World In Motion
World In Touch

The 1986 World's Fair, the largest of recent years is drawing crowds to Vancouver, British Columbia. Historically a major Pacific port and railway terminus, Vancouver is well suited to a fair showcasing transportation and communications technology. The list of 54 participating nations reflects BC's European Heritage and Pacific Rim outlook.

Whether British planes or French trains, from ancient to ultra-modern forms of transportation, there is so much to see at Expo that visitors with three-day-passes (at about $33/US) leave reluctantly. Three colorful plazas reflect the triple themes of land, sea, and air transport. On-site transportation includes some of each — a monorail, ferry-boats, and gondolas.

In the Japanese pavilion a room-size model depicts all forms of transport in both rural and urban Japan. But the United States, chose to show off its space technology including walk-through mock-ups of the proposed international space station. The Soviet Union already has a station; visitors can peer inside a life-sized model.

Canadian Provinces advertise travel opportunities with style and abundant visual effects. At the host BC pavilion a 60-frame/sec film on a giant screen provides a vivid illusion of motion. Ontario has a remarkable 3-D film which has viewers reaching out to touch the images. Quebec's audio-visual show features lasers and fountains.

After a day of electronic wizardry it is refreshing to spot gaps in the high-tech facade. Beneath the Teflon roof of the Canada pavilion a helium airship maneuvers deftly over a dugout canoe. Past the Long March Rocket and artificial satellites, Chinese artisans paint, carve, sew or write in the traditional manner. Once one looks, there are frequent reminders of the old ways. Mostly these are presented in a art-gallery way, with occasional hints of their wisdom.

Motors, a native Indian sage draws images from a "magic fire" asking why we seek to hasten our passage through life. At Canadian Pacific, Father/Mother Time personified as a stylized clock asks whether we wish to allow freedom of movement to others, and chides us that advancing technology has not altered our violent ways.