

LES ANNEES

FOLLES

DE

L'AVIATION

L'AÉRONAUTIQUE AU CŒUR DE LA MODERNITÉ (1919-1939)

\*THE GOLDEN YEARS OF AVIATION  
Aeronautics at the heart of modernity (1919-1939)

VISITORS BOOKLET

MUSÉE  
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HISTOIRE

T F 1

Europe 1



# LES ANNÉES FOLLES DE L'AVIATION

## EXHIBITION INSTRUCTIONS

The exhibition you are about to explore unfolds in two different spaces:

- The *Grande Galerie* exhibition room
- The *Interwar* exhibition room

You are free to start with

whichever room you like!

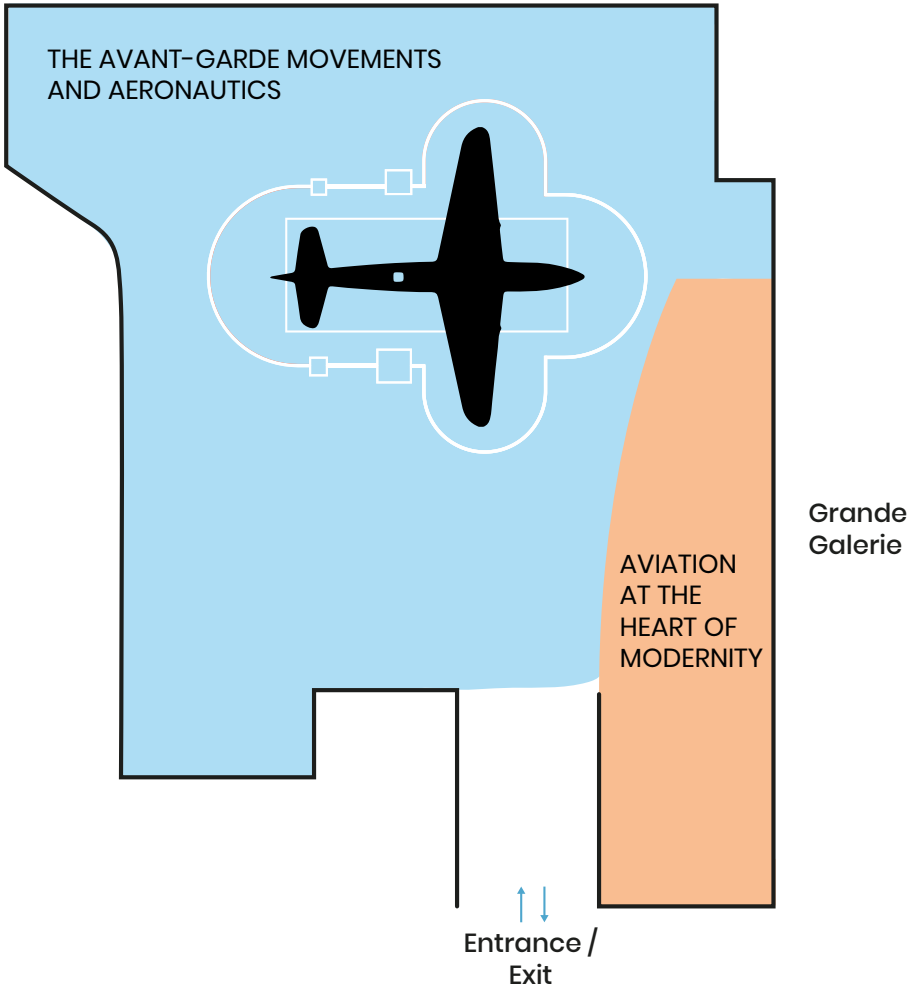
Do you wish to enhance your tour? Explore the eleven items indicated by coloured plates, within the Interwar Hall's permanent itinerary.

