



Portrait of the Artist as the Painter Raphael (1921) Manchester Art Gallery

Background

The Enemy: The Wars of Wyndham Lewis forms part of new and dynamic programme of paying exhibitions at IWM North. Extensive single artist retrospectives of course have precedence at IWM, in 2001 and 2005, respectively, IWML staged surveys of Eric Ravilious and William Orpen to popular and critical acclaim. Both exhibitions contributed to the reappraisal of both artists and established IWML as an important art venue.



Main Exhibition Space, IWM North



IWM North exterior



The decision to stage a retrospective of Wyndham Lewis, Britain's only true modernist artist, came initially from the complementary relationship that would emerge between his art and the dynamic spaces of the Daniel Libeskind architecture of IWM North. Furthermore, staging *The Enemy* would be the first major UK retrospective of Lewis for almost 40 years and first at a UK national institution since the Tate's retrospective in 1956 - during the artist's lifetime. It will occur on the 60th anniversary of Lewis's death and a hundred years after his commission as an official war artist in 1917. The show will thus form a part of our First World War Centenary programme.

Lewis until his death in 1957 was a radical force in British art and literature; a modernist 'Man of 1914' and the founder of Britain's only true *avant-garde* movement, Vorticism. As a master of art and letters he won the plaudits of T S Eliot and Augustus John in his lifetime and inspired a miscellany of figures in art, literature and music, from the sculptor Henry Moore to the blues rock experimentalist, Captain Beefheart and the pop music pioneer, David Bowie.



T.S. Eliot, c.1960s



Henry Moore, 1975



Don van Vliet (aka 'Captain Beefheart'), 1980



David Bowie, 1976

Yet in spite of this impressive cultural pedigree Lewis's reputation has been blighted by his short-lived, ill-judged praise of Hitler in the 1930s. Cast into the cultural wilderness for the second half of the 20th century, Lewis has belatedly undergone a revival of interest. In 2008, the National Portrait Gallery hosted a show of his portraits, followed by *The Vorticists: Manifesto for a Modern World* in 2011 at Tate. In 2004, Paul O'Keefe published, *Some Sort of Genius*, a new biography of Lewis and his art was subjected to fresh critical analyses in David Peters Corbett's *Wyndham Lewis and the Art of Modern War* (2009). Therefore, with renewed regard and reputation rehabilitated, a comprehensive retrospective in a UK public institution is long overdue for this most mercurial of artistic talents.

Rationale

Lewis's life and art spanned and responded to the most violent and chaotic period in human history; an era that encompassed two World Wars, the rise of Communism and Fascism, the Spanish Civil War, the Nazi Holocaust and the emergent nuclear age. His works were suffused with the key doctrines and philosophies of the modern epoch, from Bergsonian and Nietzschean 'process philosophy' of the early twentieth century to the existential angst of the post-45 era. Lewis's own critical writing, acerbic satire and social commentary were of course notorious, assailing not only the cream of British literary society but also the major figures of the time, from Chaplin to Hitler.

It was a life that mirrored the early remit of IWM. Lewis's Vorticist group, and especially its journal, *Blast*, embodied the restless iconoclasm of Britain's educated youth on the eve of the First World War. Indeed, the war for the likes of D H Lawrence and CRW Nevinson promised harsh tonic for moribund Edwardian art and society. For his part, Lewis rejected the notion of a 'regenerative war' and the First World War proved the nemesis of his nascent movement; its followers scattered by service or killed in the fighting. Lewis himself underwent a hiatus from artistic activity while serving as an artillery officer. The experience though was the basis for some of the most insightful and enduring art of the First World War, culminating in a wartime *magnum opus*, *A Battery Shelled*.



