

MOLD-A-RAMA (moldarama) machine made in 1964 by Mold-A-Rama, Inc. for New York World's Fair, and Seattle World's Fair in 1962, is restored to its original glory to reissue souvenirs last seen half a century ago. MOLD-A-RAMA machine made in 1964 by Mold-A-Rama, Inc. for New York World's Fair, and Seattle World's Fair in 1962, is restored to its original glory to reissue souvenirs last seen half a century ago.

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EXCLUSIVE:

Questions about 1964-65 NY World's Fair answered by a Mold-A-Rama employee who was there!

A fellow who actually worked for Mold-A-Rama at the 1964-65 New York World's Fair has contacted me with incredible detail of his memories. From what figures were vended there, to where the machines were located, to even the COLORS of the figures vended. Amazing. Below is a photo from Google maps that he sent me of the actual building that Mold-A-Rama (and this fellow) worked out of in Flushing, Queens, NY. He's added a couple thin arrows to show you that the sign is still there with two dinosaurs on it!

He said he thought he'd have to carry his stories to the grave. This is the type 'discovery' that this MOLDVILLE.com website, and the "Moldville" facebook page, are all about. It's a hobby for me (and most of you), and 'finds' like this are the joy of the hobby.



[My INTERVIEW with an employee of MOLD-A-RAMA who WAS THERE during the 1964-65 NY Worlds Fair:](#)

As a 10 year old I worked in the mold-a-rama service plant in Queens NY during the NY Worlds Fair. I can still remember the smell of the molten plastic and dye, the high pitched sound as the molds closed, the swirring sound of the plastic, and the sound of the compressor as it cooled the molds.

I had such a vast collection of castings that I have never seen anywhere else since e.g. the Vatican Pavilion, AMF Monorail, Better Living pavilion to name a few. Foolishly I gave them all away when I got older. They are gone forever. However, the address plaque on the building still to this day sports 2 images of the classic brontosaurus that were synonymous with the NYWF.

It's a strange story how a 10 year old could work at what we in the neighborhood called the dinosaur factory. But my fascination drove me. I started out sweeping the waxy floors. In a short time the guys were letting me mix the dyes and clean the machines. I had my own set of keys to open any machine and their coin boxes. I learned about relays, hydraulic and cooling systems as well as plastic injection molding. I remember how important it was to keep the plate clean and lubricated (we used a spray from ZEP). I prepared a few machines to be brought to the fair, by myself. (That was some process for a man, let alone a 10 year old)

At any one time there were about 15 or 20 various machines working. (mostly dinosaurs) We would fill barrels full (the empty barrels that the plastic came in). Pre-made dinosaurs were sent back to the fair (why, I don't know - when the fun of Mold-a-Rama was to watch them be made.) Some machines made special order promotional items (e.g., Sam Smart Saver Downey Nat'l Bank in CA)

The various sounds of all those machines working non-stop at the same time, the smell of the plastic, and the heat in the dead of summer cannot be forgotten. There must have been at least a hundred more machines out of service for low usage or in storage for future use.

Locations & Colors (as best I can remember):

Various Brass Rail locations - Unisphere (blue) & Unisphere bank (Orange)

Pepsi-Cola - All Disney characters (2 versions) (White)

Vatican Pavilion - Replica of building (blue)

United States Pavilion - Various presidents (brown/bronze) USS Constitution (white)

Illinois Pavilion - Busts of various presidents & Lincoln standing Giving Address) (Brown or Bronze)

AMF Monorail - Replica of monorail (red)

Florida - Dolphin (blue), Sailfish (white), Alligator (green)

Oregon - Paul Bunyan with Ax (red)

Better Living Pavilion - (white I think)

HMS Bounty - Replica of Bounty (clearish/white - little dye)

Hall of Science - Space Lab (blue), Space Taxi (yellow), Mercury Capsule - (Blue or dark green), Luner Module LEM- (Light Blue)

and of course,

Sinclair Dinoland - Brontosaurus (original facing back) & Brachiosaurus (?), Triceratops, Ankylosaurus (?) were (green), T-Rex & Stegosaurus (bronze). Trachadon, Corythosaurus (blue)



There were a few other machines scattered around like: Seal & Otter, See no evil hear no evil speak no evil, Devil, Frankenstein, Gorilla to name a few, but thats about all I can remember now.

