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Bierstuben, Cottages and Art Deco: Regionalism, Nationalism and Internationalism at the Belgian World Fairs

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“Your Antwerp correspondent wrote recently how Belgium, previously the battlefield of Europe, now seems to want to become its permanent exhibition ground”⁽¹⁾. It was with these words that the Flemish poet Karel van de Woestijne quoted his friend Emmanuel de Bom when he wrote in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* on 24 December 1906 of the bickering in the Brussels municipal council about what would be the most suitable site for the international exhibition of 1910. Belgium was indeed the country in Europe where the world fairs seemed to have permanently taken root as giant *bon marchés*. Before the First World War, between 1885 and 1914, no fewer than six world fairs were held. They took place in Antwerp (1885 and 1894), Brussels (1897 and 1910), Liège (1905) and Ghent (1913). After the First World War, it was again the turn of Antwerp and Liège (1930) to stage a joint exhibition as part of the celebrations to mark the 100th anniversary of Belgium’s existence. As a result of this last exhibition, Brussels moved its exhibition, which had been planned for the centenary celebrations, to 1935.

Following a short introduction to the world fairs, this article looks at the possible shifts which occurred between the pre- and post-war world fairs in Belgium. The discussion will focus on the tensions between regionalism (as and beyond an aesthetic interest for cities and the countryside), nationalism (as a quest for unification of the national states) and internationalism (as the pursuit of universal legitimacy)⁽²⁾ which were apparent and in particular on the tension between regionalist architectural styles and modernist approaches. Special attention is devoted to the regional-style architecture which was present at the world fairs from the late nineteenth century onwards.

(1) Emmanuel de BOM, “Over wereldtentoonstellingen, enzoovoorts”, in *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant (NRC)*, 16 December 1906, p. 1, cited in Karel VAN DE WOESTIJNE, *Verzameld Journalistiek Werk*, Ghent, Cultureel Documentatiecentrum, 1986, vol. 1, p. 353.

(2) For a definition of internationalism and transnationalism, see the introduction to this issue.

A brief history of the world fairs

The world fairs have been described as “the official calling cards of the nineteenth century”⁽³⁾. The world fairs were born barely 150 years ago out of the rivalry between Britain and France. The first fairs were held alternately in London (1851 and 1862) and Paris (1855 and 1867) until London began to lose interest. At the fairs, the different countries aimed to present their progress in the field of production⁽⁴⁾. Their endeavours represented “an attempt to depict the world through a vast display of products”⁽⁵⁾.

Industry and art occupied the leading place at the world fairs, followed by trade and science⁽⁶⁾. “Self-portraits of the nineteenth-century industrial bourgeoisie and twentieth-century futuristic proving grounds, the universal exhibitions primarily appeared as allegorical monuments to the alliance between Art and Industry”⁽⁷⁾. Certainly until 1900, industry formed the main focus of each exhibition, but a fair degree of attention was also devoted to the fine arts. Ancient art was honoured as an enduring counterweight to the fleetingness of consumption. “The more intense the pursuit of progress, the stronger the instinct for preservation” wrote the art historian André Capiteyn⁽⁸⁾. Museums of art or art and history often formed the only relic of the world fair. The boundaries between art and industry were deliberately erased⁽⁹⁾. Or, as Walter Benjamin formulated it: “The exhibitions of industry as a secret blueprint for the museums – art: industrial manufacture projected into the past”⁽¹⁰⁾.

A political concept was later attached to the world fair, namely the coming together and mutual understanding of peoples. In his chronicles of the universal exhibition held in Paris in 1900, Emile Verhaeren revealed his utopian hope for

(3) Werner HOFMANN, *Das irdische Paradies. Kunst im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, Munich, Prestel, 1974, p. 151: “die offiziellen Visitenkarten des 19. Jahrhunderts”.

(4) See the first article of the Convention relating to international exhibitions signed in Paris on 22 November 1928, cited in August COCKX & J. LEMMENS, *Les expositions universelles et internationales en Belgique*, Brussels, Editorial-Office, 1958, p. 8 note 1.

(5) Paul GREENHALGH, “The Tradition of Expositions universelles”, in *De panoramische droom. Antwerpen en de wereldtentoonstellingen 1885-1894-1930*, Antwerp, Bouwcentrum, 1993, p. 29.

(6) Especially the late nineteenth century emphasized trade. This also held for the Belgian exposition. See Serge JAUMAIN & Wanda BALCERS, eds., *Bruxelles 1910: de l'Exposition à l'Université*, Brussels, Racine, 2010, p. 30.

(7) *Le livre des expositions 1851-1989*, Paris, Herscher, 1983, p. 245: “Autoportraits de la bourgeoisie industrielle du XIX^e siècle, champs d'expériences futuristes au XX^e siècle, les expositions universelles se présentent d'abord comme des monuments allégoriques de l'alliance de l'Art et de l'Industrie”.

(8) André CAPITEYN, *Gent in weelde herboren. Wereldtentoonstelling 1913*, Ghent, Stadsarchief, 1988, p. 75: “Hoe intenser de jacht op vooruitgang, hoe sterker het instinct tot conservering”.

(9) W. HOFMANN, *Das irdische Paradies*, op. cit., p. 177.

(10) Walter BENJAMIN, *Das Passagen-Werk (Gesammelte Schriften V)*, ed. Rolf TIEDEMANN, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1983, p. 239: “Die Ausstellungen der Industrie als geheimes Konstruktionschema der Museen – die Kunst: in die Vergangenheit projizierte Industrieerzeugnisse”.

a rapprochement of peoples. His formula: “mutual admiration”⁽¹¹⁾. According to Verhaeren, universal civilization would prevail:

“There was no use fighting in Asia and Africa while the city was talking of mutuality and harmony; the idea which it was affirming spread in any case beyond the bloodstained lands; it enveloped the entire planet. One can compare it to an immense blanket stretching over the peoples of the Earth and of which the holes that are being made in it in the Transvaal and China do not prevent its marvellous warmth from penetrating to our core and its beauty from shining brightly”⁽¹²⁾.