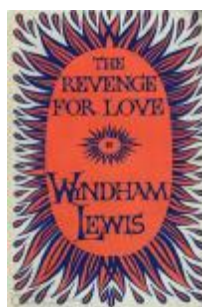
A Battery Shelled, 1918-19

A Battery Shelled fulfilled a long-held ambition to synthesise modernist aesthetics with the grand tradition of history painting. This Lewis achieved again in his impressive *The Surrender of*

Barcelona; a partial homage to Diego Velasquez's *The Surrender of Breda* (1634-5). Begun in 1934, exactly 300 years after the Velasquez masterpiece, its commencement coincided too with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War though Lewis was guarded about any immediate association with the conflict. Instead, it was his novel, *The Revenge for Love* that dealt directly with the crisis in Spain and Europe's slide towards a second world war. Also written in 1937 was *Blasting and Bombardiering*, Lewis's timely autobiography of his career prior to and during First World War. Besides detailing his exuberant pre-war years and the ensuing disillusion of the war, the spectre of future conflict loomed large in its pages, with Lewis the veteran cautioning, *There is for me no good war and bad war. There is only bad war.*



The Surrender of Barcelona, 1934-5, Tate



Lewis's resentment towards the First World War was acute; it robbed him of his friend Henri Gaudier-Brezska, denied him his most potentially productive years and, most painfully, took his beloved mother. The strain of war, Lewis was convinced, caused her premature death in 1920. His experiences serving at Messines Ridge and Passchendaele would colour his outlook and expectations for the rest of his life and the 'deliberately invented scenes' of the Western Front would be the inspiration for some of his most compelling and disturbing art and literature.



Wyndham Lewis, 1917



Wyndham Lewis, 1920

The First World War had a profound impact on Lewis just as it would on anyone else involved.

In the 1930s a personal crusade to prevent future war saw Lewis embark on a period of political writing, the ill-judged conclusions of which would have dire personal consequences. Already preferring authoritarian power over democracy (disdained as rule by the 'herd'), a chief concern of Lewis's was the perceived 'left wing orthodoxy' of a blinkered British cultural elite. Virulent anti-Communism blinded *him* to the evils of Fascism. In 1931, his infamous essay, *Hitler*, portrayed the Nazi leader as a 'man of peace' and a barrier to Soviet incursion in Europe. Lewis backed his position five years later in *Left Wings over Europe*, urging appeasement of Hitler and Mussolini and dismissing, like many others, warnings to the contrary from Winston Churchill as warmongering. Similarly in, *Count Your Dead – They Are Alive!* Lewis excused the actions of General Franco in the Spanish Civil War as necessary to resist Communism.

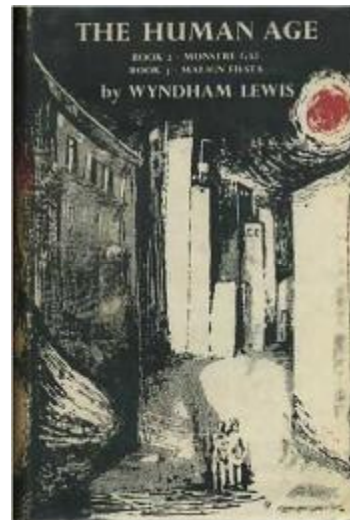


Too late then was Lewis's trip to Nazi Germany in 1937, which exposed the true nature of the regime. Hastily recanting his earlier pronouncements, he published *The Jews: Are they Human?* an often misunderstood denouncement of anti-Semitism, and *The Hitler Cult and How it Will End* (1939). In this, Lewis derided the Führer as a deluded romantic confronted by realities he could not understand.

Yet the damage was done. For Lewis's detractors his association with Nazism was unforgivable and his reputation has never recovered. He faced further criticism for his apparent desertion of Britain for Canada at the outbreak of the Second World War. Intended as a fresh start abroad after the controversial rejection of his portrait of T S Eliot by the Royal Academy in 1938, Lewis found life in the 'sanctimonious icebox' of Toronto no more conducive. In poor health and facing destitution he was cast a lifeline in 1943 by Britain's official war art scheme. His commission, *A Canadian War Factory*, however, proved problematic. The one-time modernist trailblazer afflicted with self-doubt and indecision, changed his approach twice so that by his return to Britain in August 1945 it was still unfinished.



