

Lawrence Atkinson, Sculpture, and Vorticist Multimediality¹

Seven years after the ‘little magazine’ *BLAST* published the Vorticist manifesto, one of its signatories won the Grand Prix for sculpture at the 1921 Milan Exhibition. The prize was given to a work titled *L’Oiseau*, and the artist in question was Lawrence Atkinson (1873-1931). At the time, Atkinson had also made his name as a painter, poet, and music teacher, and especially as an acclaimed performer of classical lieder. He had exhibited at the Allied Artists’ Association in 1913, appeared in the ‘Invited to Show’ section of the ‘First Exhibition of the Vorticist Group’ at the Doré Gallery in 1915, and between 1916 and 1919 exhibited his work as a non-member at consecutive shows of the London Group.² Aldous Huxley, who was introduced to Atkinson through Osbert Sitwell, described the artist in a 1918 letter to Ottoline Morrell as a ‘fabulous little man [...] of incredible energy’ who was equally at home ‘drinking champagne at lunch and talking about the *zeitgeist* and the great currents of thought of [the] age’ as he was devoting ‘one half of the night [...] to vortex-painting’.³ Later that year, Atkinson’s *The Sky Pilot* adorned the front cover of the ‘Third Cycle’ of the Sitwellian magazine *Wheels*. The September 1919 volume of *Coterie* featured his drawing *Still Life*.⁴ His attempts to unite sculptural aesthetics and musical principles would soon be documented in what remains the only monograph devoted to his work, Horace Shipp’s *The New Art: A Study of the Principles of Non-Representational Art and Their Application in the Work of Laurence Atkinson* (1922), which Shipp based on conversations with Atkinson himself.⁵ P. G. Konody, responding to these issues in a review of Shipp’s book published in *The Sackbut*, stated that Atkinson’s sculpture ‘arouses the enthusiasm of the few who can follow his abstract thought and whose sensibility is sufficiently developed to appreciate the necessarily vague emotional significance of his plastic forms.’⁶ Today, all but forgotten, Atkinson barely registers in the cultural-historical record.

Contemporary reviews of Atkinson's work show that during his lifetime he attracted high regard. For instance, shortly after the Milan Exhibition, in May 1921, his one-man show of paintings and sculptures at London's Eldar Gallery was reviewed enthusiastically by the world press. A reviewer in *American Art News* wrote of Atkinson's training as a musician, highlighted his turn to sculpture 'as a means for expressing the same emotions' he 'formerly sought to embody in sound', and noted Italy's appreciation of a figure at the cutting edge of abstractionist principles:

Italy, evidently, is more advanced than we in appreciation of these nebulous aims in sculpture, for while we beg for time in which to accustom ourselves to the non-representational in art before being called upon to commit ourselves one way or another in regard to it, she has been busy awarding gold medals and grand prizes to Mr. Atkinson's abstract sculptures.⁷

Wyndham Lewis, a friend of Atkinson, echoed the point. In an article originally meant for publication in *The Tyro*, Lewis introduced Atkinson as 'a busy practitioner in music, who produces his plastic phantasies in his spare time', and praised the 'admirable and delicate sense of design' informing his work, while stressing the irony of 'the Milan cup, or medal' on the grounds that it was 'natural that a foreign city should honour this vorticist [*sic*] artist of whom England had never heard.'⁸

Lewis was exaggerating things here. Atkinson was in fact reasonably famous in England in 1921, but beyond avant-garde circles and a small proportion of the gallery-going public he was not known for his paintings or sculptures. Those who did know of him at this time most likely would have heard, or read about, his singing. Atkinson initially studied music in Paris and Berlin prior to starting his career in the north of England as a well-

received specialist in German lieder. During the first half of the Edwardian decade he sang in numerous concerts featuring musicians of the highest rank. Those with good memories might also have remembered Atkinson for the fact that the composer Richard Strauss had accompanied him on the piano at the Schiller-Anstalt in Manchester on 21 December 1904, when Atkinson performed songs by the composer on what *The Musical Standard* called ‘a red-letter day’ in the city’s musical history.⁹ When Strauss returned to Manchester in January 1922 to participate in the Brand Lane concert series at the Free Trade Hall, Atkinson again made it into the national newspapers, this time in a notice in *The Manchester Guardian* that singled out his 1904 appearance as an event of note.¹⁰ Yet the foregrounding of his achievements as a singer had the unintended effect of accentuating his comparative lack of fame in England as an artist and specifically as a sculptor. In contrast to modernist peers like Eric Gill and Jacob Epstein, for instance, Atkinson was largely beneath the radar of contemporary opinion. And so he has remained.

