



WOLFSONIAN

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**'RHYTHMS OF MODERN LIFE: BRITISH PRINTS 1914-1939' EXPLORES THE DYNAMIC WORKS OF
EARLY MODERNIST PRINTMAKERS
EXHIBITION OPENS AT THE WOLFSONIAN-FIU NOVEMBER 20, 2009**



MIAMI BEACH, FL (June 3, 2009)—From November 20, 2009 through February 28, 2010, The Wolfsonian–Florida International University presents *Rhythms of Modern Life: British Prints 1914-1939*, an extraordinary exhibition that focuses on the dynamic synergy of modern man and machine as seen in the artistic movements of early twentieth-century England. The exhibition highlights the impact of Italian Futurism and French Cubism on British modernist printmaking from the beginning of the First

World War to the outbreak of the Second World War. Through a thematic examination of the works of 14 innovative artists, more than 90 boldly graphic prints are showcased. Approximately 70 of these works are drawn from the Johanna and Leslie Garfield Collection—a superb assemblage of modern British prints from the heroic days of early modernism to its later 1920s and '30s adaptation to popular taste. Organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in collaboration with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the exhibition was previously on view at the Museum of Fine Arts and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

“The Wolfsonian collection has many works by these extraordinary British modernists that have been widely overlooked until now. Wolfsonian founder Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. met several of these artists and began collecting their works in the 1980s” notes Wolfsonian director Cathy Leff. “We are delighted that we could partner with the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and the Metropolitan Museum of Art to bring their alternative visions of modernity to a wider public.”

Rhythms of Modern Life highlights the period between the outbreak of the First World War and the beginning of the Second World War, a time of immense social and economic change in Europe stimulated by the technological advancements of the modern age. In this politically and culturally charged climate, the status quo was challenged and new ideologies explored. The arts reflected this change by celebrating newly born abstraction and embracing the accelerating, mechanized speed of

modern life. Beginning with the outbreak of the First World War, the exhibition examines the bold, inventive works of British printmakers who were influenced in their war imagery by Italian Futurism. It continues through the short-lived but vital Vorticist movement (1914–1915) and concludes with the colorful contributions of London's Grosvenor School of Modern Art (1925–1939). The principal artists represented are C.R.W. Nevinson and Edward Wadsworth—early followers of Futurism and Vorticism—as well as Claude Flight, Sybil Andrews, Cyril E. Power, and Lill Tschudi—the later color linocut artists of the Grosvenor School of Modern Art. The exhibition and its accompanying catalogue are divided into sections and organized according to themes that preoccupied these artists: *Vorticism and Abstraction*, *World War I*, *Speed and Movement*, *Urban Life/Urban Dynamism*, *Sport, Industry and Labor*, *Entertainment and Leisure*, *Natural Forces*, and *Linocut: History and Technique*.

A rich variety of printmaking techniques is on view in the show, including woodcuts, drypoints, lithographs, and, above all, color linocuts. The newly popularized linocut technique was embraced in the 1920s and '30s by artists of the Grosvenor School of Modern Art.

Rhythms of Modern Life is curated by Clifford S. Ackley, the MFA's Ruth and Carl Shapiro Curator of Prints and Drawings and Chair of the Department. In addition to works from the Johanna and Leslie Garfield Collection, other prints included in the exhibition are from the Museum of Fine Arts, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Wolfsonian–Florida International University, and a Boston-area private collector.

"This exhibition is unusual in combining sober Futurist-derived images from World War I battlefields and radical pioneering abstract works with the later and more playful Art Deco-like color linocuts of the Grosvenor School artists," said Ackley. "The world of these artists was a brave new, energized one in which the machine dominates and anonymous figures are swept up in regimented or syncopated movement, a world of jazzy animation in which velocity is irresistible as well as exhilarating."

Exhibition Catalogue

The fully illustrated exhibition catalogue is organized thematically and includes an essay on the Garfields as collectors by Stephen Coppel of the British Museum, followed by the introduction to the catalogue by MFA curator Clifford Ackley. Introductions to thematic sections and biographies are provided by Thomas Rassieur, curator of Prints and Drawings at the MFA, and Samantha Rippner, associate curator of Drawings and Prints at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The catalogue also includes technical essays on linocut by conservators Stephanie Lussier of the MFA, and Rachel Mustalish of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It is available in soft cover for \$37.50 in The Wolfsonian's Dynamo Museum Shop or by contacting paola@thewolf.fiu.edu.

About The Wolfsonian–Florida International University

The Wolfsonian is a museum, library, and research center that uses objects to illustrate the persuasive power of art and design, to explore what it means to be modern, and to tell the story of social, historical, and technological changes that have transformed our world. The collections comprise approximately 120,000 objects from the period of 1885 to 1945—the height of the Industrial Revolution to the end of the Second World War—in a variety of media including furniture; industrial-design objects; works in glass, ceramics, and metal; rare books; periodicals; ephemera; works on paper; paintings; textiles; and medals.

The Wolfsonian is located at 1001 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, FL. Admission is \$7 for adults; \$5 for seniors, students, and children age 6 -12; and free for Wolfsonian members, State University System of Florida staff and students with ID, and children under six. The Wolfsonian, presently on a Summer Schedule through October 14, 2009, is open Thursday and Friday from noon-9pm (galleries close at 7pm on Thursday); Saturday and Sunday from noon-6pm; and is closed Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Contact us at 305.531.1001 or visit us online at www.wolfsonian.org for further information.

The Wolfsonian-FIU receives ongoing support from the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Arts Council; the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; the City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs Program, Cultural Arts Council; the Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Foundation; William J. and Tina Rosenberg Foundation; Continental Airlines, the Official Airline of The Wolfsonian-FIU; The Miami Herald; Miami.com; Bacardi U.S.A., Inc.; Robert Mondavi Winery; and Pistils & Petals.

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