A Canadian War Factory, 1943-57, Tate



Lewis returned to a country exhausted by war and in the grip of austerity, a state of affairs he powerfully evoked in his collection of literary sketches: *Rotting Hill*. Despite approaching blindness, this final period of Lewis's life was nevertheless productive. As art critic for the *Listener* he championed a new generation of British artists, including Francis Bacon, Michael Ayrton, Barbara Hepworth and John Minton. At the same time, the BBC commissioned Lewis to complete his afterlife trilogy, initially begun in 1928 with *The Childermass*. Collectively titled *The Human Age*, the volumes conjured a nightmare fantasy world of corporate consumption, compliant masses and a Hell operated by a dapper devil, Sammael.

Undoubtedly, Lewis's hellish imagery was derived from the Nazi concentration camps though as a whole *The Human Age* was a response to the Cold War, which the author believed would lead inevitably to a future nuclear world war. Thankfully, this was a prediction from a most astute modern mind that has up to now proven wrong.

The Exhibition

Exhibition approach

The exhibition, curated by Richard Slocombe, Senior Curator of Art at IWM, will be displayed in IWM North's Special Exhibitions Gallery. It will comprise of over 130 artworks, books, journals, pamphlets and other supporting material relating to Lewis and his followers, heroes, admirers, rivals and enemies.

In 1980, Jane Farrington, Curator at Manchester City Art Gallery, the venue for the UK's last Lewis retrospective, wrote in the catalogue forward, *Wyndham Lewis was too good at too many things to fit happily into a history of twentieth-century British art.*

Therefore, *The Enemy* will be more than an art exhibition and will aim to consider Lewis's career as a whole. It will build a picture of the man and his art, and the turbulent modern milieu of the twentieth century, which inspired, enticed and repelled him by turns. Exhibits will be drawn from IWM's renowned art collection, from prestigious UK national institutions, including Tate, regional collections (especially from the north) and from private collections, such as that of the Wyndham Lewis Memorial Trust. We are also seeking loans from international collections including Durban, Vancouver, Ottawa and Toronto.



Left to right: *The Armada*, 1937 (Vancouver Art Gallery); *Portrait of T.S. Eliot*, 1938 (Municipal Art Gallery, Durban); *Praxitella*, 1920-1 (Leeds Museums and Galleries (City Art Gallery); *Inferno*, 1937 (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia)

What's Eating Wyndham Lewis?



Who was Wyndham Lewis? Why is he such a divisive figure? These are the opening questions the exhibition will answer.

His wider reputation is based on his writings, but he always considered himself an artist first and foremost. Thus Lewis is a man of many contradictions, and many faces. He was aloof, intellectual and wished to distance himself from wider British society – the ‘moronic inferno’ as he termed it – but was acutely affected by it, even craved its attention and acceptance.

Ultimately, Lewis’s fate was decided by events, especially the First World War. Unlike other artists and writers enduring the conflict its impacts were less apparent, but it undoubtedly coloured his outlook and influenced his art and writing. It is an aspect of his life that tends to be ignored, even denied, especially by his detractors, who consider him cold, callous and Fascist. This exhibition will argue instead that the conflict was the pivotal moment in a life and career that transcended the early remit of IWM and produced some of the most challenging, experimental, imaginative, and ultimately, misunderstood art.

Although for many Lewis will always be *The Enemy*, it is this very aspect that makes him to others such a tantalising and beguiling figure; the outsider, the rebel, the ultimate anti-hero.

So, just as in his lifetime, there will always be a frisson of danger when dealing with him.

Section 1: The Man of the World



Portrait of Wyndham Lewis, Augustus John, 1905, Private collection

A grim-jawed, black-haired and beetle-browed individual ... disposed to be surly and uncommunicative.