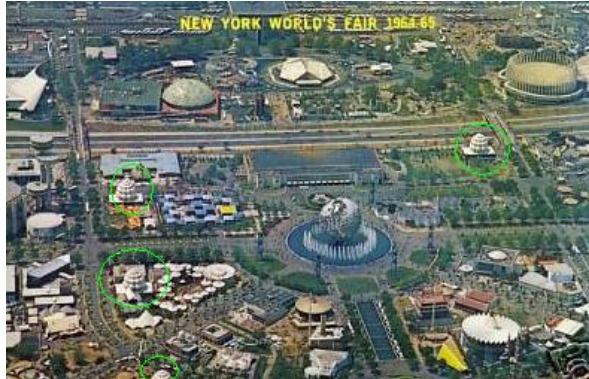
Above is the Mold-A-Rama maintenance building & location 129-01 33rd Avenue, Flushing NY 11354 from Google maps. Its hard to see, but there is a small address sign to the right of the garage door. On top there is a bronto on each side. I'll try to get a better picture for you next time I pass through the old neighborhood.

I hope I gave you a little insight. Feel free to ask away. I thought I would take my experiences and memories to the grave. Also, feel free to post anything I've sent you. BTW, there were other Mold-A-Ramas around New York. For example, Rye Play land in Rye New York, The New York Stock Exchange, The Empire State Building come to mind.

Oh my god - so so many questions for you! We as a community have been looking for YEARS for information about what molds were at the NYWF, where the machines were located, etc. Do you remember what the BACKGLASS of the Unisphere machine looked like? Were there many different style backglases?

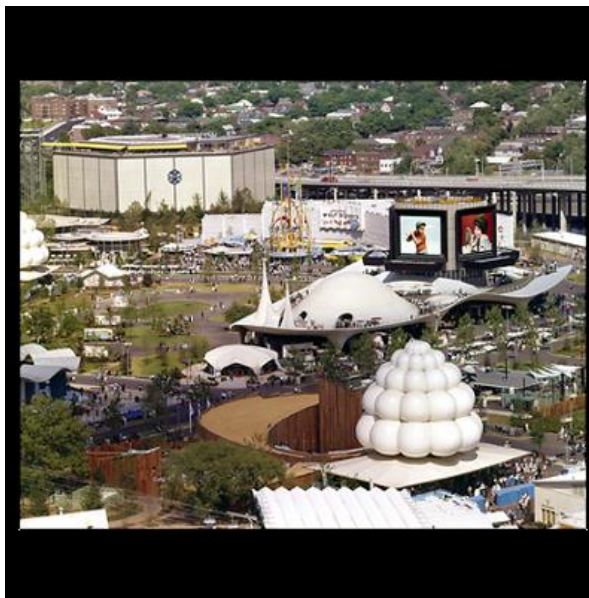
The Unisphere back glass was diagonally split down the middle. One side was orange and the other side blue (the worlds fair colors). There was a sketch of the unisphere in white. I believe it also said "Peace Through Understanding" on the lower part. I also remember a reference to presented by United States Steel. <http://nywf64.com/> (If you look at the thumbnail icon for this page you'll get an idea what the Unisphere's back glass looked like.)

Each product had its own back glass. (with the exception of some of the Disney's which were generic)



What are the "Brass Rail" locations?

The Brass Rails were food and souvenir stands scattered throughout the fair. They were made out of fiber glass bubbles stacked on top of each other. (they kind of looked like an inverted bunch of grapes) See the green circled areas in the figure.



Were the DISNEY machines located OUTSIDE at the Pepsi pavilion, or inside somewhere? Where there ELEVEN machines there (there are eleven different Disney figures).

