Vorticism

"Contradict yourself. In order to live, you must remain broken up." — Wyndham Lewis

Vorticism was formed in 1914 by the writer and artist Wyndham Lewis. It was partially inspired by Cubism and Futurism. The artists rejected traditional representational art in favour of a geometric style that tended towards a hard-edged abstraction.

Although Lewis proved unable to harness the talents of his disparate group of avant-garde artists, for a brief period Vorticism proved to be an exciting intervention and an artistic riposte to Filippo Marinetti's Italian Futurism and the Post-impressionism of Roger Fry's Omega workshop.

Vorticist paintings emphasised 'modern life' as an array of bold lines and harsh colours drawing the viewer's eye into the centre of the canvas and Vorticist sculpture created energy and intensity through 'direct carving'

The painting of 1961, ***The Vorticists at the Restaurant de la Tour Eiffel- Spring, 1915***, is an imaginative reconstruction by William Roberts of the Vorticist artists at the *Restaurant de la Tour Eiffel*, 1 Percy Street, London. It features, from left to right, seated: Cuthbert Hamilton, Ezra Pound, William Roberts, Wyndham Lewis, Frederick Etchells and Edward Wadsworth. Standing in the doorway are Jessica Dismorr and Helen Saunders. Joe, the waiter, and Rudolph Stulik, the proprietor of the restaurant from 1908-1937, are on the right. Etchells is holding volume I of the Vorticist publication *'Blast'*.

In the late 1950s, Roberts commented on the evenings at the restaurant in *'The Listener'* (21 March 1957): 'In my memory la cuisine française [French cooking] and Vorticism are indissolubly linked.'

Prelude to Vorticism

In the summer of 1913 Roger Fry, with Duncan Grant and Venessa Bell set up the Omega Workshops in Fitzrovia – in the heart of bohemian London. Fry was an advocate of an increasingly abstract art and design practice, and the studio/gallery/retail outlet allowed him to employ and support artists in sympathy with this approach, such as Wyndham Lewis, Frederick Etchells, Cuthbert Hamilton and Edward Wadsworth. Lewis had made an impact at the Allied Artists' Salon the previous year with a huge virtually abstract work, *Kermesse* (now lost), and in the same year he had worked with the American sculptor Jacob Epstein on the decoration of Madame Strindberg's notorious cabaret theatre club *The Cave of the Golden Calf*.

The Dancers, 1912, is probably the closest surviving study for 'Kermesse', It is a study drawing of three figures. Two figures, to the left and centre, are upright. The third figure is bending backwards, with the lower part of the body facing back and the upper body and head turned to the viewer. The left arm of this figure is supporting and the right arm is bent towards the head. There is little background detail.

Lewis, however, split off at an early stage, after accusing Fry of misappropriating a commission to decorate a room at the Ideal Home Exhibition in the autumn of 1913. In October 1913, Lewis, Etchells, Wadsworth and Hamilton announced their resignation from Omega in a letter, known as the 'Round Robin', to its shareholders and patrons. This letter contained accusations particularly against Fry, criticising the workshop's products and ideology.

"It is more comfortable for me, in the long run, to be rude than polite." – Wyndham Lewis

The **Omega Workshops Ltd.** was a design enterprise founded by Roger Fry and members of the Bloomsbury Group and established in July 1913. It was located at 33, Fitzroy Square in London, and was founded with the intention of providing graphic expression to the essence of the Bloomsbury ethos. The Workshops were also closely associated with the Hogarth Press. Fry, who was the principal figure behind the project, believed that artists could design, produce and sell their own works, and that writers could also be their own printers and publishers.

Fry aimed to remove what he considered to be the false divisions between the decorative and fine arts, and to give his artist friends an additional income opportunity in designing furniture, textiles and other household accessories. Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant produced designs for Omega, which closed in 1919, after a clearance sale, and was officially liquidated on 24 July 1920. A series of poor financial decisions and internal conflicts all contributed to its decline. At the time of its closure, Fry was the only remaining original member working regularly at the workshop. Despite this, Omega became influential in interior design in the 1920s.

Omega Workshop, Exhibition Poster

The quarrel with Roger Fry provided Lewis with a pretext to leave the Omega Workshops and set up a rival organisation. Financed by Lewis's painter friend Kate Lechmere, the Rebel Art Centre was established in March 1914 at 38, Great Ormond Street. It was to be a platform for the art and ideas of Lewis's circle, and a lecture series included talks by Lewis's friend the poet Ezra pound, the novelist Ford Madox Ford Hueffer and the Italian 'Futurist', Marinetti.

The Rebel Art Centre was not a commercial success. It attracted only two poor quality students and received only the most minor commissions. It closed in June 1914 when Lechmere declined to pay the next quarter's rent. She was forced to resort to solicitors' letters to try to get her £100 back from Lewis.

When Marinetti and the English Futurist C.R.W. Nevinson published a manifesto of *'Vital English Art',* giving the Rebel Art Centre as an address, it seemed like an attempted takeover. A few weeks later, Lewis took out an advertisement in *The Spectator* to announce the publication of *'The Manifesto of the Vorticists'*, which would, the advertisement promised, be a 'Death Blow to impressionism and Futurism.'

The movement was introduced to the public by means of the publication of the Vorticist manifesto in ***Blast*** magazine in 1914, in which Lewis "blasted" "bourgeois Victorian vistas" and "blessed" "the steep walls of factories" and England as an "industrial island machine". It saw only two issues. Ironically, the journal's title had been suggested by Nevinson, who was now persona non grata since the *'Vital English Art'* manifesto.

It was only with the publication of *BLAST* and the First Vorticist Exhibition at the Doré Galleries in London in 1915, that this aggressive and confrontational art movement similar to Italian Futurism appeared on British shores. Led by (with a certain amount of guile and self promotion) the self-styled ‘enemy’ Percy Wyndham Lewis. With Vorticism abstract modern art had arrived in Britain.

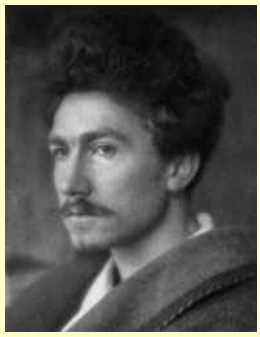
Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876 – 944) had been a familiar – and provocative – presence in London since 1910, and Lewis had seen him create an art movement on the basis of his 'Futurist' manifesto. It seemed as if everything novel or shocking in London was now being described as 'Futurist' – including the work of the English Cubists.

The colourful, Orphism inspired ***Portrait of Marinetti*** (c.1915-21) by **Růžena Zátková** (also **Rougina Zatkova**) (1885 – 1923), conveys the manic expression of his eyes and demonic character.

Zatkova was a painter and sculptor who has been regarded as the "only authentic Czech “futurist”. As a result of her Bohemian heritage and her decade-long residency in Rome, Růžena Zátková became an important artistic link between Russian and Italian Futurism. Zátková is also considered one of the pioneers of kinetic art.

Ezra Pound (photograph1920) had introduced the concept of 'the vortex' in relation to modernist poetry and art early on in 1914. At its most obvious, for example, London could be seen to be a 'vortex' of intellectual and artistic activity. However, for Pound there was a more specific – if obscure – meaning: “[The vortex was] that point in the cyclone where energy cuts into space and imparts form to it ... the pattern of angles and geometric lines which is formed by our vortex in the existing chaos.” In the belief “that artists should observe the energy of modern society as if from a still point at the centre of a whirling vortex,” Lewis saw the potential of 'Vorticism' as an exciting rallying call that was also sufficiently vague, he hoped, to embrace the individualism of the rebel artists.

Ezra Weston Loomis Pound (1885 – 1972) was an expatriate American poet and critic, a major figure in the early modernist poetry movement, and a collaborator in Fascist Italy and the Saló Republic during World War II. His works include *Ripostes* (1912), *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920), and his 800-page epic poem, *The Cantos* (1917–1962).



Pound photographed in 1913 by **Alvin Langdon Coburn**

Pound's contribution to poetry began in the early 20th century with his role in the development of Imagism, a movement stressing precision and economy of language. Working in London as foreign editor of several American literary magazines, he helped discover and shape the work of contemporaries such as T.S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, and James Joyce. He was responsible for the 1914 serialization of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the 1915 publication of Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, and the serialization from 1918 of Joyce's *Ulysses*. Hemingway wrote in 1932 that, for poets born in the late 19th or early 20th century, not to be influenced by Pound would be "like passing through a great blizzard and not feeling its cold."

Ezra Pound by **Wyndham Lewis** (1919)

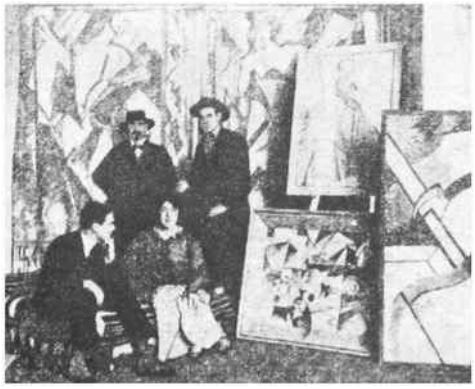
Gaudier Brzeska, ***Hieratic Head of Ezra Pound***

Kate Lechmere painting ***Buntem Vogel*** at the Rebel Art Centre, 1914

Kate Elizabeth Lechmere (1887 – 1976) was a British painter who with Wyndham Lewis, was the co-founder of the Rebel Art Centre in 1914. Lechmere paid the first three months' rent for the centre, paid to have the interior walls moved in order to create the right sized spaces for studios, and even bought a new suit for Lewis. She lived in a small flat at the top of the building.

As far as is known, none of Lechmere's paintings have survived. She served as a nurse in England during the First world War and had a three-year relationship with the poet and critic T.E.Hulme before he was killed. After the war she became a successful milliner.

Photograph at the Rebel Art Centre, 1914: Kate Lechmere, with Cuthbert Hamilton, and standing, Edward Wadsworth and Wyndham Lewis.