The section will examine Lewis's early life and considers the factors that shaped him as an artist and thinker. It will stress the importance of senior male figures to Lewis who, in the absence of his feckless American father, influenced him both psychologically and artistically. These include the lugubrious Sturge Moore, who encouraged Lewis's earliest forays into poetry and writing, and Augustus John, whom he sought to compete artistically and romantically. John's bohemianism and Post-Impressionist fascination with primitive rustic cultures were an initial influence on the young Lewis, as were his travels to Paris, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain. These not only brought him into contact with the latest ideas in art and literature and earned him a respect for the masters of the past, but also introduced him to the philosophy of Nietzsche, Bergson and Schopenhauer.

The section will also address Lewis's early impulse to construct a public persona and his own legend; evident in the reduction of his name to 'Wyndham Lewis', his fictitious birth at sea and its imprecise date. This and an obsessive secrecy contributed to an air of mystery and demonstrated a modern, publicity-savvy personality, who for all his intellectual pretensions was not averse to using the popular press to invite public attention.

It will demonstrate that Lewis's efforts to curate his image served also as a protective 'carapace'. Born in Canada, but raised in genteel poverty by his mother in Britain, Lewis always felt detached and at odds with his adoptive society and culture. This is alluded to with the inclusion of early works identifying with lonely, embattled figures, such as his drawing, *Anthony* (c.1912) and his *Timon of Athens* series (1912) or in sardonic, Camden Town-influenced, low life scenes like *Café* (1911-12) and *The Theatre Manager* (1909). Lewis's insecurity further manifested itself in an intellectual aloofness, articulated in his debut novel, *Tarr*, in which the eponymous hero's ascetic resistance to human impulses and emotions is contrasted by the brutal, indulgent behaviour of his rival, the romantic Kreisler.



The Theatre Manager, 1909, V&A



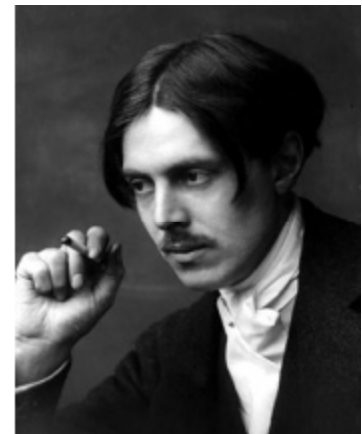
Anthony, c.1912, V&A

The insularity and conservatism of British life certainly nurtured a cynical superiority in the cosmopolitan Lewis and his taste for antagonism and intrigue developed young. The, *incarnate Loki, bearing the news and sowing discord with it*, as Augustus John recalled him. The section will argue that this behaviour was also a conscious and consistent attempt to live out a Nietzschean precept that asserted the necessity of conflict to engender art, and partly explains Lewis's propensity to turn on even friends and supporters.

Section 2: A Rebel with a Cause

Lewis, the outsider, gravitated to those he perceived too as talented outsiders; the Americans Ezra Pound and T S Eliot and the Dubliner James Joyce. They were of course the 'Men of 1914', the radical modernists who were destined to drag British art and literature out of 19th century complacency into a new era of experimentation.

This section addresses Lewis at his most assured and artistically productive between the years 1912 and 1914, a period which saw him execute his monumental painting *Kermesse* (1912), found the Rebel Art Centre, instigate Vorticism, publish the seminal *Blast* and complete his first version of his debut novel, *Tarr*. Amid the febrile atmosphere of the London's art scene in the 1910s, Lewis also clashed with other leaders of the progressive tendency. Notably, in 1914, Lewis with friends Gaudier-Brzeska and Edward Wadsworth, disrupted a typically cacophonous poetry recital by the Futurist Filippo Marinetti. Lewis angered by the Italian's attempts to dominate British modernism. More damaging was Lewis's public quarrel with Roger Fry and his departure from the Omega Workshops in 1913. Lewis remained convinced that the influential Fry and his Bloomsbury friends subsequently undermined his artistic career.