Some were inside the building, while others were outside enclosed in an open shed type shelters. There was more than one machine for each character. (Of course there were more Mickies, Mini's, Pluto's and Donalds than there were Briar Rabbits, Pinnochios, Plutos and Jiminey Crickets). There were two varieties of most of the Disney characters, The smaller less detailed were there the first year (1964) . Larger more detailed ones replaced them in 1965

You think only 15 or 20 operating machines at the whole NYWF? You've listed way more different figures than that.

Throughout the 2 years there were various numbers of machines running. A lot less in year two, but certainly more than 15 or 20. At least 50 - 60. Some were short lived and never made it back for year two.

Please describe the process of "mixing the dyes". Was it a powder (do you remember the brand), and what did you mix it with?

It was very complicated. (not) You would fill the top of one of the card board barrels the plastic came in with the the colorless plastic. Then take a paper coffee cup full of the plastic, granular powderish dye and mix it in. It was all done by eye. The more dye, the darker the color. We sometimes experimented with mixing colors, but that usually resulted in a marble effect. (not pretty). I don't remember the make of the dye, but it came in paper sacks. Maybe 40 lbs or so.

They also experimented with vending machines that sold paint kits (much like model airplane type) to paint your Mold-A-Rama toy. It never really caught on. Too messy and it did not stick well.

I'll try to give my best answers to your questions. However, it was nearly 50 years ago, I was only 10 and have lost a lot of grey matter from the brain between then and now. Also, I spent most of my mold-a-rama time in a small dingy factory - although I went to the fair often but as a spectator. As I said earlier, I did have keys to the machines so once or twice while I was there I would open the side panel and run myself a dinosaur or two and not without consequence.

Just some more information: I did not know the company as mold-a-rama (that was what I thought was the name of the machines). I recall the names ARA (Automatic Retailers of America which later became ARAMARK). That makes some sense since ARA provided various types of vending machines. I also recall the name Haber Industries (where I worked). My best guess would be that either company or both were sub-contracted or franchised to service the mold-a-ramas in the New York area.

There are many more molds that I know of, but don't find anywhere, Democratic Donkey, Republican Elephant, Seal, Otter, Capital Building.

Wow, I can't tell you how exciting all this is to me, a collector of the machines themselves (more than the figures in my case.) To that end, the actual backglass designs are of interest to me, particularly the unisphere. What you described is just like the one very distant photo we've found of what must have been the unisphere mold-a-rama machine (though I do note that the orange/blue are BACKWARDS on the unisphere mold-a-rama machine!)



Can you tell me more about the paint kits? How many colors, where they in a box? What did the vending machine look like and do you recall the price?

The machine kind of resembled the old style cigarette machines. (about 3 ft wide, 5 ft high, 18 in deep) That is my best questimation. The ones I had seen were decorated in a Disney motif which makes me believe they were at Pepsi. I believe there were 5 paints (black, white, red, blue, yellow) they came in a small cardboard box with a brush. The price may have been 50 cents. (no too sure).

Take a guess as to how many MOLD-A-RAMA machines you think were at the NYWF, between the ones out on location and those that were in storage.

As I believe I said there had to be at least 100 to 150 all included.

Were the machines ALL of the late style, with the spinning pedestal in the display box, and the four countdown display glasses on the deck of the machine? (Were there ANY of the early style with the countdown across the backglass there?)

I only remember the ones with the spinning pedestals (although they did not always spin) and the four status display glasses. I do not recall the other one you mentioned.

And back to the machine locations. That is extremely helpful to us in finding photos that may exist of any of the machines. You mention:

Various Brass Rail locations - Unisphere (blue) & Unisphere bank (Orange) These were inflatable venues? Were the machines located inside them?

They looked inflated, however I believe they were fibre glass molded. Like most of the mold-a-ramas, they were usually housed in a 3 sided shelter outside, but near their associated attraction.

Pepsi-Cola - All Disney characters (2 versions) (White)

There were quite a few sets of moldsets of each of the Disney characters, and as you say there were eight smaller figures, then the next year three large figures were made. I am REALLY interested in finding original photos of the Disney machines on location because my personal machine is a DISNEYLAND TOY FACTORY. How many machines do you think were located at the Pepsi Pavilion?

