

# 【Program #6】

## The background behind cars becoming a culture

10:30 - 11:35  
Thursday, 31st October

**Facilitator** Fumihiko Kondo  
Daihatsu Motor Co., Ltd.

**Speaker 1** Leslie Kendall  
Petersen Automotive Museum

**Speaker 2** Sébastien de Baere  
Autoworld Museum

### Automotive Museums: Their history and purpose

#### Speaker : Leslie Kendall (Petersen Automotive Museum)

Compared to precious gems, old master paintings, and pre-Columbian ceramics, automobiles are a recent collecting phenomenon. And even though they have been considered an integral part of our material culture for more than a century, professionals at many of the most prestigious museums and cultural institutions around the world are at a loss when it comes to deciding what vehicles to collect—or even if they should—let alone how to preserve and interpret them. “Why should anyone care about these kinds of plebian, workaday appliances?” some ask. “Don’t cars have more in common with toasters and washing machines than they do with mainstream museum objects like sculptures and fossils?” The answer now seems obvious, but the process of drawing a conclusion took decades.

### How automobiles became "culture" and its future prospect by Autoworld

#### Speaker : Sébastien de Baere (Autoworld Museum)

##### The early days

- Challenge for the engineers to make a self-propelled “horsless carriage” : auto-mobile
- A mechanical toy for the rich “sportsman”
- A practical means of individual transportation, reserved for the rich

##### De automobile becomes more popular

- Owner want their car to stand out from the rest. they want luxury and originality. They work with the best craftsmen and even artists
- Makes develop their own image, mainly by the form of the radiator (most makes only deliver chassis to specialist coachbuilders)
- Omnibuses and taxis appear.
- Transportation of goods + key role in the first mechanical war

##### Interbellum

- The automobile becomes affordable: mass production introduced with Ford Model T, appearance of popular makes both in US and Europe
- Custom bodied cars for the high society: originality, luxury and beauty
- The first “concours d’élégance” combining stunning bodywork and fashion
- Body styles follow trends in architecture and art
- Artful posters by famous artists and advertising
- Cars also appear in art
- The car plays an important part in everyday life
- Heydays for world famous coachbuilders, with France and Italy leading the way
- More and more attention to styling of mass produced cars

##### Post war

- Individual coachwork is too expensive and goes out of fashion
- Great importance is given to styling of the cars
- Styling bureaus appear and car makes have their own styling department
- Models change at a high rate
- Car makes invest a lot in image of the brand
- Cars are part of the image of their owner
- 1972 MOMA New York acquires a Cisitalia 202 coupé and exhibits it as a work of art.
- Appearance of art cars (Hervé Poulain) and cars as sole object of artworks (Andy Warhol)
- Art museums organise exhibitions dedicated to cars and motorcycles (Auto Art & Architecture, Guggenheim Bilbao 2022)
- From the 1970’s onwards cars become collectible
- Cars have become cultural heritage like architecture and art. But also a subject for investments. This is illustrated by the growing interest in specialised auctions and rising prices

##### Future

- The fact that cars, even recent (super)cars, fetch high prices at auction, is proof that they are sure investments, that they are part of modern culture and will remain so in the foreseeable future.
- It is also a guarantee for car museums that their significance will only grow.
- This trend will only become stronger, due to the fact that the automobile world is facing a complete make-over