The immediate upshot, however, was Lewis's formation of the Rebel Art Centre with Kate Lechmere and of Vorticism with Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska and Wadsworth. By this time Lewis's art approached complete abstraction, guided he claimed by esoteric, semi-mystical impulses parallel to the material world; a reflection of his interest in the art and theory of Wassily Kandinsky. The Russian artist's influence is evident in *Planners: Happy Day* (1912–3), an earlier watercolour of draughtsmen at work comprised of blocks and lines that contribute to and confound the viewer's perception. Lewis's *Composition* (1913) likewise defies comprehension, variously interpreted as an armoured skull, a mechanical dancing couple or an urban townscape; images form in the mind's eye but defy longer scrutiny.



The Vorticists at the Restaurant de la Tour Eiffel: Spring, 1915, William Roberts, 1960-61, Tate



The inclusion of Edward Wadsworth's *Abstract Composition* (1915) and Helen Saunders's *Abstract Multicoloured Design* (c.1915) suggest Lewis's attempts to instill a unified aesthetic within his break-away faction. Although the presence too of Jessica Dismorr's *Abstract Composition* (c.1915) and Gaudier-Brzeska's sculptures *Ornament* (1914), *Fish* (1914) and *Bird Swallowing a Fish* (1913-14) imply the Vorticists were more a conglomeration of young, independently-minded modernists seeking a creative path free of the overbearing Fry. Either way, the intervention of the First World War robbed the group of momentum and some of its most talented members.



The Crowd, 1914-15, Tate

This was not before Lewis himself had created Vorticism's standout painting, *The Crowd* (1914-15). First exhibited in March 1915, this schematic cityscape is often paired with Lewis's account of the behaviour of London crowds in the weeks before the First World War. However, discernible figures bearing flags suggest not a war-fevered crowd pictured but an insurrectionist throng. This is supported by the painting's alternative title; *Revolution*. Whatever its nature, *The Crowd* illustrates Lewis's interest in the emerging science of 'crowd psychology'. The assertion by its chief exponent, the French author Gustave le Bon, that the individual *is no longer himself ... but has become an automaton who has ceased to be guided by his will*, is visualised by Lewis in the tumbling, angular but irregular, mass that breaks and reforms as it negotiates the rigid planes and grids of the composition. This schematic matrix of humanity and architecture bears echoes of Lewis's associate David Bomberg, especially his painting, *The Vision of Ezekiel* (1912). It also revealed Lewis's waning interest in popular movements and power relations, a curiosity that had eventually disastrous consequences for him.

Section 3: The Art of Modern War



In March 1916, midway through the First World War, CRW Nevinson, English protégé of the Filippo Marinetti and 'invalided-out' medical orderly, revealed for the first time his Futurist masterpiece *La Mitrailleuse*. Shown at the Allied Artists Association exhibition at the Grafton Galleries, this despairing image of humanity bent to the will of the machine presented an entirely new understanding of warfare, taking London's art world by storm in the process. The same month Lewis eventually volunteered as a gunner with the Royal Garrison Artillery; the *de facto* leader of Britain's *avant-garde* for once seeming out-of-step with the zeitgeist.

Lewis, unlike Nevinson, did not welcome the outbreak of the First World War, viewing it not as a vital force, cleansing and renewing humankind, but as debasing to culture and civilisation, the result of animalistic urges inherent in humanity. These sentiments Lewis expressed in a series of drawings collectively titled *Combat*. Created in 1914, they pictured mechanical or insectivorous beings driven by intuitive impulses to either to fight or copulate. Lewis explored the same theme in his short story, *Cantleman's Spring-Mate*. Written as he underwent military training, it told of the eponymous recruit Cantleman, who after witnessing mating insects on Salisbury Plain decides to take and abandon his own mate – a local village girl - as punitive revenge against nature for dragging civilisation into war.



