Location, Location, Location: Sex, Respect, and Femininity at the Golden Gate International Exposition

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During the Great Depression's stranglehold, the Dustbowl's destructive effects on farming communities across the Great Plains, and Washington's denial of the inevitability of a world war, America hosted six World's Fairs in a single decade. These Fairs fiercely promoted nationalism and utopian dreams for the country's future even as they reinforced normative stereotypes and social paradigms. It was the pinnacle of American escapism. The same drive that packed movie palaces for the Saturday Matinee also kept patrons flooding the ticket gates of these Fairs.[1] A forlorn American public craved distraction and cities across the country heeded that desire.

A shift occurred as America moved from the suppressed rigidity of the late-nineteenth century into the Progressive Era, and the U.S. World's Fairs felt this shift. As Depression era fairs came into their own, in what prolific Fair historian Robert Rydell terms the 'Century-of-Progress Expositions,' these themes expanded to allow growing consumerism and the idea that this 'progress' lead towards a future utopia. He calls these Fairs

[1] For further insight into Depression Era American escapism, see: Robert Sklar, *Movie Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* (New York: Vintage Press, 1975), specifically his chapters on mass culture.

"theaters of power."[2] Rydell expounds upon this point by arguing that while Victorian Era Fairs attempted to modernize America, Depression era Fairs sought to redefine modernity in terms of an imperialist dream world and a social hierarchy, which followed existing race and gender power relations.[3]

The year 1939 set a distinct precedent in the nation's popular culture as it marked the first and only time the country launched two simultaneous World's Fairs in New York and San Francisco. Millions of people from around the world visited both fairs, and the press documented each daily. President Franklin D. Roosevelt encouraged the public to see both fairs and advised, "Most decidedly, if you have seen one, you have not, in effect, seen the other also."[4] Yet, while the New York World's Fair with its iconic Trylon and Perisphere received much attention in written works, the Golden Gate International Exposition did not and there is no common imagery of the fairgrounds in San Francisco Bay. Women, although officially limited in their power, played a much larger role in the Exposition. However, their roles, much like the Fair itself, remain an unexplored arena within these "theaters of power."

In part, this neglect has much to do with the fact that two of the most prominent World's Fair historians, Robert Rydell and Paul Greenhalgh, examine women with merely a cursory gaze in their major works.[5] Greenhalgh goes so far as to assert

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[2] Robert W. Rydell, *World of Fairs: the Century-of-Progress Expositions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 9. In this work, Rydell examines only the Fairs, which took place from 1930-1940, and puts them into a Depression era context with which they are inescapably linked. While he often cites theories, facts and figures, what Rydell does not consider in his scholarship are the mountains of ephemera produced by each and every World's Fair. Items such as pamphlets, brochures and souvenirs unfortunately do not come up for analysis.

[3] Ibid.

[4] "F.D.R.'s Opening Day Speech," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 19, 1939.

[5] Robert Rydell remains the preeminent historian on World's Fairs; in addition to *World of Fairs*, see: Robert Rydell, *All the World's*

that the only real benefit women reaped from their involvement in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century World's Fairs is that they were seen.[6] Rydell explores gender relations further, but assesses them more in sweeping cultural generalizations and not in depth. Unfortunately, this is a typical stance in much of the traditional Fair scholarship; but there was surely more at stake than mere exposure, especially as Victorian Era hold-overs gave way to monumental Century-of-Progress Expositions.

The earliest studies focusing on gender and the World's Fairs limited their scope to women's committees on fair planning boards and the roles women played behind the scenes. These histories concentrated on proper women. Jeanne Madeline Weimann pioneered this trail in the early 1980s, discussing the Women's Building at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Yet Weimann's work, although exhaustively thorough in its recreation of the famed Women's Building, offers no interpretation into the meaning this place held for nineteenth-century women or the generations of women to follow. She purposefully leaves the reader to decide on their own the value of their accomplishments.[7] Historians who followed in this vein of gender-oriented research began more interpretive analysis the following decade, especially Susan Wels who ties women's roles

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a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). For other interpretations see: Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: Expositions Universelles, Great Expositions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1988); John E. Findling & Kimberly Pelle, eds., *Encyclopedia of World's Fairs and Expositions* (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2008); Smithsonian Institution, *The Books of the Fairs: Material about World's Fairs, 1834-1916*, in the Smithsonian Institution Libraries (Chicago: American Library Association, 1992).

[6] Greenhalgh, 191.

[7] Jeanne Madeline Weimann, *The Fair Women* (Chicago: Academy Chicago, 1981), ix.

in the Victorian Expositions to their fight for suffrage.[8] Likewise, Gayle Gullet examines the way factions among the Women's Board in 1893 kept organized women from achieving their true potential at the Fair.[9] Yet all these early works focus solely on planning boards and committees, and not on women outside that sphere.[10]

More recently, scholars look at categories of women and gender at World's Fairs. A relatively new collection of essays focuses on themes of exploitation and gender ideology at the World's Fairs. It takes a closer look at the women on display, not just their organizational roles.[11] This collection allows for a history of not only the proper woman, but also the risqué one. In her essay on gendered space, Abigail Markwyn specifically calls out both Rydell and Greenhalgh for placing too little importance on female performances at Fairs, insisting that they have missed sweeping cultural aspects as a result.[12] Though she focuses on male/female dichotomies, Markwyn's examination of the differences between male and female space on the fairgrounds of

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[8] Susan Wels, "Spheres of Influence: The Role of Women at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 and the San Francisco Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915," *Ex Post Facto* 8 (1999). Wels echoes Rydell's assessment of World's Fairs as theaters of power, especially with regard to gender norms.

[9] Gayle Gullett, "'Our Great Opportunity': Organized Women Advance Women's Work at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893," *Illinois Historical Journal* 87 (1994): 259-76. Gullet examines the tension between women's groups across racial and economic lines.

[10] For more on women's involvement in World's Fairs at this time, see: Mary Francis Cordoto, "Representing the Expansion of Women's Sphere: Women's Work and Culture at the World's Fairs of 1876, 1893 and 1904" (PhD diss., New York University, 1989).

[11] Abigail Markwyn, "Encountering 'Woman' on the Fairgrounds of the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition," in *Gendering the Fair: Histories of Women and Gender at World's Fairs*, eds. TJ Boisseau and Abigail M. Markwyn, 169-186 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2010).

