

**THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART EXHIBITS ENTIRE AUTOMOTIVE COLLECTION FOR THE FIRST TIME, INCLUDING THREE NEW ACQUISITIONS****New Acquisitions—Smart Car, Volkswagen “Beetle,” and Willys-Overland Jeep—Join Three Other Automobiles in MoMA’s Collection*****AUTO*bodies: speed, sport, transport, an Inaugural Exhibition at MoMA QNS, is on View from June 29 to September 16, 2002**

NEW YORK, JUNE 2002—*AUTO*bodies: speed, sport, transport presents the six automobiles from The Museum of Modern Art’s collection together in one gallery at MoMA QNS, including three acquisitions made this year: a Smart Car (2002), a Volkswagen Sedan, popularly known as the “Beetle” (1959), and a Willys-Overland Jeep (1953). The vehicles in the collection are innovative designs representing a range of purposes such as speed, sport, and transport. Together, they span more than five decades of automotive design; individually, the automobiles are recognized for their aesthetic excellence, functional capability, historical significance, practicality, or affordability—criteria also applicable to other mass-produced design objects in the Museum’s collection. Accompanying the automobiles is a selection of graphic design works from the Museum’s collection, including posters and A.M. Cassandre’s monumental billboard, *Watch the Fords Go By* (1937). The exhibition is organized by Peter Reed, Curator, Department of Architecture and Design, and is on view at MoMA QNS from June 29 to September 16, 2002.

Mr. Reed says, “Automobiles are among the most significant inventions of industrial civilization. Each of the six cars in MoMA’s collection is an innovative, influential design. Historically, aesthetics and speed have been primary concerns. Today, we are no less concerned with aesthetics but recognize other compelling issues in personal transportation including affordability and efficiency.”

MoMA was the first art museum ever to collect and exhibit automobiles as examples of functional design. The Cisitalia “202” GT (1946) was the first vehicle to enter the collection, in 1972. *AUTO*bodies is the ninth automotive exhibition shown at MoMA, the first being the landmark presentation *Eight Automobiles* (1951). More recently, the Museum presented *Different Roads: Automobiles for the Next Century* (1999), which featured nine contemporary automobiles.

Automotive design reflects not only a car’s primary purpose but also the designer’s ingenuity and intuitive styling. Since the invention of the automobile, speed has been one of the most captivating aspects in car design, with Ferrari’s Formula 1 Racing Car 641/2 (1990) as a preeminent example. Consequently, the designer’s consideration

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of aerodynamics is a critical factor in the design process, often resulting in designs that are astonishingly beautiful and varied, like the Cisitalia and the Jaguar E-Type Roadster (1963). But even when designers and engineers address the automobile's most pragmatic function—personal transportation—speed is no less a factor than the social and economic realities that have often called for small, affordable, and efficient vehicles, like the Volkswagen Type 1 Sedan and the Smart Car. The legendary American Jeep M38A1, a small, lightweight four-wheel-drive vehicle, is a purely utilitarian design that forgoes styling in favor of efficiency and function.

MoMA's Automotive Collection (in chronological order):

Cisitalia "202" GT Car. 1946 (produced 1948).

Manufactured by Pininfarina, Turin, Italy.

Designer: Pinin Farina (Italian, 1893–1966).

Aluminum body. Years produced: 1947–52. Number of cars produced: 170.

Gift of the manufacturer. Entered MoMA's collection in 1972.

Designed in 1946 by the Italian car designer and coach builder Pinin Farina (who later changed his name to Pininfarina), the two-seater Cisitalia "202" GT was an aesthetic and technical achievement that changed the shape of postwar automobile body design. Pininfarina aimed to create a design that was "new, alive, and efficient." The forward-looking design of the Cisitalia seems to epitomize a sense of postwar optimism. In the Cisitalia, there are no sharp edges. Swellings and depressions maintain the overall flow and unity, creating a sense of speed. The body was more or less handcrafted, and its aluminum panels were shaped over wood forms. Because of this time-consuming process, only 170 models were produced between 1947 and 1952.

Truck: utility 1/4 ton 4x4, M38A1 (Jeep). February 1953 (design date: 1952).

Manufactured by Willys-Overland Motors, Inc., Toledo, Ohio (est. 1909).

Steel body. Years produced: 1952–68. Number of cars produced: 75,428 (April 1952–May 1955).

Gift of DaimlerChrysler Corporation Fund. Entered MoMA's collection in 2002.

The Jeep is quintessentially a utilitarian vehicle—a reliable tool whose primary function is transport, on- or off-road. Its official name—Truck: utility 1/4 ton 4x4—means it is a four-wheel-drive vehicle capable of carrying 500 pounds. The Jeep was invented in 1940 when the U.S. Army issued specifications for a small, powerful, general-purpose vehicle. Engineers from the American Bantam Car Company, Ford Motor Company, and Willys-Overland Motors, Inc., were largely responsible for designing the Jeep in a matter of weeks in response to the Army's program. The Jeep was one of the most technologically advanced machines at the time. After the war, Willys-Overland Motors continued to produce the vehicle for both military and civilian markets. In 1952 engineers at Willys-Overland modified the original 1940s design and produced the M38A1, a new model that was faster and slightly larger and that was widely considered to be the best military Jeep ever built. The M38A1 remained in production for sixteen years and strongly influenced the design of popular civilian Jeeps for more than three decades—a testament to its functional appeal and its transformation into a cultural icon.