This section will argue that although preceded by the likes of Nevinson, Eric Kennington and Paul Nash in the First World War, Lewis was quickest to acknowledge the 'war art' they created was a new genre corresponding with modern industrialised war. As a result, Lewis more than other British war artists sought to understand and express the debilitating impact of the conflict on the human psyche. This reached a climactic conclusion in 1919 when Lewis attempted to refashion 'history painting' to appropriate this new narrative of war, resulting in his canvas *A Battery Shelled*.



A Battery Shelled, 1918-19

At the same time, Lewis, like Nevinson also, acknowledged the limitations of the modernist idiom in conveying honestly the visceral horror of the First World War and felt compelled to find a more personalised and intelligible expression of the war. Saying of his war drawings, *Experimentation is waived: I have tried to do with a pencil and brush what story-tellers like Tchekov or Stendahl did in their books*. Despite his modesty, Lewis's drawings nevertheless drew fulsome praise from the young Herbert Read, [*Lewis's*] drawings (*descriptive of artillery fire at the front*) are great. The best war drawings I've seen yet. Full of power and energy, and true...



Officers and Signallers, 1918 (1918)



Battery Position in a Wood (1918)

The First World War by its end had taken its toll on Lewis, his vitality and optimism of 1914 replaced with bitterness and fear of a world grown accustomed to meaningless violence.

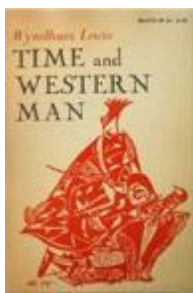
Section 4: 'A malicious, thwarted, dangerous man'



This section examines the interwar, a period when Lewis, dwelling on his war service, felt obliged to begin anew. This he initially attempted through art, his exhibition at the Leicester Galleries in 1921 introducing his latest creation, *Tyros*; grotesque representations of a vulgar, hedonistic, jazz-loving post-war generation. However, it was as a writer that Lewis made the greatest impression throughout the 1920s and 30s.

Building on the success of the critically praised *Tarr*, Lewis began an ambitious project, *The Man of the World*, seeking to position himself as major political commentator and cultural critic. His publisher's refusal to assent to the epic undertaking and separate publication of its constituent parts, including *The Art of Being Ruled* and *Time and Western Man*, contributed to Lewis's increasing hostility towards the cliques and affectations of literary society. *Time and Western Man*, for example, bore stinging critiques of Joyce, Bergson, Pound and Gertrude Stein. This was followed by his 1930 novel, *The Apes of God*;

a vicious satire of London's literary scene. It did little for Lewis's halting artistic career, alienating the very people he relied on to support his art, but by then he had already embraced the persona of antagonistic outsider; 'The Enemy', founding a new journal of the same name to promote his provocative literary output.



This section shows how Lewis's portraiture co-existed, at times paradoxically, with his writing. Early pencil studies of Pound, Joyce and first wife Iris Barry, show him perfecting a distinctive linear style. Despite later executing some of the most penetrating portraits of the 1920s and 30s this was a direction also born of economic necessity. The perennially hard-up Lewis was forced to rely on such commissions when other artistic avenues were apparently closed off.



Stephen Spender, 1938,
The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery



Edith Sitwell, 1923-35, Tate

The inclusion of portraits of literary figures in this section will demonstrate Lewis's ambivalence towards his peers and reveal how his relationships could dissolve into acrimony. For example, his portrait of Edith Sitwell, begun in 1923, when they were friends and completed in 1935, after Lewis had lampooned both her and her brothers, Osbert and Sacheverell, as the dilettantish 'Finnian Shaws' in *The Apes of God*. Some sitters, however, were surprisingly forgiving of Lewis's castigation. In 1939, Ezra Pound agreed to sit for Lewis despite the latter's withering criticism. The portrait was intended to form part of a series featuring influential living poets, and included Stephen Spender and T S Eliot. Pound undertook the sitting in Lewis's London studio, but was by this time firmly ensconced in Fascist Italy, convinced Mussolini was the leader of a new civilisation. Ever the dreamer, Pound is captured by Lewis in languid pose, dozing by the shores of the Mediterranean.

