

Curves of Steel

STREAMLINED AUTOMOBILE DESIGN

1939 Delahaye 165 Cabriolet by Figoni et Falaschi

Photo: Michael Furman
Courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum
Curves of Steel: Streamlined Automobile Design



Phoenix Art Museum mounts first-of-its-kind 20th century automobile design exhibition

Curves of Steel: Streamlined Automobile Design
Features many one-of-kind cars - through June 3, 2007

Shroughout the 20th century, the automobile was revered in American culture; thus, many of the world's greatest designers have worked in the field, creating and combining extreme beauty of line and the science of streamlining and aerodynamics.

Phoenix Art Museum is proud to have organized and to be presenting the first exhibition in an art museum to explore the impact and influence of streamlining and aerodynamics on American and European automobile design in the 20th century. *Curves of Steel: Streamlined Automobile Design*, on view at Phoenix Art Museum April 1 – June 3, 2007, is an expression of cars and designs that changed the face and shape of the automobile. It features 22 of some of the

rarest and most stunning cars ever to be presented in one show—many are the only existing examples of their kind.

Assembled are such names as Auburn, Alfa Romeo, Lincoln-Zephyr, Hispano-Suiza, Bugatti, Delage and Delahaye—including the elusive 1937 Delahaye 145 "Million Franc Prize" Grand Prix winner.

Streamlining is an expression of architecture and cultural design as a manifestation of aerodynamic science. Phoenix Art Museum has assembled an array of some of the great chassis and designs that pioneered the science of airflow and aerodynamics. Some of North America's most discerning collectors have opened their garage doors to share their prizes of automotive grace and form.

Included in the exhibition are:

- 1934 Chrysler Imperial Airflow
- 1935 Auburn 851 Speedster
- 1936 Stout Scarab
- 1936 Bugatti Type 57SC Atlantic Coupe
- 1936 Peugeot 402 Darl'mat Coupe
- 1937 Cord 812 Sportsman
- 1937 Delahaye 145 "Million Franc Prize" Grand Prix race car
- 1937 Dubonnet Hispano-Suiza H-6c Xenia by Saoutchik
- 1938 Embiricos Bentley
- 1938 Talbot-Lago T150C "Teardrop" Figoni et Falaschi coupe
- 1938 Alfa Romeo 8C 2900
- 1938 Darracq-Talbot Lago T-150 c by Figoni et Falaschi
- 1938 Delage D8-120 S Pourtout Aréo Coupé
- 1939 Delahaye 165 Cabriolet by Figoni et Falaschi
- 1939 Lincoln Zephyr
- 1941 Chrysler Thunderbolt
- 1948 Tatra T87
- 1948 Tucker

- 1952 SoCal Belly Tank
- 1957 Ferrari 625/250 Testa Rossa TRC
- 1986 Oldsmobile Aerotech
- 1994 McLaren F1

From its earliest years, the automobile adopted the designs of the horse-drawn age. Gradually automotive design evolved and the engine moved forward. By the 1920s, European designers were beginning to adapt the science of airflow from aircraft to the automobile. At first these new designs were focused on experimental prototypes and speed record cars.

In the 1930s, automobile culture exploded with art deco and streamline forms applied to the automobile. Streamline designs or influences were applied to luxury vehicles such as Auburn, Cord and Lincoln-Zephyr in the United States. General Motors used many streamline motifs, but was late to jump fully into the style, while Chrysler was an early proponent of aerodynamic design with the Airflow and the experimental Newport and Thunderbolt. In Europe, the

KEEP RIGHT >>

French Bugatti Atlantic Coupe, and many coachbuilt Delage and Delahaye automobiles featured striking and modern designs influenced more by style than aerodynamic function.

Other, often smaller, manufacturers were more concerned with function and used design to reduce aerodynamic drag and increase stability. Tatra found that a modestly-powered vehicle could attain and maintain relatively high speeds if it was shaped properly. Many of the same principles were also applied to William Stout's exquisitely-detailed Scarabs.

The vehicles comprising this exhibition are among the rarest collector cars in the world and come to Phoenix from across North America. Meticulously restored to their original elegance inside and out, their cultural content will be explored in the exhibition through additional drawings, photographs and posters. Phoenix Art Museum also will present a wide-ranging line-up of public programs and events surrounding the show. The exhibition is intended to be a total experience celebrating some of the finest automobile designs of the last century.

The Book

A 192-page accompanying book has been published, guided and written by a select team of automotive historians, writers and designers, including Ken Gross, Beverly Rae Kimes, Richard Adatto, Jonathan A. Stein, Phil Patton and Geoff Wardle, with more than 200 color photographs by world renowned automotive photographer Michael Furman. It is available for purchase in The Museum Store.

Exhibition Organizers and Advisors

The exhibition is organized by Phoenix Art Museum with the assistance of an advisory group consisting of Phil Patton, Geoff Wardle, Ken Gross, Michael Furman, Jonathan A. Stein and Richard Adatto. Patton is a design and art historian who frequently assists museums, such as the Museum of Modern Art, and is a frequent contributor to *The New York Times*. Wardle is associate chair of transportation design and director of advanced mobility research at Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, California. Gross is the former director of the Peterson Automobile Museum in Los Angeles and currently is contributing auto editor for *Playboy* and the *Robb Report*, and works with the Speed Channel. Furman is considered one of the finest automobile photographers in the world, with an expertise in pre-war coachbuilt cars. Director of publications for Hagerty Insurance and the former publishing director of *Automobile Quarterly*, Stein is a long-time automobile historian and the author of several books and hundreds of articles. Adatto is a member of the car selection committee and chief class judge at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Élegance and is a noted author and authority on coachbuilt French automobiles.

