

Institution: University of East Anglia		
Unit of Assessment: 32 - Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory		
Title of case study: Ocean Liners as Vessels of Social and Economic Change		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014 - 2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Ghislaine Wood	Acting Director, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts	2014 to present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 - 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact <p>Ocean Liners: Speed and Style was an international interdisciplinary research project, major touring exhibition (seen by 411,600 people), publication (16,503 copies sold), and learning and engagement programme (reaching 13,958 individuals). Devised as the inaugural exhibition for the major regeneration initiative, V&A Dundee, the project used a subject matter – shipbuilding – with strong national and regional associations to introduce new audiences to the context of design and the museum environment. The exhibition created new knowledge exchange networks between researchers, museums, shipping heritage archives, and contemporary cruise companies. This engagement has led to: advocacy for further support for ocean liner material culture preservation; new collections, significant donations, and the protection and display of ocean liner material culture. The exhibition received significant international, national, and regional media coverage and influenced approaches to market development and increasing commercial competition in the USD40,000,000,000 a year (pre-Covid) contemporary cruise industry, through the promotion of quality design on board cruise ships.</p>		
2. Underpinning research <p><i>Ocean Liners: Speed & Style (3.1)</i> was co-curated by Ghislaine Wood, Sainsbury Centre, UEA and Dan Finamore, Peabody Essex Museum (PEM), Salem, Mass., USA and the exhibitions took place between 2017 and 2019. The project aimed, for the first time, to survey and publicly display the surviving art and design culture of the ocean liner industry, which is dispersed internationally in public and private collections. The research located and identified previously inaccessible material worldwide and employed an interdisciplinary group of academics from a number of international institutions to research the material culture of the ocean liner. Importantly, the project used the lens of the ocean liner to explore major historical themes including: the servicing of Empire; the rise of nationalism in Europe; mass migration in the late 19th and 20th centuries; shipbuilding and the industrial economy; liners as tools of state and war; design and style as drivers of commerce and competition. The project researched the personal histories of passengers, and the roles of fashion and ritual on board.</p> <p>The Ocean Liners project is built on Wood's extensive body of work on inter- and post-war art and design including the co-curation of the landmark V&A <i>Art Deco</i> exhibition (2003), which explored the interdisciplinary nature and global impact of Art Deco and received international recognition for its innovative approach, touring to Toronto, San Francisco, Boston, Tokyo, Osaka, and Melbourne. The co-curation of the major V&A Olympic-year exhibition <i>British Design 1948-2012: Innovation in the Modern Age</i> (2012) which is the most extensive survey of British design to date and, amongst other themes, explored the tensions between tradition and modernity in post-war art, architecture, and design. The Ocean Liners project continues these exhibitions' legacies, along with building upon research that informed <i>'Floating Museums: Ocean Liners and Art Deco'</i> (3.3). The project brought together art, design, fashion, architecture, and economic and maritime histories with historians of technology to explore the impact of the liner across a range of social,</p>		

political, and economic contexts. It particularly focussed on how the design of liners, and the art commissioned for them, drove competition and profitability within the industry. The project aimed to use historical ocean liner design to engage with the contemporary cruise industry, the fastest growing sector of the leisure industry pre-Covid, to explore contemporary design and visitor experience. A major publication was produced, *Ocean Liners* (3.2), and a wide-ranging public engagement programme accompanied the exhibition in all three venues. The exhibition (3.1) opened at the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Mass., USA (**May – Aug 2017**) and then travelled to London, V&A (**Feb – Jun 2018**) before becoming the inaugural exhibition for V&A Dundee (**Sep 2018 – May 2019**).