[12] Ibid., 171.

the Panama-Pacific International Exposition establishes a useful framework for analysis. Although the book is a step forward, it is but a start in the right direction. Presently, most scholarship assumes a polarized view towards women's roles at Expositions and does not delve into the myriad of intersections and conflations. The gray areas are ignored or glossed-over and, as a result, much of the story has been lost. To uncover it, the sources must be re-analyzed and put into a greater and more encompassing context; one which allows for a category of womanhood that has been historically ignored, contested, and difficult to define.

Sources do exist to conduct such a study involving women and, in the case of San Francisco in 1939, they remain primarily untapped. Promotional materials and newspapers pertaining to the Golden Gate International Exposition provide the best window into the world of the Fair. Because Fair organizers created them at the time, and for the specific purpose of promoting and discussing the exhibits and shows on Treasure Island, they supply a contemporary point of view that cannot be recreated. With items such as programs, guide books and pamphlets, it is possible to glean not only the face value of these promotional materials, but also the underlying agendas. Knowing that the aim was to entice fairgoers, it is reasonable to assume that the creators carefully chose specific hyperboles, ribald words, and imagery. Since few people wrote academically about the Fair at the time, news articles remain as some of the last vestiges of public interpretation and reaction. Articles from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *New York Times*, and *Los Angeles Times* give a sense of how reaction varied across the country. And while reporters often interjected their own interpretations and biases into their coverage of the Fair, this helps construct a more fully-formed idea of how contemporaries read the Exposition. To complete that formation, a collection of memoirs documented by Fair enthusiasts nearly fifty years after the

Exposition, provide a trove with which to gauge and temper interpretation of the competing spaces that existed within.[13]

People experienced the Fair in numerous ways, and nowhere was that more apparent than in the press. Long before the Fair opened, there existed two distinct and contrasting versions of it: the enlightened wonderland and the titillating "pleasuredom."[14] Although these two ideas may seem mutually exclusive, they both existed on the chimeric shores of Treasure Island and both relied on a specific gendered identity. Spatially, the two visions of the Fair were separated as were the women who inhabited those spaces, dividing these places into the realms of the proper and the risqué. While in theory who these women were and what they did at the Fair constituted the reason for separation, in reality the rift had much more to do with where on the fairgrounds they found themselves. In essence, location at the Fair intrinsically linked the societal acceptance of these women. Several women who bridged that chasm between respectability and ill repute did so by blurring the spaces and roles that these distinct groups occupied. Such conflation was reinforced during the New Deal Era where, increasingly, cultural images of women could represent both temptation and purity.[15] These hybrid

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[13] Patricia F. Carpenter & Paul Totah, eds., *The San Francisco Fair: Treasure Island, 1939-1940* (San Francisco: Scottwall Associates, 1989).

[14] Jack James and Earle Weller, *The Magic City: Treasure Island 1939-1940* (San Francisco: Pisani Printing and Publishing, 1941), 1.

[15] Barbara Melosh, *Engendering Culture: Manhood and Womanhood in New Deal Public Art and Theater* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1991), 184. Melosh examines this theme through the lens of Art and Public Theater, though it seems a natural extension to the realm of the World's Fair. See also: Maria Elena Buszek, *Pin Up Grrrls: Feminism, Sexuality, Popular Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); Rachel Shteir, *Striptease: the Untold History of the Girlie Show* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Susan Glenn, *Female Spectacle: the Theatrical Roots of Modern Feminism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Lois W. Banner, *American Beauty* (New York: Knopf, Inc., 1983); Robert C. Allen, *Horrible Prettiness:*

women, with their ability to precariously balance between both realms, highlighted just how difficult it was to break free of traditionally prescribed gender paradigms.

Promotion and Legacy

From the beginning, a dichotomy existed in the public presentation of the Golden Gate International Exposition (GGIE). On one hand there was the dreamy, cultural oasis and mecca of family fun - a place to take the wife and kids, where an entire family could learn and be amazed by wonders from around the world. However, on the other hand, the Fair was a bastion of naughtiness for pleasure seekers, a place of adventure and an escape from normality. In essence, the contrasting spaces of the Fair sparked conflicting publicity. Although this multi-pronged approach to promotion was not unusual, in San Francisco it reached absurdist heights early on in the campaign.

Interest in the Fair ignited immediately, as evidenced by numerous newspaper articles spanning back to the first whispers of an Exposition in 1934. The trick facing the San Francisco Bay Exposition Company was not building interest but sustaining it for the next five years.[16] Early on, as Treasure Island began to form, an enchanting and exotic tone spin set the tone of Fair publicity. San Francisco's many daily papers echoed that the island seemed to "rise, if by magic, from the blue waters of the bay."[17] Descriptive and flowery language was a substitute for photos, as the island was merely a pile of sludge at this point. Yet, newspaper reporters did not let that dissuade them from bombarding the public with stories and promises of the

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Burlesque and American Culture (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

[16] James and Weller, Ch.1. The San Francisco Bay Exposition Company was the name given to the Board, before an official name for the Fair had been set upon. In years leading up to the Exposition and for all of 1939, the President was prominent San Franciscan, Leland W. Cutler. Marshall Dill replaced him in 1940, for contested reasons.

[17] Stanton Delaplane, "The Selling of a Fair," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb. 17, 1939.

"Baghdad in the Bay," that was to come.[18] "It will be sensational!" touted Harris Connick, head of promotion for the GGIE and an integral figure in getting the Fair advertised as frequently as possible.[19] The sheer volume of press on the Fair was enough to cause *TIME* to criticize that the press agents had clearly "run wild" with their coverage.[20] Fairgoer Richard Reinhardt reminisced that, "It was almost as if they [newspapers] decided to become the PR vehicle for the Fair." Reinhardt emphasized his point: "You may have seen the headlines from the Examiner and *Chronicle*...blazing headlines."[21]

As there were few images of Treasure Island to yet accompany such headlines, promoters devised the next best thing - a "Theme Girl" to represent what was underway in the bay. In referring to the shift from the ornate early tones used in promotion, *Chronicle* reporter Stanton Delaplane noted, "The ecstasy of it all lasted only a few months and then came the Theme Girl."[22] At the time, Connick staged an exploit consisting of young women picketing in front of his downtown office demanding more sex appeal for the Fair. On their signs were slogans such as, "The Tower of the Sun Lacks Sex Appeal, do WE?" and "Don't be un-FAIR, to the FAIR sex."[23] Reporters noted that while the spectacle was an obvious publicity stunt, "it had a leggy atmosphere that could not be ignored."[24]