Smiling Woman Ascending a Stair is a 1912 painting of Lechmere by Lewis. It shows his early move towards abstraction and the compression of the subject matter into a formalised design expressed by straight lines and clearly defined shapes, arranged to emphasise a dynamic curving motion, as though revolving around the shadowed area of her waist, near the geometrical centre of the painting. Incidental background elements are incorporated into the composition and given equal weight with the main elements.

"That we are eternal miners, lashed in the clumsy process of learning by the retribution that awaits our mistakes, and dreaming, steeped in transcendental values that transform the mechanical basis of our life into a fairyland, is the first truth that we must accept." Wyndham Lewis – *'The Anonymity of Perfection'*

Percy Wyndham Lewis (1882 – 1957) was a British writer, painter and critic. His novels include *Tarr* (1918) and *The Human Age* trilogy, composed of *The Childermass* (1928), *Monstre Gai* (1955) and *Malign Fiesta* (1955). A fourth volume, titled *The Trial of Man*, was unfinished at the time of his death. He also wrote two autobiographical volumes: *Blasting and Bombardiering* (1937) and *Rude Assignment: A Narrative of my Career Up-to-Date* 1950).

His published play, *Enemy of the Stars,* a proto-absurdist, Expressionist drama, has been identified by Lewis scholar Melania Terrazas as a precursor to the plays of Samuel Becket.

Lewis was born reputedly on his father's yacht off the Canadian province of Nova Scotia. His English mother, Anne Stuart Lewis (née Prickett), and American father, Charles Edward Lewis, separated about 1893. His mother subsequently returned to England. Lewis was educated in England at Rugby School and then, from the age of 16, the Slade School of Fine Art, but left for Paris without finishing his course. He spent most of the 1900s travelling around Europe and studying art in Paris. While in Paris, he attended lectures by Henri Bergson on process philosophy.

Lewis sought to combine the strong structure of Cubism, which he found was not "alive", with the liveliness of Futurist art, which lacked structure. The combination was a strikingly dramatic critique of modernity. In his early visual works, Lewis may have been influenced by Bergson's process philosophy. Though he was later savagely critical of Bergson, he admitted in a letter that he "began by embracing his evolutionary system." Nietzsche was an equally important influence

At first glance ***Composition 1*** (1913) presents a compressed series of mechanical forms and abstract references to the modern city. However, it is possible to recognise traces of human figures. Dynamic thrusting shapes rise from the lower left but are contained within a claustrophobic, abstract environment. These forms can be seen as a dancing couple. The woman, on the right, bends backwards. The white parallelogram halfway up the right edge is perhaps her hair. The pleated curving architectural form at the bottom centre could be her skirt.

Ethel (Dolly) Kibblewhite (1873]–1947) was the host of an important artistic and literary salon in the 1910s. The salon was held at her home at 67, Frith Street and presided over by the poet and critic T.E Hulme. It was attended by many of the important literary and artistic figures before the First World War, including C.R.W. Nevinson, Jacob Epstein, J.C.Squire, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Rupert Brook and others.

Lechmere met the critic and poet **T.E. Hulme** (1883–1917), who had an imposing presence, when Lewis brought him to the Rebel Art Centre. Some accounts suggest that Lewis had timed the visit to ensure that Lechmere was out and would not meet Hulme, but she returned unexpectedly early from lunch. In a description that could have been of Lewis, Jacob Epstein who was otherwise full of praise for Hulme, described him as "large and somewhat abrupt in manner. He had the reputation of being a bully and arrogant because of this abruptness." Hulme "excluded women for the most part from his evenings, as he said the sex element interfered with intellectual talk – a confession of his own weakness."

Hulme was a clear rival to Lewis for Lechmere's affections. In addition, he was not deferential like some in Lewis's circle, and praised Jacob Epstein and David Bomberg above Lewis's own work. Lewis saw Hulme as Epstein's man, and lectured Lechmere that "Hulme was Epstein and Epstein was Hulme". Lewis and Hulme had originally been friends, and Lewis had invited him to write an essay on Epstein for the first issue of *BLAST*, but now relations soured. A paranoid and insecure Lewis was afraid that he would lose Lechmere and her financial support, and be replaced at the Centre by Hulme or Epstein. He was right about the first two only. There was no conspiracy to replace him. He took to pacing up and down and calling Lechmere a "bloody bitch", which she chose to ignore.

After a quarrel between Lewis and Lechmere, Lewis pronounced his intention to kill Hulme, and Lechmere followed Lewis through the streets of London begging, "Please don't kill him, please don't". When Lewis eventually found Hulme at Ethel Kibblewhite's salon he burst into the room with the words "What are you doing to me?" A fight ensued and Lewis managed to get Hulme by the throat, but Hulme, who was the more powerful man, got the better of Lewis and after the struggle moved outside, hung him upside down on the railings of nearby Soho Square.

Lechmere then embarked on a three-year relationship with Hulme. In 1914 Hulme volunteered as an artilleryman. In 1917, he was killed by a shell in Flanders. .

As art historian Michael Prodger said, "Vorticism sought to reflect the dynamism of the modern world through angular, fractured, urban and machine-based imagery".

Workshop (c.1914) was an early Vorticist work representing the crowding towers and architecture of a city on the cusp of war. Bold geometric lines extend diagonally across the canvas, abstracting the blocks and walls of a growing London. Ladder-like planes and patterns of squares lead the eyes around the work, bringing them up towards the distant window of blue sky in the centre top, while a rectangular overhang sends them back down, lending a note of claustrophobia to the piece. There is a sharp contrast between the blue, representing a tiny patch of nature, and the many browns, ochres and pinks of the man-made. Shapes and colours jar as the artist strived to produce an art that matched the energy of the modern world. For Lewis, art was always superior to life, and with this work he wanted to present an "attack on traditional harmony."

Lewis himself wrote: "A man who passes his days amid the rigid lines of houses, a plague of cheap ornamentation, noisy street locomotion, the Bedlam of the Press, will evidently possess a different habit of vision to a man living amongst the lines of a landscape."

The painting acted as a vacuum, said art historian Andrew Graham-Dixon: "To look at *Workshop* is to see so much that had been omitted from art in Britain since the middle of the nineteenth century - bright colour, the shapes of modern engineering and architecture, a sense of visual excitement and exhilaration in the face of change - suddenly rushing into English painting".

The outbreak of war in 1914 led Lewis to think about the power of political ideas to form and manipulate crowds. "***The Crowd*** [exhibited 1915?] is the first mobilisation of a country", he wrote in the July 1915 issue of *Blast*. Here tiny, interlinked figures inhabit a vast abstracted city. Some seem to be leaving the 'Enclo[sure]', perhaps climbing towards the hive-like structure of industrial treadmills at the top right. The larger figures at the bottom are ambiguous. They could represent overseers or be inciting the crowd to revolutionary action.

The themes of *Workshop* are further explored in *The Crowd*, the only one of Lewis's paintings from the Vorticist period to survive to this day. Art Critic Mark Hudson described it as "a quintessential Modernist city-scape, at once euphoric and slightly nightmarish, with asymmetric grid-forms offset by busier cell-like structures, all in rich oranges and yellows".

As in *Workshop* we see the urban setting, the grids and ladders, the earthy tones and geometric forms. But in this work humans have been introduced, albeit in robotic form. Brown and red tower blocks tussle for space in the unsettling scene. There is a heavy absence of blue sky or nature, as collections of apparent humanoids bustle up and down the work, often indivisible from the crowd in which they find themselves. People, dwarfed by the buildings surrounding them are rendered stick-like and frantic.

The work was designed to examine the instinctive behaviour of people in crowds and Lewis presented them climbing, scuffling and scurrying like ants in a farm. The eye is drawn to the very centre of the work where someone waves a red flag. On the bottom left however, another figure waves a tricolor - indicating opposition or protest. Indeed, the work's working title was *Revolution*.

Art historian Michael Prodger described the work as the purest example of Lewis's Vorticism. He said the work represented "a schematic metropolis - part Fritz Lang and part Mondrian gone wrong - crawled over by tiny, rudimentary figures. A flag and men with banners suggest this might show an insurrection but it is nevertheless redolent of Lewis's belief that modern man was at heart a dehumanised automaton driven by base passions." Indeed, the work prefigured the most disastrous century of conflict, resolution and alienation in human history.

Timon-Group1, illustrations to Timon of Athens (1912)

By the end of Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* the titular character is living in a cave, cursing his former

friends and all of Athens. “I am Misanthropos and hate mankind,” he tells Alcibiades, a former friend and a visitor to his cave. Timon is what you might call “prickly.”

Some of the most engrossing illustrations of Shakespeare’s rarely performed tragedy come from Wyndham Lewis, who was something of a misanthrope himself.

He hoped to publish an edition of Shakespeare’s play with the prints included. Instead, the prints were published as a portfolio, to Lewis’s disappointment—he still hoped that the illustrations would be published in an edition with Shakespeare’s text, and feared that the portfolio would damage its eventual sales. An edition of the play with Lewis's illustrations was finally published in 2010.

Lewis would later write about *Timon* in his 1927 book, *The Lion and the Fox: The Role of The Hero in the Plays of Shakespeare.* In it, he positions Timon as an idealist: “noble and immaculate.”

The image, ***Timon of Athens; A Feast of Overmen*** (lithograph), can be interpreted in the light of Lewis’s later (dated 1915) Prologue to *Tarr*: “Nietzsche’s books are full of seductions and sugar-plums. They have made 'aristocrats' of people who would otherwise have been only mild snobs or meddlesome prigs... and they have made an Over-man of every vulgarly energetic grocer in Europe.”

Amongst a welter of curves and angularities six or more figures, male and female may be made out, some clothed others nude.

As model citizens of the new world, the Overmen in Lewis’s painting gorge themselves on food and wine at the expense of their host, Timon in Shakespeare’s play. As they carouse they grow in strength and stature and begin to fuse with the inanimate scene around them. Here then is another expression of Lewis’s concern about Nietzsche’s invitation to reconnect with a more basic aspect of life.

