

Until 15.V.2011 I Vorticisti Venice, Guggenheim

05/03/2011

The power of the Great British Whirl arrives in Venice. An impetuous movement, between Abstraction and Primitivism. Which takes us back "to the centre of the eddy, where energy focuses at its best"...

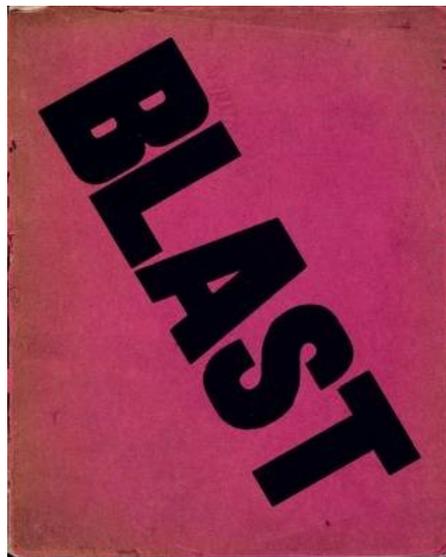


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To push over the edge the deshumanization, to emphasize "the strangeness, the surprise and the distance" as "primitive mercenaries in the modern era". These are the watchwords of the Vorticism avant-garde, an English movement inspired by Worringer with a futuristic fingerprint, growing apart from "Mr. Marinetti's limited imagination". This movement in fact, cannot stand that sort of mechanical device, which is unable to recognize the power of the wild man overbearing the vital power. The energy of the whirl that inspired artists who gathered around Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, and the Blast magazine between 1913 and 1918 is in fact present in the chaos of imperfection and natural human depth that surrounds (without dominating) the sexual drive.

The exhibition presents works that participated in the group's three historical exhibitions, the first one took place in 1915 in London, then the American review

dating to 1917 and the coeval final exhibition dedicated to the kaleidoscopic photographic experiments by Alvin Llangdon Coburn.



Blast No. 1: Review of the Great English Vortex, 20 giugno, 1914 - 1° luglio 1914 - copertina disegnata da Wyndham Lewis - rivista pubblicata da John Lane - The Poetry Collection of the University Libraries, University at Buffalo

In the first two exhibitions a few paintings of abstract inspiration add up; they get animated on the basis of segmented chaotic construction that seem to accelerate and to go beyond the borders of the picture. Not to miss are the graphic compositions by Lewis and Edward Wadsworth, which find wide space and spread in the pages of Blast. It is mainly the sculptures by Jacob Epstein and Gaudier-Brzeska that will affect the audience with their geometric and primitive style; these elements will also have an influence on Henry Moore and the new generation of British sculptors.

The force of their contribution is very clear from the first two introductory rooms that expose two icons of the movement. One is Ezra Pound Hieratic Head by Gaudier-Brzeska, which express the link between a primordial sexual dimension and intellectual power - combining Totem forms and a geometrized face with the obviously phallic shape on the back. A spectacular introduction to this art movement is given by Epstein's Rock-Drill, which puts on a real drill an aggressive figure combining alien and beast, with a head halfway between the nose and the helmet on one side and the body ploughed with showing ribs on the other. A sinister image in which, as its author later will put it, there was "no

humanity, only the terrible Frankenstein's monster laying within us".



David Bomberg - Faighi - 1914 - olio su tela - Tate, Londra

As announced in the second and final issue of Blast magazine - recently reissued along with the first one, which can be browsed on display at the exhibition - the noises of war overwhelmed the Vorticism movement. David Hulme, the group theorist, and Gaudier-Brzeska lost their lives because of the war and as of the others, they were unable to sustain the same violent anxiety for change that they had once sought. As stated a few years later by the same Lewis: "Vorticism, rather than marking the announcement of a new order, was the symptom of the terminal illness of the old. The wonderful world was a mirage, a snare and a delusion".

stefano mazzoni

show visited on February the 4th, 2011 ---

From January the 28th to May the 15th, 2011

I Vorticisti.

Artisti ribelli tra Londra e New York
curated by Mark
Antliff e Vivien Greene

Collezione Peggy Guggenheim -
Palazzo Venier dei Leoni

Dorsoduro 701 (zona Accademia) -
30123 Venezia

Opening Hours: Wednesdays to
Mondays 10-18

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reduced € 10

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