In practice, however, the promotion of international fraternity had its limits. Paul Greenhalgh even concludes that “instances when such understanding could be witnessed were sparse in relation to occasions when exhibitions openly generated bitterness and hatred. The Exposition universelle of 1900, for example, was propelled to an epic scale by the thought that the hated Germans might try to hold an exhibition in the same year.”⁽¹³⁾ Furthermore, an as yet not openly admitted objective was hiding behind the world exhibitions. Benjamin formulates this as follows: “The world exhibitions were the high schools, in which the masses wedged away from consumption learned to empathize with exchange value. ‘Just look, don’t touch’”⁽¹⁴⁾. The nature of the earliest world exhibitions was indeed much like that of large department stores – they still were located in the city – and they were owned by private companies. This seductive and cross-border character of capitalism incited Marx and Engels to a fierce reaction from the first world exhibition in London on⁽¹⁵⁾.

Although officially the promotion of peace and philanthropy played an important role, they were never the genuine *raison d’être* of the world fairs⁽¹⁶⁾. The world fairs raised the prestige and served the propaganda interests of the states and rulers patronizing the event. The participating countries were initially arranged in a rather haphazard formation within a great central exhibition palace in order to demonstrate a utopia of international free trade. At the Universal Exposition in Paris of 1867, the participating countries were for the first time encouraged to present some of their exhibits in a national pavilion as well. Each country was to construct a pavilion in a characteristic national style, which could document its past glories by showing archaeological findings and

(11) Émile VERHAEREN, “Chroniques de l’exposition universelle de 1900”, in *Sensations d’art*. Édition établie par François-Marie DEYROLLE, Paris, Librairie Séguier, 1989, p. 340-341: “admiration mutuelle”.

(12) É. VERHAEREN, “Chroniques de l’exposition universelle de 1900”, *op. cit.*, p. 357: “On a eu beau se battre en Asie et en Afrique pendant que la ville parlait de mutualité et de concorde, l’idée qu’elle affirmait s’est déployée quand même au delà des pays ensanglantés; elle a enveloppé la planète entière. On la peut comparer à un manteau immense qui s’est étendu sur les peuples et dont les trous qu’on y faisait au Transvaal et en Chine n’empêchaient point la bonne chaleur d’arriver jusques aux moelles et la beauté de resplendir”.

(13) Paul GREENHALGH, *Fair World. A History of World’s Fairs and Expositions from London to Shanghai 1851-2010*, Winterbourne, Papadakis, 2011, p. 33-34.

(14) W. BENJAMIN, *Das Passagen-Werk*, *op. cit.*, p. 239. “Die Weltausstellungen waren die hohe Schule, in der die vom Konsum abgedrängten Massen die Einfühlung in den Tauschwert lernten. ‘Alles ansehen, nichts anfassen’”.

(15) A. CAPITTEYN, *Gent in weelde herboren*, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

(16) P. GREENHALGH, “The Tradition of Expositions universelles”, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

historical artefacts⁽¹⁷⁾. From now on they began to use national pavilions that formed “a small temporary city”. Such developments also indicated a growing rivalry and intense competition between states: “... trade, this bond between peoples, is now confronted with the divisions caused by nationalism”⁽¹⁸⁾. Thus, the Western countries not only contributed collectively to the progress of humanity but also increasingly emphasized their differences, be it in the style of their pavilions or by focusing on their own particular Golden Age. In fact, the world fair had been an international event with a clear national basis from the very beginning. The countries competed on a friendly basis by showing themselves to one another in as favourable a light as possible. The best example of this is the “Rue des Nations”, with historicist copies or pastiches of typical old buildings along one avenue, which first appeared in Paris 1878 and culminated in Paris 1900.

By 1900 the increasing protectionism meant that the government itself had become the actual entrepreneur⁽¹⁹⁾. “The *expositions universelles* were given their scale and opulence for political and economic motives. Especially in the 1870 to 1914 period, the heyday of the medium, a politico-economic intensity can be found as the motive power of every site, as nationalist structures consolidated themselves and the imperial drive gained new verve at the expense of Africa and Asia”⁽²⁰⁾. Alexander Geppert has counted 210 international large-scale exhibitions between the 1880s and the Second World War, with “roughly half of them in Europe”. As a result, more such exhibitions operated within wider transnational networks. Geppert thus concludes:

“Even if the medium [of international exhibitions] was subject to its own fashions and trends, such far-reaching resemblances and a comparatively slow pace of change resulted from a defined set of applied rules about how to put which items on what kind of display. First developed through inner-European, inner-urban competition in the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, this led to the increasing codification of a standard repertoire and the gradual development of a special exhibition language. Such a repertoire consisted of certain exhibits and specific sections featuring the oft-discussed, inevitable *clou*”⁽²¹⁾.

As a result of the protectionism around the turn of the twentieth century, the economic and industrial importance of the world fairs was further undermined. After 1900 they met with increasing suspicion in industrial circles due to the

(17) Martin WÖRNER, *Vergnügung und Belehrung. Volkskultur auf den Weltausstellungen 1850-1900*, Münster, Waxmann, 1999, p. 49-50; and Winfried KRETSCHMER, *Geschichte der Weltausstellungen*, Frankfurt/New York, Campus Verlag, 1999, p. 82-83.

(18) Respectively: P. GREENHALGH, “The Tradition of Expositions universelles”, *op. cit.*, p. 29; and W. HOFMANN, *Das irdische Paradies*, *op. cit.*, p. 155: “Der völkerverbindende Handel wird mit dem völkertrennenden Nationalismus konfrontiert”. See also Eckhardt FUCHS, “Nationale Repräsentation, kulturelle Identität und imperiale Hegemonie auf den Weltausstellungen: Einleitende Bemerkungen”, in Eckhardt FUCHS, ed., *Weltausstellungen im 19. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig, Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 1999, p. 8-14.