Regardless of his critical outbursts, Lewis's artistic skills still commanded respect. In 1937 following his exhibition at the Leicester Galleries, his first since 1921, the poets Geoffrey Grigson, W H Auden and Stephen Spender and authors Naomi Michison and Rebecca West were among many luminaries who lobbied for Lewis's work to be accepted into a national collection. The finest painting of the exhibition was undoubtedly *The Surrender of Barcelona* (1934-37), a richly-coloured and intricate composition alluding to the conquest of Ferdinand and Isabella in 1472, but with contemporary resonances with the Spanish Civil War. The painting's stylised architectural abstractions can also be found the earlier *Baghdad* (1927). The image of interlocking towers, spiral staircases and hanging gardens was cubist in character but possessed also of a dreamlike, metaphysical quality. *Baghdad* itself was the culmination of a series of experimental works, including Lewis's drawing *Creation Myth* (1927), where the artist explored esoteric and spiritual ideas in a bid to uncover a new 'world art' born of a 'synthesis of cultures and times'. This itself was the driving force for a new culture combining the industrial dynamism of the West and the aesthetics and spirituality of the East.



The Surrender of Barcelona,
1934-37, Tate



Baghdad, 1927, Tate

Lewis's utopian internationalism was eroded by deteriorating global events of the 1930s. His sympathy for Nazi Germany was grounded in a mistaken belief that Hitler held the key to peace, but only placed him further at odds with Britain's intelligentsia. Yet, the decisive and symbolic break between Lewis and 1930s Britain occurred following the Royal Academy's rejection of Lewis's portrait of T S Eliot in 1938. His submission to the summer exhibition was a curious move, Lewis had always deplored the Royal Academy and by offering just one work to its selection committee appeared to set himself up to fail. Whether Lewis was seeking confirmation of his shunning or was intending to generate press controversy (which he achieved) is unclear. However, as the world descended in the Second World War, the 'Lonely Old Volcano of the Right', as Auden termed Lewis, headed for self-imposed exile in Canada.



T S Eliot, 1938, Durban Art Gallery



Lewis scored much publicity from his portrait of Eliot's rejection by the Royal Academy, including an interview in the **Daily Express** and a feature in *British Movietone News*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0niXuJUdDY>

Section 5: Fading Light

The final section of the exhibition addresses the last two decades of Lewis's life, beginning with the nadir of the 1940s when ostracised in Britain he failed also to make a success of Canada and the United States. In unfamiliar surroundings, his portraits bore none of the vitality of his 1930s work and, instead, it was an intriguing series of watercolours, meant as private meditations on the misadventure and machismo of war, that one found an agile, creative mind still at work.

Salvation of sorts came from an unlikely source in 1943. Despite a personal dislike of Kenneth Clark and suspicion of art impresarios after Fry, Lewis accepted the offer of a commission from Clark's War Artists Advisory Committee. Instigated by Eric Kennington, the offer was timely for the penniless Lewis; however, plagued by doubt and indecision, his canvas, *A Canadian War Factory* underwent two changes in approach. Lewis's reluctance to part with the painting continued after his return to Britain in 1945 and was only received by the Tate following his death in 1957. Even so, *A Canadian War Factory* was the last major painting Lewis completed and was the best work to arise from his transatlantic sojourn. Clark replied in person to Lewis's offer to portray the Canadian industrial effort, claiming he was, *one of the first artists we thought of*, for his scheme and ingratiatingly underlined his enduring admiration for the artist. Paid an up-front fee, Lewis spent six weeks sketching in the smoke and darkness of the Anaconda Brass Works near Toronto, a task made more difficult by Lewis's failing eyesight.