Zoe Dell Lantis, a "statuesque brunette," became the favorite of some fifty "Theme Girls" dressed as pirates, and she promoted the Exposition all across the country.[25] She recalled her experiences years later. "The publicity people had wild ideas about what to do to capture interest in the Fair," she mused, "I would do anything they asked."[26] Such activities ranged from

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[18] *San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb. 18, 1939.
[19] Delaplane, February 17, 1939.
[20] "Pacific Pageant," *TIME*, January 2, 1939, 24.
[21] Carpenter & Totah, 152.
[22] Delaplane, February 17, 1939.
[23] [Image], *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 17, 1939.
[24] Delaplane, February 17, 1939.
[25] James and Weller, Ch. 13.
[26] Carpenter and Totah, 1.

judging frog races to meeting politicians. The public could not get enough of the campaign and "The picture pages began to fill with smirking officialdom as they stood next to the most gorgeous legs in the gorgeous West."[27] Much like the Pin-Up Girl, which existed in various forms since the mid-nineteenth century, the "Theme Girl" was at once subversive to and representative of the status quo.[28] Dell Lantis had thousands of pictures of her as a pirate girl taken and printed throughout the country from 1937 until the Fair closed in 1940. In his critique of the Exposition's promotion Delaplane surmised, "Though [Connick] wrote that, 'The greatest man-made island in the world rose as if by magic from the blue waters of the bay,' actually it was propped up on Theme Girls' legs, floated on a sea of typewriter ink and anchored in newspaper clippings."[29] This remains a rather cynical reduction considering that Delaplane himself had floated right alongside Connick on those inky waters.

Descent from the flowery, exalted prose of the early days did not end with the "Theme Girls;" on the contrary, the success of that approach led to further exploitation of women's bodies and their sex-appeal to promote the Fair. Whereas initial publicity focused on the natural and architectural allure of the island, it later shifted to the biological beauty one could witness. Fair organizers used sex and especially female sexuality to promote, publicize, and sell the Golden Gate International Exposition on a vast scale.[30] Both the act and the veiled promise of sex invoked the spirit and experience of the Gayway, as

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[27] Delaplane, February 17, 1939.

[28] Buszek, 157. See also: Glenn, 155-187, for similarities to "Chorus Girl."

[29] Delaplane, February 17, 1939.

[30] The precedent for overt female sexuality linked to World's Fairs had been set at the World's Colombian Exposition in Chicago, 1893. Initially linked with the exotic woman, an appropriation by Broadway made this type of spectacle acceptable (on some level) for white women also. See: Glenn, 96-125.

showcased in newspapers and magazines around the country.[31] The word peppered headlines about the Fair. One such story presented the title, "A 3-Letter Word," in large type and had the subtitle in smaller print, which illuminated, "Down here we might mention that word is sex."[32] True to its promise, the article goes on to describe the myriad Girlie Shows presented at the Fair - none receiving more attention than Sally Rand's controversial *Nude Ranch*. Rand was so synonymous with sex at this time that a headline merely had to mention her name to summon the association. A similar article on the varied sensual amusements of the Fair, bluntly headlined, "Inevitably, the name of Sally Rand appears in this report," reveals as much.[33] Contemporary readers had no question as to the content of the article, in which the Fair's "great gray brain," Connick, likened his plans for Treasure Island's nightlife entertainment to "the pleasure domes of Kubla Khan."[34] Not only did Connick's simile imply the consumption of women's bodies, it also implied the consumption of just about everything else on the fairgrounds. Robert Rydell asserts that 1930s Fairs represented a powerful defense of corporate capitalism and the veiled promise that consumers would lead America out of the Depression.[35]

Yet, as the grand opening approached, promotion swayed once again back towards the eloquent and evocative prose of the early days. Romantic ideals reigned across the front pages of newspapers and magazines around the country; and the Fair again became a land of wonder, mystery and adventure.[36] Newsweek hailed the exotic architecture and romantic lighting of the island, saying that it gleamed both day and night "like a

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[31] The Gayway was the name of the Midway section of the Exposition. The name came from a contest sponsored by the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1938.

[32] Neil Hitt, "A 3-letter Word," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 17, 1939.

[33] Herb Caen, "Inevitably, the name of Sally Rand appears in this report," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 17, 1939.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Rydell, *World of Fairs*, 115.

[36] Stanton Delaplane, "A Magic City of Romance Awaits World," *San Francisco Chronicle*: February 18, 1939.

mountain of jewels."[37] Likewise, *TIME* referred to Treasure Island as "an imaginative, quasi-Oriental 'Never-Never Land.'"[38] These stories did not take the place of Connick's carefully crafted sex campaign, in fact, they appeared right alongside them. One particularly eroticized article, comparing the Fair to an "Eastern Bride" awaiting her wedding night, caused *Chronicle* reporter Delaplane to retort, "It breathed with the Connick, Sally Rand and Zoe Dell Lantis days." Though he allowed that it was only "a parting shot" appealing to the public's baser instincts.[39] However, not even cynical Delaplane was immune to the siren's call of mystical Treasure Island.[40] On opening day his front-page article eloquently touted the Fair's mighty construction feats, its romantic and exotic buildings and its jeweled towers, seen for miles around the bay.[41] Fair fever had turned even a grizzled newspaper cynic into a believer, if only for a day.

Fairgrounds Proper

Respectable women had a specific role and place on the feminized fairgrounds of the GGIE; praised as and expected to be social role-models, family-oriented consumers and ambassadors of hospitality.[42] They set the example for 'smart' women heading to the Fair, and were lauded for their efforts to instill culture and beauty to the fairgrounds. Though limited in power, the Women's Board sustained an active role in the years leading up to the Fair and their direction influenced public perception considerably. Their involvement was so integral that

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[37] "San Francisco Fair Set for Opening," *Newsweek*, February 13, 1939, 26.
[38] "Pacific Pageant," *TIME*, January 2, 1939, 24.
[39] Delaplane, February 17, 1939.
[40] "Magic Moment is Here!" *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 18, 1939, 16.
[41] Delaplane, February 18, 1939.
[42] Buszek, 140; Melosh, 183. Both authors delve into this theme extensively. See also Daniel Delis Hill, *Advertising to the American Woman 1900-1999* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000), 38-132.