(19) Cf. Julius LESSING, cited in W. BENJAMIN, *Das Passagen-Werk*, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

(20) P. GREENHALGH, “The Tradition of Expositions universelles”, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

(21) Alexander C.T. GEPPERT, *Fleeting Cities. Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, Basingstoke and New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 7-8, 12 and 240 (quote).

rampant growth of pavilions and the growing share of popular amusements. Industrialists now started to favour smaller, but more specialized, trade fairs. First London pulled out, and after 1900 Paris followed suit. This created more room for other countries and provincial cities⁽²²⁾. These smaller cities even took advantage of the term⁽²³⁾. The opportunity which they received or seized to each organize their own world fair effectively formed the beginning of the end of the *expositions universelles*. Ghent 1913 is a case in point in this regard and signalled the definitive ending of an era: "it was the last local initiative which, via the national governments, was raised to the level of an international forum"⁽²⁴⁾. In an article in the weekly newspaper *De Amsterdammer* on 27 April 1913, Karel van de Woestijne was already wondering what "apart from vanity – still only a secondary factor in the economic development of a nation – is driving second-rate cities such as Ghent, which is second-rate even within Belgium, to spend millions on something which will generate no interest and has no obvious benefit or even immaterial importance for the advancement of industry or art, nor for the lasting prosperity of the exhibition city"⁽²⁵⁾. Capiteyn called the Ghent Expo "a spectacular end point, the swansong of the *Belle-Époque* bourgeoisie, the true end of the nineteenth century"⁽²⁶⁾. The omnipotence of the bourgeoisie had been eroded for once and for all by the rise of the working classes. So the world exhibitions increasingly engaged with broader sections of the population. Women were attracted by special pavilions⁽²⁷⁾. Already in their early years, there were examples of enlightened factory managers sending workers' delegations to such events⁽²⁸⁾. Employers distributed cheap subscriptions to their employees⁽²⁹⁾. The Brussels Exhibition in 1910 enticed 2500 inhabitants and workers from Port-Sunlight⁽³⁰⁾. These masses, who were still embraced by Verhaeren, frightened his confreres Van de Woestijne and Cyriel Buysse. Their scepticism with regard to the world fair had a lot to do with the fairground style of the latter events of the *Belle Époque*.

The dioramas, panoramas and other -ramas, the replica colonial villages as giant *tableaux vivants*, the imitation ancient and modern cities or villages and, above all, the luna-park attractions had caused the world fairs to move

(22) A. CAPITEYN, *Gent in weelde herboren*, op. cit., p. 72.

(23) P. GREENHALGH, "The Tradition of Expositions universelles", op. cit., p. 29.

(24) A. CAPITEYN, *Gent in weelde herboren*, op. cit., p. 192: "Het was het laatste lokale initiatief dat, via de nationale overheden, naar het internationale forum werd opgetild". Although it has to be admitted that the international exhibition of Barcelona in 1929, for which the initiative was taken in 1913, during the first years of the preparation also was a local affair.

(25) Karel VAN DE WOESTIJNE, "Gent tentoonstellingsstad", in *De Amsterdammer. Weekblad voor Nederland*, 27 April 1913, p. 6.

(26) A. CAPITEYN, *Gent in weelde herboren*, op. cit., p. 194: "een spectaculair eindpunt, de zwanenzang van de *Belle-Époque*-burgerij, het ware einde van de 19^{de} eeuw".

(27) Hans VANDEVOORDE, "Amazones in niemandsland. Vrouwen op de Belgische wereldtentoonstellingen tussen 1894 en 1913", in *Verslagen van het Centrum voor Genderstudies*, Ghent, Academia Press, 2004, 13, p. 75-94.

(28) W. BENJAMIN, *Das Passagen-Werk*, op. cit., p. 246.

(29) See the testimony of Maria Van der Beken in A. CAPITEYN, *Gent in weelde herboren*, op. cit., p. 208.

(30) Karel VAN DE WOESTIJNE, *Verzameld Journalistiek Werk*, Ghent, Cultureel Documentatiecentrum, 1988, vol. 3, p. 600.

away from their didactic political and economic purpose towards that of amusement. However, this was not so much a conscious move by organizers or participating countries but more a consequence of the enormous success of these kinds of attractions. Thus, among the Dutch contributions, the old Frisian Hindeloper room with life-size wax figures in traditional dress of 1878 and the Javanese village populated with real “natives” from 1883 and 1889 attracted most visitors⁽³¹⁾. As a consequence of the success of these ethnographic exhibitions, countries became more inclined to stress the most picturesque ethnographic aspects, both when representing the motherland and the colonies. At the Belgian world fairs, reconstructions of the old medieval cities Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent or Liège as well as of the Belgian Congo were presented⁽³²⁾. Often these kind of ethnographic shows were outright commercial enterprises. The German impresario Carl Hagenbeck, for instance, “imported ‘exotic’ people from overseas for exhibition purposes” and even went on tour with *Völkerschauen*⁽³³⁾. Something similar happened with European ethnographic ensembles. Thus in Chicago in 1893, German, Austrian and Irish villages were constructed at the amusement centre of the Midway Plaisance, offering typical drinks and meals, while seven years later in Paris a Swiss village and a reconstruction of *L'Andalousie aux temps des Maures* – both constructed by private entrepreneurs – were extremely popular among the masses⁽³⁴⁾.

The cinema, which was so profitable that in 1913 a tax was levied on it in Ghent in order to contribute towards improving the equipment of the armed forces⁽³⁵⁾, gradually took over the instructive task of the exhibition, and the rebuilt Indian reserves and *Wild West* shows at the American world fairs later led to the Disneylands, which skilfully appealed to their original educational value⁽³⁶⁾. The purported elevated allegorical character of the world fair was increasingly pushed aside in favour of attractions and tourism. The publicity for the Ghent world fair primarily focused on the city itself and was aimed at attracting large

(31) Ad DE JONG, *De dirigenten van de herinnering. Musealisering en nationalisering van de volkscultuur in Nederland 1815-1940*, Nijmegen, SUN, 2001, p. 91-125; Marieke BLOEMBERGEN, *De koloniale vertoning. Nederland en Indië op de wereldtentoonstellingen (1880-1931)*, Amsterdam, Wereldbibliotheek, 2002, p. 96-100 and 138-165.

(32) About the African villages at the Belgian world fairs, see, among others, Rudy DOOM, “The World Exhibitions and Colonial Propaganda”, in *De panoramische droom*, op. cit., p. 204-207; Maurits WYNANTS, *Van Hertogen en Kongolezen. Tervuren de Koloniale Tentoonstelling 1897*, Tervuren, Koninklijk Museum voor Midden-Afrika, 1997; Johan LAGAE, “Displaying Authenticity and Progress. Architectural Representation of the Belgian Congo at International Exhibitions in the 1930s”, in *Third Text*, vol. 50, 2000, p. 21-32.

(33) A.C.T. GEPPERT, *Fleeting Cities*, op. cit., p. 48.

