



V&A Dundee

Ocean Liners: Speed & Style

15 September 2018 – 24 February 2019

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Organised by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem

Supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery and investment managers Baillie Gifford



The Normandie in New York, 1935 – 39 © Collection French Lines

V&A Dundee's inaugural exhibition will be *Ocean Liners: Speed & Style*, a remarkable show organised by the V&A in London and the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem which will re-imagine the golden age of ocean travel.

This exhibition is the first to explore the design and cultural impact of the ocean liner on an international scale and will be the first major V&A show exhibited in Scotland.

V&A Dundee's temporary exhibition gallery, the largest of its type in Scotland, will showcase more than 250 objects from public and private collections around the world. *Ocean Liners: Speed & Style* will include paintings, sculptures, ship and engine models, wall panels, furniture, fashion, textiles, photographs, posters and film.

It will display objects never-before-seen in Europe, and reunite objects not seen together since on board these spectacular vessels which revolutionised travel in the mid-19th century to the late 20th century. The exhibition will also explore Scotland's important role in the design and development of ocean liners.

Visitors will be invited to experience what it would have been like to step on board these 'great floating palaces' and discover how ocean liners became one of the most powerful and admired symbols of 20th century modernity.

Sophie McKinlay, Director of Exhibitions at V&A Dundee, said:

“When V&A Dundee opens in September 2018 visitors will get a sense of what it would have been like to experience life on board an ocean liner.

“There is a lot to be said about the romance of these floating cities which are a wonderful example of a totally designed experience. As well as the glamour and hugely successful marketing of ocean liners, the exhibition will also venture into the engine rooms of these impressive vessels, exploring the innovations in engineering that so radically changed the way people travel.

“This exhibition demonstrates how design covers such a huge range of disciplines drawing upon collections, skills and expertise as well as exploring the design and cultural impact of the ocean liner in a way that has never been done before.

“We are delighted to be working closely with our colleagues at the V&A in London, who have spent years researching and producing this exhibition, to bring *Ocean Liners: Speed & Style* to Dundee.”

Exhibition highlights include Stanley Spencer’s painting ‘The Riveters’ from the 1941 series Shipbuilding on the Clyde. Commissioned by the British Government to record industries involved in World War Two, it shows the strict division of labour in the shipyards and reflects the huge and highly skilled workforces involved in the construction of liners.

A stunning and varied display of fashion items will also be on show, including one of the most important flapper dresses in the V&A’s collection – Jeanne Lanvin’s ‘Salambo’ dress – a version of which was displayed at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris in 1925. The dress belonged to Emilie Grigsby, a renowned wealthy American, who regularly travelled between the UK and New York on board the Aquitania, Olympic and Lusitania throughout the 1910s and 1920s.

On display will also be the Christian Dior suit worn by actress Marlene Dietrich as she arrived in New York on board the Queen Elizabeth in 1950 and the Duke of Windsor’s sumptuous 1940s Goyard luggage.

The exhibition will also feature ground-breaking works by Modernist artists, designers and architects inspired by liners, including the painting Paquebot ‘Paris’ by the leading US Precisionist Charles Demuth.

A precious Cartier tiara recovered from the sinking Lusitania in 1915, as well as a panel fragment from the Titanic’s first-class lounge will also be on show.

Ocean Liners: Speed & Style was co-curated by Ghislaine Wood, Guest Curator for the Victoria and Albert Museum, London and Daniel Finamore, The Russell W. Knight Curator of Maritime Art and History at the Peabody Essex Museum.

Ghislaine Wood, exhibition curator, said:

“This exhibition has been four years in the making, and from the outset research for the V&A Dundee project played a key role in its development. *Ocean Liners: Speed & Style* highlights how Scottish design and engineering innovation was at the centre of the spectacular evolution of the ocean liner. It is truly fitting that it will be the first V&A Dundee exhibition.”

Press images

[Ocean Liners: Speed & Style press images](#) are available to download free of charge.

