



22 FEB
13 SEP
2026



**MARI
TIME
REVO
LUTIO
NEN**

museum
kunst der westküste

MARITIME REVOLUTIONS

MKdW hosts the International
Maritime Museum Hamburg

The 19th century was a time of great change. The invention of the steam engine heralded an era of intense transformation: the steam engine also changed shipping like no other invention before. Technical change also brought about profound changes in many areas of society. Impressive paintings and ship models show how the 'maritime revolutions' of the 19th century shaped seafaring. The exhibition highlights the changing relationship between sailing ships and steamships, presents iron giants and their eccentric creators, and shows how sea travel changed from a mere means of transport to a luxurious experience.

James Tibbits Willmore
(after Turner, J. M. W.)
The Fighting
Temeraire
1861

The legendary Royal
Navy man of war
"Temeraire" is being
towed away for
scrapping by a new
model steamship in
1838. J. M. W.
Turner's famous
painting looks back
melancholically on
the transition from
sailing ships to steam
ships.



MERCANTILE REVOLUTION

Commercial shipping between wind and steam

For over 3000. years, wind determined seafaring – and its violence made seafaring a dangerous undertaking. The steam engine made it possible for the first time to sail the seas independently of the whims of the wind.

Starting from the rivers and coasts, steamships soon conquered the oceans and began a race for ever faster connections between the continents. In a final golden age of the sailing ships, the dangerous voyages around the dreaded Cape Horn led to the formation of close-knit seafaring communities.

IRON REVOLUTION

From wooden frames to iron plates

Steam power not only changed the way ships moved through the seas, it also transformed shipbuilding itself. Iron and steel were introduced to the shipyards. A new professional group turned the craft of shipbuilding into a science: engineers experimented with new materials and methods and created ever larger designs. Despite all the technological advances, seafaring remained a risky undertaking. Even the iron giants remained vulnerable to the forces of the sea.

The Great Eastern and the frigate Iris in Sheerness . Robert Charles Dudley, 1865

When it was launched, the enormous "Great Eastern" was by far the largest ship ever built. This contemporary watercolour painting impressively illustrates its enormous dimensions.



Poster "Hamburg"
Ivan Sally Seligmann
1928

The Jewish artist impressively symbolised Hamburg's aura as the 'Gateway to the World', which also embodied the flair of wanderlust and cosmopolitanism in the late phase of the great ocean liners.



TOURISM REVOLUTION

The rediscovery of sea travel

Many people were initially suspicious of steamships, and passengers sceptically described the noises on board the new machines. With increasingly lavishly equipped ships, shipping companies attempted to transform sea voyages from a weeks-long ordeal into a luxurious experience. At the same time, passenger steamers remained a symbol of the strict class society of their time. Whereas sea journeys had previously been merely a means of transporting people across the sea to their destination on land, Albert Ballin in Hamburg turned them into an end in themselves: in 1891, the first ship set sail from Cuxhaven on a round trip to the Mediterranean – marking the birth of modern cruising.



Internationales
Maritimes Museum
Hamburg

MKdW hosts the International Maritime Museum Hamburg

Internationales Maritimes
Museum Hamburg
Peter Tamm Sen. Stiftung

Kaispeicher B
Koreastraße 1
20457 Hamburg
Tel. +49 40 300 92 30- 0
E-Mail: info@imm-hamburg.de
www.imm-hamburg.de

Für mehr Informationen zur
Ausstellung:

Museum Kunst der Westküste
Hauptstraße 1
25938 Alkersum/Föhr
Tel. +49 4681 747400
info@mkdw.de - mkdw.de

Öffnungszeiten

Donnerstag	11:00–16:00	Montag	Geschlossen
Freitag	18:00–23:00	Dienstag	11:00–16:00
Samstag	11:00–16:00	Mittwoch	11:00–16:00
Sonntag	11:00–16:00		