(34) Respectively: M. WÖRNER, *Vergnügung und Belehrung*, op. cit., p. 72-78, Angela SCHWARZ, “‘Come to the Fair’: Transgressing Boundaries in World’s Fairs Tourism”, in Eric G.E. ZUELOW, ed., *Touring Beyond the Nation: A Transnational Approach to European Tourism History*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2011, p. 87; Sharon L. HIRSH, “Swiss Art and National Identity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century”, in Michelle FACOS & Sharon L. HIRSH, eds., *Art, Culture, and National Identity in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 275-280; Luis MÉNDEZ RODRÍGUEZ, *La imagen de Andalucía en el arte del siglo XX*, Seville, Centro de Estudios Andaluces, 2008, p. 114-122.

(35) A. CAPITEYN, *Gent in weelde herboren*, op. cit., p. 182.

(36) Pieter VAN WESEMAEL, “Schouwplaats van instructie en vermaak”, in *Andere Sinema*, vol. 109, 1992, p. 32-34.

numbers of tourists. "Because the whole world is concentrated on a single location, a visit to the world fair spares one the trouble of a world tour"⁽³⁷⁾.

Nationalism and regionalism at Belgium's international expositions

The international fairs traditionally had an official, national and even growing nationalist character, as shown by the commemorative expositions in Liège in 1905 and Liège/Antwerp in 1930. This celebration of national glories had already become manifest in Philadelphia, where in 1876 a century of American independence was celebrated, in Paris where in 1889 the centenary of the French Revolution was commemorated and in Chicago, which in 1893 commemorated the discovery of America by Columbus⁽³⁸⁾. It is true that these Belgian expositions were private initiatives, but they were patronized by the king, and the government provided financial support, which was greatly necessary since they almost inevitably closed with a large deficit⁽³⁹⁾. Thanks to their official character, we can identify a number of developments connected with the political situation in Belgium. We shall focus briefly on the Antwerp fairs, where the presence of the port ensured a level of continuity. After the First World War, we see greater input from the city at the expense of the state. This possibly points to an increasing decentralization linked to the waning power of the king. In addition, we also see that the Antwerp world fair of 1930 was bilingual, which reflects the growing importance of the Dutch language in public life. Finally, the labouring classes were also noticeably present at the fair: both the Christian and socialist labour movements were exhibitors⁽⁴⁰⁾.

One constant at both the pre- and post-war Belgian world fairs were ethnographic representations of cities and regions, who thus participated in a clear transnational trend: "Old Antwerp" (1894), "Bruxelles-Kermesse" (1897), "Old Liège" (1905), "le Vieux Bruxelles" (1910), "Old Flanders" at Ghent (1913) and "Old Belgium" (1930)⁽⁴¹⁾. They were part of a tendency towards increasingly growing amusement for the numerous visitors of the world

(37) W. HOFMANN, *Das irdische Paradies*, op. cit., p. 127: "Da man die ganze Welt an einem Punkt zusammenführt, erspart der Besuch einer Weltausstellung die Weltreise".

(38) P. GREENHALGH, *Fair World*, op. cit., p. 32, see also p. 155-193.

(39) A. CAPITEYN, *Gent in weelde herboren*, op. cit., p. 77.

(40) Mandy NAUWELAERTS, "The Dream of the Metropolis. Antwerp and the World Exhibitions", in *De panoramische droom*, op. cit., p. 62. About the way labour masses were increasingly integrated in national festivities, see Jeroen JANSSENS, "'Voor ons is 't vaderland de ontelbare menigte van 't werkende volk': arbeiders, nationalisme en de Belgische onafhankelijkheidsvieringen van 1880, 1905 en 1930", in Els WITTE et al., eds., *Natie en democratie, 1890-1921. Acta van het interuniversitair colloquium, Brussel 8-9 juni 2006 = Nation et démocratie, 1890-1921. Actes du colloque interuniversitaire, Bruxelles, 8-9 juin 2006*, Brussels, KVAB, 2007, p. 203-214.

(41) See Pieter UYTENHOVE, "The Ruin and Party. The Modernity of Old Antwerp and Old Belgium", in *De panoramische droom*, op. cit., p. 256-257; Alfons THIJS, "Old Antwerp 1894, a Bourgeois Dream World", *ibid.*, p. 267-269; Hans VANDEVOORDE, "Racial-Linguistic Nationalism. Race, Language and Nation at the Antwerp Universal Exhibition of 1894", in Petra BROOMANS, Goffe JENSMA, Hans VANDEVOORDE & Maarten VAN GINDERACHTER, eds., *The Beloved Mothertongue. Ethnolinguistic Nationalism in Small Nations: Inventories and Reflections*, Leuven, Peeters, 2008, p. 171-186.

fairs. At the same time they are indicative of a growing regionalism that was not opposed to nationalism, and sometimes regional folk heritage could be claimed by several different nations. Bjarne Stoklund, for instance, mentions Frisian interiors that were exhibited as part of Dutch, German and Danish national patrimony⁽⁴²⁾. In this context, it is worth noting that in 1930, the ethnographic representations of separate cities and regions from before the First World War were replaced by “Old Belgium”⁽⁴³⁾. As decentralization seemed to be increasing, there was a growing need on the part of the establishment to present itself as a single cohesive country⁽⁴⁴⁾. The tendency towards regionalism was also visible elsewhere. Thus, in Barcelona in 1929, a Spanish Village was constructed on the slopes of the Montjuïc Hill, while at the Ibero-American Exhibition which was held during the same year in Seville, all Spanish regions had their own pavilion. And even France presented itself in 1937 in a Regional Centre which was meant to “bring out all the faces of France in all their diversity”⁽⁴⁵⁾. However, while the Spanish Village and the Regional Centre had the air of a village, Old Belgium – like the ethnographic ensembles of earlier expositions in Belgium – clearly was modelled as a small town. It thus referred back more to the glorious late medieval and early modern past of the Flemish (and Walloon) towns than to a more timeless rural idyll.

Even before the war, these ethnographic representations of old cities and regions were not such an innocent pleasure⁽⁴⁶⁾: regardless of their success among the wider public, there were indeed a number of conscious and less conscious motives behind them. The countries in question primarily used ethnographic buildings to improve their international reputation and thereby make them more attractive for economic and political collaboration. Further, by shifting attention from national high culture to vernacular products of specific regions, those responsible also stimulated a more regionalized nationalism. By encouraging their feelings of local and regional attachment

(42) Bjarne STOKLUND, “How the Peasant House Became a National Symbol. A Chapter in the History of Museums and Nation-Building”, in *Ethnologia Europaea*, 29, 1999, p. 5-18.