The concept of *Übermensch* ('Overman' or 'Superman') arose in the philosopher Nietzsche's ***Also sprach Zarathustra*** *(Thus Spoke Zarathustra.)* It was a concept latched onto and distorted by the Nazis. Along with other intellectuals of the time, Lewis was initially an admirer of Hitler, and after a visit to Berlin, published *Hitler* (1931), a book presenting Adolf Hitler as a "man of peace", with members of his party being threatened by communist street violence. His unpopularity among liberals and anti-fascists grew, especially after Hitler came to power in 1933. Following a second visit to Germany in 1937, Lewis changed his views and began to retract his previous political comments. He recognized the reality of Nazi treatment of Jews after a visit to Berlin in 1937. In 1939, he published an attack on anti-semitism titled *The Jews, Are They Human?*, which was favourably reviewed in *The Jewish Chronicle*. He also published *The Hitler Cult* (1939), which firmly revoked his earlier support for Hitler.

In 1915, the Vorticists held their only U.K. exhibition before the movement broke up, largely as a result of World War I. Lewis himself was posted to the western front and served as a second lieutenant in the Royal Artillery. Much of his time was spent in Forward Observation Posts looking down at apparently deserted German lines. He made vivid accounts of narrow misses and deadly artillery duels.

After the, Third Battle of Ypres, Lewis was appointed an official war artist for both the Canadian and British governments. For the Canadians, he painted ***A Canadian Gun Pit*** (1918) from sketches made on Vimy Ridge.

Lewis described the First World War as "a black solid mass, cutting off all that went before it" and as a "stupid nightmare". This piece depicts the boredom and physical labour involved in what could also be incredibly dangerous work. Lewis drew on his own experiences in the artillery for the work,

Lewis creates tension with the bright orange and purple palette and the sharp diagonals of the gun, the clouds and the canvas which jars with the boredom on the men's faces and the uniformity of the mortars, lined up ready to cause death and disruption. To the top left, trees have been blasted, leaving denuded trunks reaching into nowhere. A note of menace is added in the bent-over soldier's face which art historian Paul Edwards pointed out "is suggestive of a skull with metallic sinews."

He painted one of his best-known works, ***A Battery Shelled*** (1919), drawing on his own experience at Ypres. It was commissioned by the British War Memorials Committee who allowed the artist greater artistic freedoms than the Canadian War Memorials Committee, which deemed abstract art as inadmissible.

The heavily stylized composition shows a scene in which enemy barrages were being suppressed by counter-battery work. The three soldiers in the foreground, rendered in dark greens, blue and black, while looking in different directions, stand calmly before the devastation in the background. Soldiers in the distance are reduced to robotic or marionette-like forms, working or hurrying for cover amid smoke and destruction. They are rendered insect-like and faceless, and are further dehumanized by their colours and contours, similar in comparison to the standing columns of mortars, waiting to be loaded.

The cold expressions of the three officers match the palette and the cold, emotionless detachment with which Lewis presents the scene.

Art critic Jonathan Jones drew attention to the differentiation between the three soldiers at the front and those running in terror beyond: "A group in the foreground are more characterful. They stand pensively, reflecting on the shattered Vorticist battlefield. Why are some human and others not? This painting lets us into the psychology of war. Enemy soldiers and even comrades can seem distant, remote, unreal. In war, you save yourself by effacing fellowship with others."

The work was inspired by Lewis's own experience on the battlefield - he'd served in the Royal Artillery at Passchendaele. In both style and content the work was one of the most controversial to come out of the First World War. As art historian Michael Prodger explained: "When it was exhibited at the Royal Academy neither its enigmatic nature nor its avant-gardism appealed to audiences that wanted something more seemly and obviously commemorative, and the painting was embarrassedly offloaded by the war art committee to the Imperial War Museum".

Lewis exhibited his war drawings and some other paintings of the war in an exhibition, "Guns", in 1918; and later documented his experiences and opinions of this period of his life in the autobiographical *Blasting and Bombardiering* (1937), which covered his life up to 1926.

Although the Vorticist group broke up after the war, Lewis's patron, John Quinn, organized a Vorticist exhibition at the Penguin Club in New York in 1917. His first novel, *Tarr,* was serialized in *The Egoist* during 1916–17 and published in book form in 1918. It is widely regarded as one of the key modernist texts.

After the war, Lewis resumed his career as a painter with a major exhibition, *Tyros and Portraits*, in 1921. "Tyros" were satirical caricatures intended to comment on the culture of the "new epoch" that succeeded the First World War. 'Tyros' were satirical, caricatured figures intended by Lewis to comment on the culture of the 'new epoch' that followed the First World War.

A Reading of Ovid and ***Mr Wyndham Lewis as a Tyro*** are the only surviving oil paintings from this series.

'Tyro' means a novice or beginner, but Lewis expanded on this definition, calling him, in 1921, "a new type of human animal like Harlequin or Punchinello...The Tyro is raw and underdeveloped; his vitality is immense, but purposeless, and hence sometimes malignant. His keynote, however, is vacuity; he is an animated but artificial puppet, a 'novice' to real life."

Lewis was often critical of his artistic contemporaries. He described the 'Tyros' series of paintings as a challenge to the 'Arts-for-Arts-sake dilettantism' that he saw in French painting and in the work of the English Bloomsbury group, such as Duncan Grant.

Lewis also launched in 1921 his second magazine, *The Tyro*, of which, like *Blast*, there were only two

issues. The second (1922) issue contained an important statement of Lewis's visual aesthetic: *"Essay on the Objective of Plastic Art in our Time"*. It was during the early 1920s that he perfected his incisive draughtsmanship.

By the late 1920s he concentrated on writing. He launched another magazine, *The Enemy* (1927–1929), largely written by himself and declaring its belligerent critical stance in its title. The magazine and other theoretical and critical works he published from 1926 to 1929 mark a deliberate separation from the avant-garde and his previous associates. He believed that their work failed to show sufficient critical awareness of those ideologies that worked against truly revolutionary change in the West, and therefore became a vehicle for these pernicious ideologies. His major theoretical and cultural statement from this period is *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926).

Time and Western Man (1927) is a cultural and philosophical discussion that includes penetrating critiques of James Joyce, Gertrude Stein and Ezra Pound that are still read today. Lewis also attacked the process philosophy of Bergson, Samuel Alexander, Alfred North Whitehead and others. By 1931 he was advocating the art of ancient Egypt as impossible to surpass.

It is thought that Lewis made ***Bagdad*** (1927-28) to decorate a cupboard in his studio on Ossington Street, London. The wood panel is composed of several strips joined together. Its title and design may come from a chapter of Lewis's book 'The Caliph's Design', published in 1919. Lewis wrote a short parable set in Baghdad, about a Caliph who is unhappy with the appearance of his city. The Caliph creates a Vorticist-style design, instructing an engineer and architect to 'invent the shapes and conditions that would make it possible to realise my design'. Lewis seems to have developed the imagery from abstract drawings he did the previous year.

In 1930 Lewis published *The Apes of God*, a biting satirical attack on the London literary scene, including a long chapter lampooning the entire Sitwell family. The writer Richard Adlington, however, found it "the greatest piece of *writing* since *Ulysses*", by James Joyce In 1937 Lewis published *The Revenge for Love*, set in the period leading up to the Spanish Civil War and regarded by many as his best novel. It is strongly critical of communist activity in Spain and presents English intellectual fellow travellers as deluded.

In his later years, Lewis found portraiture provided a useful source of income, and produced a number of images depicting his famous friends, including TS Eliot, Ezra Pound, James Joyce, and, the cultural luminary Edith Sitwell.

Made over a period of more than a decade his ***Portrait of Edith Sitwell***, (1921-35) reflects the changing relationship between artist and sitter. The poet Edith Sitwell was part of an aristocratic and cultural elite, and claimed she had to visit Lewis six days a week for ten months while he painted her portrait between 1921 and 1923.

Lewis was close to the wealthy Sitwell family when he began this portrait commission, hoping that they might support him financially in the longer term. However, he abandoned the painting in October 1923 when he had to leave his studio, unable to pay the rent. He finally completed it in 1935. By this point, Lewis resented the Sitwells for being amateur artists and writers. He felt they should instead focus on supporting 'real' artists like himself.

To finish the portrait involved Sitwell spending months in Lewis's rat-infested room. (She complained of rustling in the rubbish that covered the filthy floor.) Sitwell later wrote: "The studio [...] was very large, and the floor was crowded with old newspapers, books, drawings, housemaids' worries, pots, pans, kettles, a tea pot, tins of milk and Mr Lewis's discarded undergarments".

The domestic reality of the situation is not reflected in Sitwell's serene pose, however. The calming blues and greens of Sitwell's coat and the background are echoed in her expressionless face, as she looks down in "Zen-like" contemplation. The books to her right symbolize her role as a poet and critic in a practice that uncharacteristically looks back to Lewis's artistic forebears. Sitwell's hands are hidden, however, in a move that predicts the pair's eventual conflict. (Sitwell was notoriously proud of her slender wrists).

Despite serious illness necessitating several operations, he was very productive as a critic and painter. He produced a book of poems, *One-Way Song*, in 1933, and a revised version of *Enemy of the Stars*. An important book of critical essays also belongs to this period: *Men without Art* (1934). It grew out of a defence of Lewis's satirical practice in *The Apes of God* and puts forward a theory of "non-moral", or metaphysical, satire. The book is probably best remembered for one of the first commentaries onWilliam Faulkner and a famous essay on Ernest Hemingway.

In his later years, Lewis found portraiture provided a useful source of income, and produced a number of images depicting his famous friends, including TS Eliot, Ezra Pound, James Joyce, and, the cultural luminary Edith Sitwell.

The Portrait of T.S. Eliot (1938) is somewhat stylised but more naturalistic than his earlier figure paintings, or his portrait of Edith Sitwell. It shows Eliot from the front as he sits in an armchair, dressed in a lounge suit and a waistcoat. His hands are crossed and he has a serious facial expression. *The Guardian* describes Eliot's face as "a jigsaw puzzle of shadowy half-moons and sharp planes". In the background, on each side of the armchair, are abstracted shapes reminiscent of smoke plumes. The background has been interpreted as an expression of experimental ideas and as two pillars symbolising the male and female sides of creativity, which have been interpreted as a phallus and a bird's nest.

Lewis submitted the portrait to the 1938 exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts, knowing it would be rejected. The rejection caused a reaction from the media, and Augustus John to resign. It gave Lewis attention from a wider public. The phallic shape in the background has been given as a reason for the rejection.

