

PRESS RELEASE

JULES VERNE

The Boundaries of Imagination

Vigo hosts the exhibition of the Telefónica Trust about Jules Verne and his influence on important historical personalities.

This exhibition includes specific contents regarding Verne's links to the city and it is on show at MARCO's ground floor from 19 April to 16 September.



Curators: María Santoyo and Miguel A. Delgado
Content consultant for Vigo: Eduardo Rolland

19 April – 16 September 2018
MARCO, ground floor exhibition halls
Opening hours: Tuesday to Saturday (inc. holidays) from 11am to 2:30pm and from 5pm to 9pm
Sunday from 11am to 2:30pm

OVERVIEW

Jules Verne. The Limits of Imagination is an exhibition promoted by the Telefónica Trust that, after visiting the Telefónica Trust Spaces in Madrid and Argentina, as well as the Niemeyer Centre in Avilés, Spain, comes to MARCO in Vigo from 19 April to 16 September.

Jules Verne (Nantes, 1828 – Amiens, 1905) had a curiosity and a thirst for knowledge and learning that led him to become one of the most prolific, popular and influential authors of world literature, publishing over a hundred works where he created imaginary settings with a wonderful verisimilitude thanks to his interest for science and his eagerness to research. His novels depicted the spirit of his time, mapped the known world and opened the gates to places barely imagined so far.

The exhibition, curated by **María Santoyo** and **Miguel A. Delgado**, intends to draw those often invisible limits between fiction and reality, limits that in this case fade and converge. Through thirty of his most representative works, and through the environments featured in his novels—earth, air, ice, water, space, time—, we will plunge into Verne's imaginary accompanied by his contemporaries. Travelling all over his works and legacy, the exhibition dissects Verne's literary universe and translates the feats and adventures he wrote about into reality thanks to twenty-seven historical personalities who dared to make them true and pioneered their fields from mid-19th century to early-20th century.

Taking into account the particular links that Jules Verne had with the town—2018 will be the 150th anniversary of the visit of Captain Nemo's *Nautilus* to the Bay of Vigo in *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, and the 140th anniversary of Verne's first visit to Vigo—, the exhibition will include particularly related contents thanks to the expert advice offered by **Eduardo Rolland**. For instance, the *Mobilis in Mobili* section will show together for the first time several unique items related to the French author and lent by private collections and museums of Galicia, from a model of the vessel *Saint Michel III* to Dutch engravings of the Battle of Rande and original parts from 19th-century diving suits.

During its stay in Vigo, the exhibit will be combined with several supplementary activities—guided tours, talks, round tables, a book exhibition at the Library-Documentation Centre, etc.—, as well as with a programme for students of all ages.

The exhibition *Jules Verne. The Limits of Imagination* has been made possible thanks to the collaboration of a number of national and international museums and institutions—lending the pieces making up the exhibition— together with priceless items from private collections like those of Francisco Román Huerta, Diego Quevedo Carmona or Clark & Joan Worswick. The section showing the links between Jules Verne and Vigo consists of pieces lent by the Sea Museum of Galicia, the Quiñones de León Museum of Vigo, the Massó Museum, the Museum of Pontevedra, the Port of Vigo Authority and private collections.

A WALK THROUGH THE EXHIBITION

VERNE'S STUDY

The walk through the exhibition starts at Verne's Study, his creative space, where the writer's imagination is dissected analysing his novels and the characters, fantasy creatures and animals, means of transportation and devices that fill his works. This section features several literary gems, amongst them the first edition of *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* published in the world (1869), which due to historical events happened to be a Spanish edition. We will also find a series of illustrations featuring Verne's characters, from Phileas Fogg to Captain Hatteras; or devices and inventions that can be found in his novels, like the telegraph or the Ruhmkorff coil. Lastly, an audio-visual installation shows us the bestiary appearing throughout his vast literary work.

VERNE'S TERRITORIES

Known and Unknown Earth

With his *Extraordinary Voyages*, Verne intended to show the whole world to his readers; hence their subtitle *Known and Unknown Worlds*. Verne was well informed of the great expeditions of his time, an age when imperialism led to faraway and unexplored places like the deepest regions of Africa. A prominent piece of this section is an audio-visual installation with six shows reproducing the phenomena found by the protagonists of *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1864) during their voyage: the cave, shadow play, a volcano, or fire as primeval light. Through mapping we can also follow the geographical routes along the five continents in Verne's most important novels.

Globetrotters

Jules Verne was born in Nantes in 1828 and, 44 years later, he wrote *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1872). In a little over four decades, means of transportation experienced a fast-paced development that changed how the world and time were understood. Phileas Fogg's impossible challenge to go around the world becomes feasible by mid-19th century, and Verne uses in his novel all available information regarding global communications. In his voyage, Phileas Fogg resorts to all the means of transportation existing at the time, from sleighs to elephants, from packet boats to trains.

This section is a tribute to world travellers and explorers, and to all the landscapes that Fogg found during his adventures. Over thirty photographs of that time —from the Clark & Joan Worswick Collection, one of the most important private collections in the world, famous for gathering together the legacy of American photographer Walker Evans— show us all the places visited as they were in the age of Phileas Fogg. Most of the pictures were taken in exotic Middle Eastern countries and reveal civilizations that are now lost, for instance Imperial China.

The character of the globetrotter is illustrated as well by Nellie Bly, the American journalist that in 1889-1890 managed to go around the world in 72 days, beating Phileas Fogg's record. During her trip, she even made a stop in Amiens to visit Verne.

In this section we will discover as well the territories appearing in *Around the World in Eighty Days* from a theatrical perspective. For instance, we'll see Orson Welles' and Cole Porter's *mise*

en scène of their musical *Around the World* thanks to previously unpublished photographs and audio clips from the show.