Jack James and Earle Weller devoted an entire chapter in the Fair's official history to the Women's Board's activities. However, the authors did not feel familiar enough with the women's activities to write it themselves, thus they turned the writing of that chapter over to the Board's publicity director Marie L. Darrach, who had no issue promoting their accomplishments. She opened the chapter with a bold declaration, "In the mosaic which is the Golden Gate International Exposition...one of the brightest designs in the complete pattern reflects the works of the Women's Board of the Exposition, as the focal point of women's activities."[43]

Throughout the chapter her tone echoes the early descriptions of Treasure Island: full of dreamy and romantic language. Such descriptions gave the Exposition a decisively feminine and virtuous identity, considered appropriate and appealing to the public.[44] Likewise, journalists noted that the Fair had been planned with an expert eye for beauty and a restrained sense of glamour.[45] Business Week observed, "There is an absence of garishness and Hollywood ballyhoo in this Fair."[46] Hollywood's Golden Age, in full bloom at this time, meant lavish spectacles presented with the spirit of escapism.[47] For Business Week, at least, that "garish" element remained pleasantly absent. A number of writers linked this restraint to femininity. "The island, strange as it may seem, has a feminine overtone," observed *Chronicle* reporter Carolyn Anspacher. She added, "It has a feminine friendliness, a feminine dignity that is never overpowering, never stuffily ponderous."[48] Her article continues to further link ideas of womanhood, hospitality, and dignity to the details of the fairgrounds. *TIME* picked up on these

[43] James and Weller, Ch.13.
[44] "Fairs' Affairs," *Newsweek*, July 31, 1939, 12.
[45] "San Francisco Fair Set for Opening" and "Pacific Pageant."
[46] "Here it is - the Golden Gate Fair!" *Business Week*, February 11, 1939, 22.
[47] Robert Sklar, *Movie Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* (New York: Vintage Press, 1975).
[48] Carolyn Anspacher, "The Women," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 19, 1939.

friendly, feminine, and unpretentious qualities concluding that as a result, "the Golden Gate International Exposition might make history by being really pleasant to attend, instead of just grandiose and exciting."[49]

Making the Fair pleasant was a priority for the Women's Board, charged by Exposition organizers to oversee hospitality and cultural refinement at the Fair. The Board had been involved since the early stages of planning, a fact of which they remained proud. They considered it a great step toward equality that unlike Lady Managers of an earlier era, who typically served as "decorative accessories after everything was finished," their group stayed integral to the decision-making process.[50] While Greenhalgh implies that the Women's Board of the GGIE functioned mainly as a macrocosm of the "housewife" at the Fair, perhaps his interpretation (or at least his definition of 'housewife') can stand some re-imagining.[51] Even the *Chronicle* noted, "Women have taken one of the active, if less publicized parts in the pre-exposition plans. Not only as office workers, designers and artists, there was [also] the Women's Board."[52] Chief among the Board's goals was to bring "importance and dignity to the Exposition."[53] To this end they self-promoted by making sure society columns contained stories of who had lunch with whom on the fairgrounds and by peppering local papers with images of well-dressed ladies having afternoon tea on Treasure Island. A recurring headline in the 'Woman' section of the *Chronicle* proclaimed, "Smart Women will see the Fair and wear the Fair," and encouraged women to dress a certain way

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[49] "Pacific Pageant," *TIME*, February 27, 1939, 20; "Western Wonderland," *TIME*, February 27, 1939, 20.

[50] James and Weller, Ch. 13. The GGIE Women's Board at this time would have had no inkling as to the work done by earlier Women's Boards' at World's Fairs, as scholarship in this area would not start for several decades.

[51] Greenhalgh, 183. This assessment is echoed in: Lisa Rubens, "The 1939 San Francisco World's Fair: The New Deal, the New Frontier and the Pacific Basin," (PhD. diss., University of California, Berkeley. 2004).

[52] *San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb 17, 1939.

[53] James and Weller, Ch. 13.

when in attendance.[54] While these pages focused on the fashionable appeal of the Exposition, they nonetheless reinforced the link between consumerism and the female body.[55]

The publicity and cultural endeavors of the Women's Board extended beyond printed press. Open to students around the Bay Area, they sponsored several essay contests and chose winners based on who best captured the cultural significance of the Exposition.[56] One Board member, San Francisco socialite Mrs. Coolidge, endeavored to further the cultural aspects of the Exposition by personally paying for a string quartet to play around the fairgrounds, hoping to improve the musical taste of visitors.[57] Although other members remained skeptical that chamber music would work in such an environment, to the surprise and delight of many the "Coolidge String Quartet" became a recurring hit with fairgoers. Other accomplishments of the Board included the Hall of Flowers, Decorative Arts Exhibit, Horticultural Committee, Fine Painting Exhibit, Pacific Area Social Relations Committee, and "the ultra-smart Yerba Buena Club."[58]

In one of his daily editorials, *Chronicle* veteran Herb Caen favorably remarked, "Bokays to the Yerba Buena women's clubhouse on Treasure Island, by far one of the most attractive buildings on the lot."[59] Caen, an acerbic San Francisco institution, rarely paid compliments so this was indeed rousing applause for the Board. If the fairgrounds, pavilions, and gardens were for ladies, then the private clubhouse existed for the very best society ladies, promoting the place as "the smart rendezvous

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[54] *San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb. 17, 1939. See also Hill, 38-166, for discussion of prescriptive consumerism geared towards women at this time.

[55] Rydell, *World of Fairs*, 143.

[56] *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 17, 1939.

[57] James and Weller, Ch. 13.

[58] James and Weller; Melosh, 231. Melosh discusses how women's groups (in general) at this time presented themselves as guardians of culture.