(43) Cf. *Oud-België op de Wereldtentoonstelling voor Koloniën, Zeevaart en Vlaamsche Kunst*, Antwerp, De Volder, 1930. “Old Belgium” was then also taking root in variety theatres. See Evelien JONCKHEERE, *Kijklust en sensatiezucht. Een geschiedenis van revue en variété*, Antwerpen-Amsterdam, Meulenhoff-Manteau, 2009, p. 159-163.

(44) S. Jaumain and W. Balcers already observed in Liège in 1905 that to the urban particularism a regional (Walloon) particularism was added. This urban particularism was related to the linguistic, since language balances played a part in the government’s choice for a certain city. Thus national unity was underlined during the world exhibitions of 1930 and 1935. See S. JAUMAIN & W. BALCERS, eds., *Bruxelles 1910, op. cit.*, p. 25.

(45) Edmond LABBÉ, *Exposition internationale des Arts et Techniques. Paris 1937. Rapport général*, Paris, 1938, vol. 8, p. 18. See also Eric STORM, *The Culture of Regionalism: Art, Architecture and International Exhibitions in France, Germany and Spain, 1890-1939*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2010; Shanny PEER, *France on Display. Peasants, Provincials, and Folklore in the 1937 Paris World’s Fair*, New York, State University of New York Press, 1998. Even England presented itself with a village called “Merry England” at the New York World’s Fair of 1939. See GREENHALGH, *Fair World, op. cit.*, p. 168.

(46) Martin WÖRNER, “Bauernhaus und Nationenpavillon. Die architektonische Selbstdarstellung Österreich-Ungarns auf den Weltausstellungen des 19. Jahrhunderts”, in *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, vol. 48, 1994, p. 414-417.

to the *Heimat* or *petit pays*, the inhabitants of the different regions could also identify more easily with the more distant and abstract nation or Reich. This happened in old nation-states such as Sweden, the Netherlands and Spain but also in recently unified countries such as Germany and Italy⁽⁴⁷⁾. With a similar goal, these neo-vernacular pavilions formed an outlet for the regional and national identities of multi-ethnic states, such as the Austro-Hungarian “k. & k.-Monarchie” and ... Belgium. On a more unconscious level, they were an expression of a romantic yearning (*Sehnsucht*) for the good times of yesteryear and a fear for the loss of traditional social structures. More innocent was the interest in the past which they revealed. However, the image which they presented was often inaccurate and ahistorical: they represented nothing more than “picturesque theatre backdrops”⁽⁴⁸⁾.

“Universal regionalism”⁽⁴⁹⁾

The Belgian representations of cities and regions recalled the great mediaeval past. Present in large numbers were the cafes or pubs, e.g., at Bruxelles-Kermesse (1910). The fact that these representations were intended as tourist attractions can be seen from the large number of advertisements for hospitality and catering businesses which can be found in the catalogue for Le Vieux-Liège (1905). Beyond the ethnographic villages, primarily in the amusement parks, regional architectural styles were also often used for the numerous *Bierstuben*, bodegas and other catering attractions. As early as 1885, one could quench one’s thirst at “In den Soeten Inval”⁽⁵⁰⁾. Foreign countries were also abundantly represented in this sector. In 1910, for example, we see an “Altdeutsche Bierstube” at Alt-Düsseldorf.

Following the war, this retro-event continued unabated. The tendency to use regional styles for the cafes, where increasingly newly “invented” regional dishes were served, remained during the world fairs of the inter-war period, as shown by the Antwerp fair, which, strictly speaking, continued the conservative tradition of the pre-war era. In 1930 the café-concert “Oberbayern” opened

(47) See, for example, Celia APPLEGATE, *A Nation of Provincials. The German Idea of Heimat*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990; Anne-Marie THIESSE, *Écrire la France. Le Mouvement littéraire régionaliste de langue française entre la Belle Époque et la Libération*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1991; Alon CONFINO, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor. Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1997; Stefano CAVAZZA, *Piccole patrie. Feste popolari tra regione e nazione durante il fascismo*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1997; Eric STORM, “Regionalism in History, 1890-1945. The Cultural Approach”, in *European History Quarterly*, 2003, p. 251-265.

(48) M. WÖRNER, “Bauernhaus und Nationenpavillon”, *op. cit.*, p. 417: “pittoreske Theaterkulissen”.

(49) For the term “‘universal’ regionalism” see Linda VAN SANTVOORT, “‘Back to Nature’: From Cottage to Farmstead”, in Linda VAN SANTVOORT, Jan DE MAEYER & Tom VERSCHAFFEL, eds., *Sources of Regionalism in the Nineteenth Century. Architecture, Art and Literature*, Leuven, Kadoc, 2008, p. 106.

(50) “In den Soeten Inval”, meaning “Open House”, is a typically Flemish name for a pub. See P. LOMBAERDE, “Architecture of Exhibitions and Urban Development in Antwerp”, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

in the amusement park, an enormous *Bierhalle* “designed in the pleasant Bavarian mountain style”⁽⁵¹⁾. Even at a quite modernist exhibition in Nazi Germany, such as at the *Schaffendes Volk* Exhibition in Düsseldorf (1937), where regionalism was almost totally sidelined, most cafes and restaurants were still constructed in a neo-vernacular style⁽⁵²⁾.

That other approaches were possible – for instance, cafes in a more modern style – is highlighted by the Maison Delune with its *Art Nouveau* influences. Being part of the 1910 fair, it was a beautiful building which can still be found close to the Bois de la Cambre, in the South of Brussels, where the exhibition was held. At Antwerp 1930, one could see a remarkable modernist Restaurant of Norway Pavilion, where Norwegian beer of the Frydenlund company was served⁽⁵³⁾. At the world fairs before the First World War, the distance between regional retro-architecture and modernist architecture was not that great at all. This can be seen in certain national pavilions, such as the German ones in 1910 and 1913⁽⁵⁴⁾. The main German pavilion of 1910 was built in a baroque design in South German style, fitting in with the Beaux Arts architecture of other countries, but had a slight modern look because of its plain style. The railway station next to it, a design of Peter Behrens, was the only ultramodern construction. Since it was presented in the context of the whole German presence at the world fair, this station was not a representation of internationalism but of strong nationalism. Such observations highlight that we should avoid the equation of internationalism and modernism.