Phoenix Art Museum

The classically progressive design of the 203,000 sq. ft. Phoenix Art Museum integrates art and architecture with the Southwestern landscape, accommodating large traveling exhibitions and a collection of over 17,000 works in American, Asian, modern & con-

1936 Stout Scarab



Photos: Michael Furman
Courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum
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1941 Chrysler Thunderbolt



temporary, European, Latin American and Western American art, and fashion design. Visitors also enjoy the Sculpture Garden, the Thorne Miniature Rooms of historic interiors, PhxArtKids interactive space for children, Art Museum Café and The Museum Store. Visitors can learn more about the Museum's collection through its bilingual, random access MP3 audioguide, available at the admissions desk. The Museum recently opened its \$50 million expansion project, which included the addition of a new glass-enclosed lobby and entry plaza, 4-level gallery wing, sculpture garden and expanded store.

Curves of Steel

Exhibition Admission: \$14 adults; \$6 children ages 6-17, free for Museum members (some restrictions apply) and children under age 6. Tickets are not for timed entry, but will be available for advance purchase. Includes Museum general admission.

- Exhibition Hours: Open during regular Museum hours (see below).
- Purchase Tickets: In person at the Museum, online at PhxArt.org, or by phone at (602) 307-2090 or (800) 452-0314.

Rembrandt and the Golden Age of Dutch Art

Exhibition Admission: \$18 adults; \$8 children ages 6-17, free for children under age 6, and free for Museum members (some restrictions apply). Tickets are for dated and timed entry, and include the exhibition audioguide and general admission to the Museum.

- Exhibition Hours: Tuesday, 11:30am – 9pm (last entry 7:30pm); Wednesday-Friday, 11:30am – 5pm (last entry 3:30pm); Saturday & Sunday, 10am – 5pm (last entry 3:30pm).
- Purchase Tickets: In person at the Museum, online at PhxArt.org, or by phone at (602) 307-2090 or (800) 452-0314.

Combined Admission

Combined Admission for Curves of Steel and Rembrandt and the Golden Age (April 1-May 6)

- Admission (same day only): \$20 adults; \$8 children ages 6-17; free for Museum members (some restrictions apply) and children under age 6. Purchasers must still choose date and entry time for Rembrandt and the Golden Age. Includes the Rembrandt audioguide and general admission to the Museum.
- Purchase Tickets: In person at the Museum, online at PhxArt.org, or by phone at (602) 307-2090 or (800) 452-0314.

General Admission & Hours

■ Admission: \$10 adults; \$8 senior citizens (65+) and full-time students w/ID; \$4 children 6-17; and, free for Museum members and children under age 6. The Museum general admission is free to all on Tuesday evenings, 3-9pm. Some exhibitions have special admission fees. Hours: Tuesday, 10am-9pm; Wednesday-Sunday, 10am-5pm. Some exhibitions have special hours. The Museum is closed Mondays and major holidays. The Museum Store is open during Museum hours; Art Museum Café by Arcadia Farms is open 10am-5pm.

- For Phoenix Art Museum information, visit online at PhxArt.org, or call the 24-hour recorded information line at (602) 257-1222.

1936 Peugeot 402 Dar'Imat Coupe



1937 Duhonnet Hispano-Suiza 7-6c Xeria by Saoutchick



Photos: Michael Furman
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1938 Talbot-Lago T150C "Jeardrop" Figoni et Falaschi coupe



OUR VISIT

It's unfortunate that cameras aren't allowed at this exhibit, even at a media event (though we understand the various reasons why). The stunning photos here will whet your appetite for this show, but you really need to go in person, to see them all from every angle, including from the second level, where windows given an open view of much of this display. Whether elements of aerodynamic, style or whimsy, these vehicles contain surprises wherever you look.

There was quite a bit of discussion of relativity within our group, as we'd sometimes have to remind ourselves just how many decades ago some of these masterpieces were produced, considering they were just on the heels of the first Model T, or not far behind. Some were derived from aircraft design cues and theory, of course, but that's another industrial design field that was in its youth at the same time.

The show runs through June 3, so make a point of getting down there before it's too late. What it took to put this show together is remarkable, and all the more remarkable for having been done by our friends and neighbors at the Phoenix Art Museum (who also rounded up a lot of the highest caliber assistance available anywhere).

The Museum is open Wednesday through Sunday 10am-5pm and on Tuesdays from 10am-9pm (we went on a Tuesday night). The Museum is closed Mondays and major holidays. The Museum Store is open during Museum hours; Art Museum Café by Arcadia Farms is open 10am-5pm.

Exhibition admission is \$14 for adults, \$6 for children ages 6-17, and free for Museum members (some restrictions apply) and children under the age of 6. Tickets are not for time-specific entry, and are available for advance purchase online at PhxArt.org or by phone at (602) 307-2090 or (800) 452-0314. We encourage you to catch this show. You'll be wowed from the moment you walk in the door. ■



1939 Lincoln Zephyr

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1948 Jaguar J87