Looking more closely at Atkinson’s life and career, however, allows us to reconsider from a new angle at least three persistent clichés about Vorticism (that it was unmusical, that it was stopped by the First World War, and that its members formed a cohesive ‘group’); to establish more firmly an almost entirely unappreciated trajectory within post-war British sculpture, one running from Atkinson’s early interactions with the British Rhythmists to his encounters with Vorticism and beyond; and to re-examine what Matthew Hofer has called the ‘decidedly radical’ early twentieth-century project of non-institutional education focusing on ‘interdisciplinarity through the interaction of the arts’, a project to which Lewis, Ezra Pound, and Atkinson made symbolically important contributions.¹¹ Throughout 1913 and 1914 Pound hoped to open a London-based College of Arts devoted to ‘intelligent and intellectual activity’.¹² The College was to have fostered dialogue between sculpture, painting, music, letters, photography, crafts, and dance. Here Pound owed much to the example of the

similarly multimedial Rebel Art Centre, the venue financed by Kate Lechmere in which Vorticism was incubated under Lewis's direction, and *vice versa*. Moreover, Pound and Lewis were also setting examples to which Atkinson later paid homage by trying to found his own *atelier*, the Centre of Modern Interpretation, in 1921 and 1922. This project barely got off the ground, and in this regard it echoed Lewis's Rebel Art Centre and Pound's College of Arts, neither of which lasted sufficiently long to enrol students.¹³ Atkinson's venture is significant because it shows the persistence of Lewisian and Poundian ideals in the English context after Lewis had given up on Vorticism and after Pound had decamped to the Continent. It also suggests that Atkinson deserves a more visible place in histories of avant-garde, inter-disciplinary artistic instruction.

My discussion is split into four parts. The first part discusses the hitherto unexamined reasons for Atkinson's transition from singer to painter, and offers a condensed overview of his relationship with the British Rhythmists, the first of two networks that fundamentally affected his development as an artist. The second part considers the second network, the Vorticists, and specifically how the Rebel Art Centre and the College of Arts gave Atkinson two examples of multimedial projects that influenced him when he tried after the First World War to establish the Centre of Modern Interpretation. The third part examines Atkinson's emerging sculptural practice: it differentiates that practice from the Vorticist principles without which it could not have come into being; discusses the continuities between Atkinson's work and its Rhythmist origins; and reads his sculptures as distinctive contributions to an incipient tradition of English non-figurative art. The fourth part provides a brief account of the 'multimedial endeavour' that emerged in tandem with Atkinson's work as a sculptor and singing teacher in 1921 and 1922: the Centre of Modern Interpretation, which until now has remained almost completely unknown to historians of avant-gardism in 1920s England. In tracing these elements, I hope to reclaim Atkinson as a subject worthy of

critical scrutiny, and to show his importance as a musician and teacher, roles that shaped and benefited from his career as a sculptor in important ways.

Atkinson's Second Beginning

One of the least documented aspects of Atkinson's life is the fact that in the middle of the Edwardian decade he had to give up his singing career in shocking circumstances. Atkinson was in 1905 a musical star in the making whose rise into the cultural firmament seemed guaranteed. However, his life soon changed dramatically. On 27 July 1905 he was involved in the Hall Road accident, in which 'the 6.30 p.m. express train from Liverpool to Southport ran into an empty passenger train standing in the middle siding at Hall Road Station.'¹⁴ Twenty passengers died in the collision; twice as many again were injured.¹⁵ According to *The Aberdeen Daily Journal*, writing a year after the crash, Atkinson 'had a marvellous escape from death, [and] suffered from concussion of the spine and of the brain, and also from nervous shock.'¹⁶ As his daughter described it, Atkinson 'was thrown out of the burning train at such a distance that the railway company tried to make out that he had [not] been on [it].'¹⁷ However, his brother Cyril Atkinson, a barrister who later served as MP for Altrincham in Cheshire, 'defended [him] brilliantly' against the company responsible, the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, which argued that Atkinson's 'voice would become as good as ever when he recovered', and whose legal representative submitted that his claim of injury 'was a greatly exaggerated one.'¹⁸ This proposal was brushed aside, and in May 1906 Atkinson received £2,500 in damage payments (about £150,000 in 2014's money).¹⁹

