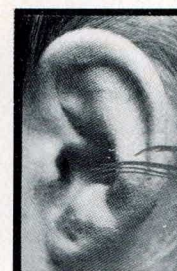


EXPO OPTICA



Expo Optica, held last May in Madrid, was conceived as a national optical exhibition whose objective was to create a greater sensitivity to the Spanish Optical Industry's capabilities among the general public, the various professions, not to mention an opportunity for the manufacturers, distributors and importers to assess their own relative potential.

The exhibition was organized by IFEMA, the Madrid Trade Fair organization, with the support of the concerned professional associations and the association of manufacturing and distributing firms. That IFEMA was able to obtain the sponsorship of eight groups speaks well for the abilities of the organizers and indicates that all concerned groups realize that progress comes from co-operation and a common effort. In fact, it can be said that this co-operation is an example to the world where all too often open rivalry and distrust divide similar groups in other countries.

For the benefit of our readers, we list the following sponsoring groups:

National Association of Opticians and Optometrists of Spain.

General Council of Pharmaceutical Associations.

General Council of Medical Associations.

Association of Friends of University Schools of Optics.

National Association of Audioprosthodontists (ANA).

National Association of Pharmacists Specializing in Optics and Acoustics (AFOA).

Spanish Optics Society (SEDO).

Spanish Otolaryngology and Cervicofacial Surgery Society.

Just reading this list reveals several possible areas of conflict which were overcome in the better interests of these groups and the Spanish public which they all serve.

Expo '82 was the first such exhibition. It was so successful that a decision was made to repeat the event in 1983. Whether this fair will become an annual or biennial event has not yet been decided, as it competes with Silmo in Paris, Mido in Milan and the Optical Fair in the USA.

Nonetheless, Expo '83 was a great success.

An open invitation to attend was extended to the public. No admission was charged but visitors were requested to register (name, address, occupation) in order to evaluate the drawing power of the fair.

Students from the University School of Optics had a booth and raised funds by the sale of souvenirs related to optics. More importantly, their presence served to promote optometry as a career. The only international flavour to the event was the presence of representatives from Optometry Journals (Canada, England, France, Germany, Italy and one Scandinavian country.) The Spanish Trade Commission is attempting to develop its exports of optical goods and it is hoped that reports of the fair in these countries will create more interest in Spanish optical goods, and that foreign firms will seek to develop trade relations with Spanish manufacturers.

In the process of reporting activities at the fair, it is expected that some distinction will be made between firms manufacturing goods in Spain and those who act solely as importers or distributors of European, American and Japanese products.

It should be noted that Spanish manufacturing covers the following items:

ophthalmic frames

sunglass frames and sunglass spectacles

ophthalmic lenses — there are no glass makers in Spain. Blanks are obtained from France, England and Germany (Schott, Corning and Pilkington)

hand tools — some of which this writer had never seen or even read about

lens edgers of all types, and other laboratory equipment

contact lenses

contact lens solutions

spectacle cases of unique design, chains, cords, cleaners

contact lens cases

contact lens lathes and other production machinery diagnostic equipment

ophthalmic chairs, stands, examination room furniture and equipment.

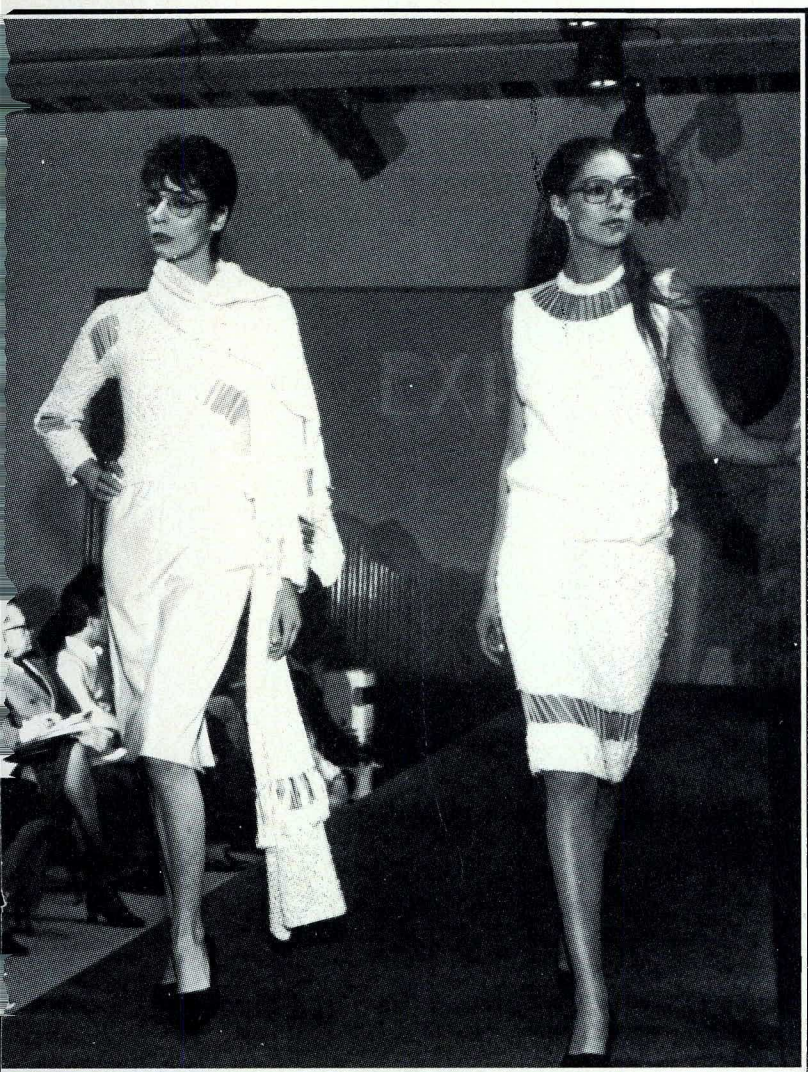
It should be noted that Barbudo and Indo frames

are to be found in Canada and that Bobes and Bosch, both manufacturers of diagnostic and examining equipment, have Canadian representatives.