[59] Herb Caen, "These Foolish Things," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 21, 1939.

for women members and their guests."[60] Much like the women of the Chicago Fair, the GGIE's Women's Board designed, built, furnished, and paid for the entire project with no help from male organizers and also created the Yerba Buena Club to supplement funding.[61] A fire destroyed what little records were kept of the Club, but history and Fair tradition suggests that membership consisted of almost exclusively white, middle to upper-class women.[62] Club dues ranged from $10 to $100, depending on the level of membership, though all members had access to the building that was, quite literally, a glass house.[63]

The main function of the building was hospitality and it served as an oasis for members needing a break from the frenzy of the Fair. Inside one could find multiple dining rooms, lounges, cocktail bars, beauty shops, children's play room as well as "other feminine conveniences." [64] The press saw it as the fulfillment of the Women's Board's assignment of hospitality and refinement.[65] Although Rydell suggests in Fair America that women had no prominent place at the GGIE, it would seem, at the very least, that contemporaries believed they had one.[66] In hindsight however, Durrach lamented that the public saw the Yerba Buena as the sole achievement of the Board, precisely because it was so lauded.[67] Her disappointment had much to do with her wish to distance the Board from those Lady Managers of yore and their staple Women's Buildings at the Victorian Era

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[60] Official Guidebook, 101.
[61] James and Weller, Ch. 13.
[62] Markwyn, 173.
[63] James and Weller, Ch. 13; *Official Guidebook*, 101.
[64] *Official Guidebook*, 101.
[65] *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 17, 1939, E25.
[66] Rydell (2000) 98. Here, Rydell echoed some of his earlier presumptions about Women's roles at the GGIE, in *World of Fairs*; and alluded to them playing a very small part in this particular Exposition. However, more recently he has allowed that historians need to reexamine in general the contributions of women to all World's Fairs, see his introduction in, *Gendering the Fair*.
[67] James and Weller, Ch. 13.

Expositions.[68] This space that San Francisco's society women carved out for themselves at the Fair may have overshadowed their concurrent endeavors, but those efforts prevailed in being felt, if not seen, throughout the fairgrounds proper.

Numerous efforts were made to make women feel comfortable at the Fair, with or without an escort. The Board assumed that many family women would come during the day with their children while their husbands worked. Although no demographic records were kept on attendance, the image of the harried mother toting small children around Treasure Island became a common sight in the papers. Opening day's initial wave of women and children, the first visitors allowed to enter, solidified the Exposition's broad appeal to women of all ages; "There were cowgirls and girls of the Old West. There were chic ladies of fashion and there were harassed mothers and soignée debutants. There were ladies of joy and joyful ladies. And there were old women, sedate in black seal coats and not-to-modish hats."[69] These women, much like the Women's Board, had a very specific role to play at the Fair - as the driving force of wholesome consumerism. They brought their husbands, children, and sweethearts again and again to dine, buy souvenirs, and see the exhibits.[70] For years, the press instructed the women of San Francisco on how to view and enjoy the magical island in the bay, and the Women's Board insured the friendly hospitality of the fairgrounds for them to explore.[71]

With the Fair officially opened, these early women were additionally charged with spreading word-of-mouth reviews to their friends at home. Tales of their opening day experiences "would sound well over a luncheon table, or a bridge table, or a back yard fence, or behind a department store counter."[72] Female visitors to the Fair could delight in all of the virtuous offerings found on Treasure Island and were encouraged to do just that. Though the public image of the Fair had morphed and its scope

[68] Greenhalgh, 182.
[69] Anspacher.
[70] Anspacher; Melosh, 183.
[71] James and Weller, Ch. 13.
[72] Anspacher.

grew, in the eyes of the Women's Board at least, the Exposition should still embody the lofty eloquence with which it had been introduced, when Treasure Island rose "Aphrodite-like from the green waters of the bay."[73] From the Board's point of view, inside the glass walls of their clubhouse, the fairgrounds remained a manicured oasis, thanks in large part to their efforts.

Fair Game on the Gayway

Across the island from the waterfront Yerba Buena, and buttressed up next to the parking lot, stood the Fair's fun section called the Gayway.[74] There, visitors could stroll joyously down streets full of games, amusements and shows where "leather-lunged salesmen" spilled "adjectives like water over a dam."[75] Described in the *Chronicle* as "The Laugh Seekers Mecca" pre-Fair publicity had touted it as the be-all, end-all of fun on the fairgrounds. Preeminently because, "the Exposition is going in heavily for topflight Vaudeville acts and girl shows." [76] *Newsweek* observed, "Treasure Island officials place great emphasis on pleasure, in a community that loves gayety and good living."[77] On opening day, young people flocked "many blocks" there for diversion, immediately after the "dignified" opening ceremonies concluded. [78] Although some reports emphasized the "naughtiest naughties" available on the Gayway, others downplayed or denied this angle.[79] "The San Francisco public has insisted that it be 'kept clean,'" claimed *Business Week*, though they noted, "Nonetheless, several little items of the

[73]Ibid.
[74] *Official Guidebook*, fold-out map.
[75] James and Weller, Ch. 15; Alexander Gross, ed. *Famous Guide to San Francisco and the World's Fair* (San Francisco: The San Francisco News Company, 1939), 116.
[76] Harry Lerner, "The Gayway," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 19, 1939.
[77] "San Francisco Set for Opening," *Newsweek*, February 13, 1939, 26.
[78] Kathleen McLaughlin, "Golden Gate Fair Opens with Glittering Spectacle," *New York Times*, February 18, 1939.
[79] "Western Wonderland" *TIME*, February 27, 1939, 20.

Sally Rand variety are being quietly installed." [80] Mere association with the Gayway or Rand was enough to set the stage of debauchery in the public's imagination. The women who worked there were no exception, and their association with the area clearly marked them as a certain type of girl.

Caught somewhere between entertainers and temptresses, the girls of the Gayway started out in contested roles. Like their Broadway or Hollywood counterparts, their job was to embody the fantasies of fairgoers.[81] Yet in a post-Hays Code America, these women had far less restrictions placed on their appearance and endeavors. [82] As such they were both promoted and viewed by the public not only as a threat to morality, but also its collective escape - none more so than the Gayway's 'face' Sally Rand. Yet, many of these women, including Miss Rand, embraced this public persona for the notoriety and profits.[83]

Rand, an Iowa farm girl and failed Hollywood starlet, gained instantaneous infamy at the Chicago World's Fair of 1933 when she single-handedly "nullified an entire Century-of-Progress" with a Lady Godiva publicity stunt. [84] Her aim to merely get a job dancing on the Midway turned into a lifelong legacy. The Streets of Paris concession at which she bared her white-powdered body became an overnight sensation and financially saved the Fair.[85] Across the country her fan dance permeated what Rydell refers to as the "warp and woof" of the nation, capturing not only its attention, but its imagination as well.[86] Arrested by Chicago Police for indecency, Judge Joseph B. David ultimately dismissed the case. "Some people would like to put pants on a horse," he famously ruled and added, "The