The architecture at Belgian world fairs exemplified the ambiguity of a regionalism which proclaimed universal aspirations, bore national content and was not exclusively oriented towards the past. It is easy to recognize the same hesitation between old and new in the reflection on architecture. The Ghent international exposition of 1913 saw the staging of the “Premier Congrès international et Exposition comparée de Villes”, which was where Paul Otlet revealed his plan for a *Cité internationale*. According to Linda Van Santvoort, however, regionalism “was strongly promulgated at that conference”⁽⁵⁵⁾.

Probably inspired by the success of vernacular constructions at the world fairs, regionalism had become a new architectural trend around 1900. Recently, also other scholars have argued that regionalism – which was

(51) *Le livre d'or de l'exposition internationale coloniale, maritime et d'Art Flamand Anvers 1930*, Antwerp, La Propagande commerciale, p. 369: “conçue dans le style aimable de la Bavière montagnarde”.

(52) Stefanie SCHÄFERS, *Vom Werkbund zum Vierjahresplan. Die Ausstellung “Schaffendes Volk”, Düsseldorf 1937*, Düsseldorf, Droste, 2001, p. 164-165, 175-179 and 183.

(53) Prospectus, AMVC-Letterenhuis, W 4782/D.

(54) Henry Van de Velde was involved with both. For the German pavilions in Brussels in 1910, see *Exposition universelle Bruxelles 1910. Section allemande. Catalogue officiel*, Berlin, Georg Stilke, 1910; Paul SIGEL, *Exponiert. Deutsche Pavillons auf Weltausstellungen*, Berlin, Verlag Bauwesen, 2000, p. 61-99; Alexandre KOSTKA, “Une déclaration de guerre? La participation allemande à l'exposition de 1910”, in S. JAUMAIN & W. BALCERS, eds., *Bruxelles 1910, op. cit.*, p. 167-175.

(55) L. VAN SANTVOORT, “Back to Nature”, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

heavily influenced by the English Arts and Crafts movement⁽⁵⁶⁾ – should at the beginning be primarily viewed as an innovative architectural trend. This probably was best visible in Germany where, as John Maciuka has shown, prominent regionalist architects such as Muthesius, Riemerschmid and Schumacher pursued a clear reform policy while also occupying leading positions in the Deutsche Werkbund, which generally is viewed as the main precursor of Bauhaus⁽⁵⁷⁾. With its emphasis on simplicity, economy, harmony and authenticity, regionalism was in the first place an innovative trend and a conscious rejection of the pompous historicist and academic architecture of the second half of the nineteenth century. The basic principles of architectural regionalism were simple: a building should be adapted to the popular spirit of a specific region, which had been forged during the ages by the continuous interaction between the population and its natural environment. In practice this meant that the architect should in a creative way apply local materials, building traditions and forms. This generally resulted in attractive houses – mostly villas, country houses and cottages – with varied spaces, a picturesque use of different natural materials, a harmonious interaction with the natural surroundings (by using bay windows, balconies, verandas, easy access to the garden etc.) and with mostly a huge, inclined roof⁽⁵⁸⁾.

During the world fairs in 1910 and 1913, special attention was devoted to the cottage, the regionalist building style which had made its way over from England. The cottage had been propagated by architects of Arts and Crafts Movement and, towards the end of the nineteenth century, was also adopted by some of the architects of the *art nouveau* movement on the Continent⁽⁵⁹⁾. According to Amy Ogata “a reevaluation of the national past, regional traditions, and the idealization of a preindustrial, rural culture”⁽⁶⁰⁾ constitutes the antimodern side of the new style. At the fair of 1910, a model home by Oscar Van de Voorde (which he later reconstructed in Deurle), built for the Brussels firm Céline Dangotte, was exhibited in all its simplicity⁽⁶¹⁾. The Freemason Van de Voorde would become the official architect for Ghent 1913, and in that capacity would fall back into an eclectic, historicizing,

(56) For the role of the Belgian World exhibitions in promoting the Arts and Crafts, see for instance Hans VANDEVOORDE, “‘L’âme bruxelloise’. Georges Khnopff en de Engelse kunst en literatuur tijdens het fin de siècle in België”, in Anne VAN BUUL, ed., *Lopende vuurtjes. Engelse kunst en literatuur in Nederland en België rond 1900*, Verloren, Hilversum, 2012, p. 23-36.

(57) John V. MACIUKA, *Before the Bauhaus: Architecture, Politics and the German State, 1890-1920*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005; E. STORM, *The Culture of Regionalism*, op. cit. Umbach has defined this reform movement as Bourgeois Modernism; see Maiken UMBACH, *German Cities and Bourgeois Modernism, 1890-1924*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009.

(58) François LOYER & Bernard TOULIER, eds., *Le Régionalisme, architecture et identité*, Paris, Éditions du Patrimoine, 2001; E. STORM, *The Culture of Regionalism*, op. cit., p. 73-195.

(59) Amy OGATA, *Art Nouveau and the Social Vision of Modern Living. Belgian Artists in a European Context*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

(60) A. OGATA, *Art Nouveau and the Social Vision*, op. cit., p. 7.

(61) According to *The Studio*, it was “distinguished by its admirable proportions and by the agreeable air of light and homeliness it gave”. F[ernand] K[HNOPFF], “Studio-Talk”, in *The International Studio*, vol. 51, 1911, p. 325. See also Anthony DEMEY, *Oscar Van de Voorde*, Ghent, Provinciebestuur Oost-Vlaanderen, 1997, p. 32.

academic style⁽⁶²⁾. However, his administrative buildings for the fair were of a modern design⁽⁶³⁾.

During Ghent 1913, visitors could also see a Modern or Contemporary Village, an agricultural village on which the artist Armand Heins and architects including Valentijn Vaerwyck (also responsible for Old Flanders!), Van de Voorde and Van de Velde all worked⁽⁶⁴⁾. (Incidentally, Liège 1905 also had a model farm, and one of the exhibits in 1930 was an innovative electric farmhouse.)⁽⁶⁵⁾ Nevertheless, for the radical modernists, the Modern Village of 1913 as a plea for an authentic Flemish building style was not modern enough and was too much of a mish-mash of the visions of various architects⁽⁶⁶⁾.