Eliot commended the painting in a letter to Lewis on 21 April 1938: "It seems to me a very good portrait, and one by which I am quite willing that posterity should know me, if it takes any interest in me at all... and I certainly have no desire, now, that my portrait should be painted by any painter whose portrait of me would be accepted by the Royal Academy." According to *The Independent*, the "aura of scandal" around the painting has made it "perhaps the most celebrated" work by Lewis.

In 1932 Walter Sickert had sent him a telegram which said that a pencil portrait of Rebecca West proved him to be *“the greatest portraitist of this or any other time.”*

Lewis spent the Second World War in the United States and Canada. In 1941 in Toronto he produced a series of watercolour fantasies centred on themes of creation, crucifixion and bathing.

He grew to appreciate the cosmopolitan and "rootless" nature of the American melting pot, declaring that the greatest advantage of being American was to have "turned one's back on race, caste, and all that pertains to the rooted state." He praised the contributions of African Americans to American culture, and regarded Diego Rivera, David Siqueiros and José Orozco as the "best North American artists," predicting that when "the Indian culture of Mexico melts into the great American mass to the North, the Indian will probably give it its art." He returned to England in 1945.

By 1951 he was completely blinded by a pituitary tumour that placed pressure on his optic nerve, ending his career as a painter, but he continued writing until his death. He published several autobiographical and critical works: *Rude Assignment* (1950), *Rotting Hill* (1951), a collection of allegorical short stories about his life in "the capital of a dying empire"; *The Writer and the Absolute* (1952), a book of essays on writers including George Orwell, Jean-Paul Sartre and André Malraux; and the semi-autobiographical novel *Self Condemned* (1954).

The BBC commissioned Lewis to complete his 1928 work *The Childermass*, which was published as *The Human Age* and dramatised for the BBC Third Programme in 1955. In 1956 the Tate Gallery held a major exhibition of his work, "Wyndham Lewis and Vorticism", in the catalogue to which he declared that "Vorticism, in fact, was what I, personally, did and said at a certain period"—a statement which brought forth a series of "Vortex Pamphlets" from his fellow *Blast* signatory William Roberts.

Lewis's personal life:

From 1918 to 1921, Lewis lived with film critic Iris Barry, with whom he had two children. He is said to have shown little affection for them.

In 1930, Lewis married his partner of ten years, Gladys Anne Hoskins (1900–1979), affectionately known as Froanna who modelled for some of his work, and is reflect by characters in his books. They had no children. Lewis ever jealous did not tell all of his friends about his marriage.

Politically, Lewis remained an isolated figure through the 1930s. In *Letter to Lord Byron*, W.H. Auden called Lewis "that lonely old volcano of the Right." Lewis thought there was what he called a "left-wing orthodoxy" in Britain in the 1930s. He believed it was against Britain's self-interest to ally with the Soviet Union, "which the newspapers most of us read tell us has slaughtered out-of-hand, only a few years ago, millions of its better fed citizens, as well as its whole imperial family."

In *Anglosaxony: A League that Works* (1941), Lewis reflected on his earlier support for fascism:

> Fascism – once I understood it – left me colder than communism. The latter at least pretended, at the start, to have something to do with helping the helpless and making the world a more decent and sensible place. It does start from the human being and his suffering. Whereas fascism glorifies bloodshed and preaches that man should model himself upon the wolf.

In 1921 Lewis converted to Catholicism. By the time of his death in 1957 he had written 40 books.

In the years before the First World War **William Roberts** RA (1895 – 1980) was a pioneer, among English artists, in his use of abstract images. In later years he described his approach as that of an "English Cubist".

Roberts was born into a working-class family in London's East End, his father was a carpenter. From an early age Roberts showed an outstanding talent for drawing, and this was encouraged by his parents and by his school teachers. He left school at the age of 14 and took up an apprenticeship with the advertising firm of Sir Joseph Causton Ltd, intending to become a poster designer. ***Boy Wearing a Blue Scarf*** (1908-10) is an early Self-Portrait, dated to when the artist was thirteen to fifteen years old.

Roberts was intrigued by Post-Impressionism and Cubism, an interest fuelled by his friendships at the Slade (in particular with Bomberg) as well as by his travels in France and Italy after leaving the Slade in 1913. Later in 1913 he joined Roger Fry's Omega Workshops for three mornings a week. The ten shillings a time that Omega paid enabled him to create challenging Cubist-style paintings such as ***The Return of Ulysses*** (now owned by the Castle Museum and Art Gallery in Nottingham).

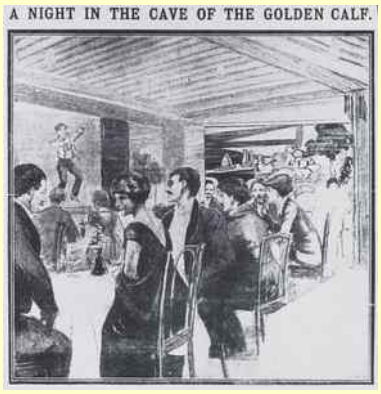
The subject of Ulysses's return from the Trojan Wars is derived from Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*. The geometric style of figuration in this work creates a dynamic composition, achieved through a series of sharp diagonal lines, an approach to picture-making common with Vorticist artists. Roberts later became close to Wyndham Lewis, signing the Vorticist manifesto and contributing to their exhibitions.

The previous year *The Return of Ulysses* was exhibited at the New English Art Club. Kenneth McConkey in *The New English*, his book on the NEAC, comments, "The painters [William Roberts and David Bomberg] and their objectionable modernism were in evidence in the club [NEAC] as well as in the London Group, even though their work must have occasioned resentment of older members."

Two large-scale oil paintings exhibited in the 1917 Penguin Club Vorticist exhibition in New York, and purchased by John Quinn, were subsequently lost, but the radical nature of Roberts's "Cubist style" is evidenced by ***The Toe Dancer*** (owned by the Victoria and Albert Museum) and the recently rediscovered *Boxers* **–** both exhibited with the London Group in 1915.

Roberts and David Bomberg met at the Slade becoming life-long friends. For a brief period both were members of an artists' commune in Primrose Hill, at the house of the Scottish solicitor-turned-hunger-marcher Stewart Gray. It was here that Bomberg met Alice Mayes, a dancer with Kosslov's Ballet Company, who had been invited to the house to demonstrate 'Russian Dance Steps'. Bomberg and Mayes would marry in 1916. And it was at a party at this house in Ormonde Terrace that Roberts was inspired to create his extraordinary *The Toe Dancer*.

The focus of the picture is an eccentric dance performance from Stewart Gray's wife, who is performing semi-naked and appears to be morphing into Vorticist abstraction, as does a male dancer in the background.



In 1912 the **Cave of the Golden Calf**, a basement nightclub off Regent Street, had been opened by Frida Strindberg, a former wife of the Swedish playwright – "a small plump pale-complexioned brunette, with a forceful manner", according to Roberts. In existence for only two years it became a haunt for the wealthy and aristocratic classes, as well as bohemian artists in search of a European-style cabaret, and epitomised decadence, and still inspires cultural events. Its name is a reference to the Golden Calf of the Biblical story, an icon of impermissible worship.

With decorations by Wyndham Lewis, Spencer Gore and Eric Gill, the club exemplified the exciting contemporary collision between popular dance, ragtime jazz and the visual arts. The description 'ragtime' seems to have embraced a wide range of musical forms beyond jazz, including tango, apache and veil dances. Isadora Duncan, who was associated with this scene, was renowned for the sensuality of her dance performances; and her daring, flimsy costumes probably inspired Nina Hammett, artist, model and 'Queen of Bohemia', who was not averse to dancing naked.

> The club introduced London to new concepts of nightlife and provided a solid model for future nightclubs. Philip Hoare, in his book *Oscar Wilde's Last Stand*, provided the following description:
>
> > Up in Regent Street young men wearing tight suits and nail varnish were sipping *crème de menthe* in the Cafe Royal, while down a dark cul-de-sac lurked a new and devilish sort of place where Futurists cavorted: a 'night club' profanely named 'The Cave of the Golden Calf'. Vague rumours had reached her that nowadays, the backstreets harboured all manner of such places, attended by members of the social elite. Such intimations confirmed all the suspicions of her class. At the root of these evils lay the name of Oscar Wilde, still unspoken in polite households. He may have been dead for more than a decade, but Wilde's decadence endured.

It is quite possible that Roberts saw the Ballets Russes in 1913, during his last year at the Slade. Ezra Pound's poem *'Les Millwins'* describes a 'turbulent and undisciplined host of art students' from the Slade attending a performance by the Ballets Russes in London in March of that year. Although the poem specifically mentions a performance of Michel Fokine's ballet *Cléopâtre*, it is most likely that the students' excitement related to the other work on the bill that evening – *L'Après-midi d'un faune*, with Vaslav Nijinsky, who choreographed the piece, in the principal role. Both ballets were designed by Léon Bakst

Unlike Bomberg's, Roberts's dance subjects take their inspiration from popular dance forms. The turkey trot, the bunny hug and 'shaking the shimmy' had a sensuality and a raw sexuality that shocked the middle-classes as much as Fry's post-Impressionists had rattled the popular press.

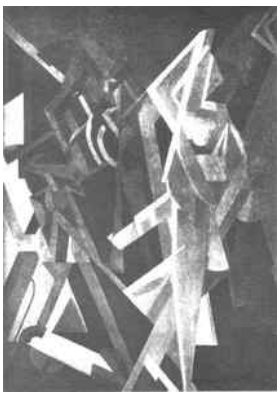
The unusual presence of a printed notice of a boxing contest between Kid Lewis and Jim Berry adhered to its surface helps to identify this large and dramatic black-and-white ink drawing, ***Boxers*** (1914), as being derived from a boxing subject. It is a large drawing in a finished state suitable for exhibition,

Of his boxing works, it is the recently discovered drawing that is the most abstract, and it is a work that clearly relates to the 'cubist' or abstract work that Roberts was producing between 1913 and 1915.