## FOR FAMILIES

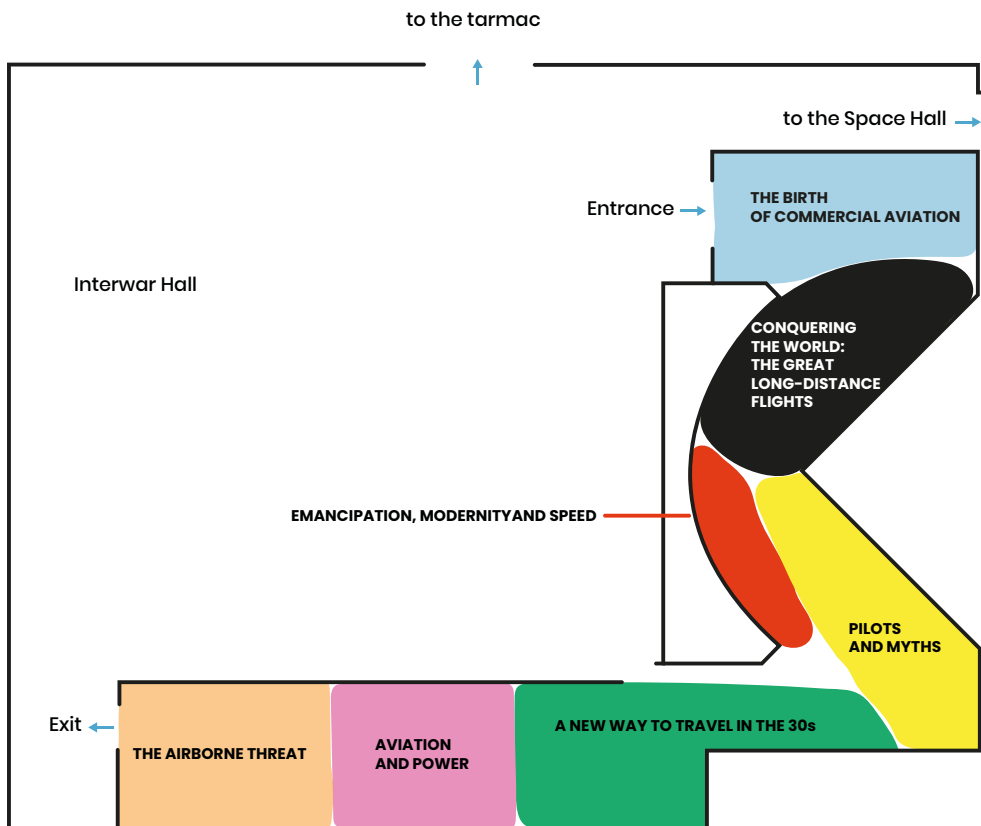
Families can have fun touring the exhibition accompanied by Héli the bat. Guided by Héli, 25 plates provide children with an alternative way to explore the exhibition. A fun way to learn for children of all ages!



# GRANDE GALERIE EXHIBITION ROOM



# INTERWAR EXHIBITION ROOM



## **INTRODUCTION**

Between the interwar period, the aeroplane helped transform societies, our view of the world, and the relationship between time and space. Following the railway and the automobile, aviation represented modernity in an era that was now imagining the continental and even worldwide coming together of humankind. The aeroplane evolved prodigiously during the Great War and from 1919 was seen as the mode of transport of the future. However, ocean crossings were still an individual achievement and many air routes were yet to be opened up. Uncertain and uncomfortable, air transport remained the preserve of wealthy and intrepid passengers.

Within two decades, the promises had been fulfilled: aeroplanes transported

passenger to the ends of the earth. Airlines were operated by the major aeronautical powers' national and private companies. Despite its risks and the lives lost along the way, this revolutionary mode of travel caused a permanent change of perspective. Aviation also became an instrument for domination and supremacy amongst competing nations.

Through a number of works brought together for the first time, the exhibition gives prominence to the transformations within society. It bears witness to the impact of aeronautics on the arts, architecture and visual culture.

The itinerary questions the processes that led societies, within the space of a few years, from hopes for a world without borders to the massacre at Guernica.

## THE EXHIBITION

### The birth of commercial aviation

At the end of the Great War, new civilian markets were needed for aircraft that had been mass-produced during the conflict. Demobilised pilots were employed by the airlines created from 1919. Passengers were few in number, and the aircraft were mainly used to transport mail, which constituted the airlines' only profitable activity. In France, the development of air transport was dependent on financial support from the State, accompanied by vigorous propaganda.



### Conquering the world: the great long-distance flights

Involving a combination of personal and industrial ambition, as well as patriotic issues, the great air raids were amongst the most significant events of the interwar period.



Due to the adventurous nature of these remote expeditions and the courage of their crews, the impact of these raids was far-reaching. The press echoed such attempts, which potentially paved the way for future commercial routes.

## Emancipation, modernity and speed



The interwar period was characterised by a fascination with speed and mechanisation, which was epitomised by the aeroplane.

Although ticket prices meant that air transport was the preserve of the elite, aviation generated popular enthusiasm, as evidenced by the success of air shows.

The figure of the aviatrix emerged from within a society that was characterised by a strong urge to liberate the mind and the body.

### Aviation at the heart of modernity

Aviation was considered to be one of the spearheads of modernity within western societies. Fundamentally urban, modernity meant a new relationship – physical, symbolic and aesthetic – to geography and time. The attraction of the new modes of transport – aviation and the automobile – was all the stronger since the era valued speed and technical progress. Posters, toys and everyday objects shaped the mental representations associated with this promising new mode of transport.



## The avant-garde movement and aeronautics

In the 1920s the avant-garde movement took an interest in aeronautics, which it saw as a means to break with the artistic traditions of the pre-war period.



