



The 1933 Chicago World's Fair: A Century of Progress

Cheryl R. Ganz

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Chicago's 1933 world's fair set a new direction for international expositions. Earlier fairs had exhibited technological advances, but Chicago's fair organizers used the very idea of progress to buoy national optimism during the Depression's darkest years. Orchestrated by business leaders and engineers, almost all former military men, the fair reflected a business-military-engineering model that envisioned a promising future through science and technology's application to everyday life. But not everyone at Chicago's 1933 exposition had abandoned notions of progress that entailed social justice and equality, recognition of ethnicity and gender, and personal freedom and expression. The fair's motto, "Science Finds, Industry Applies, Man Conforms," was challenged by iconoclasts such as Sally Rand, whose provocative fan dance became a persistent symbol of the fair, as well as a handful of others, including African Americans, ethnic populations and foreign nationals, groups of working women, and even well-heeled socialites. Cheryl R. Ganz offers the stories of fair planners and participants who showcased education, industry, and entertainment to sell optimism during the depths of the Great Depression. This engaging history also features eighty-six photographs--nearly half of which are full color--of key locations, exhibits, and people, as well as authentic ticket stubs, postcards, pamphlets, posters, and other items.

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