Taking place in the Whitechapel venue Premierland, the boxing contest announced in the notice stuck on Roberts's drawing would have been a big draw for Roberts, Bomberg and the other East End artists. In March 1914 'Kid' Lewis (aka the Aldgate Sphinx) was the British and European featherweight champion and was known to David Bomberg through his brother, Mo. A friend of Mo's commented, "We knew Kid Lewis very well, he was the hero of the East End."

It is not known whether the printed notice was attached to *Boxers* by the artist, the purchaser or a third party, but its placement is in harmony with the overall design and its content anchors the potentially abstract work to a specific concrete form. Writing in 1957 Roberts explained, “I became an abstract painter through the influence of the French Cubists.” and commented further: “As the best abstract work shows, the artist is always careful to retain some traces of the natural forms that have inspired him and upon which his composition is built. It is these suggestive fragments of natural forms scattered throughout the design that give the abstract shapes it contains their vitality and significance, without this *levain* the picture remains a mechanical geometric construction.” Provided with the key of the boxing contest, the complex image becomes more readable, with suggestions of figures in combat, faces, boxing gloves and towels. However, beyond these fairly obvious interpretations it remains difficult to 'decode' the image.

Boxing remained an important subject for Roberts in the years immediately after the First World War. *Sparring Partners* is a watercolour in the Tate, collection dated *c.*1919, ***The Interval before Round Ten****,* is Roberts's first major oil painting of a non-war subject in the post-war period, this and the preparatory drawing for it are dated to 1919–20.



Dancers (1914) was borrowed by Lewis to hang at the Twentieth Century Art Exhibition at the Rebel Art Centre in the Spring of 1914. It seems to be a more formalised version of an early study: an incredibly precocious achievement for a young artist of 18 years of age. *Dancers* was perhaps shown as *The Dance* in the 1914 and it was reproduced as *Dancers* in *BLAST* No.1

T.E. Hulme, writing on Roberts's *The Dancers* in the cultural magazine the *New Age* in 1914 warned of trying to find meaning in abstract forms: “I could point out the position of these figures in more detail, but I think such detailed information is misleading. No artist can create abstract form spontaneously; it is always generated or, at least, suggested, by the consideration of some outside concrete shapes . . . The interest of the drawing itself depends on the forms it contains. The fact that such forms were suggested by human figures is of no importance.”

The Dancers (1919) is one of three panels painted for the Hôtel de la Tour Eiffel in autumn 1919. The third, of an unknown subject, is now lost.

The Diners (1919) is the second of the three decorative panels commissioned for the ‘Restaurant de la Tour Eiffel’. All three panels hung in the first floor lobby leading to two private dining rooms, one of which was known as the ‘Vorticist Room’, named after the group of avant garde artists engaged in expressing the dynamic modern world who congregated there.

After 18 months of active service in northern France, in April 1918 No.123744 Gunner William Roberts of the Royal Field Artillery returned to London with a commission via Paul Konody, the art adviser to the Canadian War Memorials Fund (CWMF), for a large-scale work (10 feet x 12 feet, its size was dictated by the commission) on the subject of the first German gas attack at Ypres, three years earlier. Although, as he noted, he was “without experience of that kind of cloud gas warfare, and told Konody so.” Based at a studio in Chelsea in the summer of 1918 Roberts clearly worked on the project with an intensity that must have been fuelled by his own war experiences.

Warned that only 'representative' work would be acceptable, and indeed Bomberg's first version of his *Sappers at Work* was rejected by the CWMF as being 'too cubist'. Nevertheless, Roberts's ***The First German Gas Attack at Ypres*** is a huge, uncompromisingly modernist work.

Like no other painting in the CWMF collection, *The First German Gas Attack at Ypres* conveys the confusion and the horror of modern war.

The Cinema (1920) is based on a small cinema in Warren Street which is now used as a television studio.

In the 1930s the angular style of Roberts's earlier work was replaced by a rounder, more sculptural approach. At this time Roberts received financial support from the London Artists' Association. While he was critical of the support it is difficult to imagine how the family would have survived without this patronage. Later he would describe the thirties as "the years of economic struggle". He undertook a number of striking large-scale canvases which were exhibited at the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, and in New York. Despite their financial position the family occasionally took holidays: they travelled to Spain for the first time in the early 1930s and went on a cycling holiday to Brighton that apparently inspired ***Les Routiers*** (c1931). Andrew Heard suggests that Roberts may have used a French title for this work as a nod towards the work of Fernand Léger, whose "tubist" forms have some similarity to Roberts's figures

In August 1940, visitors to the then Belfast Municipal Art Gallery were given questionnaires inviting them to say which painting they liked best and which they liked least, with reasons, and asking for their views on three paintings in particular, one of which was *Les Routiers.* The *Belfast Telegraph* of 20 September 1940 reported that "The picture that came in for the greatest amount of criticism and which headed the poll as far as unpopularity is concerned was *Les Routiers*, by William Roberts. It was described as 'ghastly,' 'repugnant,' 'a nightmare,' 'foolish,' 'vulgar,' 'a vision of chocolate-box robots in Laocoon evolutions,' 'horrible,' 'frightful' and 'childish.' One woman thought that the only valuable thing about it was the frame, and another said she could see no merit in it as a work of art but would willingly take it home "to amuse the children."

The Royal Academy and the "Vortex Pamphlets"

In the 1950s, when cutting-edge British art was abstract, Roberts's work was in danger of seeming out of date. Roberts re-evaluated the Royal Academy as an exhibiting opportunity, as it attracted large and diverse crowds that were generally more interested in representational art than in abstraction, as well as press coverage. From this point on Roberts's annual contribution became increasingly sensational – spectacular in scale, in use of colour and in dramatic subject matter. *The Temptation of St Anthony* (1951), *Revolt in the Desert* (1952) and *The Birth of Venus* (1954) dominated the walls of the RA and were a talking point in the press and with the public. Roberts now had a new patron – Ernest Cooper, who ran a chain of health-food shops under the banner of the *London Health Centre*. As well as purchasing a large number of these Royal Academy paintings, Cooper commissioned Roberts to design illustrations for his mail-order catalogues and instructional pamphlets.

In 1956 the Tate Gallery held an exhibition entitled *Wyndham Lewis and Vorticism*, with 150 works by Lewis and a small selection by other artists to give "an indication of the effect of his immediate impact upon his contemporaries". Roberts was offended that the catalogue "would lead the uninitiated to suppose that the artists designated as 'Other Vorticists' are in some way subservient to Lewis", and published a series of "Vortex Pamphlets", in which he railed against the exhibition, the catalogue, the

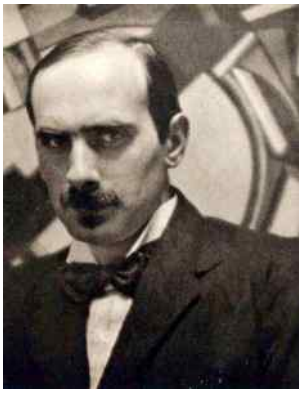
press coverage and the account of his own career contained in *Modern English Painters* by the Tate's director, John Rothenstein, which appeared at about the same time. Targets of earlier visual satires had included Walter Sickert and Roger Fry. To publicise his own work he also published *Some Early Abstract and Cubist Work 1913–1920* (London, 1957), the first of a series of collections of reproductions of his paintings, with somewhat polemical prefaces.

In a tirade of letters and pamphlets, and a repost to Lewis' assertion that "Vorticism, in fact, was what I, personally, did and said at a certain period..." Roberts wrote: "...in the month of July, in the year 1956, I was bound and gagged by a press-gang and forced to serve aboard the old hulk 'Vorticism' then lying off Millbank by Thames-side, under the command of Captain 'Manifesto' Lewis and his chief mate 'Little' John [Rothenstein}; also of the voyage I made in her across the wide and abstract sea."

King of Vorticism Land' or 'Stop Kidding' (A Bedtime Story)

Now kiddies, once upon a time there were six little 'VORTS' and they all lived happily together (almost) in a little house called 'BLAST', in the land of 'VORTICISM': well kiddies, one fine day one of these little 'VORTS' thought how nice it would be if he were to grow much bigger than the rest, then everyone would say he was the biggest 'VORT' in the whole wide world. So one night whilst the others were snugly asleep in their little cots, he stole away to a castle by the banks of the Thames where dwelt 'CURATOR', a powerful dragon. When 'CURATOR' heard 'VORT'S' wish he cast a Spell upon the other little 'VORTS' and they slept for 40 years. At the end of this time 'VORT' had grown so tall that the whole world named him 'VORTICIST' which means King of the land of 'VORTICISM'.

Goodnight kiddies – that is all!



Edward Wadsworth, (1889 – 1949) the son of a magnate from the Bradford area, was raised in an industrial environment that was to appear in his works. He studied at the Slade School and took part in the activities of the Rebel Art Centre

Interested in the writings of Wassily Kandinsky, which he translated for the magazine *Blast No. I*, he was also fascinated by the world of machines, which soon became the main motif in his painting.

His mother died nine days after giving birth. His father, Fred, had in mind that Edward would one day take over the family business – Bromford mill – and sent Edward to study engineering and the German language in Munich between 1906 and 1907. He didn't complete his engineering degree but he did learn German and most significantly he studied art in his spare time at the Knirr School. Here he learned woodcut printing and drawing. Munich was a cultural hotbed and Edward was introduced to a lively artistic and intellectual way of life. When he returned home he had decided that he wanted to be an artist - his father was appalled.

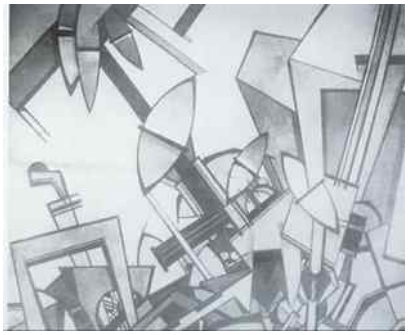
However, Wadsworth was now the beneficiary of a £250 a year income, via a trust fund set up by his Aunt, making him financially independent of his father. He attended Bradford School of Art and then the Slade, spending some time at Le Havre, prior to the start of the autumn term in 1909. His contemporaries at the school included Mark Gertler, Stanly Spencer, CRW Nevinson, William Roberts, and Dora Carrington – "one of the greatest student classes in the history of English art schools" – and his tutors Henry tonks and Philip Wilson Steer exhibited in an 'impressionist' style with the New English Art Club whilst stressing the discipline of drawing as "an explanation of form, analysing its construction, preparation and direction [the direction of the bones]" in their teaching. Although the cohort at the Slade was socially diverse, Wadsworth's closest friends - C.R.W. Nevinson and Adrian Allinson were from similarly wealthy backgrounds.