For more information, please contact: Jenny Kane, V&A Dundee Media Officer

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Exhibition Highlights

Detail of 'Riveters' from the series Shipbuilding on the Clyde Stanley Spencer, United Kingdom, 1941 © Imperial War Museums



Ocean liners were exceptional objects of engineering and their design and construction required huge workforces. Clydebank was the most important centre for British ship building. 'The Riveters' is part of Stanley Spencer's epic series Shipbuilding on the Clyde commissioned by the British Government to record industries involved in World War Two. Stanley Spencer visited the Clyde shipyards and sketched the different activities involved in shipbuilding. In this scene evoking the clanging sound of metal, highly-skilled riveters join pieces of masts by hammering red hot rivets into the plates. The specialised workers depict the division of labour in the shipyards.

The Steerage, Alfred Stieglitz, 1907, gift of the Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



For much of the 19th century international immigration was a highly profitable business for shipping lines, with most global immigrants enduring extreme overcrowding and very poor on-board conditions – a vastly different experience from those travelling in first class.

The Steerage shows immigrants returning to their European homelands on the steerage level of the fashionable ship Kaiser Wilhelm II, the one on which American photographer Alfred Stieglitz sailed to Europe in 1907. Hailed as one of the greatest photographs of all time, Stieglitz felt that this spontaneous shot perfectly captured related shapes as well as human feelings. He later recalled: "I saw shapes related to one another - a picture of shapes, and underlying it, a new vision that held me: simple people; the feeling of ship, ocean, sky; a sense of release that I was away from the mob called 'rich'."

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Model of a quadruple expansion tandem engine, designed by Walter Brock, made by David Carlaw for William Denny Brothers, Dumbarton, Scotland, 1887 © CSG CIC Glasgow Museums and Libraries Collections



This exquisite large-scale model was made as an exhibit for the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1888. Models of this quality were frequently shown at international exhibitions to promote industrial products. This model represents an advanced type of reciprocating steam engine that was developed in Britain. Pistons moved up and down in four cylinders operating at different pressures. Engines like this were used on ocean liners from the 1880s until around 1900, when they were superseded by steam turbines.

'Empress of Britain' colour lithograph poster for Canadian Pacific Railways, J.R. Tooby, 1920 – 31, given by the Canadian Pacific Railway Co. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Constructed at John Brown & Co on Clydebank and launched in 1930, the Empress of Britain was the fastest and most luxurious ship of her time operating between Britain and Canada. This poster advertising Canadian Pacific Railways' liner demonstrates how companies diversified transport networks and developed the seamless experience of modern travel.

The imposing view of a looming hull in movement with its trailing smoke dramatises the sense of scale and speed. The extreme stylisation is typical of Art Deco.

Silk georgette and glass beaded 'Salambo' dress, previously owned by Miss Emilie Grigsby, Jeanne Lanvin, Paris, 1925 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



This beaded flapper dress belonged to the Kentucky-born Miss Emilie Grigsby. In the 1910s and 1920s, Grigsby, who had become a wealthy New York socialite, regularly travelled between Europe and New York on the Olympic, Aquitania and Lusitania. An adventurous and fashionable dresser, she patronised the greatest French couturiers and was a regular client of both Paul Poiret and Jeanne Lanvin. Named 'Salambo', this dress evokes the exoticism of Gustave Flaubert's 1862 novel, Salammbô, and reflects the wider trend for exotic themes in the 1920s. The 'Salambo' dress was shown at the 1925 Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes (International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts). Grigsby's extraordinary wardrobe, including ensembles by Paul Poiret, Jeanne Lanvin, Callot Soeurs and Madeleine Vionnet, and travel luggage was acquired by the V&A in 1967.

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Two-piece bathing suit made of yellow wool jersey by Finnigans Ltd., London 1937 - 39, previously owned by Vera, Lady Swettenham © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



By the 1920s outdoor pools and umbrella-lined decks were a common sight on many of the biggest ocean liners. Indoor pools were also popular and used as social spaces, with the Normandie's pool even featuring a gilded bronze semi-circular bar.

Dressing appropriately for the different on-board activities became increasingly important and swimwear was no exception. This two-piece bathing suit was made by Finnigans Ltd, London, in the 1930s and was owned and worn by the wealthy and fashionable Lady Swettenham.

Marlene Dietrich wearing a day suit by Christian Dior on board the Queen Elizabeth arriving in New York, 21 December 1950 © Getty Images



The German born actress, Marlene Dietrich, was one of the famous stars of the age and frequently crossed the Atlantic on liners. She was seen wearing this Dior 'new look' suit on 21 December 1950 arriving in New York on board Queen Elizabeth. Liner companies were quick to publicise stars travelling on board, and Dietrich was often photographed wearing the very latest fashions. She was also photographed on Normandie in 1938 wearing Elsa Schiaparelli's famous Zodiac suit of that year.

