

Self-Guide

By Sky and by Sea

Even if you haven't seen Chicago's annual Air and Water Show, if you've lived anywhere near in the city, you've likely heard it. Take a quieter approach to the sky and sea with this month's high-flying, swift-sailing guide to the collection.



BLUHM FAMILY TERRACE

Untitled (Alliance) (2010) by Roger Hiorns

Airplane engines in an art museum? A museum of science or technology maybe. But art? The connection may not be readily apparent, but these two Pratt and Whitney TF33 P9 engines from Boeing EC-135 Looking Glass long-range surveillance planes provided the tenuous global security under which many artworks in the Modern Wing were created. London-based artist Roger Hiorns has long been fascinated with engines, both from automobiles and airplanes, as a symbol and manifestation of excessive power and mesmerizing speed. In *Untitled (Alliance)*, Hiorns has invisibly incorporated anti-anxiety and depression medications into the installation, drawing a link between global and individual anxieties and their alleviation.



GALLERY 154A

Model Boat (c. 2046–1794 B.C.) Egypt

In ancient Egypt, boats were today's automobile—the primary mode of transportation. The country's sandy terrain made wheeled vehicles inefficient, while the life-giving Nile offered 625 miles of swift transport. Boats could be easily rowed along with the Nile's south-north current when traveling north and then equipped with rectangular sails that took advantage of the prevailing southward wind when traveling south. The Egyptians equipped many tombs with models of this essential transport believing that small replicas and even pictures of items could function as whatever they portrayed in the afterlife. This boat would have ensured the deceased had everyday transport as well as a means of traveling to the sacred city of Abydos, the cult center of the god of the underworld, Osiris.



GALLERY 157

Pendant Shaped as a Ship (c. 1870/90)

designed by Reinhold Vasters

Maybe not the swiftest of all sailing vessels and certainly not the largest, this enameled-gold ship would definitely be in the running for the most dazzling. Ship-shaped pendants of this sort were made for a relatively long period of time, from the 17th into the 19th century, mostly in the Greek islands that had political or commercial ties with Venice. These stylized mini ships conformed to a similar design—a raised forecastle, poop deck, three masts, bowsprit, and hulls of filigree-decorated enameled gold. Most likely not intended as personal jewelry, the pendants were probably used as votives and hung in churches to protect maritime communities. With the tiny figure of Fortune holding a sail aloft, this 19th-century beauty captures the period's Romantic spirit.



REGENSTEIN WEST

World's Fair, Brussels, Belgium (1958)

by Henri Cartier-Bresson

If you think the Air and Water Show is exciting, imagine being at the 1958 Brussels World's Fair at the height of the jet age like the boys in this photograph by Cartier-Bresson. The first operational jet fighter, the German Me-262, had only been introduced in the final years of World War II, and the Cold War had propelled jet technology into hyperdrive. So at the 1958 World's Fair, the first major international exhibition since the end of the war, participating nations were eager to show off their innovations and the public eager to take them in. Surprisingly, it was not a jet airplane that won the fair's Grand Prix but rather the Ilyushin Il-18, a large turboprop plane that became one of the best-known Soviet aircraft of its era, setting 25 records in the following years, including flight range and altitude with various payload capacities.



GALLERY 249

Sky above Clouds IV (1965) by Georgia O'Keeffe

We might not be able to show you what it feels like to be performing the dare-devil aerial gymnastics of the Blue Angels, but with this massive painting by Georgia O'Keeffe, we can offer you a taste of what it's like in a passenger plane, all with your feet resting comfortably on terra firma. The ultimate painting in a series in which O'Keeffe captured her in-flight experiences traveling all over the world, *Sky above Clouds IV* is also the largest. The first was just three by four feet while this painting measures 24 feet across, as large as O'Keeffe could make it in her garage. Ironically, while the painting and series stemmed from O'Keeffe's travels, the size of this work has prevented it from doing much traveling itself.



GALLERY 225

Steamboat Leaving Boulogne (1927) by Édouard Manet

It wasn't until he was 32 years old that Manet began to paint the sea, but once he started in 1864, he continued until his death in 1883. His enchantment with the waters emerged in 1848 during his time as a sailor-in-training aboard the *Havre et Guadeloupe*, a small ship bound for Rio de Janeiro, and was reignited 16 years later when he and his family vacationed in the northern French port town of Boulogne-sur-Mer. Based on sketches the artist made in Boulogne-sur-Mer, this painting, along with three others, were converted into fully finished paintings in Paris. X-ray analysis reveals that Manet started this work with the sea, filling over two-thirds of the canvas with liquefied pigments to create smooth, and in places, transparent waters. Floating on this glossy, blue-green expanse are 11 almost calligraphic boats, each a recognizable type. The side-wheel packet steamer with its blustering plumes of smoke, of course, dominates the scene, charging past the slower, sail-powered vessels.

Want more aerial exhilaration and sailing stunts?

Take in the thrill of Chicago's 52nd annual Air and Water Show, along the lakefront from Fullerton to Oak Street, August 14–15. Then August 24–29, don't miss the 20 majestic and historic ships that will sail into Navy Pier as part of Tall Ships, a festival of maritime heritage.