3. References to the research

- 3.1 *Ocean Liners: Speed & Style* exhibition
Curated by **G. Wood** (output held on file at UEA)
Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, USA (20 May 2017 to 9 Oct 2017), *V&A South Kensington*, UK (3 Feb to 17 Jun 2018), *V&A Dundee* (15 Sep 2018 to 24 Feb 2019).
- 3.2 *Ocean Liners* exhibition publication
D. Finamore and **G. Wood**
V&A (2017). ISBN: 9781851779499
- 3.3 *Floating Museums: Ocean Liners and Art Deco*, 174-186pp
G. Wood
Modern Taste, Art Deco in Paris 1910-1935, edited by Tim Benton, Manuel Del Junco, Maria Zozaya
(Fundacion Juan March, Madrid 2015). ISBN 9788470756290

4. Details of the impact

Ocean Liners: Speed & Style (3.1) was a major exhibition, which travelled to three international institutions and was seen by 411,600 people (142,751 V&A Kensington, 157,449 V&A Dundee, and 111,400 Peabody Essex Museum, USA). It was accompanied by the illustrated publication *Ocean Liners* (16,503 copies sold) (3.2), edited by Dan Finamore and Ghislaine Wood. A wide-ranging learning and engagement programme supported the exhibition in all three venues including conferences, talks, short courses, workshops, performances, evening events, practical workshops and digital events for children, with the V&A Dundee and London events combined reaching 13,958 individuals. An extensive social media campaign also supported the show and V&A Dundee achieved over 551,865 impressions for social media advertising (5.2 p.11).

1. Building new audiences, engaging with design culture, and supporting regeneration in Dundee

The *Ocean Liners: Speed & Style* exhibition was devised to open the V&A Museum of Design, Dundee, a GBP80,000,000 regeneration project, which transformed the waterfront, providing a new museum for the city. Wood was the lead V&A curator for V&A Dundee (before joining UEA), and originated the *Ocean Liners* exhibition while curating the Scottish Design Gallery, which also opened the museum. The V&A Dundee National Lottery Heritage Fund Final Evaluation Report (5.3 p.37) describes how '*Ocean Liners was agreed to be the most appropriate opening exhibition [for V&A Dundee] as it covers a wealth of design disciplines as well as placing Scottish engineering at the heart of the exhibition*'. The report goes on to highlight how the museum's Exhibitions Programme, which *Ocean Liners* was selected to open, was '*... developed to fulfil the museum's mission of enriching lives through design and deliver on its vision to inspire people and promote a greater understanding of design, including reaching wider and diverse audiences*'.

The 157,449 visitors to *Ocean Liners* at V&A Dundee represented 33% of museum footfall over the exhibition period and the [REDACTED] and the *Ocean Liners* catalogue was the top-selling item for the museum during the exhibition run (5.2 p.2).

Visitor feedback from the Dundee exhibition (5.2 p.2&4) was extremely positive, and demonstrated that expectations were often exceeded with comments including; *'I wasn't interested before coming but left fascinated and inspired'*, *'Didn't expect anything this good in Dundee'* and *'Fantastic exhibition. Much bigger than expected'*. Other visitors reflected on how it *'Felt as if you were there – design was so absorbing'* and being *'...transported to a different era'*. Of the 2,910 visitor surveys completed *'74% of respondents said they had learnt something new as a result of the visit ... 92% of respondents rated the overall exhibition experience positively'*. Underlying these statistics, the impact on individual visitors in the exhibition was personal and profound as one V&A Dundee Visitor Assistant describes in the V&A Dundee National Lottery funding report, discussing his highlights as *'seeing visitors to Ocean Liners dancing around to the music played in the exhibition and reminiscing about their own sea voyages'* (5.3 p.112).

The exhibition was of great cultural and social significance for those who were part of the history of shipbuilding and engaged these audiences with the new museum in Dundee. A *Daily Record* article, *Clyde shipbuilders head back in time for Ocean Liners exhibition at V&A museum*, at the time of the exhibition reported that:

'Ronnie McLellan, 75, and Peggy, 74, his wife of 50 years, have tears in their eyes as they recall being passengers on the QE2 in 1993. Ronnie said: "When we were young, I promised we would sail on her one day ... [it] felt like we had made it when we actually did ... I took her hand and showed her all the bits I had done. It was very emotional... I am proud to have helped build such a beautiful ship"' (5.1).

