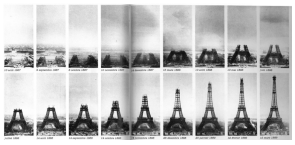
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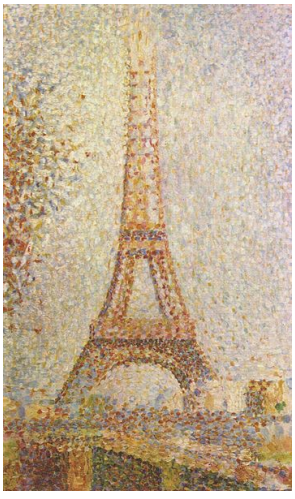
View on the Eiffel Tower during the World Fair of 1889..



The steps of the construction.



Marc Ribaud, painter of the Eiffel Tower in 1953.



The Eiffel Tower by Goerges Seurat.

At times admired and at other times criticised, the **Eiffel Tower** has a rich and eventful history behind it which helped to build its image among the collective unconscious until it became the symbol of **Paris**. Drafted up in the Gustave Eiffel society's offices ever since 1884, it was built for the World Fair of 1889, celebrating the centennial of the French Revolution. The initial project was the combined work of engineers, Eiffel's collaborators, **Maurice Koechlin** and **Emile Nouguier**, architect **Stephen Sauvestre**, and **Gustave Eiffel** himself, the only one able to materialise this paper project. A patent was acquired, under the name of four men, and the drawings are shown to the **Exhibition of Decorative arts in Paris of 1884**. The idea of a really tall tower was in the air at the time, in both France and the United States where projects and attempts were abundant. The project of an iron tower of 300 metres is decided on the 1st May 1886 for the World Fair of 1889, whilst establishing the competition conditions.
The panel assigns **Gustave Eiffel** and Stephen Sauvestre to build the tower, whilst stating that it *"should look like an original metallic industrial masterpiece"*. They also decided that it should be situated at **Champ-de-mars** and serve as the monumental entrance for the exhibition. The tower's metal architecture became a topic of discussion, criticised for being too industrial looking. The debates culminated when it was publicly criticised, in the newspaper *Le temps* on 14th February 1887, by a *"protestation of artists"*, signed by influential names from the intellectual and artistic sector such as the writer **Maupassant**, the poet **Leconte de Lisle**, the painters **Bouguereau** and **Meissonier**, the architect **Garnier**... However since its inauguration, the tower has been a huge popular success and is widely recognised among Parisians. Built for a Universal Exhibition focusing on the ephemeral character of buildings, the Tower was under threat of being knocked down in 1903. Eiffel thus worked on demonstrating the scientific utility of the Tower by setting up a weather station and carrying out experiments in the field of aerodynamics and astronomy. Finally, in 1904, he installed a wireless Telegraph pole that would be of great use during the Second World War. The Tower thus took on a patriotic role. In between the two wars, artists like **Delaunay**, **Cendras** and **Apollinaire** portrayed it in their plastic and literary reflections. It thus became the avant-garde symbol for all the generations.
The occupation by the Nazis in 1940 and the aviation achievements during the Liberation made this monument become a part of the town's history and left a mark on the collective imagination.

See also

Gustave Eiffel — Metallic architecture — 1889 World's Fair — Émile Müller — Art Nouveau — Haussmann

See our exterior architecture