With their unique vision of the world, aeroplane flights and aerial photography brought a shift in approach. Painters and photographers seized this reversal of perspective, which came to characterise modernity.

Advances in aeronautical construction also inspired major designers in the fields of architecture and furniture.

## Pilots and myths



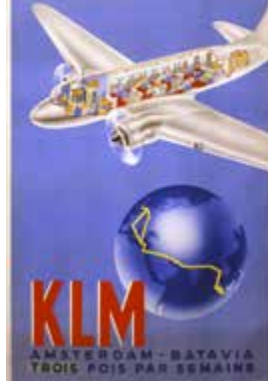
In the 1920s, planes had open cockpits; aviators were exposed to the elements, against which their leather clothing offered scant protection.

But above and beyond pilots' physical abilities, their heroic status was associated with the outstanding moral qualities they were accorded. Aviators such as Jean Mermoz epitomised the ideal of the "new man". Some of these personalities were set up as role models and exploited by ideologists, whilst others voluntarily entered politics in the 1930s.



## A new way to travel in the 1930s

Pampered and few in number, those who travelled by air acquired a prestige that was due both to the price of the tickets and fashionable portrayal: taking a plane meant moving with the times and sharing an adventure with other privileged members of society. Above all, and despite its unpredictability, air transport promised speed and savings in time compared to railway and maritime routes.



## Aviation and power



Military or civil, aviation constituted a propaganda tool that served to influence states.

Imperial Airways and Air France dominated the cities along the colonial routes, whilst the Zeppelin carried the Nazi emblem over the Atlantic.

The new airport terminals served to stage the exercise of power, particularly within totalitarian states that organised displays of prowess in military aviation for the benefit of their populations gathered on the terraces.

## The airborne threat

In an increasingly perilous context, the interwar aeronautics industry was essentially supported by military procurement.

Adolf Hitler's assumption of power in 1933 precipitated Germany's rearmament. Europe lived in fear of a new war.

The airborne threat was echoed in its representations, including within science-fiction. In 1937, during the Spanish War, the use of mass bombing in Guernica provided brutal grounds for such fears.



### Legends and credits

P.6  
**Poster for the great aeronautical show**  
Robert Mallet-Stevens (1886-1945)  
France, 1920 - Lithography  
Musée de l'Air et de l'Espace - Paris-Le Bourget

**ML-5 toy plane**  
manufacturer: jouet magnin de Lyon  
France, XX<sup>e</sup> siècle  
Lithographed sheet metal, clock mechanism, synthetic materials  
Musée de l'Air et de l'Espace - Paris-Le Bourget

**Dieudonné Costes and Joseph Le Brix aboard the Breguet 19 Nungesser-Coli**  
André Alibert (1889-1974) studio photo André-Le Bourget  
France, 1927 - Photography  
© Coll. musée de l'Air et de l'Espace - Paris-Le Bourget

**Model of the Couzinet type 70 Arc-en-ciel aircraft**  
Scale 1/16<sup>e</sup> - manufacturer: établissements couzinet  
France, 1930s - Painted wood  
© Musée de l'Air et de l'Espace - Paris-Le Bourget / C. Semenoff-T-C

P.7  
**Adrienne Bolland aboard a Caudron G.3**  
Agence Monde et Caméra  
France, around 1920 - photography  
Musée de l'Air et de l'Espace - Paris-Le Bourget

**Lignes Farman, the great air expresses poster**  
Albert Solon (1897-1973)  
1930 - Lithography  
Musée de l'Air et de l'Espace - Paris-Le Bourget

P.8  
**Caudron-Renault C-714R aircraft**  
Manufacturer: Caudron-Renault  
Issy-les-Moulineaux, 1938-1939  
wood, metal  
Musée de l'Air et de l'Espace - Paris-Le Bourget

**Raymond Delmotte, test pilot**  
France, 1930s - Photography  
Musée de l'Air et de l'Espace - Paris-Le Bourget

P.9  
**KLM's Amsterdam-Batavia route, three times a week poster**  
Paul Erkelens (1912- ?)  
1937 - Lithography  
Musée de l'Air et de l'Espace - Paris-Le Bourget

**Douglas DC-2 under the control tower at Le Bourget airport**  
Agence Safrà  
Le Bourget, around 1938 - photography  
Musée de l'Air et de l'Espace - Paris-Le Bourget

P.10  
**For the disarmament of nations poster**  
Jean Carlu (1900-1997)  
Photography: André Vigneau (1892-1968)  
1932 - Lithography  
Musée de l'Air et de l'Espace - Paris-Le Bourget

## AROUND THE EXHIBITION

### Tour and activities (All activities are in French)

A number of activities, open to all, are offered in connection with the exhibition:

#### PLANETARIUM SESSIONS

« NAVIGATE BY THE STARS » – 30 MN

Through the example of a flight on the Aéropostale (airmail service) routes to Santiago in Chile, discover how air navigators used the stars to orient themselves during the interwar period.

