

Exhibition Highlights

Cars: Accelerating the Modern World

Supported by Bosch Group

Sainsbury Gallery

23 November 2019 – 19 April 2020

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



Patent-Motorwagen No. 3,

Karl Benz

1888

Engineer Karl Benz's Patent Motorwagen was the first production automobile ever made. Debuted in the summer of 1886, with an engine that could barely muster 16km/h, the car proved its mettle in 1888 when Benz's wife Bertha took the Motorwagen Nr. 3 for the first ever long-distance drive – covering almost 60 miles. Shortly thereafter racing over long distances became an increasingly popular sport, one that put a car's reliability to the test, as much as its speed.



Firebird 1 Concept Car

Harley Earl/ General Motors

1953

In the 1950s, General Motors designed a series of four concept cars under the label 'Firebird'. They are directly inspired by aircraft fighters of the period, incorporating fluid silhouettes, cockpit seats, and jet engine technology into their designs. Through the metaphor of flying, they suggest a future in which driving is a fluid almost flight-like experience. Subsequent iterations of the Firebird also imagined a future of autonomous driving, long before the technology was available.



Tatra T77

Hans Ledwinka and Paul Jaray

1934

This was the first mass-produced car designed according to the principles of streamlining developed by engineer Paul Jaray. Influenced by his early work on zeppelin design, Jaray founded a consultancy in the 1920s which advocated for streamlining in the car industry. The Czech

company Tatra was the first to collaborate with him, and together with their chief designer Hans Ledwinka, they produced the T77, characterized by its sleek low-body and unusual fin running down its back.



Hispano-Suiza Type HB6 'Skiff Torpedo'
Hispano-Suiza (chassis) Henri Labourdette (body)
1922

French patron Suzanna Deutsch de la Meurthe bought this Hispano-Suiza HB6 chassis at the 1919 Paris Auto Salon. She then sent it to Henri Labourdette's coachbuilding workshop to be custom built with a 'skiff torpedo' body. This wooden hand-crafted body was inspired by the torpedo shape of boats. This commission would have been a hugely expensive and time-consuming undertaking - but it clearly signified, to her peers and to onlookers from the street, that the owner was a person of refined tastes and deep pockets.



Graham (sculpture)
Patricia Piccinini (artist)
Transport Accident Commission (commissioner)
2016

Graham is a human who has evolved to naturally withstand car crashes. He has a flat face to absorb impact; his enlarged skull contains more fluid and ligaments to protect the brain; and the numerous nipples on his chest act as a type of airbag. Graham renders in sensational fashion a vision of humanity literally transformed in order to survive its own invention.



Pop-Up Next
Flying Car
Italdesign with Airbus and Audi
2018

Designed to relieve traffic congestion, this vehicle addresses various mobility challenges in cities today. The design combines an electric chassis, a pod, and a drone: the pod can either clip onto the chassis or the drone, giving the driver both options of ground and air travel. The design combines four of the biggest themes in the future of mobility currently being debated: autonomous, electric, service-oriented, and flying.



Fight Automation Fallout [poster]

Union of Automotive Workers

1950s

Unionisation was a powerful tool for automotive workers to defend themselves from exploitative labour practices.

Following the landmark Flint sit-down strike of 1936-37 against General Motors, the Union of Automotive Workers grew from 30,000 to 500,000 in one year. Posters like this show their continued advocacy work in defending worker's rights in matter such as automation.



Victoire mascot

René Jules Lalique

ca. 1925

Radiator caps on car bonnets posed an opportunity to display wealth and fashionability. Between 1920 and 1931 the French designer René Jules Lalique produced a series of car hood ornaments made from glass. These 'accessory mascots' were designed to be illuminated by internal electric lighting.

The rarity of these objects is testament to the fact that even with the most careful chauffeur, life on the road could be dangerous for these fragile glass sculptures.



Cloche Hat

Miss Fox

1928-1929

Motoring and its obsession with speed helped to shape new fashion trends in the 1920s and 30s. Modern, streamlined bodies were supposed to look and move fast – whether expressed in the form-fitting, bell-shaped 'cloche' hat - with its practical value of staying fixed to the head while riding in a car) - or in the fitted forms of new sports fashions.



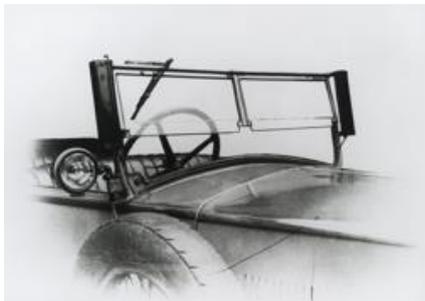
Michelin Guide

Michelin

1900

In 1900, during the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris, the tire company Michelin produced a little red guidebook for motorists, giving essential information for making road trips across France. Although only 3,000 vehicles were registered in France at the time, the company printed

35,000 copies, simultaneously predicting the future market for car ownership, while making motoring more attractive through the lure of the road trip.



Hydraulic unit for ABS Antilock Braking System and Electronic Control Unit and Wiper motor with wiper blade

Robert Bosch GmbH

1978 and 1926

Safety innovations have helped dramatically reduce traffic fatalities over the past century. Bosch introduced early electrical systems in cars, which allowed for several now-commonplace features which drastically improved early motoring safety. Increasingly, safety mechanisms are shifting the responsibility away from driver to computerised systems, suggesting a future where self-driving cars predominate.