As the opening exhibition at V&A Dundee, *Ocean Liners* had wide economic significance. For many visitors to the exhibition, *Ocean Liners* was their main reason for visiting the city of Dundee. The visitor survey report highlighted that *'77% of respondents said Ocean Liners was their sole or main reason to visit Dundee, demonstrating the importance of exhibitions to the overall destination'* (5.2 p.4). *Ocean Liners* brought visitors from the local area (51%), across Scotland (39%), and the exhibition's presence at V&A Dundee coincided with a 19.4% increase in visitors to Dundee during the first six months of 2019. Visitors to the museum as a whole were found to be worth GBP21,000,000 to the Dundee economy and GBP75,000,000 to the overall Scottish economy in the 12 months from 15 September 2018 (5.5). Citing its tremendous economic impact, Scottish Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop said:

'V&A Dundee is a powerful symbol of Dundee's new confidence and the strong future of design and innovation across our nation ... In its first year it has far exceeded expectations for visitor numbers and proved an incredible success in boosting Scotland's attractiveness to those looking for world-class cultural experiences' (5.8 p.2).

2. Establishing knowledge exchange networks and enabling preservation of material culture, developing new collections, and creation of new exhibition environments

The project highlighted the importance of historic ocean liner collections and enabled individuals in disparate archives, museums, and companies to connect. As V&A Dundee director Philip Long highlighted in *The Courier* (5.1) *'Many of these objects have not been seen in Europe since the ships were launched. It is a fantastic opportunity to find out about some of the greatest design of the 20th century'*. A key part of the project advocated for further support for the preservation of ocean liner material culture by highlighting the on-going influence historic liners have on various sectors including architecture, film, and the contemporary cruise industry. The project revealed the value of archive assets to companies holding historic archives and how they can be used to promote prestige and raise profile. The team worked closely with P&O Heritage Archive (owned by Dubai Port), French Lines, Costa, Viking Cruises, and Cunard amongst others.

The exhibition prompted contributing organisations to take the opportunity to develop their own collections. [REDACTED], Senior Curator, P&O Heritage (5.4 p.4) describes how *'As a direct result of reviewing our liner tableware, with V&A & PEM, we then collaborated with V&A & Wedgwood jointly acquiring (by donation) a near complete set of Oriana China (designed by Robert Y Gooden)'*. This is a lasting legacy of *Ocean Liners* both as a key and rare opportunity for these

private collections to be appreciated by the public in world-renowned museums and for them to *'reviv[e] a sense of corporate pride in [the] collection internally'* at P&O, as well as acting as a catalyst for these collections to grow (5.4 p.1). Building upon this relationship, Wood and the Sainsbury Centre, UEA are working with P&O Heritage on research that will lead to a major new exhibition and publication exploring the archive of Sir Colin Anderson, Director of the British Orient Line and his impact on modern British design. This project will further explore the role that ships played in promoting ideas of modern art, design, and lifestyle.

For Peabody Essex Museum, the exhibition has led to a significant donation to their collection. Maritime Curator, [REDACTED] (5.6) detailed how *'the exhibition allowed us to extend our involvement with maritime scholars and collectors beyond our traditional circle of 18th and 19th century interests, and connect with a significant circle of 20th century decorative arts collectors'* and this *'led to several offers of significant collections to the museum and library'*. The most important of these is a donation of over 250 works from *'the most prominent American collector of graphic and decorative arts related to ocean liner advertising and design'*. Furthermore, the PEM *'library has also acquired a collection of travel scrapbooks and printed ephemera totalling about 100 pieces'*.

The V&A *Ocean Liners* exhibition provided a key curatorial model for creating an exhibition environment integrating art, design, and architecture of historical ocean liners. For example, as part of the repurposing of the *Queen Mary* liner, which now operates as a hotel complex and entertainment destination in Long Beach, CA. Future plans include a Queen Mary Arts Centre and as a result of the exhibition Wood and Finamore are acting in an advisory capacity to the project (which is currently delayed due to Covid-19).

3. Informing approaches to market development and increasing commercial competition in the contemporary cruise industry

Viking Cruises supported the exhibition with corporate sponsorship of over GBP300,000 and encouraged audiences on their cruises to engage with the content of the exhibition through various channels. Viking stated:

'Working with the V&A on Ocean Liners: Speed & Style, was a great partnership for Viking. It allowed us share the exhibition with our audience, and for them to explore how ocean travel has evolved from its conception, into the contemporary, industry-leading experience that Viking offer today' (5.9).