Atkinson's singing career ended as a result of the crash. He was only 'slightly improved' in health by early August 1905, and the newspapers noted that he subsequently

‘lost many of his pupils’ and that he ‘had to give up his professional engagements.’²⁰ At this point he had to accept that ‘he had more or less lost his voice’; that ‘he couldn’t sing any longer than about 5 minutes, [before] his voice gave out’; that ‘[h]is nerves were ruined’; and that ‘for many years after he would relive what he saw of the train accident before he lost consciousness’ during the event itself.²¹ Understandably, the process of physical and artistic recovery was slow. Between 1907 and 1912 Atkinson arranged a number of concert series in Birkenhead and in Liverpool, beginning with a programme on 4 November 1907 featuring the Brodsky Quartet and Lillie Wormald.²² The singer Doris Woodall employed Atkinson at some point around 1912. Under his guidance she gave her first lieder recital at the Bechstein Hall (later rebranded, during the First World War, as the Wigmore Hall) in May of that year.²³ During this period he took his advanced pupils abroad on an annual basis to perfect their diction of French and German.²⁴ For the rest of his life Atkinson earned most of his living as a singing teacher, but he was never again to enjoy the success as a performer he had experienced in and before 1905.

Although biographical details concerning Atkinson’s career between 1905 and 1912 are difficult to verify, it seems probable that the trauma of the Hall Road Accident was the catalyst that changed him from a singer to a painter and, eventually, to a sculptor. Circa 1911 or 1912 he began a course of study under the Scottish Fauvist and water colourist J. D. Fergusson at the Académie de La Palette in Paris.²⁵ Kate Lechmere, who employed Atkinson as a piano teacher, was a fellow student, as was Jessica Dismorr, alongside whom Atkinson exhibited with Fergusson, Samuel Peploe, Anne Estelle Rice, and Ethel Wright, among others, at the Stafford Gallery in London in October 1912.²⁶ The only painting of Atkinson’s that survives from this period, *Landscape* (1912), which was one of two landscape paintings he exhibited at the Stafford Gallery, shows traces of a Fergussonian style, its bright colourings and intense evocation of depth and landscape pointing to Fergusson’s *Montgeron*

(1909) and *Royan* (1910), as well as to Marguerite Zorach's *Les Baux* (1910) and Dismorr's *Landscape with Cottages* (c.1913).²⁷ This period, one of Atkinson's 'phases of discipleship to [...] other schools' noted by Shipp, was also one of several origin points for his emerging sculptural practice.²⁸ Atkinson himself did not leave any published accounts of that practice, but its outlines, as we will see, can be reconstructed from the talks with Shipp that formed the basis of the latter's *The New Art*, from contemporary reviews of his paintings and sculptures, and from the artworks themselves.

In studying under Fergusson, Atkinson would have been exposed to a wide range of artistic personalities and intellectual systems. For instance, Fergusson's intuitionist model of aesthetics led to his appointment as the art editor of the 'little magazine' *Rhythm* when it was founded by John Middleton Murry and Michael Sadleir in June 1911. In that role Fergusson provided multiple artworks for *Rhythm* itself. He also would have been an interlocutor and key artistic networker for the forty-year-old Atkinson, who at this point needed to make new contacts as he embarked on a fresh creative path. Indeed, Atkinson appears to have been among the circle of artists, many being *Rhythm* contributors, whom Fergusson brought over from Paris, among them Peploe, Rice, André Dunoyer de Segonzac, Dismorr, and Marguerite Thompson.²⁹ Between 1912 and 1921, Atkinson shifted from Fauvist painting, to Vorticist imitation, and thereafter to a minimalist sculptural aesthetic whose plastic realizations echoed Murry's Bergsonian (and musical) definition of artistic purpose: the striving for 'pure form' and for a 'refining and intensifying [...] vision till all that is unessential dissolves away'; a quest for 'the moment of pure perception to see the essential forms, the essential harmonies of line and colour, the essential music of the world.'³⁰ Atkinson's aims as a sculptor, as we will see, were one and the same: to transcend accepted mimetic norms and to evoke through instinctual sensitivity the unifying realities beneath surface appearances. In Shipp's words, Atkinson 'became interested that the mind should not be arrested by the surface beauty, but

should be led by the sensuous image to something more fundamental', leading him to seek 'the element of pattern in its purest essence'.³¹