There had to be at least 2 dozen throughout



Vatican Pavilion - Replica of building (blue)

Do you think this machine was indoors inside the pavilion? Did this have its own custom backglass too?

Yes to both. As you left the Pieta display on your way out there was a lobby type area where the machine was. I only remember one. I actually made my Vatican pavilion mold-a-rama at the fair (free of course) The display glass had a picture of the pavilion

United States Pavilion - Various presidents (brown/bronze) USS Constitution (white)

Can you recall which presidents? And where these machines were located?

There was, Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy (a smaller one and the normal size as well), Johnson and for some strange reason we had a mold of Barry Goldwater (which was not at the fair and I don't know where it was used). I think they had a room called the great hall or the Hall of Presidents (which would make sense) where they may have been located.

Illinois Pavilion - Busts of various presidents & Lincoln standing Giving Address). (Brown or Bronze)

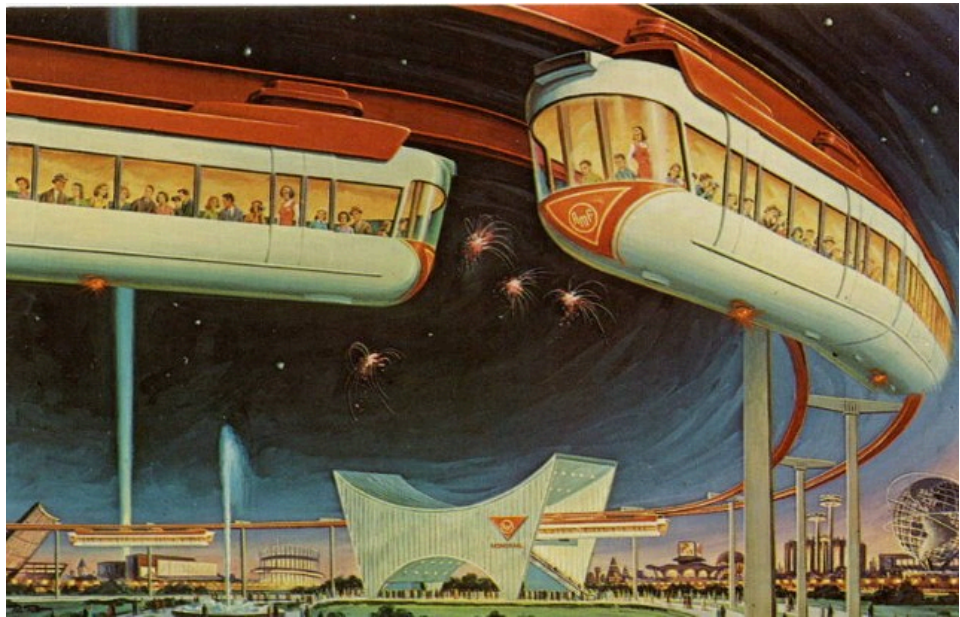
Any idea where these machines were?

I think they were in some type of lobby on your way out of the building.

AMF Monorail - Replica of monorail (red)

I didn't even know about this moldset. I have to look it up. Any idea where this machine was located? Or what the backglass looked like?

I don't think it made year two, as the only known mold and machine were stored in the "factory". But when it was out there, it was at the base of the monorail station in the amusement section of the fair. It also had some inscription on the back, but I don't recall what it said. The back glass had a very common picture of the monorail heading into a curve.



Florida - Dolphin (blue), Sailfish (white), Alligator (green)

Do you know which dolphin by chance? Or where the machines were, and did each figure have its own custom backglass? (You may know that NONE of the original, vintage backglasses survive today, because they all peeled off at some time or another.)

The dolphin later was used at the Miami seaquarium, I think they added the Flipper name to it. I did not see it in the examples on your page, but it resembled the Moby Dick rising above the crest of a wave. (I would know it if I see it) I think it's back glass was more generic. Something like a souvenir from Florida.