Volkswagen, Type 1 Sedan. 1959.

Manufactured by Volkswagenwerk AG, Wolfsburg, West Germany.

Designers: Ferdinand Porsche (German, 1875–1951) and Volkswagenwerk (est. 1938).

Steel floor pan and body. Year introduced: 1938. Number of cars produced in 1959: 575,407

Acquired with assistance from Volkswagen of America, Inc. Entered MoMA's collection in 2002.

The most popular automobile in the world, the Volkswagen Sedan Type 1, popularly known as the “Beetle,” completely transcended its German roots, quickly becoming an international phenomenon. The Volkswagen Sedan is remarkable for its formal consistency; its basic form has undergone relatively few changes since production began in 1938. The design of the Volkswagen can be traced to the noted German automobile designer Ferdinand Porsche. By the early 1930s, Porsche had developed a prototype for an affordable “people’s car” (the literal translation of *Volkswagen*). His challenge was to create an innovative design that was not simply a scaled-down large car. MoMA’s “mignonette green” VW exhibits several features typical of the cars sold in America at the time such as whitewall tires and “towel-rail” bumpers.

E-Type Roadster. 1963.

Manufactured by Jaguar Ltd., Coventry, England.

Designers: Sir William Lyons (British, 1901–85); Malcolm Sayer (British, 1916–70); and William M. Heynes (British, 1903-89).

Steel body. Years produced: 1961–74. Number of cars produced: 72,520.

Gift of Jaguar Cars. Entered MoMA's collection in 1996.

If ever a sports car elicited powerful emotions, the sleek Jaguar E-Type (known in the United States as the XK-E) is probably one of the most evocative. The two-seat roadster with foldaway top was the fastest production sports car on the market in 1961. The influential E-Type was conceived as a synthesis of a competition racer and an everyday-use car, priced for a large consumer market. The aerodynamic styling of racing cars clearly influenced the body's design—a functional yet unabashedly beautiful bulletlike silhouette.

Formula 1 Racing Car 641/2. 1990.

Manufactured by Ferrari S.p.A., Italy (est. 1946).

Company design (chassis). Body designer: John Barnard (British, born 1946).

Body materials: Composite with monocoque chassis in honeycomb with carbon fibers and Kevlar.

Year produced: 1990. Only car produced.

Gift of the manufacturer. Entered MoMA's collection in 1994.

This high-performance car has a single purpose: to win the Grand Prix. It is the only car in MoMA's collection designed exclusively for professional racing. It made its debut in 1990, driven by Alain Prost, one of the most talented racers for Ferrari. State-of-the art technology and engineering coupled with the designer's intuitive abilities inform the car's shape. There is nothing superfluous in this sophisticated machine, which has a top speed of 210 miles per hour. The monocoque (driver's cockpit) is fabricated with innovative materials (carbon fiber and Kevlar, originally developed for the aircraft industry) that are stronger and lighter than aluminum, which was common in earlier cars.

Smart Car (“smart & pulse” Coupé). 2002.

Manufactured by Micro Compact Car smart GmbH, Renningen, Germany, and Hambach, France (est. 1994).

Steel frame and thermoplastic body panels. Year introduced: 1998.

Gift of Micro Compact Car smart GmbH, a company of the DaimlerChrysler Group. Entered MoMA's collection in 2002.

Engineered by Mercedes-Benz, the design was further developed with input from the Swatch watch company. Only eight feet long, the efficient Smart Car challenges habits of personal mobility. It is especially well suited to urban environments. The Smart Car has been developed to maximize the convenience, comfort, and safety of driver and passenger, while minimizing the impact on the environment. The Smart Car's body reveals a clear, functional, modular design. The black frame of reinforced steel—the so-called Tridion safety cell—gives the vehicle its inherent strength. Colorful, easily exchangeable body panels made of recycled plastic are virtually dent resistant and rust free. Since their debut in 1998, nearly half a million Smart Cars have been produced, becoming a common sight in Europe—sometimes two per conventional parking space.

About the Curator

Peter Reed, organizer of *AUTObodies*, was named Curator in the Department of Architecture and Design at MoMA in January 1999. He joined the staff in 1992 as an Assistant Curator and was appointed Associate Curator in 1994. He was a co-organizer of *The Long View* (2000), a collaboration between The Museum of Modern Art and The Municipal Art Society, and of *ModernStarts* (1999), the first cycle of exhibitions in the series MoMA2000. He also organized *Alvar Aalto: Between Humanism and Materialism* (1998), *The United Nations in Perspective* (1995), and *Civic Architecture* (1995). He assisted Terence Riley, Chief Curator of the Museum's Department of Architecture and Design, with the organization of *Frank Lloyd Wright: Architect* (1994), the most comprehensive presentation of Wright's architectural work since his death in 1959, and coedited the catalogue with Mr. Riley. Mr. Reed also coedited the catalogue that accompanied *ModernStarts* and has authored articles for publications such as *Studies in Modern Art VI*, *A+U*, and *Connaissance des Arts*. He has contributed to numerous publications, including *World War II and the American Dream* (National Building Museum and MIT Press, 1995) and *Encyclopedia of Architecture: Design, Engineering, and Construction* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1989). Mr. Reed holds a B.A. degree in art history from Lake Forest College and an M.A. and Ph.D. in art history from the University of Pennsylvania, where he was the recipient of two fellowships.

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