Wadsworth's lecturer in art history at the Slade was Roger Fry who brought the work of Cézanne, Gauguin and van Gogh to London in a major exhibition: *'Manet and the Post-Impressionists'* in 1910. In her biography, *A Painter's Life. Edward Wadsworth* Barbara Wadsworth describes him as only really making a real aesthetic leap when he met up with Lewis. In 1912 he married Fanny Mary Eveleigh, a professional violinist. Wadsworth had a work included in Fry's *'Second Post Impressionist Exhibition*' in 1913, which brought 'cubist' pictures by Picasso and Braque to London.

This work, ***Rotherhithe*** (1911), demonstrates Wadsworth early interest in Marine subjects. A theme which was to occupy him, almost exclusively from the 1920's. This simplified but dramatic image of buildings lining a harbour, their reflections forming a silvered 'tray' on which the boats float and risk slithering down the glassy surface, perhaps betray a knowledge of proto-Cubism and the colour abstractions of the Fauves, produced only a few years prior, but as yet to be introduced to the public in Fry's 1913 exhibition. Although schematic with non-natural lines and colours, it yet has some sense of an atmosphere which would be negated in his later, Vorticist abstractions. Produced while still a Slade student it shows a remarkable departure from the Impressionistic paintings of his tutors.

The early part of Edward Wadsworth's career was inextricably linked with Wyndham Lewis. From the pages of *Blast* in 1914 to the Group X exhibition of 1920, Wadsworth joined with Lewis in the vanguard of an attack on the British art establishment. However, as this period progressed, the ties between the two artists gradually loosened, corresponding to Wadsworth's increasing confidence in his own abilities, and to the prejudicial impact of the First World War on the modernist agenda.

Wadsworth had backed Lewis in his row with Roger Fry over a commission for the Omega Workshops in October 1913, and it was in that same month that Wadsworth exhibited stylised landscapes at the Doré Galleries in London. These showed a marked change in his personal style, containing angular trees and shapes that one can attribute to Lewis's influence; such as ***Landscape***, a gouache made in woodland near Lewes in Sussex, when he was twenty-four. He was exploring ideas about the depiction of form and space derived from Cézanne and Cubism. However, Wadsworth rarely produced pastoral landscapes such as this; his later work was to be dominated by industrial, urban and maritime imagery. Very little of Wadsworth's early work survives.



The following year Wadsworth was alongside Lewis at the opening of the short-lived Rebel Arts Centre, and again when objecting to Nevinson's appropriation of their names for Marinetti's Futurist manifesto. However their greatest collaboration in 1914 was over the magazine *Blast*, to which Wadsworth contributed five works, exemplified by ***Cape of Good Hope*** (now lost).

Lewis said of Wadsworth's ***Blackpool*** (1914-15, now lost) that it is "one of the finest paintings he has done. Its striped ascending blocks are the elements of a seaside scene, condensed into the simplest form possible for the retaining of its vivacity." He praised later its 'realism', saying that Wadsworth had captured "the essential truth, of a noisy, garish seaside", whereas a Camden Town artist would merely depict "a symbol or trophy of the scene."

Christopher Green considered ***Vorticist Study*** (1914) to be a mechanical composition that does not refer to any particular matter. Indeed, rather than relating to a specific theme, this composition of elaborate forms executed with the impersonal objectivity that characterises Wadsworth, illustrates what Ezra Pound defined as "the delight in mechanical beauty."

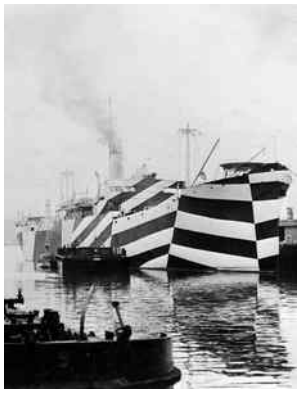
I n ***Abstract Composition*** (1915) sharp diagonal lines converge towards a focal point. This painting most typically recalls the poet Ezra Pound's description of the vortex as "absorbing all that is around it in a violent whirling." The Vorticist group's aggressive rhetoric, angular style and focus on the energy of modern life were similar to Italian

futurism. However, they did not share the futurists' emphasis on speed, or their romanticisation of technology. Wadsworth and the other Vorticists had a more matter-of-fact attitude to the machine age. Their images betray little sense of celebratory excitement.

View of a Town (c.1918) is a lithographic print. Wadsworth's abstract view of an industrial town is made of interlocking roofs and chimney stacks. It has been identified with Bradford. The urban scene is presented as geometric and streamlined, without any trace of people. The work exists in several colour variations, including grey and black (as here), deep purple and green, and lilac and black. This is an approach Wadsworth took with many of his prints. For instance, *The Open Window* (c.1915) was produced in six different versions with colours ranging from grey to scarlet – from austere restraint to fierce exuberance.

"Excuse me for harrowing you with this picture of war. But I am very full of it at present." — Edward Wadsworth

In the latter half of the First world War Wadsworth was part of a team involved in the transfer of dazzle camouflage designs to ships for the Royal Navy, supervising the camouflaging of over 2,000 ships. The irregular shapes broke up the ship's form, making it difficult for enemy submarines to accurately determine its course, as seen in the photograph of **USS West Mohamet**. Dazzle attracted the notice of artists such as Picasso, who claimed that Cubists like himself had invented it.



When, after the war, Wadsworth was asked to produce a work for the Canadian War Memorial Scheme, the result was ***Dazzle-Ships in Drydock at Liverpool*** (1919).

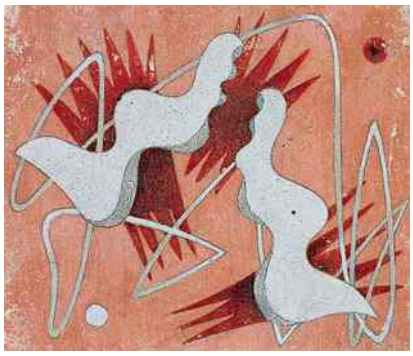
This huge picture, over three metres high, enabled Wadsworth to bring his Vorticist training to a contemporary scene, in which angular blocks of colour were applied not just to the hull of the ship, but to a background of girders, pipes, buildings and chimneys. Wadsworth depicts a freshly painted vessel in dry dock, towering over the men completing their paintwork. With its clarity of line, strong contours and subdued machine power, the painting exemplifies the concerns of the British artistic and literary movement Vorticism.

The Black Country

Wadsworth's oil painting activities had been curtailed by the war and he turned to the production of small woodcuts whilst stationed in the Eastern Mediterranean. After the war he took as inspiration the scenes he had witnessed on his many train journeys between London and Liverpool, which passed through the Black Country of the industrial Midlands. This interest culminated in a show of 37 pen and ink drawings at the Leicester Galleries in 1920, such as ***Tipton in the Black Country***. The Daily Express appreciated Wadsworth's portrayal of the "terrible beauty of the slag heap and furnace". The critic of The Times spoke of "the terrific energy of the whole industrial process represented[...]in rhythmical and orderly forms", whilst The Morning Post saw parallels of "desolation almost as grimly forbidding as the shell-riven battlefields of Northern France." Their critic went on to say that the "absence of life greatly lessens the permanent value of these clever drawings of the Black Country." Paul Nash had exhibited images of war landscapes at the same galleries fourteen months previously — like Wadsworth he had been interested in man's impact on the environment rather than by depictions of the human figure in that environment.

These pictures were a critical success; P.G. Konody in The Observer wrote that Wadsworth had “distilled art of the highest order” from material that was “positively forbidding.” This encouraged Wadsworth to publish, later in 1920, The Black Country, a collection of twenty of these images in a luxury edition, of which ***Ladle Slag, Old Hill*** (1919) is an example. This too received much praise, tempered with a social concern for the conditions it portrayed. The New Statesman critic, R.S.S., said of Wadsworth that “his mind from the point of view of a Labour member or a welfare worker is simply a blank. But it is anything but blank from the point of view of an artist: it is full of plastic ideas engendered by aesthetic emotion.” The Times Literary Supplement praised Wadsworth for “increasing the sum of human beauty” but affirmed that these drawings provided no justification for the Black Country itself. R.S.S. asserted that in Wadsworth’s work “everything is clear, definite and ordered” and concluded that he had succeeded in “hewing beauty out of a slag-heap.”

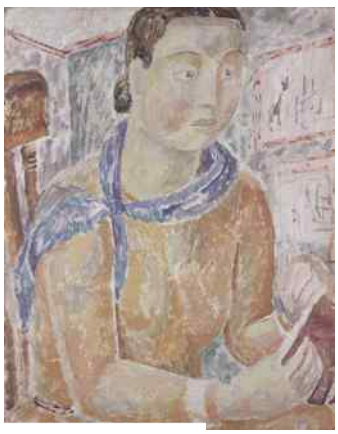
In the second half of the 1920s Wadsworth concentrated on marine themed still life compositions, as in ***Faithful Servants (marine)*** (c1928), and still-life compositions using tempera. Although infused with a surrealistic mood he never exhibited with the British surrealists. Perhaps, following ideas articulated by Léger and to some extent exemplified in the work of the German *Neue Sachlichkeit* painters, Wadsworth juxtaposed modern manufactured objects such as marine navigational equipment with symbols of culture, contrasting the organic - such as sea shells - with the manufactured and using dramatic perspective effects to contrast the small with the vast. His use of tempera created a kind of realism that seemed ultramodern whilst also evoking a nostalgia for a lost past.



By the end of the 1920s Wadsworth was successfully exhibiting in Paris and London. His work was reproduced in European avant-garde arts magazines and he could be seen as “a leading British modernist artist.” In the early thirties and in the early forties his work was mainly abstract, as in this example: ***Composition on a Pink Background*** (1934). He made a significant contribution to the development of modern art in Britain in the inter-war years.