Oregon - Paul Bunyan with Ax (red).

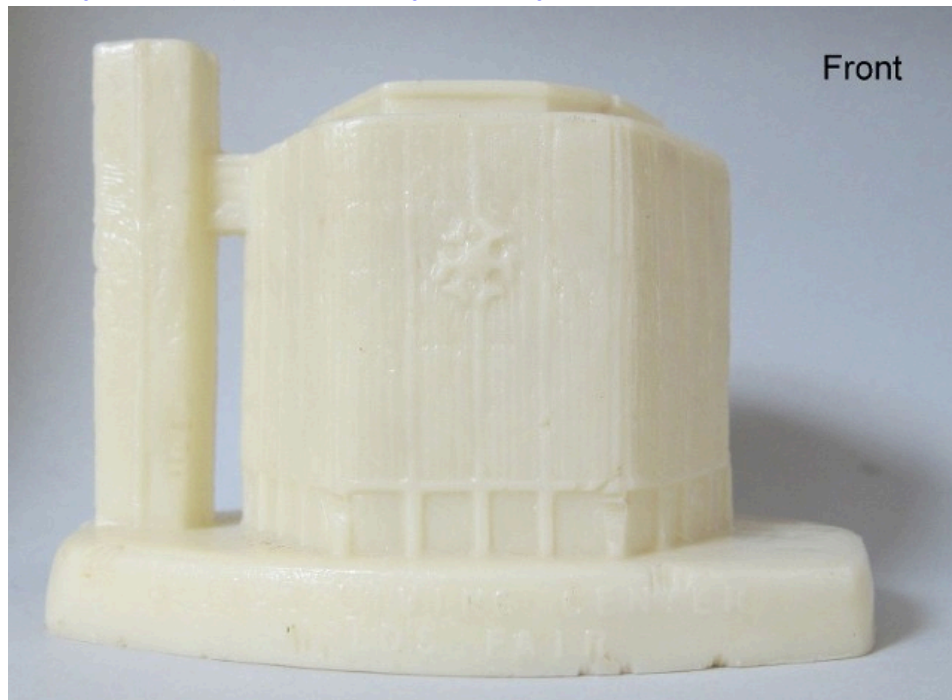
Where do you think this machine was, and do you remember its backglass design?

Most of the Oregon Pavilion was out door exhibitions, I believe the machine was too, but like the monorail, I don't think it made year two. I got mine by opening the display glass and taking out from a machine in storage. The back glass had a picture of Paul Bunyan and an outlined map of Oregon. I think the letters were made out of logs.

Better Living Pavilion - (white I think).

ANOTHER moldset I have no knowledge of! I wonder where it was located, and the backglass design.

The Better Living Pavilion had a large open floor area in the center of the building, The machine(s) were located there. Again there was a picture of the building on the back glass.



HMS Bounty - Replica of Bounty (clearish/white - little dye)

Aha! I knew it! When I reissued this one a few months back I guessed it was from the NYWF, not only because of the serial numbering of the moldset, but because there are quite a few copies of the moldset still in existence (like 4 or 5), which is indicative of use at the NYWF - it seems that a HUGE number of molds and machines were made just for the NYWF.

A life size replica of the Bounty from the movie was docked in the Worlds fair Marina. There was a machine or two on the pier leading up to it.

Hall of Science - Space Lab (blue), Space Taxi (yellow), Mercury Capsule - (Blue or dark green), Luner Module LEM- (Light Blue)

Where were the machines at the Hall of Science located? And what did the backglases look like? Lastly, are you SURE that the LEM moldset was there? I didn't think it was designed in 1965.

The machines were in a walkway leading out of the building after you left the "rendevouz in space demo". I only worked there in 64 & 65 and I had a LEM in my collection.

There were a few other machines scattered around like: Seal & Otter, See no evil hear no evil speak no evil, Devil, Frankenstein, Gorilla to name a few. Was it the frankenstein bust, or standing frankenstein? Anything you can remember about where these machines were located, and what the custom backglass looked like?