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[80] "Here it is – the Golden Gate Fair!," 22.
[81] See: Buszek, 115-141; Glenn, 155-215; Sklar, 175-194.
[82] See: Sklar, 161-174.
[83] See: Glenn, 9-40. She discusses the originations of this anomaly in the American theater, with Sarah Bernhardt.
[84] Hitt. For more on Rand's splash in Chicago see: Rydell, *World of Fairs*, 115-156; Shteir, 127-155.
[85] Shteir, 151.
[86] Rydell, *World of Fairs*, 92.

human body is a beautiful work of nature."[87] Although arrested many more times in both Chicago and New York, the charges never stuck. Yet, each time her notoriety grew. While Rand may not have single-handedly nullified one hundred years of the nation's progress, she did prove that nude women were indispensable to World's Fairs and her act became a staple within them for the next decade.[88]

At the Dallas Fair in 1936, Rand debuted in a nude 'Dude Ranch' concession, produced by famed vaudevillian Billy Rose. With the Lone Star state as host in 1936, the idea of uniting the cowgirl with the fan dance seemed both logical and profitable.[89] Nostalgia, sex, and infamy were winning strategies for Rand, who brought notoriety and her renamed *Nude Ranch* concession along with her to the Gayway's main artery in 1939. The papers could not make enough predictions or innuendos.[90] For weeks after the Fair's opening, rumors persisted that police were going to shut the place down. Herb Caen supported this angle in his daily column stating, "The wise ones are betting that Sally Rand's Nude Ranch won't last thirty days as is!"[91] Though Jerry Bundsen, who worked in publicity for Rand and also as an assistant to Caen admitted, "It was just a case of getting her name in the columns. You had to think up items, you know."[92] These speculative articles always analyzed the girls' skimpy costumes, and served not only to publicize but also to reinforce the notion that these women existed to be consumed and fetishized.[93] A former Ranch Girl, Patricia Liley reminisced about police "raids" during the Fair, "The police would close the place down, and it would be in all the papers that Sally was busted. The next morning it was business as usual, in fact, more

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[87] Meyer Berger, "Step Right This Way," *New York Times,* April 16, 1939.
[88] Shteir, 270.
[89] Shteir, 155.
[90] "Amazing Devices Fill Gayway Tills," *New York Times*, February 24, 1939.
[91] Herb Caen, "It's News to Me," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 21, 1939.
[92] Carpenter and Totah, 8.
[93] Markwyn, 173.

business than usual."[94] Rand clearly embraced her public persona, using the Fair's own publicity machine to propel her fame and fortune.

Rand had a definitively polarizing effect in popular perception. "I knew Sally Rand," recalled Dell Lantis, main "Theme Girl" of the Fair. "Smart," she reminisced. "She had a mind like a steel trap, but was a very nice person."[95] Not everyone agreed with that assessment. Many reporters 'praised' her with tongue-in-cheek backhanded compliments such as Neil Hitt who referred to her condescendingly as an "ingenious girl."[96] Caen, too, often snidely described her concession as "highly cultured."[97] Such comments served to negate the agency with which Rand manipulated a system that had long ago branded her a fallen woman. Even when business was good and police were scarce, reporters found ways to denounce the businesswoman. A main complaint was that Rand herself was not appearing nude at the Ranch: "Miss Rand will have no part in the show, she merely will direct it."[98] Another reporter noted, "She will not participate actively in her Nude Ranch, in case you've been wondering."[99] Carlos E. Cummings, who spent a month at the Fair conducting research for his book concluded that the *Nude Ranch* had not been very popular in San Francisco, because Rand "did not herself appear."[100] All evidence points to the contrary, as the wildly successful *Nude Ranch* was one of only two Gayway concessions brought back the following year. Even cynical Caen noted that business at the Ranch boomed from day one admitting that "the first day's take was well over $3,000.00."[101] Although Rand's personal review stayed mixed,

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[94] Carpenter and Totah, 11.
[95] Carpenter and Totah, 4.
[96] Hitt.
[97] Caen, February 21, 1939.
[98] Hitt.
[99] *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 17, 1939.
[100] Carlos E. Cummings, *East is East and West is West* (New York: Buffalo Museum of Science, 1940), 24.
[101] Caen, February 21, 1939.

there was no denying the triumph of her concession and hardly a day went by without her incendiary name in the papers.

The long shadow cast by Rand fell upon the other women of the Gayway. Concessions such as the 'Greenwich Village' mock nude art school, and the 'Fair Dancers' striptease show received very little attention as a result of competition with the Ranch.[102] Other exhibits included the 'Hollywood Beauties' dunking game and a living portraits concession, in which women simulated famous nude paintings.[103] Katherine Caldwell, who worked at the Fair's Palace of Fine Arts, recalled that the models had little education and no knowledge of the artworks they were emulating.[104]

One work of art, however, managed to attain some semblance of equality with Rand and her name was Stella. "She was beautiful but dumb and came to almost nothing in overhead," assessed Times reporter Meyer Berger.[105] The famed barroom nude had made a splash at the San Francisco Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915, and she returned to the Fair twenty-four years later to the delight of nostalgic fairgoers.[106] "She hasn't grown a bit older or a bit less alluring," observed *Chronicle* reporter Harry Lerner and added, "You must see Stella - that girl has something."[107] Yet, even Stella was labeled a "wanton" woman, though created for and by a man.[108] The press promoted and viewed the women in the Gayway, including Rand and Stella, in a certain way - as objects to be simultaneously ridiculed and lusted.[109] These working-class women, existed in the Fair's social hierarchy to be (at least visually) consumed, and they stayed fair game because of their placement within the

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[102] Hitt; Rubens, 152. Rubens argues that Rand's concession was more popular than the others precisely because it did not pretend to be art.

[103] *Official Guidebook*, 104.

[104] Carpenter and Totah, 47.

[105] Berger, 187.

[106] "Western Wonderland."

[107] Lerner.

[108] Hitt.