Spectacle frames and sunglasses are typical Spanish design and manufacture. Contact lenses, both imported and locally manufactured, and solutions, are to be had.

Diagnostic Equipment is Spanish made, part of which is of local design and part of which is made under licence to American firms, and Japanese firms, but the more sophisticated electronic equipment is imported.

Laboratory equipment is, for the major part, of Spanish production and, again, made under licence. Stones for edgers are also of Spanish manufacture.



As in 1982, the organizers sponsored a frame design competition for Spanish makers. Six prizes were awarded: two for ladies', two for gentlemen's and two for children's frames. Winners were given a cash prize and an Optica Prism, a kind of "Oscar" consisting of a nine-inch upright prism, suitably engraved, into whose surfaces were ground three

concave depressions, resulting in a unique refraction pattern when looking into the concavities.

The winners were featured at a spectacle and sunglasses fashion show on the first evening, reserved for special guests, members of the professions and the industry. It was repeated the next day for the general public.

The fair was organized by sections, although this was not too evident from the manner in which the exhibitors were located in the exhibit hall, a three-storey building.

These sections consisted of:

- spectacle frames
- contact lenses and solutions
- ophthalmic lenses
- diagnostic equipment
- optical machinery
- optical instruments, microscopes, binoculars, telescopes
- hearing aids
- audiometric (diagnostic) instruments
- metrology
- special light sources
- associated industries — makers of metal parts for frames, hinges, metal temple screws, plaques, cases
- the ophthalmic and optical press.

It seems strange to a North American visitor to see the presence of metrology instruments, hearing aids, binoculars and telescopes included in the fair. Historically, opticians did make and sell metrology instruments, telescopes and visual aids, and this explains their presence. Hearing aids are no longer truly connected to optics, as hearing aids no longer require spectacle frames to hold them.

Scientific instruments, such as telescopes, microscopes and binoculars are of historical interest and, as the profession evolves into a true health care discipline, such accessory activities will cease. However, the need for low vision aids, optical or otherwise, will require the profession to maintain an interest in these devices.

The true metrology aspect, barometers, thermometers, certain time pieces, etc. have little real relationship to optics, other than the historical. Formerly, *all* these devices were handled by optical instrument makers. Here again, this relationship will decrease with the evolution of the profession.

A fair of this nature is a proper vehicle to publicize manufacturing and distributing enterprises in the optical industry, but all would be of no avail if the professions did not exist to provide the services essential to the consumption of optical products. It is, therefore, not out of place in a report of this nature to spend a few minutes describing the University School of Optics in Madrid, one of the two training institutions for Spanish optometrists.

We were privileged to have as our guide Sr. Don Pedro Jiminez Landi, former director and founder of the School.

At the outset, the School was a private institution, sponsored by the Spanish Institute of Optics, and the Professional Association of Optical Engineers. Enrollment was small, some 30 students in all. Training emphasized optics and optical engineering, rather than ophthalmic optics, physiological optics and clinical optometry.



Professor Landi, as Director of the School, realized that the progress of optometry as a health care discipline required a longer course, more broadly based, incorporating more physiological optics and clinical optometry, but in a university. He prepared a curriculum covering a four-year programme, and had it accepted by the Ministry of Education at the University of Madrid. Thus, in 1973, the Institute of Optics relinquished its authority over the school, which now became "Escuela Universitaria de Optica de Madrid".

Although the four-year curriculum has been approved, the present programme covers only three years. As development occurs, there should be no problem extending the curriculum to the full four years. A site on the main university campus has been set aside for the construction of a building specifically designed for optometry. The present faculty numbers thirty members, who average 18 hours of teaching per week. The students have a 40-hour week, and number some 400 in total. English courses are compulsory in two of the three years. Students may see 30 patients on their final year of clinic. This aspect is being reinforced as clinical subjects are given more importance.

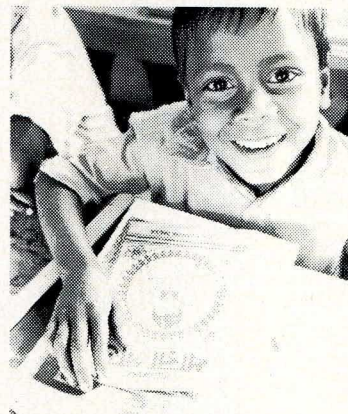
Presently the school is housed in a half-vacant, off-campus building of the engineering faculty. The

seven-storey building also houses the biology department on the upper two floors. The facilities are vast, even for a student body of 400. For example, the mechanical optics laboratory is housed in what was to have been a lab for heavy machinery. It resembles a factory, more than a classroom. The administration, lecture rooms and more optometrically-oriented classes are located in the regular section of the building. Optics and biology courses are provided by the university.

The physical inconveniences are not meant to imply poor or inadequate instruction. The curriculum seems to be at the level existing at our Ontario College in the late 1930's. Greater emphasis on pathology, neurology and clinical optometry is being carried out. The evolution of the programme is following the expected trends in development experienced by all countries, and should not be considered to be unusual. To this visitor, Spain will be one of the first continental European countries to reach the North American level in optometric education.

G.M. Belanger

Food for thought . . .



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