During the post-war reconstruction period, in addition to the regionalist "farmstead-style"⁽⁶⁷⁾ we also see how the notion of the garden city took concrete form in Belgium, as it did elsewhere in Western Europe. The idea itself came from across the Channel; prior to the war, it had been propagated with limited success. The garden city is another example of this surprising combination of regionalism and modernism. Most early garden cities, both in Great Britain and on the Continent, were constructed in the new regionalist style, generally in order to connect the inhabitants both to their region and the nation. However, since the construction of a great number of houses with artisanal techniques and natural materials became too expensive and time-consuming, more modern and even functionalist designs rapidly gained the upper hand, both in social housing and in the new garden cities⁽⁶⁸⁾. In the first half of the 1920s, important modernists such as Huib Hoste, Jean-Jules Eggerix, Victor Bourgeois and Louis van der Swaelmen, inspired by the idea of community art, created a number of garden cities in Belgium. In the case of Eduard van Steenberghe (Unitas garden city, Deurne, 1925), this did not happen without influences from the more popular art deco. However, a change of government towards a more conservative administration brought an end to this source of assignments for modernist architects⁽⁶⁹⁾.

(62) L. VAN SANTVOORT, "Back to Nature", *op. cit.*, p. 116: "homogeneous Beaux-Arts inspired architecture with Wiener Secession elements".

(63) A. CAPITEYN, *Gent in weelde herboren*, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

(64) *Ibid.*, p. 164.

(65) For Liège 1905, see Christine RENARDY, *Liège et l'Exposition universelle de 1905*, Brussels, La Renaissance du Livre, 2005.

(66) L. VAN SANTVOORT, "Back to Nature", *op. cit.*, p. 118.

(67) An additional stimulus for the rise of regionalism was the "recognition that a significant portion of the national heritage had been irrevocably lost during the war, together with a yearning for 'tried and true' values and traditions" (L. VAN SANTVOORT, "Back to Nature", *op. cit.*, p. 120-121). Regionalism also was the intended style for the post-war reconstruction in France and Germany; see Jean-Claude VIGATO, *L'architecture régionaliste. France 1890-1950*, Paris, Norma, 1994, p. 75-139; Hartmut FRANK, "Heimatschutz und typologisches Entwerfen. Modernisierung und Tradition beim Wiederaufbau von Ostpreußen 1915-1927", in Vittorio LAMPUGNANI & Romana SCHNEIDER, eds., *Moderne Architektur in Deutschland 1900 bis 1950. Reform und Tradition*, Stuttgart, Hatje, 1992, p. 105-133.

(68) Stanish MEACHAM, *Regaining Paradise: Englishness and the Early Garden City Movement*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1999; E. STORM, *The Culture of Regionalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 101-114, 140-153 and 178-183.

(69) France VANLAETHEM, "Modernisme", in Jos VANDENBREEDEN & France VANLAETHEM, *Art deco en modernisme*, Tielt, Lannoo, 1996, p. 136.

The garden cities brought modernist architecture in Belgium to the attention of a wider public. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that they helped make modernism *salonfähig* to such a degree that it was also given an opportunity in other areas, even at the more conservative international expositions, although admittedly not generally in official buildings but, rather, in those of enlightened industrialists and in the pavilions of some foreign countries. The main exception obviously was the Weimar Republic, since it commissioned Ludwig Mies van der Rohe to construct the German pavilion, which would become a hallmark of the new modernist movement, at the International Exposition of Barcelona in 1929⁽⁷⁰⁾. In Belgium, modernism made its definitive breakthrough in the pavilions during the World Fair of 1930 in Antwerp. "Modernism was present in an extraordinarily varied manner at the fair of 1930", wrote Piet Lombaerde⁽⁷¹⁾. Architects including Léon Stynen, L.H. De Koninck and Eggericx designed pavilions for a range of manufacturers. This was all the more feasible since, from then on, the world exhibitions more and more emphasized thematic pavilions (e.g., Gas and Electricity) at the expense of great central halls⁽⁷²⁾.

From the above, one could not conclude that both the cottage and garden cities were at odds with regionalism (which was primarily rural in nature). However, just as we have previously done with literature and painting⁽⁷³⁾, we must put this contrast between modernism and regionalism into perspective. The cottage style, which was considered progressive before 1914, was in fact a regionalist style which was mostly applied in a rural context. The adaptation was sometimes open to international influences: English (Voysey, Mackintosh), Dutch (Berlage) and even German⁽⁷⁴⁾. Conversely, the so-called international modernism of the post-war period had a strong regional basis⁽⁷⁵⁾. The garden-city architect Flor van Reeth "united the '[eigen]landaaerstijl'

(70) P. SIGEL, *Exponiert. Deutsche Pavillons auf Weltaustellungen*, op. cit., p. 102-127.

(71) Piet LOMBAERDE, "Architecture of Exhibitions and Urban Development in Antwerp", in *De panoramische droom*, op. cit., p. 92: "Het modernisme was op een bijzonder gevarieerde wijze aanwezig op de tentoonstelling van 1930". S. JAUMAIN & W. BALCERS, eds., *Bruxelles 1910*, op. cit., p. 18 refer to the art deco and the Amsterdam School.

(72) S. JAUMAIN & W. BALCERS, *Bruxelles 1910*, op. cit., p. 28.

(73) Hans VANDEVOORDE, "Die Pendelbewegung zwischen Internationalismus und Regionalismus. Skandinavische Literatur in Flandern 1900-1940: Ein Fall von Genre-transfer", in Herbert VAN UFFELEN, Dirk DE GEEST, Christine HERMANN & Hilde MOORS, eds., *Heimatliteratur 1900-1950 – regional, national, international*, Wien, Praesens Verlag, 2009, p. 71-90 (Wiener Schriften zur niederländischen Sprache und Kultur; Bd. 5); Eric STORM, "Painting Regional Identities: Nationalism in the Arts, France, Germany and Spain, 1890-1914", in *European History Quarterly*, vol. 39, 2009, 4, p. 143-157.

(74) Cf. L. VAN SANTVOORT, "Back to Nature", op. cit., p. 108 and 114.