[109] For more on the impact of the 'Nude' in American popular culture, see Buszek's Introduction.

eroticized Gayway. Unlike the ladies from Women's Board, who added dignity to the Fair, the girls of the Gayway offered a brand of sexualized hospitality, beneficial only in proportion to their desirability.[110]

Staging Respect

A third group of woman managed to extract a unique identity for themselves on Treasure Island. Although they had much more in common with the girls of the Gayway, the group succeeded in blending with the respectable. These women remain on the acceptable side of morality, because of their inclusion in the legitimate fairgrounds. "Theme Girls," "Aquabelles," and the coquettish dancers of the *Folies Bergère* achieved a limited but authentic respectability, despite the fact that their hemlines, undulations and provocative poses were every bit as suggestive as those found on the Gayway. These women, promoted in the press with a good-natured nudge toward the racy, received official sanction as part of the wholesome fun to be found at the Fair.[111]

Much like the proper women of the Fair, the "Theme Girls" existed essentially as ambassadors offering their own brand of sensationalized hospitality, an official role that lent respectability. Like the Women's Board, they exuded a gracious liaison to the public and also worked for years leading up to the Fair. "They started us working as early as 1937," remembered Dell Lantis, "The publicity men would get a pirate girl booked anywhere...there would be talk about the Treasure Island Fair."[112] As a result, she visited "every state, every governor and every mayor of every major city," to publicize the Exposition. Although an honored guest at luncheons who gave speeches and greeted dignitaries, Dell Lantis was no society matron of the Women's Board, but a pirate girl instead.[113] *Chronicle* reporter Delaplane described that pirate girl costume as "a big turned-up

[110] Hitt.
[111] See: Hill, 212-238.
[112] Carpenter and Totah, 1.
[113] Carpenter and Totah, 3-4.

black hat and small turned-up pants." He concludes his assessment, "It was one of the most successful and most photographic outfits that ever enhanced a piece of leg art."[114] Although he clearly objectifies her in no uncertain terms, Fair organizers still sanctioned her public appearances, crafted them in fact, to promote their Fair to the masses.[115] In essence, organizers objectified her and the other "Theme Girls" in their own more fluid and less derisive way. The successful endeavor convinced the Publicity Department that newspapers around the country "preferred pictures of human interest to prosaic panoramas of walls and towers," to put it democratically.[116]

What made their brand of sensualized hospitality different from that of the Gayway girls was nothing more than perception. Some, including Dell Lantis's mother, could gauge little if any difference. "My mother was horrified," recalled the "Theme Girl" years later, "she didn't like the short costumes."[117] In Delaplane's critique of Fair publicity he judges the "Theme Girls," "This leggy art was released in great gobs to the eager public and where it was possible, was given 'class' by tying it up with such notables as movie stars and public officials."[118] Yet some public officials wanted nothing to do with that kind of publicity. Dell Lantis recalls being turned away while trying to see Mayor LaGuardia on a press junket in New York: "he didn't want to see me because I had on a short costume."[119] LaGuardia, in the midst of attempting to shut down Burlesque throughout the city at the time, gave the press a field day and his refusal to meet with Dell Lantis made a very clear public statement about his

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[114] Delaplane, Feb. 17, 1939. A link can be drawn here between the Fair's "Theme Girl" and the "Vargas Girl," in her often fetishized costumes, a topic Buszek discusses in depth throughout her book.

[115] Like precedents set by Glenn's "Chorus Girl," and to some extent Buszek's Pin-Up; this third group's acceptance into the mainstream had much to do with their male producers.

[116] James and Weller, Ch.17.

[117] Carptenter and Totah, 2.

[118] Delaplane, February 17, 1939.

[119] Carpenter and Totah, 3.

stance on her respectability.[120] Still, he was the only mayor in the country to publicly reject her hospitable advances, which suggests that overall her repute remained secure.

Like "Theme Girls," the "Aquabelles" of Billy Rose's famed, *Aquacade*, played on their charms to fill the seats in the massive International Hall, which had been renovated for the show.[121] In 1940, when the Fair re-opened for a second season, the biggest news was the addition of the famed water spectacle. Headlines blazed with reports that Rose would open an *Aquacade* on Treasure Island, and articles hailed him as the financial savior of the Fair.[122] The *Aquacade* further blurred the lines of acceptability, by aligning itself with the family friendly exhibits of the Fair, even though its stars wore little more than Sally Rand's Ranch Hands.[123] Conceived in "typical Billy Rose manner" the show - half synchronized swimming and half vaudeville - touted itself as "one of the most enchanting panoramas of all time."[124] Some critics however, described the show more bluntly as a "drama based on a tank full of pretty girls in bathing suits."[125] Even national swimming champion, Esther Williams, lauded as a "living sermon to the youngsters of America" because she neither smoke nor drank, preformed in "concealing-yet-revealing costumes."[126] In actuality, the irony lay in Rose's ability to promote the *Aquacade* as tame at all, considering he built his career in New York on risqué girlie shows.[127]

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[120] Delaplane, February 17, 1939.

[121] Tom White, "Coast Fair," *New York Times*, April 28, 1940. "Aquabelles" and "Aquadonises" were the female and male swimming stars of the *Aquacade*, "Chorus Girls" who did not swim were known as "Aquafemmes."

[122] *New York Times*, December 12, 1939

[123] Shteir, 208.

[124] *Billy Rose's Aquacade: Golden Gate International Exposition* (1940), 6-7.

[125] Cummings, 79.

[126] James and Weller, Ch.15; *Billy Rose's Aquacade*, 9.

[127] Stephen Nelson, *Only a Paper Moon: the Theater of Billy Rose* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1987), 107.

Rose, famed for his ability to wax poetic on his ethereal pageants, did not let eloquence interfere with promoting his *Aquacade* via photos and advertisements highlighting the underdressed nature of his "aquatic damsels."[128] The contrast caused some critics to lump him and his show in with Rand and her lot, "The Sally Rand and Billy Rose School of entertainment is simply modern hootchy-kootchy." [129] In fact, the two entertainers had been associates for a long time and became aquatinted over years of traveling the World's Fair circuit around the country. Rose was even in the midst of suing Rand over her *Nude Ranch* claiming it was initially his idea. [130] Rose did produce Rand's first *Nude Ranch* incarnation in Dallas, though by that time public perception was cemented and the point moot.[131]

However, Rose had one reputable thing going for him that Rand did not, which was a place among the authentic exposition halls on Treasure Island. The previous year, his Aqua-stadium played home to an exhibit on the Boy Scouts, Ham Radios and the history of costuming; in 1940 it housed "the loveliest girls in the West" performing for the "pleasure of tens of thousands of entertainment seekers." [132] Still, after every promotion and critical review, no matter how contradictory, people flocked to the *Aquacade* in droves.[133] What made this show's eroticized spectacle palatable for families was not a difference in exhibition as much as the prime location, directly across from the Tower of the Sun.[134] By the time the *Aquacade* closed with the Fair in 1940, over 15 million people on both