Viking reached an audience of more than 200,000 both on board their ships and through their various marketing platforms including their *Explorer Society News* magazine (print circulation 50,000) and database (100,000). The *Ocean Liners* book continues to be available on all Viking ocean ships reaching many thousands of passengers. Pre-Covid the cruise industry was worth USD40,000,000,000 a year and was the fastest growing area of the leisure industries worldwide. The project aimed to inform the contemporary cruise industry on how design culture employed on ships historically drove competitive edge. Viking utilized this narrative to promote the quality of and engagement with their ships. Viking hosted a number of events for passengers at the exhibition. Viking past guest, [REDACTED], commented:

'I was intrigued when I heard from Viking Cruises, that they were sponsoring the V&A's glorious Ocean Liners Speed and Style. Having travelled with Viking a number of times and judging by the awards they have won, I could see that they are the natural successors to the storied cruise lines of the past' (5.9).

Viking continue to work with Wood, reaching mass audiences on their digital streaming platform, Viking TV, with their project Museum Monday.

Conference and workshops in London and Boston brought together academics, contemporary cruise ship designers, and industry experts to discuss the quality of contemporary versus historical design. Interior designer Kelly Hoppen, currently working for Carnival Cruises, spoke at the V&A

with [REDACTED] the Cunard maritime architect of the *QM2*; while Scott Wilson of Butler Wilson, designer of the largest Royal Caribbean cruise ships in the world, spoke at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem. The cruise industries' engagement with the exhibition was considerable with designer of the *QM2* [REDACTED] commenting, '*Interior designers from both the maritime and terra firma varieties, found much of interest and relevance to their projects of today*' (5.10).

4. Public and media attention for *Ocean Liners: Speed & Style*

Ocean Liners featured on Front Row Late (BBC 2), Sky News, Free Thinking (BBC Radio 3), [Front Row](#) (BBC Radio 4), and popular daytime television programme Sunday Brunch (Channel 4) with approximately 688,000 viewers. The project research underpinned the Channel 5 TV documentary *QE2: The World's Greatest Cruise Ship* which aired in Feb 2018, receiving around 3,060,000 viewers for the two episodes. The exhibition had exceptional online engagement across various platforms: the total number of V&A online page views for *Ocean Liners* from set up to the present is 754,523.

The exhibition was also reviewed extensively in the international, national, and regional press (5.1) including *The Wall Street Journal*, USA, *Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata*, Italy, alongside publications such as *frieze* and *The Art Newspaper*. Alastair Sooke, writing in *The Daily Telegraph* described the innovative nature of the exhibition as '*The first show ever devoted to the design of ocean liners ... full of fascinating moments and animated throughout by a breezy, buoyant spirit*'. In *The Scotsman*, Duncan Macmillan elegantly summarised the historical and social context of *Ocean Liners* and the exhibition's role in setting the tone and ambition for future exhibitions at the newly opened V&A Dundee when he wrote:

'There will be other partners in future shows, but if this [Ocean Liners] is how the new museum intends to carry on, it is a fittingly ambitious beginning ... Here are the clothes they wore, ship models, art works and furniture from the fabulously luxurious interiors, film of life on board and much more to inform, intrigue and delight - and that surely is what a museum should always do'.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 5.1 Media reviews (*Daily Telegraph*, *Scotsman*, *Daily Record*, *Courier*, *Wall Street Journal*, *frieze* etc.).
- 5.2 V&A Dundee Exhibition Summary Evaluation and follow on correspondence.
- 5.3 V&A Dundee National Lottery funding report.
- 5.4 Senior Curator, P&O Heritage Report.
- 5.5 Dundee City Council's Visitor Economy 2018 report.
- 5.6 Associate Director for Exhibitions, Peabody Essex Museum.
- 5.7 Peabody Essex Museum Report.
- 5.8 Dundee Chamber of Commerce publication.
- 5.9 Viking Cruises UK testimonial.
- 5.10 Designer Queen Mary 2 testimonial.