Jessica Dismorr (1885 – 1939) participated in almost all of the avant-garde groups active in London between 1912 and 1937 and was one of the few English painters of the 1930s to work in a completely abstract manner. She was one of only two women members of the Vorticist movement and also exhibited with the Allied Artists' Association, the Seven and Five Society and the London Group. She was the only female contributor to Group X and displayed abstract works at the 1937 Artists' International Association exhibition. Poems and illustrations by Dismorr appeared in several avant-garde publications including *Blast, Rhythm* and an edition of *Axis*.

Prior to joining the Vorticists in 1914 Dismorr had studied with the artist J.D. Fergusson and made repeated trips to France where she created representational works with “rich colour and the flat decorative shapes.”



Self-Portrait 1929

Abstract Composition (1915 – Tate Gallery) features a series of pastel-coloured geometric forms, reminiscent of architectural components, overlapping on a black ground. A dark yellow triangular prism with a curved side provides a vertical focus and splits the composition in two. A smaller pale pink object appears to approach the foreground, which is crowded by five more objects of different shapes and colours. The arrangement of these objects, as well as the interaction of darker and lighter colours, creates an illusion of depth and movement.

It shares several components with *Design,* a drawing published in *Blast II*. Dismorr wrote: “towers of scaffolding draw their criss-cross pattern of bars upon the sky, a monstrous tartan...” Viewed side by side these repetitions accentuate the effect of movement and demonstrate Dismorr’s interest in arranging and rearranging these almost architectural-looking fragments. This parallels the concerns of the Vorticist movement, which sought to imagine the condition of the modern city as augmented by machines and new metropolitan infrastructures.

Historian Miranda Hickman has argued that Vorticism appealed to Dismorr as it offered her “the free navigation of such city spaces, at this time marked masculine … through the gestures, perspectives and qualities associated with its masculinity.” Her engagement with the masculine spaces and abstraction of Vorticism, Hickman suggests, “countered effects of 'Prettiness' that suggested feminine weakness and inferior artistry.”

In the 1930s she returned to abstraction, although her works from this period were less angular than anthropomorphic, for example. The abstract nature of works such as ***Related Forms*** (1937) was in the mid-1930s associated with the utopian ideas of a European avant-garde, advocating common cause in opposition to an increasingly fractious political environment on the continent.

Works by Dismorr entitled *Related Forms* were included in the exhibition ‘Unity of Artists for Peace, Democracy and Cultural Development’ in April-May 1937, although it is not known if this work was among those shown there.

So far as is known, Jessica Dismorr's work was exclusively abstract from 1936 until her death. Her still-lifes of 1935 are transitional to abstraction. These and the earliest abstract works bear a strong relation (perhaps still suggested in the Tate's work) to the shapes of vases, curtains and scrolls of music. After the period of the Tate's pictures, Dismorr's painting tended increasingly to the overlapping of forms. As well as by the three adjectives cited above, she variously prefixed the word ‘Forms’ in the titles of her works from 1936 by ‘Stationary’, ‘Separated’ and ‘Superposed’.

Helen Saunders (1885 – 1963) studied at the Slade School of Art in 1907, attending three days a week until the Spring term; and later attended the Central School of Arts and Crafts.

Saunders exhibited in the Twentieth Century Art Exhibition in 1914, as one of the first British artists to work in a non-figurative style. In 1915 she became associated with the Vorticists signing the manifesto in the first edition of Blast, contributing to their inaugural exhibition. She and Jessica Dismorr were the only female members. Saunders was fluent in both French and German and during World War I worked in the office of the United Kingdom Government Censor.

By 1912 Saunders' work had become recognisably Post-Impressionist, and in February her painting *Rocks, North Devon* was accepted by The Friday Club, an exhibiting group set up by Vanessa Bell.

In 1996 Richard Cork wrote: "Since Saunders' early work earned her a respected place in experimental circles, the gathering obscurity of her later years seems cruel. She endured the neglect with uncomplaining stoicism, for her innate warmth prevented her from succumbing to bitterness."

Saunders' early works also reveal her engagement with contemporary art in France, namely the influence of the Cubists. ***Tree*** (c.1913) reveals an interest in Cubist stylisation. However, her concern for the formal/design development of the image does not override the dramatic and expressive possibilities of the natural form. The tree seems to take on an almost animalistic quality, looming like a threatening vegetal monster; the branches thrusting and nudging at the enveloping foliage, seeking the air.

But then there's ***Hammock*** (c.1913–14), an agonised image appropriate for a world where women were being force-fed for seeking suffrage. Its weeping female figure is suspended from a frame reminiscent of a Queen Anne chair: what better symbol for the prison of the bourgeois home?

Someone (not Saunders) has given a small, claustrophobic watercolour the title ***Female figures imprisoned*** (c.1913). A group of seven figures with stylised, mask-like faces enclosed within an indeterminate but clearly confined space bounded by a heavy black line. It's a strange, troubling picture. William Blake comes to mind, not least because of the way the scale of the work invites scrutiny, pulling you in to peer at figures bent painfully out of shape in some subterranean space. Several of them are swathed in a royal blue, like Madonnas confined to ill-fitting niches.

The painting dates back to the pre-Vorticist period of the artist's creative career and was her response to the event when her friend Katie Gliddon, her teacher Rosa Vogue and other women were imprisoned for speaking out for women's suffrage. The confined space resembles a cave – wherein various "broken" characters are depicted, surrounded on all sides and even separated from each other by aggressive and massive geometric elements.

Thick black lines and the techniques of cubist painting and graphics, characteristic of late Post-impressionism and Fauvism, are used by the artist to create the intense claustrophobic effect.

Images of hands and facial features are hidden within the jagged composition: ***Abstract Multicoloured Design*** (c.1915). There is an eye, a nose and a mouth. The fragmented figure seems to be mounted on a diagonally thrusting rocket. The fusion of man and machine was a common theme for the Vorticists. However, many became increasingly disillusioned with the supposed dynamism of the machine age in the face of the mechanised killing during the First World War

As with all Vorticist works dynamic motion characterises ***Vorticist Composition, Yellow and Green*** (c.1915). Composed of hard edged jagged shapes, not a single vertical or horizontal line introduces a sense of stability or repose, with few curves to soften the aggressive expression of violent activity. A broken, yellow band thrusts up and across from the bottom left, cutting into, overlapping and immuring the grey/blue background.

Formally called ***Gulliver in Lilliput***, the work has been interpreted as tiny figures clambering over a monstrous yellow alien effigy with yellow body and orange arms.

View of L'Estaque (c.-1920–29) is a scene of the costal town near Marseilles, made famous to artists by Cézanne's landscapes, and subsequently by the proto-cubist houses and trees of George Braque. The later work of Saunders, as characterised by this gentle cuboid

interpretation of the scene, may be seen as a retreat from the revolutionary, more 'confrontational' style of her Vorticist years.

From 1920 she increasingly turned away from the avant-garde and adopted a more realist style, working in still life, landscapes and portraiture, and latterly exhibiting with the Holborn Art Society. Despite her long career, fewer than 200 of her works are currently known. She was included in the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University when it hosted an exhibition entitled *The Vorticists: Rebel Artists in London and New York, 1914–18* in late 2010.

Saunders died of accidental coal gas poisoning at her home in Holborn, London, on January 1st 1963.

"There are infinite modes of expression in the world of art, and to insist that only by one road can the artist attain his ends is to limit him." – Jacob Epstein

Jacob Epstein (1880 – 1959) was an American-British sculptor who helped pioneer modern sculpture. He was born in the United States, and moved to Europe in 1902, becoming a British subject in 1910.

Early in his career, in 1912, the Pall Mall Gazette described Epstein as "a Sculptor in Revolt, who is in deadly conflict with the ideas of current sculpture." Revolting against ornate, pretty art, he made bold, often harsh and massive forms of bronze or stone. His sculpture is distinguished by its vigorous rough-hewn realism. Avant-Garde in concept and style, his works often shocked audiences. This was not only a result of their, often explicit, sexual content, but also because they abandoned the conventions of classical Greek sculpture favoured by European academic sculptors, to experiment instead with the aesthetics of art traditions as diverse as those of India, China, ancient Greece, West Africa and the Pacific Islands.

Rock Drill (c.1913) was exhibited for the first and only time in public in March 1915, at a London Group exhibition at the Goupil Gallery. Unable to afford to cast the figure in bronze he left it in plaster and mounted it on an actual rock drill.

The combination of an industrial rock drill and the carved plaster figure makes the artwork an example of a "Readymade" created at the same time as Marcel Duchamp' s *Bicycle Wheel* (1913). A powerful 1974 reconstruction, by Ken Cook and Ann Christopher, is part of the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery's collection. *Rock Drill* has been heralded as embodying the spirit of "radical Modernism more dramatically than any other sculpture, English or continental, then or since."

It is also said to blend the artist's interests in fertility and industrial production.

By making an actual, unaltered, industrial drill an integral part of the sculpture, Epstein must have expected criticism. The menacing body mounted on the drill appeared to be assembled from machine parts, including a head on a shaft with the only organic feature the foetus within the creature's open rib-cage. The critic's response was almost universally hostile and abusive. P.G. Konody described *Rock Drill* as "unutterably loathsome" and Augustus John persuaded John Quinn not to buy it. Even the supportive reviewer for *The Guardian* concluded that the "incongruity" of the work was "too difficult for the mind to grasp."

In May 1916, Epstein, apparently mortified at the continuing slaughter of the war, made the decision to break up the sculpture. He removed the drill entirely and reduced the upper figure to a legless one-armed torso, which he had cast in gunmetal. When shown at the London Group as ***Torso in Metal*** in the summer of 1916, the torso appeared

more of a victim than the menacing figure of the original sculpture. At this point Epstein began to concentrate less on avant-garde sculpture and embrace more figurative forms of working.

The artist stated in *The Sculptor Speaks,* 1931, "*The Rock Drill* is not entirely abstract. It is a conception of a thing I knew well in New York and is my feeling of that thing as a living entity, translated into terms of sculpture. It is a thing prophetic of much of the great war and as such within the experience of nearly all and has therefore very definite human associations."