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[128] Cummings, 24.
[129] Berger.
[130] "Sally Rand Bankrupt," *New York Times*, October 15, 1939. It is interesting to note here that Rand had previously accused Rose's first wife Fanny Brice of stealing her Fan Dance after seeing it in Chicago; an act which Rand herself had been accused of stealing prior to that.
[131] Nelson, 58.
[132] *Billy Rose's Aquacade*, 6.
[133] Cummings, 229.
[134] *Official Guidebook*, map.

coasts had seen the show; forever solidifying it as the most popular World's Fair entertainment of all time.[135]

Another popular show of potentially questionable moral fiber was the *Folies Bergère*, direct from Paris.[136] "No less than 50 of those oh so oo-la-la blondes, brunettes and redheads" from the original French production "will sing, dance and lend incentive to the arts as exemplified by the human form over on Treasure Island."[137] The show consisted of vaudeville-type skits and dances, where women wore next to nothing. In many cases, the costumes were more revealing than those at the *Nude Ranch.* The press, of course, picked-up on and emphasized this supposed challenge stating, "Don't look now, Sally, but something tells us your Bar-B-Hind rancho is in for some serious competition. From Paris, where nudity really is an art, comes the *Folies Bergère* to perform at the Fair." [138]

For decades, World's Fairs echoed his idea of specifically French and generally foreign "naughtiness," ever since Little Egypt danced to Sol Bloom's "Hootchy Kootchy" in the White City.[139] The *Folies Bergère* managed to skirt the bounds of vulgarity by relying on its status as foreign and exotic, and hence expected to act in a salacious way. A prime location in the stately California Auditorium, across the Concourse of Commonwealths from the Federal Building, only solidified this status.[140] Carpenter and Totah stated that, "For most San Franciscans, the *Folies Bergère* was their first taste of sophisticated French entertainment."[141] Even Cummings, who remained critical of the far-tamer *Aquacade*, called the show "a most delightful manner of passing the time."[142] Similarly, Times reporter Tom White grouped it together with his reviews of other

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[135] Nelson, 118.
[136] Shteir credits the original *Folies Bergère* as the inspiration for both Broadway Revues of the early twentieth century and ultimately the emergence of striptease, in her Introduction.
[137] *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 4, 1939.
[138] *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 2, 1939.
[139] Hitt.
[140] *Official Guidebook*, map.
[141] Carpenter and Totah, 102.
[142] Cummings, 79.

enjoyable and family friendly shows at the Fair.[143] In no major paper, on either coast, is the revue linked to smut or shame the way nearly identical shows on the Gayway are constantly associated.

A simple analysis of the production's *Programmes* reveals the truth behind such urbane hype. In 1939, as the *Chronicle* lauded the "art form" from abroad, a practically nude woman with only strategically-placed sequined star pasties over her nipples graced the cover of the booklet. Arms raised over her head, she looks off-camera and smirks: her sensuality is blatant and undeniable.[144] Full nudity, and plenty of it, was saved for the souvenir programs for purchase in the lobby.[145] Perhaps caving to official request, though no public statement remains, the following year the *Programme* features only the silhouette of a nude woman, though the pose of her in profile on her knees offering a gift above her head is no less suggestive than before.[146] Likewise, the *Souvenir Art Program* in 1940 replaced the cover nude photograph with a life-like drawing of the same woman, though the amount of nudity inside remained the same.[147] Fairgoer Richard Reinhardt guessed that the women in the show wore body stockings under their costumes, yet there is no other evidence to suggest that they were not nude; and it should be noted that Reinhardt was only twelve when he snuck in to see the "sex show."[148] Despite such strong ties to nudity and sex, the French extravaganza remained a popular and respected form of entertainment at the Fair, with a "majority of the Island's permanent and transient population" in attendance.[149] Like the "Theme Girls" and "Aquabelles," the "Mademoiselles" of the *Folies Bergère* managed to taunt the boundaries of impropriety while remaining well within the confines of respect; a luxury

[143] White, 132.
[144] *Folies Bergère Programme* (1939), front cover.
[145] *Souvenir Art Program, Folies Bergère* (1939).
[146] *Folies Bergère Programme* (1940), front cover.
[147] *Souvenir Art Program, Folies Bergère (1940)*.
[148] Carpenter and Totah, 152.
[149] James and Weller, Ch. 15.

afforded them by the spaces they occupied on the fantasyland of Treasure Island.

Conclusion

"Fairs are usually remembered for 1) their effect on contemporary architecture, 2) their naughtiest exhibits, and 3) their deficits," remarked *TIME* in early 1939.[150] The "Pageant of the Pacific" would only be remembered for the second. The architecture of Treasure Island did not last, and the GGIE's slight deficit made New York World's Fair look like an economic sinkhole; yet, stories of the *Nude Ranch* lived on. As Cummings wrote, somewhat pessimistically, "governments and states may spend millions on scientific exhibits at an exposition, but it takes a Sally Rand to put it across," and put it across she did.[151] While history largely ignored the San Francisco World's Fair, the few tidbits mentioned about it always include anecdotes of the fan dancer. Yet, as this paper shows, she played but one role in a varied cast of women on Treasure Island.

Beyond appearance, performance and expectation lay the ultimate determining factor of respectability at the Golden Gate International Exposition: location. The Women's Board set the standard for morality and authorized hospitality at the Fair, but such offerings did not end at the threshold of the Yerba Buena. Other groups of women offered hospitality of their own making. Sensationalized and eroticized to varying degrees, "Theme Girls" and girl shows extended a friendly welcome to fairgoers in their own way and to different ends. Sex, smut, and shame linked Sally Rand and the girls of the Gayway because of the areas they inhabited. Gayway businesses could use such associations to the advantage of their profits and notoriety, but there remained the shadow of public scrutiny and judgment. Similar shows held on the legitimate fairgrounds did not receive such criticism. Instead, they became associated with the kind of typical, wholesome entertainment that the whole family could

[150] "Western Wonderland."
[151] Cummings, 92.

appreciate. Ultimately, it was not what these women did that created such contrast, but where at the Fair they did it.