(75) L. VAN SANTVOORT, "Back to Nature", op. cit., p. 121 (basing the idea on Anne VAN LOO, "De architectuur in België van 1830 tot heden: een overzicht", in EAD., ed., *Repertorium van de architectuur in België van 1830 tot heden*, Brussels, Mercator, 2003, p. 121). Moreover, most modernists had a great interest in regionalism; Mies van der Rohe even began his career designing a regionalist villa. See, for example, Vittorio LAMPUGNANI & Romana SCHNEIDER, eds., *Moderne Architektur in Deutschland*, op. cit.; Francesco PASSANTI, "The Modern, the Vernacular and Le Corbusier", in Maiken UMBACH & Bernd HÜPPAUF, eds., *Vernacular Modernism. Heimat, Globalization and the Built Environment*, Palo Alto, Stanford University Press, 2005, p. 141-157.

with the social-ideological thought of the English protagonists of garden city architecture”⁽⁷⁶⁾. Once again, we see a transnational or “universal regionalism” as opposed to a regionalism only inspired by local traditions.

Conclusion

The rise of the ethnographic representations formed part of the overall evolution of the world fair towards a more nationalistic event. However, they also point to the stronger regional tendencies which emerged around 1900 as a transnational phenomenon. These regional tendencies found expression in the exhibition architecture, for example in the ethnographic representation of cafés. Nevertheless, the opposition between internationalism and regionalism was not as pronounced as the handbooks would sometimes have us believe. Progressive forms of architecture such as the cottage (pre-First World War) and the garden city (post-First World War) are just as much expressions of regionalism, although with universal aspirations. This “universal regionalism” connects the work of some pre-First World War architects with the modernists of the post-First World War period. In that sense, the rupture caused by the war in Belgium and elsewhere is perhaps not as great as has previously been assumed.

ABSTRACT

Eric STORM & Hans VANDEVOORDE, Bierstuben, Cottages and Art Deco: Regionalism, Nationalism and Internationalism at the Belgian World Fairs

There were no fewer than six world fairs in Belgium between 1885 and 1914, while in the interwar period two more would follow. After a short introduction on the world fairs and their international context, the article focuses on the interplay among regionalism, nationalism and internationalism that was visible at these international expositions. We therefore analyse the presence of regional and modernist architectural styles in both the national pavilions and the ethnographic representations of old towns and regions, of which cafés always were a part. Contrary to what is generally presumed, before World War I in architecture – like in literature and the visual arts – there was not such a large distance between a preference for regionalism or internationalism. This ambiguity, visible for example in the cottage style, goes together with the barely concealed nationalism which, from the beginning, constituted the base of the international expositions. After the war, the world fairs continue to play a nationalistic role, although certain changes can be detected. Thus, the labouring classes are increasingly involved, while the share of attractions and amusement increases. Nevertheless, the “universal regionalism” that can be seen in the garden cities does not differ substantially from that of the cottages during the pre-war period. This way also the supposed fault line between the pre-war and the post-war culture and art is relativized.

World fairs – regionalism – internationalism – architecture

(76) L. VAN SANTVOORT, “Back to Nature”, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

RÉSUMÉ

Eric STORM & Hans VANDEVOORDE, *Bierstuben, cottages et Art Déco. Régionalisme, nationalisme et internationalisme aux expositions universelles belges*

Entre 1885 et 1914 il n'y eut pas moins de six expositions universelles en Belgique; durant l'Entre-deux-guerres, il y en eut encore deux. Après une brève introduction consacrée aux expositions universelles et à leur contexte international, nous nous penchons sur l'interaction entre régionalisme, nationalisme et internationalisme qui s'affichait pendant ces *world fairs*. Pour analyser cette interaction, nous envisageons la présence des styles architecturaux régionaux et modernistes, aussi bien dans les pavillons des pays que dans les présentations ethnographiques des villes anciennes et des régions, dont faisaient toujours partie les cafés. Le contraste entre la préférence pour le régionalisme et l'internationalisme dans l'architecture d'avant-guerre, tout comme dans la littérature et les beaux-arts, ne paraît pas aussi grand qu'on l'avait pensé. Cette ambiguïté, visible notamment dans le « cottage style », correspond au nationalisme qui était à peine caché et qui, dès le début, était à la base des expositions internationales. Après la guerre, on continue à faire appel aux expositions universelles dans un programme national, alors même qu'on aperçoit des évolutions. Ainsi, les populations ouvrières sont de plus en plus impliquées et la part des attractions et du divertissement croît. Pourtant le « régionalisme universel », visible notamment dans les cités-jardin, ne diffère pas des cottages d'avant la Première Guerre mondiale. La rupture qui aurait existé entre la culture d'avant-guerre et celle de l'après-guerre s'en trouve ainsi relativisée.

Expositions internationales – régionalisme – internationalisme – architecture

SAMENVATTING

Eric STORM & Hans VANDEVOORDE, *Bierstuben, cottages en art deco. Regionalisme, nationalisme en internationalisme op de Belgische wereldtentoonstellingen*

Tussen 1885 en 1914 waren er niet minder dan zes wereldtentoonstellingen in België en in het interbellum volgden er nog twee. Na een korte inleiding op de wereldtentoonstellingen en hun internationale context focussen we op de wisselwerking tussen regionalisme, nationalisme en internationalisme die op die *world fairs* zichtbaar werd. Met het oog daarop analyseren we de aanwezigheid van regionale en modernistische architecturale stijlen in zowel de landenpaviljoenen als meer speciaal in de etnografische voorstellingen van oude steden en regio's, waarvan steevast ook cafés deel uitmaakten. In de architectuur blijkt er vóór de oorlog, net zoals in de literatuur en beeldende kunst, niet zo'n grote afstand als doorgaans aangenomen wordt te bestaan tussen de voorkeur voor het regionalisme en het internationalisme. Die dubbelzinnigheid, zichtbaar bijvoorbeeld in de cottagesstijl, spoort met het nauwelijks verborgen nationalisme dat aan de internationale tentoonstellingen van meet af aan ten grondslag lag. Na de oorlog blijven wereldtentoonstellingen ingeschakeld worden in een nationaal programma, ook al zijn er verschuivingen merkbaar. Zo worden in toenemende mate arbeiderspopulaties erbij betrokken en groeit het aandeel van attractie en vermaak. Toch verschilt het 'universele regionalisme' dat bijvoorbeeld aan tuinsteden merkbaar is, niet van dat van de cottages voor de Eerste Wereldoorlog.

Daarmee is ook de breuk gerelativeerd die zou bestaan tussen de vooroorlogse en de naoorlogse cultuur en kunst.

Wereldtentoonstellingen – regionalisme – internationalisme – architectuur