The Frankenstein Bank was a bust (which one of your collectors has). There was also a Devil and some other unknown trollish creature bust.

I presume that all machines were the BABY BLUE? (with the exception of the Sinclair machines which for the second year it appears they came back green.

Correct, although I think the Disneys also had some type of covering like a castle or stone back ground.

It seems that the Sinclair machines were changed out between years 1 and 2: any idea if they were, and why?

I can only assume that it was because they were undoubtedly the most used. Most service calls were to Sinclair.

Do you have any PAPERWORK, manuals, or Mold-A-Rama whatever?

No, unfortunately a 10 year old wouldn't think of those things (sigh)

Some vintage figures have been found with the UNISPHERE engraving on the underside. Do you know if/why the Unisphere vat cover plate may have been used on other machines (or the converse - maybe other molds were put on the unisphere machines)? Examples I have heard of include the KEWPIE DOLL, and the LINCOLN BUST - were those figures vended at the NYWF? (Where would the Kewpie doll have been vended?)

Yeah, the Unisphere plates were everywhere, UNISPEHERE AS PRESENTED BY UNITED STATES STEEL Pat####. The plates were suppose to have been reserved for other moldings, but often were not. I'm sure there are many molds with that statement on the bottom between the blow holes.

I only saw the Kewpie doll mold in the storage cabinet and made a copy for myself. I never knew where it came from.



Why was the brontosaurus looking back replaced for the 2nd year? Similarly, why were the smaller DISNEY figures replaced with larger versions?

I think I recall hearing the molds were very popular, but not up to Disney standards. I can't swear to that. I just think I recall hearing the guys talk about it as the new ones were more detailed

The molds for the NYWF were all serial numbered. Do you have a list of the molds by serial number, or know of any detail about how the moldset designs were decided on?

Sorry, wish I could.

And lastly (ok, maybe lastly for today - I have SO MANY questions I want to ask-) quite a few of us want to know more about the machines at the PEPSI pavilion. Do you have any more detail you can add about where at the Pepsi pavilion they were located?

I'll scratch my head a little harder, but I think there is not too much left there.

Were the backglasses SILKSCREENED, or did they have a PAPER BACKING with the custom design for each figure?

I guess they were silk screened as they seemed to be painted on - not paper. They were also translucent and back lit.

In that same vein, were the SINCLAIR backglasses SILKSCREENED, or did they have a PAPER BACKING?

I don't recall seeing any other type. However, there were some in storage that were inaccessible as they were stacked and side by side with little room to get to them.



Regarding the paint vending machine, was it the type with the knobs down low that you pull on and the package flips back? If so, any guess as to how many knobs there were?

If I recall correctly, they had 4 pull out type knobs. The package seemed to just drop to a pickup slot just below the knobs.

Was the dolphin that was at the NYWF like this one: (http://www.moldville.com/20_Carolina_Snowball.html)

No, it was like the one like below (courtesy moldamania.com):



The molds that were made at the service building and stuffed into the supply barrels: do you think these were merely sold at souvenir stands?

Possibly, we cranked out barrels of them daily. Maybe they were given as promo items, but they were brought to the fair in our van.

Was the US CAPITAL BUILDING mold at the NYWF?

I don't think so. We had all sorts of molds in the storage closet that were not at the fair. It may actually have been sent to DC.

Were the COW and BULL molds at the NYWF?

I never saw a cow and bull anywhere.