Mobilis in Mobili. Verne and Vigo

A passion for the sea is one of the recurring topics in Jules Verne's literary universe. Although several novels like *In Search of the Castaways* deal with the subject, his best work on the topic is clearly *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*.

In this novel, Verne came up with a device that captivated the person who eventually invented the first electric submarine: the Spanish seaman Isaac Peral. Models and posters of the first commercial packet boats of the 19th century, pictures of the *Great Eastern* —the largest transatlantic of its time, where Verne travelled in 1867— or memorabilia of Isaac Peral allow us to know better the maritime transports of the age. This section is completed with the first underwater photographs taken deeper than 50 meters by biologist Louis Marie Auguste Boutan.

The hall named *Mobilis in Mobili* focuses on the links of the French author with Vigo thanks to his two stays in town, the Battle of Rande and the novel *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*. Here we can find unique pieces lent by the Sea Museum of Galicia, the Quiñones de León Museum of Vigo, the Massó Museum, the Museum of Pontevedra, the Port of Vigo Authority and private collections.

The Battle of Rande, fought in October 1702 between the English-Dutch and the Spanish-French coalitions during the War of the Spanish Succession, gave rise to the legend of sunken galleons laden with a great treasure. In search for this treasure Verne describes us Captain Nemo, the protagonist of *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, and the visit of the *Nautilus* to the Bay of Vigo. This section allows us to enjoy Dutch engravings of the Battle of Rande, wood planks from the Treasure Fleet galleons, shares of treasure-salvaging companies and singular items like an English coin minted with precious metals from the English bounty or one of the popular "Rande canes" that were sold in the 19th century.

We can also admire an original 19th-century diving suit, including its pump and helmet; an old rudder, and models of merchant steamers like those appearing in Verne's novels or arriving at the author's hometown. We also show the first edition in the world of the novel *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, which was published in Spain before the French edition.

A model of the *Saint Michel III*, the luxury yacht that brought Jules Verne to Vigo, gives us a chance to remember his stays in town. A city map of that time allows us to check the spots he visited in 1878 and 1884, enjoying the local festivities, witnessing the procession of the Christ of Victory from the balconies of El Casino or attending a ball at the La Tertulia club.

The influence of Verne's imagination in future technical advances is clearly shown in the "torpedo-launching buoy" presented by Antonio Sanjurjo Badía in 1898, thirty years after the publication of *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*. Although everything leads to think that the industrialist and the writer never met, the former most likely read his novels and dreamt of them when he built his device.

Deserts of Ice

In Verne's times, the Poles were the limit between the known and the unknown world and enthralled a lot of readers. That curiosity for undiscovered territories is shown in the exhibition

through personalities who organized expeditions to those frozen and inhospitable lands, anticipated and imagined by Verne in *An Antarctic Mystery* (1897) or *The Adventures of Captain Hatteras* (1886).

This section shows pictures of failed polar expeditions like those of the Swede S. A. Andrée or the Irishman Sir Ernest Shackleton, a real-life Captain Hatteras who wanted to be the first person to cross Antarctica from coast to coast. Ten pictures of this expedition —their frozen film negatives were found in Antarctica in 2013— are exhibited for the first time in Spain.

Floating or Flying

A special section is devoted to the controversy that raged in the first days of aeronautics between those who upheld lighter-than air flight —i.e., ballooning— and those who advocated heavier-than-air flight —i.e., the first airplanes—. A walk through the conquest of air led by personalities like Brazilian pioneer Santos Dumont, considered by many to be the first person to make a plane fly in 1906, or French photographer Nadar, author of the first airborne photographs in history and an enthusiast of ballooning, depicted by Verne in *From the Earth to the Moon* and *Around the Moon*.

Around the Moon

The notion to travel to the Moon, present in world literature since the 4th century BC, was a recurring topic in 19th-century popular culture, and Verne was no exception, as we can see in his novels *From the Earth to the Moon* (1865) and *Around the Moon* (1870). Both left a deep impression in collective imagination and had amazing similarities with the real voyage of humans to our satellite in 1969.

A geodesic installation shows twenty ways to travel to the Moon described in world literature, from Hindu Vedas to *Woman in the Moon*, written by German author Thea von Harbou and filmed by Fritz Lang. This lunar fever is also shown in several posters related to the Moon: shows of that time, images of films by George Méliès, or operas by Jacques Offenbach inspired in Verne's works; as well as in the documentary creative piece *Living in a Bullet*, an enactment of *From the Earth to the Moon*, a voyage that Verne imagined in a lunar projectile fired from a cannon.

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Verne has been described as the father of modern science fiction, when what he actually did was gathering and reflecting in his literary legacy the progress that characterized the second half of the 19th century. There were only two exceptions where the French writer truly went beyond his age and time: the novel *Paris in the Twentieth Century* (1863), a tale revolving around progress based on the rule of scientism; and *The Day of an American Journalist in 2889* (1891), a much more positive story where technology is beneficial for humankind... Two very different concepts of progress by Verne.

The epilogue of the exhibition leads us into these two futuristic works through the illustrations of 19th-century French authors who imagined the scientific advances of the year 2000 and the engravings of French artist Albert Robida, who anticipated in the time of Verne some inventions of that distant 20th century. The exhibition concludes with the cryptogram of a quote from Verne that sums up the meaning of his literary work.

Information and Guided Tours

Our museum staff is available to help the visitors regarding any question or information about the exhibition, as well as during regular guided tours:

Every day at 6pm

Personalized visits for groups available, for bookings please call: +34 986 113900/11

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