Portrait of Wyndham Lewis, Michael Ayrton, 1955, Tate



Michael Ayrton, cover art for *The Human Age*, 1955

Blindness put paid to Lewis's artistic career although through his art criticism he introduced the British public a new generation of artists and gained a protégé in Michael Ayrton, whom he met in 1946. They formed a creative partnership, Ayrton providing the cover art for his bleak, semi-autobiographical novel, *Self Condemned*, and for the first two volumes of *The Human Age*. Ayrton also portrayed his mentor in, *Portrait of Wyndham Lewis* (1955) capturing Lewis physically ailing but no less formidable, matching the description by the younger artist, *...on the summit of Mr Lewis's black and formal figure was Mr Lewis's head, wedge-shaped, blade-nosed, with a forehead like a sledgehammer beneath which the girders of his spectacle frames seemed to provide a dangerous cakewalk for ideas cross.*

Completed two years before his death, it pictures Lewis, despite setbacks and ill-health, still resolute and uncompromising; the Enemy to the very last.

Key Messages

The key messages will be reviewed as the exhibition content and narrative develops

- 'War Shapes Lives' – War shaped Wyndham Lewis's life and work.
- This will be the first UK retrospective in a national institution since Lewis's death in 1957.
- IWM North is a venue for innovative and challenging visual arts exhibition and a place to debate and discuss big questions relating to war and conflict and our lives today
- Our remit is broad and covers the whole of the twentieth-century and addresses social, political and cultural impacts of conflict and not just its military aspects
- History is written by the winners

Audience

- Middle Youth
- Culture Vultures
- Classically Cultured

Learning and Visitor Programme

Details of the learning and visitor programme are currently being developed and are likely to include a major academic conference and a debating session.

Key communication messages

Details of the marketing and press campaigns and opportunities, including social and digital media are currently being developed.

Development and Partnerships

Details of the development and partnerships plan is currently being developed

Retail

There will be retail lines which are specifically developed for the exhibition available in the shop on the ground floor. These are related to the themes of the exhibition and make use of the IWM

collections and loan items that are featured in the exhibition.

Publishing and partnerships

Initial discussions have been undertaken with the Publishing team and capacity within the curatorial and publishing teams confirmed.

Project Board

Programme Director: Gill Webber

Programme Board Members: Claire Wilson, Richard Slocombe, Emily MacArthur, Lindsay Ball, Lucy Donoughue, Camilla Thomas, Emily Mathew, Odile Masia

Programme Manager: Claire Wilson

The exhibition project development will be via the project team meeting approx. every 4-6 weeks. For details of the roles and responsibilities of the project team, please refer to the related project Roles and Responsibilities document.

Circulation List

This document will be circulated via email to the staff below:

- Gill Webber – Executive Director of Content and Programmes
- Richard Slocombe – Exhibition Curator
- Odile Masia – Exhibitions Coordinator (IWM North)
- Lindsay Ball – Corporate Marketing Manager
- Emily MacArthur – Corporate Marketing Manager
- Rachael Welsh – Marketing Officer (IWM North)
- Lucy Donoughue – Head of Communications
- Angela Kirk – PR Manager (IWM North)
- Lorna McBride – PR Assistant (IWM North)
- Emily Mathew – Head of Business Development (IWM North)
- Barry Smith – Assistant Director of Commercial
- David Fenton – Head of Retail and Admissions
- Claire Johnstone – Retail and Admission Manager (IWM North)
- Joyce Murdoch – Head of Learning and Engagement (IWM North and Duxford)
- Camilla Thomas – Visitor Programmes Manager (IWM North)
- Victoria Howarth – Formal Learning Manager (IWM North)
- James McSharry – Learning Resource Manager (IWM North)
- Sarah Gilbert – Head of Exhibition Production and Delivery
- Andrew Gibbs – Senior 3D designer
- Michelle Brookes – Operations Coordinator (IWM North)
- Kev Hall – IT Infrastructure and AV Ops Team Manager
- Michael Carty, Roberto Mallo Garcia, James Byrom – Technical Team (IWM North)
- Andy Calver – Section Head of Care and Conservation
- Simon Bourne – Head of Procurement and Compliance