✦ on Wednesdays, weekends, bank holidays and during the school holidays

#### ART & AIR GUIDED TOURS – 1H30

Sharpen your artistic eye and explore the museum's collections and the *Golden years of aviation* exhibition from a new perspective.

#### L'ART VU DU CIEL (ART SEEN FROM THE SKIES) WORKSHOP – 1H

Explore the museum's and exhibition's works that were inspired by aerial views, and create your own landscape seen from above in the style of Cubist or Futurist painters.

✦ The times of activities open to the general public are available at reception and on the museum's website: [museeairespace.fr](http://museeairespace.fr)

### School groups

Activities for school groups, associated with the temporary exhibition, are also offered; all the details can be found on: [museeairespace.fr/vous-etes-enseignant](http://museeairespace.fr/vous-etes-enseignant)

### Exhibition catalogue

*Les Années folles de l'aviation : l'aéronautique au cœur de la modernité (1919-1939)*

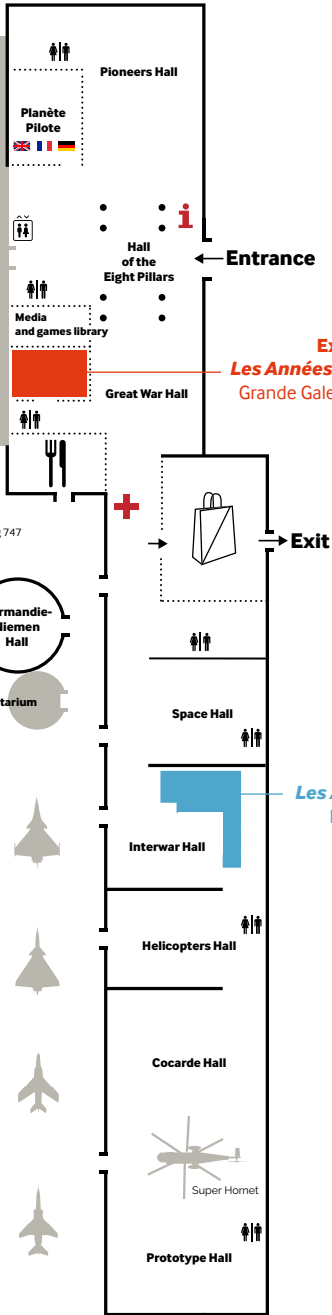
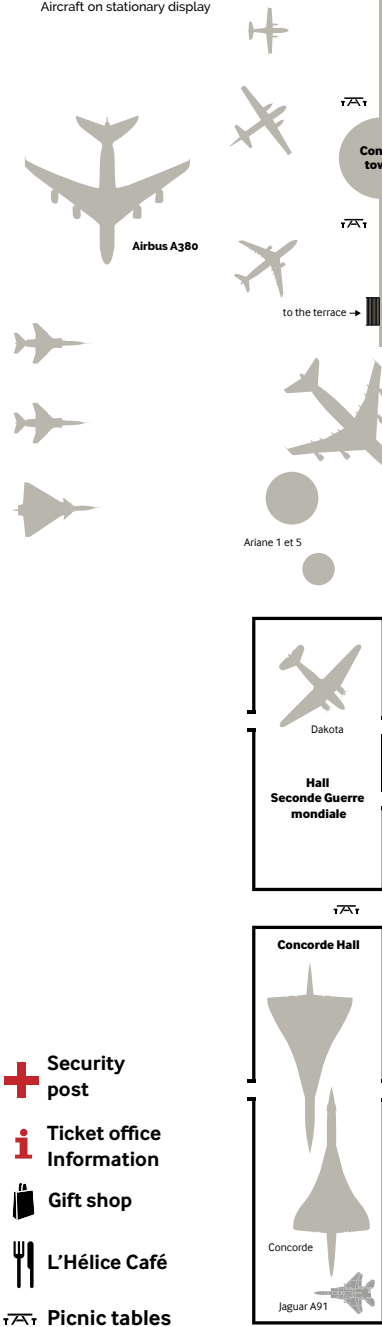
18 articles and numerous illustrations to enhance your tour and learn more about aviation's impact on society and the arts during the interwar period.

Jointly published by the National Air and Space Museum of France/ Liénart publications

Available in the museum's shop and in bookshops €30.

# MUSEUM MAP

**Tarmac**  
Aircraft on stationary display



**Exhibition**  
*Les Années folles de l'aviation*  
Grande Galerie exhibition room

**Exhibition**  
*Les Années folles de l'aviation*  
Interwar exhibition room

- Security post
- Ticket office
- Information
- Gift shop
- L'Hélice Café
- Picnic tables