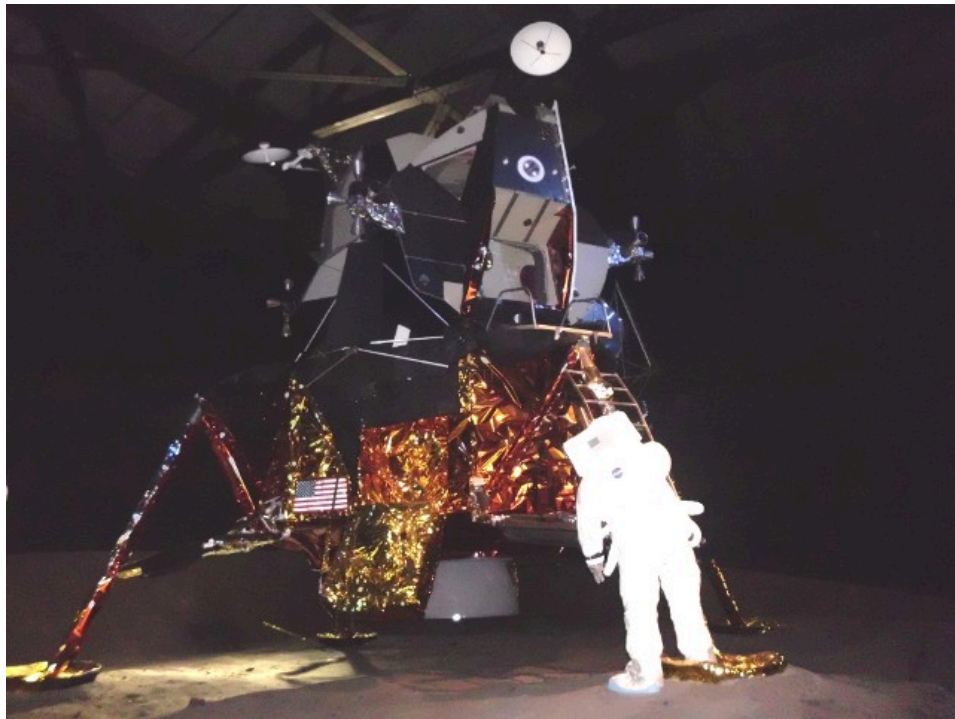
Were the DEMOCRATIC DONKEY, REPUBLICAN ELEPHANT vended at the NYWF? Any idea which venue?

I believe they were at the fair, but don't know where...sorry!

And by the way, I just realized that the LUNAR MODULE (s/n 1158) is serial numbered just 2 higher than the SPACE LAB (s/n 1156) that most certainly was at the NYWF, so it is entirely possible (and with your recollection certain) that the Lunar Module WAS vended at the NYWF! Any idea what venue, and what the backglass might have looked like?

I was pretty sure it was at the Hall Of Science, but I also think it may have been at the Transportation & Travel Pavilion. They had an exhibit called the Moon & Beyond. In fact the roof of that building was the moonscape. I know there were definitely mold-a-ramas in The Transportation & Travel Pavilion. The LEM, Donkey & Elephant seem to stick out in my mind.

The LEM back glass was of the LEM on the moons surface with an astronaut kneeling at its base (exactly what the mold-a-rama was). As I previously mentioned there was a complete story of the LEM molded in the back of it.



Any idea who, and where, the new moldsets were being designed, sculpted, and made?

No clue.

What other locations in the NY area (or anywhere else for that matter) were you aware of, and what was vended? Like what was vended at the NY Stock exchange?

As I mentioned, Rye Playland, Stock Exchange and Empire State Building. I have not seen examples of the later two since I gave up my collection. Unfortunately I don't know where in their respective buildings the machines were placed. I also think (but not 100% sure) that there may have been some at the NY Aquarium at Coney Island.

Do you know anything about the EMPIRE STATE BUILDING moldset? Was it located at the top of the building? Just wondering if you knew.

I have seen a picture of someones mold-a-rama of the skyline of NY with the Empire State Building in it, but the one I had was a 3d replica of the building (in brown).



Don't Forget the Sam Smart Saver Bank for Downey Savings & Loan in CA. We produced them in house and shipped them to CA in barrels. We made the coin slots using a hot metal slug attached to a soldering iron then slowly melted away the predesignated slot into the top of his head. Then we melted a hole in the bottom of the base with a hot pipe to put a removeable plastic plug to retrieve the money.