Luggage previously belonging to the Duke of Windsor, Maison Goyard, 1940s © Miottel Museum, Berkeley, California

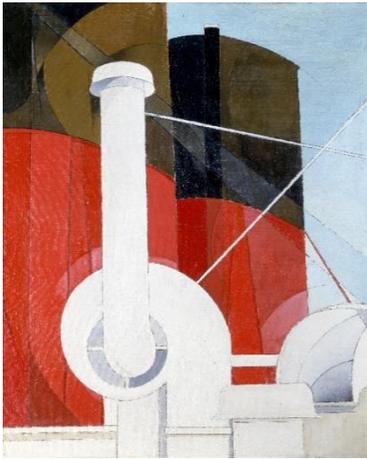


After Edward VIII abdicated to marry American divorcee Wallis Simpson, the elegant couple frequently travelled on liners between their adoptive home in France and the United States. The Duke and Duchess of Windsor each owned a set of luggage purchased from the exclusive Maison Goyard, founded in Paris in 1853. They travelled with astonishing quantities of luggage and once boarded the SS United States with 100 pieces. The Duke's luggage was personalised with his title and yellow and red stripes. These Goyard suitcases have not been seen in Europe since they were acquired from the Windsor Estate.

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Paquebot 'Paris', Charles Demuth, United States, 1921 – 22, gift of Ferdinand Howald © Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio



This iconic painting by the leading US Precisionist, Charles Demuth, celebrates the ocean liner as a symbol of the modern age. In this striking composition, Demuth focuses on the ventilator and funnels of the French liner the Paris. For a number of American artists, the industrial aesthetic captured their country's new identity after World War One when it emerged as the undisputed leader of industrial production. The exhibition marks the first time that this important painting has been seen in the UK in almost 50 years.

Diamond and pearl tiara, previously owned by Lady Marguerite Allan, and saved from the Lusitania, Cartier, Paris, 1909, Marian Gérard, Cartier Collection © Cartier



This fashionable Greek key pattern tiara by Cartier belonged to the wife of Sir Hugh Montagu Allan of the Canadian Allan Line shipping company. Lady Allan travelled with two of her daughters and two maids on the last voyage of the Lusitania which was sunk in a German U-boat torpedo attack off the Irish coast on 7 May 1915. Tragically, her daughters were among the 1,198 lost. Lady Allan escaped with her maids, Emily Davies and Annie Walker, and a suite of luggage that contained the Cartier tiara.

Wooden panel fragment from an overdoor in the first-class lounge on the Titanic c. 1911 © Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada



Found floating on the surface of the Atlantic, this extraordinary interior fragment comes from where the Titanic broke in half as it sank on the night of 14 April 1912. It is a remarkable survival and the largest remaining fragment from the ship. The panel decorated the over-door to the first-class lounge and its carved decoration of musical instruments was appropriate for its setting. Executed in Louis XV style with Rococo motifs and forms, it demonstrates the extraordinary quality of the decoration on board the Titanic. Many of the interiors of the Titanic and her sister ship the Olympic were created in the Beaux-Arts style. Rarely lent by the Maritime Museum in Halifax, this panel will be on display in Europe for the very first time.

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Notes to editors

- Ocean Liners: Speed & Style runs from 15 September 2018 – 24 February 2019 at V&A Dundee
- Ocean Liners: Speed & Style runs from 3 February 2018 – 10 June 2018 at the V&A in South Kensington
- Tickets for Ocean Liners: Speed & Style at V&A Dundee will go on sale in March 2018 and will range from between £8 and £12 for adults. A range of concessions and discounts will be available
- V&A Dundee's temporary exhibition space is located on the upper floor of the museum. It is the largest museum-standard temporary exhibition space in Scotland, measuring 1,100m²

Ocean Liners: Speed & Style at V&A Dundee is being supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery and investment managers Baillie Gifford.

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Corporate support for V&A Dundee is vital. Please help us by acknowledging the exhibition supporters, players of People's Postcode Lottery and investment managers Baillie Gifford, where possible.

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