He wrote further in *Autobiography*, 1940, "It was in the experimental pre-war days of 1913 that I was fired to do the rock-drill, and my ardour for machinery (short-lived) expended itself upon the purchase of an actual drill, second-hand, and upon this I made and mounted a machine-like robot, visored, menacing, and carrying within itself its progeny, protectively ensconced. Here is the armed, sinister figure of today and tomorrow. No humanity, only the terrible Frankenstein's monster we have made ourselves into.... Later I lost my interest in machinery and discarded the drill. I cast in metal only the upper part of the figure."

> Extract from PhD theses *In 'the mouth of [the] cave': Wyndham Lewis, Myth and the Philosophical Discourse of Modernity Circa 1914* by Christopher Lewis PhD:
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> The Bergsonian model was used by Marinetti and the Italian Futurists to justify the idea that by populating the world with a new species of machinery, humankind had liberated itself from the draconian rule of material Nature. Life's ascent was identified with the vital energies of the machine-age and the aggressive combat which the Futurists perceived humankind as having launched against material nature. In this way Futurism celebrated the machine-age as the final and decisive stage of Kant's 'Enlightenment', conceived as "man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity." By unleashing the power of the machine the Futurists argued that humankind was effectively overthrowing the authority of natural laws. "Time and Space died yesterday", wrote Marinetti, "[w]e already live in the absolute, because we have created eternal, omnipresent speed"
>
> It is perhaps Jacob Epstein's sculpture *Rock Drill* of 1913 which most forcefully illustrates the new evolutionary possibilities which this moment of historic severance awakened in the modernist psyche. As Richard Cork writes: "Half human and half automaton, the figure [...] appears to be the harbinger of a different, harsher and more disturbing world." Certainly the figure is designed to express the aggressive vitality of the machine-age. Its phallic positioning, aggressively poised to plumb the earth, conveys well the passive conception of nature which we find in these years. Yet embedded in the armoured structure of the driller's ribcage we find the fragile embryo of organic life, as yet shapeless and unconscious, the progeny of the new type of humanity — presumably a man-machine hybrid — that would populate the new world.

"I am perhaps the most unpopular artist in England – and only because I am draughtsman first and painter second." – David Bomberg "The Bomberg Papers"

David Bomberg (1890 – 1957) was one of the most audacious of the exceptional generation of artists who studied at the Slade School of Art under Henry Tonks, and which included Mark Gertler, Stanly Spencer, C.R.W. Nevinson and Dora Carrington. Bomberg painted a series of complex geometric compositions combining the influences of Cubism and Futurism in the years immediately preceding world War I; typically using a limited number of striking colours, turning humans into simple, angular shapes, and sometimes overlaying the whole painting with a strong grid-work colouring scheme. He was expelled from the Slade in 1913, with agreement between the senior teachers because of the audacity of his breach from the conventional approach of that time.

On the importance of drawing he wrote:

> "I approach drawing solely for structure..... Drawing demands a theory of approach, until good drawing becomes habit – it denies all rules. It requires high discipline… Drawing demands freedom, freedom demands liberty to expand in space – this is progress. By the extension of democracy – good draughtsmanship is – Democracy's visual sign. To draw with integrity replaces bad habits with good, youth preserved from corruption. The hand works at high tension and organises as it simplifies, reducing to barest essentials, stripping all irrelevant matter obstructing the rapidly forming organisation which reveals the design. This is drawing."

The artist painted ***Vision of Ezekiel*** in 1912 while he was still at the Slade School. His sister, Mrs Kathy Newmark, remembers him working on it at his parents' home in Aldgate, London. It is unclear to which particular vision of Ezekiel the title refers. Mrs Lilian Bomberg, the artist's widow, has suggested the vision of the Valley of the Dried Bones, where God guided the prophet Ezekiel to a valley full of bones and commanded him to speak: "There was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together." Skeletal yet animated, the figures appear to emerge from the platform.

Bomberg may well have chosen the subject himself, rather than it being suggested by his tutors, as he was deeply interested in the Old Testament and Jewish history.

Bomberg probably exhibited this painting for the first time in the 'Cubist Room' at the *Camden Town Group and Others* exhibition, with six other pictures. Miss Alice Mayes and Peter Richmond both confirmed the story that Wyndham Lewis not only hung the painting behind a door so that it could scarcely be seen, but also did not include it in the catalogue (actions which they attributed to jealousy). Miss Mayes said that in return Bomberg refused to allow Lewis to reproduce any of his drawings in *Blast.* Mrs Bomberg believes the artist told her that he took the picture away on the top of a taxi during the course of the exhibition.

Although Bomberg's painting style is often associated with Vorticism, he did not sign its manifesto. He distrusted the group's leader, Wyndham Lewis, and wanted to retain his independence.

He also wrote: "the new life should find its expression in a new art, which has been stimulated by new perceptions. I want to translate the life of a great city, its motion, its machinery, into an art that shall not be photographic, but expressive."

Philip Rylands has described Bomberg as "the most advanced painter working in England at the time". Bomberg had completed a number of large-scale abstract works for his one-man show at the Chenil Galleries in July 1914, including the sporting subject ***Ju-Jitsu*** (probably completed in 1913). Richard Cork comments that this work drew its inspiration from the martial arts that Bomberg saw at the gymnasium in Cable Street where his elder brother, Mo, a boxer, trained.

Bathing figures were a traditional way of depicting the nude, but here Bomberg brings the subject into the modern era by basing the scene on steam baths used by the local Jewish population near Bomberg's home in east London. When ***The Mud Bath*** (1914) was first exhibited at the Chenil Gallery, along with several of Bomberg's early masterpieces, it was hung on an outside wall surrounded by Union Flags , the better "that it may have every advantage of lighting and space." Also causing *"the horses drawing the 29 bus... to shy at it as they came round the corner of King's Road."*

In 1918 David Bomberg, who had served in the Royal Engineers, was commissioned by the Canadian Government to paint the a memorial to the men who tunnelled under St Eloi on the Western Front in 1916. The tunnel at St Eloi was 1,650 feet long and 125 feet deep. It was used to explode the largest mine of the war. In his first version of ***Sappers at work, a Canadian Tunnelling Company*** (1918-19) he reduced his subjects to angular shapes, full of tension and kinetic energy, well suited to depicting tunnellers who shored up their shafts with wooden supports, as sharp edged as his figures. The Canadians, however, had asked him to avoid abstraction, and rejected his first painting as too Futurist.

Bomberg described the process of reducing the human figure to a series of geometric shapes, as ”searching for an intenser expression… where I use Naturalistic Form I have stripped it of all irrelevant matter.” In the Foreword to the Chenil Gallery exhibition catalogue the artist wrote: “I appeal to a *Sense of Form.* In some of the works I show in the first room, I completely abandon *Naturalism* and Tradition. I am *Searching for an Intenser* expression....I look upon *Nature,* while I live in a *steel city,* where decoration happens, it is accidental. My object is the *construction of Pure Form.”*

Sappers at Work: A Canadian Tunnelling Company, Hill 60, St Eloi is a preparatory sketch, charcoal on paper, for a second version, now in the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, in which Bomberg compromised and produced a more representational work. The tension and geometry that interested Bomberg are still evident in the complex rhythm of the beams against the curved tunnel walls and in the figures' poses, but the bright colour and bold abstraction of the first work have disappeared. Bomberg has included himself in the foreground of the picture carrying a heavy beam to show his feeling of being burdened by this task.

His second version was much larger, a little over three metres high, and painted in a more acceptable, realistic style. He painted himself Bomberg portrayed himself as the sapper carrying the large beam in the lower-right corner.

World War I was to bring a profound change to Bomberg's outlook. His experiences of its mechanized slaughter and the death of his brother in the trenches – as well as those of his friend Isaac Rosenberg and his supporter T. E. Hulme – permanently destroyed his faith in the aesthetics of the machine age.

After the horrors of the first mechanised World War, like many other artists Bomberg turned away from representations of man-machine abstractions and turned to painting mainly landscapes, either in a realist or expressionistic style.

Although its influence was to live on Vorticism, as a short-lived youthful movement, effectively died like so many young men on the battlefields of Europe.

Many of Wyndham Lewis's books have recently been reissued:

Fiction: *Tarr*, (1918); *The Wild Body*; short stories (1927); *The Childermass* (1928); *The Apes of God* (1930); *Snooty Baronet* (1932); *The Revenge for Love* (1937); *The Vulgar Streak* (1941); *Rotting Hill*, short stories (1951); *Self Condemned* (1954); *Monstre Gai* (1955); *Malign Fiesta* (1955); *The Red Priest* (1956)

Autobiography and Travel: *Journey into Barbary (*1932) *Blasting and Bombardiering* (1937); *America, I Presume* (1940); *America and Cosmic Man* (1949); *Rude Assignment* (1950)

Essays: *The Caliph's Design: Architects! Where is Your Vortex?* (1919); *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926); *The Lion and the Fox: The Role of the Hero in the Plays of Shakespeare* (1927); *Time and Western Man* (1927); *Paleface: The Philosophy of the Melting Pot* (1929); *Hitler* (1931); *The Diabolical Principle and the Dithyrambic Spectator* (1931); Doom of Youth (1932); *Men Without Art* (1934 criticism); *The Jews, Are They Human?* (1939 a repudiation of antisemitism, well received by the Jewish community); *The Hitler cult, How Will it End?* (1939 a repudiation of his earlier support for Hitler); Anglo-Saxon*: A League that Works* (1941); *America and Cosmic Man* (1949); *The Writer and the Absolute* (1952); *The Demon of Progress in the Arts* (1955)

Recommended reading:

Wyndham Lewis; British Artists series: by Richard Humphries

In this, the first introduction to explore Lewis’s work both as painter and a writer, Richard Humphreys examines his hugely varied output, and explains his ideas about art, life and politics.

Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer by Paul Edwards

Through detailed but accessible commentary Paul Edwards traces a coherent pattern in Lewis's bafflingly diverse work and shows its centrality to a full understanding of Modernism. He also discusses Lewis's Fascist sympathies in the 1930s, his dissociation from Fascism after 1937, his self-imposed exile in Canada during the Second World War, and the radical reevaluation of his life and intellectual commitments in his final novels.