

Exhibition Highlights

Embargoed to 10.00 Thursday 27 July 2017

Ocean Liners: Speed & Style

Sponsored by Viking Cruises

Room 39 and the North Court

3 February – 10 June 2018

vam.ac.uk/OceanLiners | [#OceanLiners](https://twitter.com/OceanLiners)

In February 2018, the V&A will re-imagine the golden age of ocean travel with the major new exhibition, *Ocean Liners: Speed & Style*, sponsored by Viking Cruises. Co-organised by the V&A in London and the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, it is the first ever exhibition to explore the design and cultural impact of the ocean liner on an international scale. It will investigate all aspects of the design of liners from architecture, engineering and interiors to the fashion and lifestyle promoted aboard.

Painted earthenware tile panel for the saloon on *Sutlej*, William De Morgan, United Kingdom, c. 1882 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Arts and Crafts ceramicist William De Morgan designed these glazed tiles for the saloon of the *Sutlej*, a P&O liner serving India and the Far East. By the end of the 19th century, De Morgan had been commissioned to design tiles for 12 P&O ships. This was a time when the interiors of ocean liners underwent dramatic change as shipping lines began to employ trained architects and renowned designers to create liners' interiors, in a bid to attract passengers. De Morgan's colourful tiles were inspired by Iznik ceramics from the sixteenth-century Ottoman Empire, which he encountered at the South Kensington Museum (today the V&A). Such exotic sources were both fashionable and evoked P&O's destinations. De Morgan's designs for tile panels for the P&O ships are today in the V&A collection.

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 Engines like this were used on ocean liners from the 1880s until around 1900, when they were superseded by steam turbines.

Diamond and pearl tiara saved from the *Lusitania*, Cartier, Paris, 1909. Previously owned by Lady Allan. 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.

**Empress of Britain colour lithograph poster for Canadian Pacific Railways, J.R. Tooby, 1920 - 31
© 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.

**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.

**Wooden wall panel from the Beauvais deluxe suite on *Île-de-France*, Marc Simon, France, 1927
© Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts**



At the time of launch in 1927, *Île-de-France* was the most luxurious ship on the transatlantic route, described 'as a museum of modern French decorative arts.' Her interiors promoted France's reputation for grand traditions of luxury. The decoration of the first-class Beauvais suite used

beautifully coloured marquetry panels using the floral decoration made popular by designers such as Paul Poiret in the 1920s. The centre of the panel would have contained a Lalique light fitting from which the rays of light executed in marquetry emanate.

Silk georgette and glass beaded 'Salambo' dress, Jeanne Lanvin, Paris, 1925. Previously owned by Miss Emilie Grigsby. Given by Lord Southborough © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



This exquisitely beaded flapper dress belonged to the Kentucky-born beauty 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 were acquired by the V&A in 1967.

Panel from *The Rape of Europa* for the first-class grand salon on-board *Normandie*, Jean Dupas, made by Jacques-Charles Champigneulle, France, 1934 © Miottel Museum, Berkeley, California



Normandie was the greatest French liner ever built and came to represent the pinnacle of the French Art Deco style. The spectacular 140 metre long Grand Salon, built along the central axis of the ship, emulated the splendour of the Galerie des Glaces in Versailles and was decorated with a giant glass mural of over 400 square metres of panels. Designed by the artist from Bordeaux, Jean Dupas, it presented the History of Navigation, and was executed in predominantly gold and black verre églomisé (reverse painted mirrored glass).

Silk crêpe dress worn by Bernadette Arnal on the maiden voyage of *Normandie*, Lucien Lelong, France, 1935 © Paris, Les Arts Décoratifs



This archetypal bias-cut dress by Lucien Lelong was worn by Bernadette Arnal, the wife of a partner in the important shipping company, Worms & Cie, on the maiden voyage of *Normandie*. A regular client of Lelong, Arnal ordered dresses for the crossing in red, white and blue. The exclusive chance to see the latest fashions formed an important part of celebrations during the maiden voyage. The leading French couture houses sent representatives for an on-board show, including Lelong, Callot Soeurs, Jeanne Lanvin, Madeleine Vionnet and Charles Frederick Worth. Each showed a garden party dress, a tailored ensemble and three evening gowns.

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 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.

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.

Marlene Dietrich wearing a day suit by Christian Dior on-board *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.

- ENDS -

For further PRESS information about *Ocean Liners: Speed & Style* please contact Laura Mitchell in the V&A press office on +44 (0) 20 7942 2503 or email l.mitchell@vam.ac.uk (not for publication).

A selection of press images are available to download free of charge from pressimages.vam.ac.uk

 [victoriaandalbertmuseum](https://www.facebook.com/victoriaandalbertmuseum)

 [@V_and_A](https://twitter.com/V_and_A)

 [vamuseum](https://www.instagram.com/vamuseum)

 [vamuseum](https://www.pinterest.com/vamuseum)



Sponsored by

