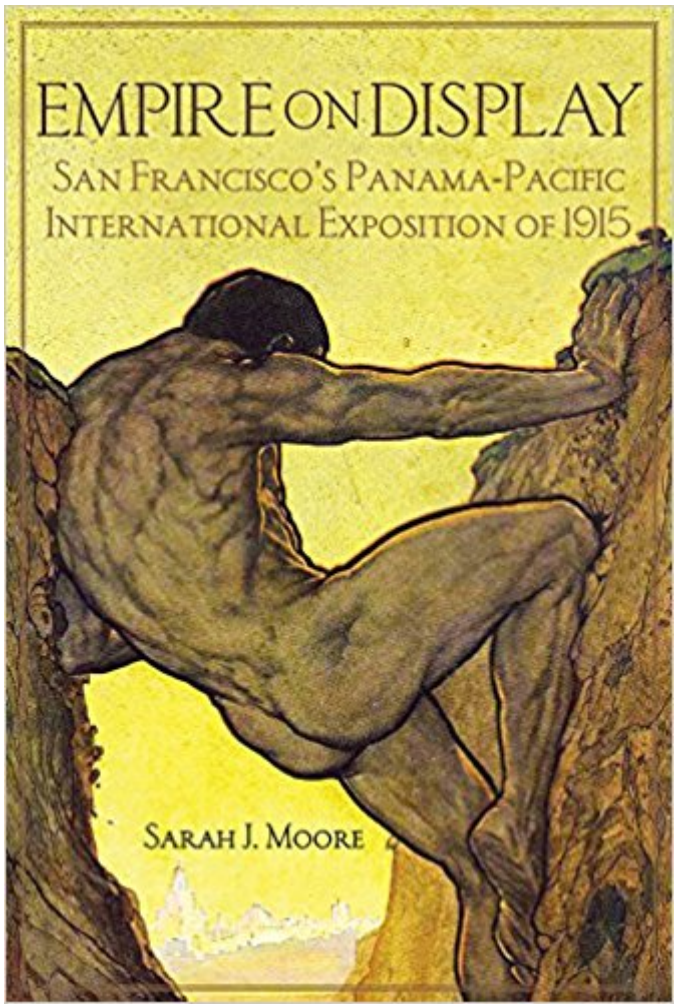
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Empire On Display: San Francisco's Panama-Pacific International Exposition Of 1915



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Synopsis

The worldÃ¢â ¬â„¢s fair of 1915 celebrated both the completion of the Panama Canal and the rebuilding of San Francisco following the devastating 1906 earthquake and fire. The exposition spotlighted the canal and the city as gateways to the Pacific, where the American empire could now expand after its victory in the Spanish-American War. Empire on Display is the first book to examine the Panama-Pacific International Exposition through the lenses of art history and cultural studies, focusing on the eventÃ¢â ¬â„¢s expansionist and masculinist symbolism.The exposition displayed evidenceÃ¢â ¬â •visual, spatial, geographic, cartographic, and ideologicalÃ¢â ¬â •of AmericaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s imperial ambitions and accomplishments. Representations of the Panama Canal play a central role in MooreÃ¢â ¬â„¢s argument, much as they did at the fair itself. Embodying a manly empire of global dimensions, the canal was depicted in statues and a gigantic working replica, as well as on commemorative stamps, maps, murals, postcards, medals, and advertisements. Just as San FranciscoÃ¢â ¬â„¢s rebuilding symbolized AmericaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s will to overcome the forces of nature, the Panama Canal represented the triumph of U.S. technology and sheer determination to realize the centuries-old dream of opening a passage between the seas.Extensively illustrated, MooreÃ¢â ¬â„¢s book vividly recalls many other features of the fair, including a seventy-five-foot-tall Uncle Sam. American railroads, in their heyday in 1915, contributed a five-acre scale model of Yellowstone, complete with miniature geysers that erupted at regular intervals. A miniÃ¢â ¬â œGrand Canyon featured a village where some twenty Pueblo Indians lived throughout the fair.Moore interprets these visual and cultural artifacts as layered narratives of progress, civilization, social Darwinism, and manliness. Much as the globe had ostensibly shrunk with the completion of the Panama Canal, the Panama-Pacific International Exposition compressed the world and represented it in miniature to celebrate a reinvigorated, imperial, masculine, and technologically advanced nation. As San Francisco bids to host another worldÃ¢â ¬â„¢s fair, in 2020, MooreÃ¢â ¬â„¢s rich analytic approach gives readers much to ponder about symbolism, American identity, and contemporary parallels to the past.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Pulls together the most important strands of cultural politics at a key turning point in American history in ways that no other book quite accomplishes and no reader will ever forget.Ã¢â ¬Â•—T. J. Boisseau, coeditor of Gendering the Fair: Histories of Women and Gender at WorldÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Fairs“Empire on Display shows that public events like the 1915 international exposition in San Francisco put on display not just the latest material products of modern technology and industry but also their conceptual underpinnings—meanings implicit and explicit that shaped the staged events and projected themselves into the public realm. Impressively researched and lucidly argued, Empire on Display helps us see the high importance of public display in establishing the terms of American hegemony in the opening years of the twentieth century.Ã¢â ¬Â•—Alan Trachtenberg author of Shades of Hiawatha: Staging Indians, Making Americans, 1880–1930

Sarah J. Moore is Professor of Art History at the University of Arizona, Tucson, and author of John White Alexander and the Search for National Identity: Cosmopolitan American Art, 1880Ã¢â ¬â œ1915.

It was a time in our history when the "men" of the USA could do and accomplish whatever they wanted. The reading is a little heavy, but well worth the effort and it is lightened considerably by the illustrations and art. The early 20th century is normally thought of (at least for me) as the time before WWI, but extraordinary things were done leading up to the 1915 exhibition.

This book is filled with depictions of the architecture, sculpture, and painting of the SF Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915. There are several illuminated quotes of the Fair’s directors and planners which, when compared to the Fair’s aesthetics, posit a staunch ideological platform of re-imagined American nationalism in respect to a global empire. However, there is

almost no coverage of how Asian people were imagined. Moore's book is written to heavily emphasize how Americans imagined themselves (more than how they imagined others) at the Fair. The book also discuses the general historiography of American Fair's remarkably well. A good read for graduate students and People enthusiastic about cultural expressions shaping in Fairs.

Not enough pictures, this item fell short!

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