Also, I thought for sure mold-a-rama was in DC as there were molds of: the Capital, Lincoln Memorial and Valley Forge (I know that's in PA) I figured surely some of those president busts would have made it there too. BTW, the pedestals were added to the busts later. The first molds did not have them. Basically, they screwed extenders to the bottoms of existing molds.

To the best of my knowledge Lincoln Memorial was not molded at fair. It was fairly large, 3D and a replica of the memorial in DC. The more I think about it the more I believe there were machines in DC as I recall 2 of the guys going on a weekend field trip to Washington.

[I've made quite a few batches of GLOW-IN-THE-DARK figures of various colors: orange, yellow, green, blue, and I'm ready to try red glow.](#)

Wow, glowing mold-a-ramas. Miller would be proud of you

[Were the LINCOLN MEMORIAL or the NY STOCK EXCHANGE molds plaque-like designs \(like say the EMPIRE STATE BUILDING\), or were they shaped like the buildings?](#)

All, including the Empire State Building were 3D replicas (shaped like the buildings). I only saw 2 types of Empire States, and I only had the 3D type.

[Summary of the MOLDS vended at the 1964-65 New York World's Fair \(per our friend who worked for Mold-A-Rama\):](#)

AMF Monorail (red)[AMF monorail]

Mercury capsule(blue or dk gn)[Hall of Science]

hms bounty (clearish/white-little dye)[pier]
george Washington (copper)[US pav/Illinois pav]
Lincoln bust (copper) [US pav/Illinois pavilion]
Lincoln standing (copper) [US pav/Ill. pavilion]
Truman (copper) [US pavilion/Illinois pavilion]
kennedy (large) (copper) [US pavilion/Ill. pav]
dolphin jumping (blue)[Florida pavilion]
Roosevelt (copper) [US pavilion/Illinois pav]
Eisenhower (copper) [US pavilion/Illinois pav]
Lyndon Johnson (copper) [US pavilion/Ill. pav]
mickey mouse(sm)('64only)(white)[pepsi pav]
mickey mouse (lg)('65only)(white)[pepsi pav]
Donald duck (sm)('64only)(white)[pepsi pav]
Donald duck (lg)('65only)(white)[pepsi pavilion]
pluto (sm)('64only)(white) [pepsi pavilion]
pluto (lg)('65only)(white) [pepsi pavilion]
Pinocchio (white) [pepsi pavilion]
jiminy cricket(white) [pepsi pavilion]
goofy(white) [pepsi pavilion]
peter pan(white) [pepsi pavilion]
brer rabbit(white) [pepsi pavilion]
unisphere (blue)[brass rail locations]
unisphere bank (orange)[brass rail locations]
bronto facing back ('64only)(green)[Sinclair]
bronto ('65only)(green)[Sinclair]
T-rex (large) (brown/copper) [Sinclair]
trachodon (large) (blue) [Sinclair]
stegosaurus (large) (brown/copper) [Sinclair]
triceratops (large) (green) [Sinclair]
corythosaurus (large) (blue) [Sinclair]
ankylosaurus (large) (green) [Sinclair]
sailfish (white) [Florida pavilion]
alligator (green) [Florida pavilion]
space lab (blue) [Hall of Science]
space taxi (yellow) [Hall of Science]
lunar module(lt blue)[Hall of Science or travel pav]
Vatican (blue) [Vatican pavilion]
USS Constitution (white) [US pavilion]
paul bunyan (red) [Oregon pavilion]
better living pavilion (white?)[better living pav]

NOT SURE:

democratic donkey [maybe at travel pavilion]
republican elephant (large) [maybe at travel pavilion]

MOLDS at facility in storage closet, but not vended:

3 monkeys (no base)
piggy bank
skull
singing angel
reindeer (flying)
HOTEL
gorilla (small)
3 monkeys
koala
bowling pin 'the champ'
bowling pin & card
devil
otter
robot
kewpie
bull seal
US capitol
troll
Frankenstein bust
walrus
valley forge
barry goldwater
mercury capsule
JFK bust (small)

RYE Playland, NY:

gorilla (waving)
3 monkeys

NY Stock Exchange:

??



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