Multimedial Contexts

A work like Atkinson's *Landscape* gives only an embryonic sense of such tenets. Yet he most likely would not have reached after these principles in the way that he did were it not for Fergusson and his circle, the first of two artistic networks that influenced Atkinson's artistic development. He encountered the second network, Vorticism, through Lechmere and the Rebel Art Centre. An increasingly commonplace view of Vorticism states that it was an unstable formation with which different artists affiliated themselves at different times in different ways: Mark Antliff and Scott W. Klein claim that Vorticism was 'multifarious: interdisciplinary; [and] multiply (and at times self-contradictorily) self-defining'.³² In these various respects, Vorticism's most important multimedial precursor was the Rebel Art Centre, the projected educational venture on Great Ormond Street that was financed by Lechmere, and run by Lechmere and Lewis. From March to the summer of 1914 the Rebel Art Centre hosted artists who experimented in different art forms, among them easel paintings, murals, furniture, and textiles.³³ *BLAST*, which heralded the arrival of Vorticism as a movement later that same year, restated at a textual level the Rebel Art Centre's commitment to artistic and medial plurality. Although in some ways *BLAST* was edited on an *ad hoc* basis, Lewis partially filling it with copy that was to hand at the time, the magazine's mixing of different media (poems, reproductions of paintings, manifestos, etc.) within a single physical object – the printed magazine itself – symbolically demonstrated the movement's aim to amalgamate different artistic practices under the banner of an evolving,

though not always consistent, aesthetic agenda. As Julian Murphet writes, a ‘notable trend’ of Vorticism in its earliest days was its embrace of ‘aesthetic collaboration’ and its ‘combining of strengths across medial and artistic fronts’, the movement’s ‘multimedia aesthetic’ being ‘as much a matter of retaining medial specificity’ – a nod to Pound’s notion of the ‘primary pigment’ – ‘as it was of preparing for the arts’ imminent synthesis in an apotheosis that would transform everyday life.’³⁴

In much the same way, the Rebel Art Centre was envisaged as a space in which artists could develop their craft on their own terms under the developing principles of what Lewis later called ‘an alphabet of as abstract as possible a kind.’³⁵ Indeed, various aspects of the Vorticist aesthetic coalesced in the Rebel Art Centre, which became a haunt for Atkinson and for many of the key figures whose work appeared in *BLAST*. The Rebel Art Centre hosted talks by Marinetti, Pound (who spoke on Vorticism), and Ford Madox Ford, and announced a varied roster of bohemian entertainments, including shadow plays (*ombres chinoises*), dances, special exhibitions, and artistic social gatherings.³⁶ Lectures by Schoenberg and Scriabin were planned but in the end not given. Atkinson seems to have contributed to the Rebel Art Centre by designing the large curtain that bisected its principal studio space.³⁷ It is also likely that he had a hand in proposing the musical lectures, not only because of his performance background but also because, as Huxley later recalled, he was an expert on Scriabin.³⁸ Atkinson impressed Lewis, who ‘took a special interest in him’ and who, possibly with Atkinson in mind as a potential instructor, hoped to open an art school at the Rebel Art Centre offering “‘instruction in various forms of applied Art, such as painting of screens, fans, lampshades and scarves”’, the codes for the pedagogy being “‘the principles underlying the movements in Painting, known as Cubist, Futurist, and Expressionist.”’³⁹ The school never appeared, however.

Lewis later wrote that the publicity materials for the Rebel Art Centre touted ‘lectures that were never delivered, and classes that were never held, as the war supervened’.⁴⁰ In this respect the Rebel Art Centre anticipated the fate of Pound’s College of Arts, the London-based venue for which he devised a prospectus in June 1913 and which he promoted in *The Egoist* in November 1914, after financial problems forced the Rebel Art Centre to close and after *BLAST* had made its debut.⁴¹ Pound stated in a ‘Preliminary Announcement of the College of Arts’ that his scheme offered ‘a temporary refuge and a permanent centre’ to those ‘American students who would have sought Vienna or Prague or some continental city [but who had been] disturbed by war’, and that it pledged ‘contact with artists of established position, creative minds, men for the most part who have already suffered in the cause of their art.’⁴² Education was to follow two paths: an applied trajectory with practical and technical training, on the one hand, and a more leisured route for those interested in art for its own sake, on the other. By November 1914 Pound had secured faculty involvement from Henri Gaudier-Brzeska (sculpture), Lewis (painting, to be assisted by Helen Saunders), Edward Wadsworth (design), Mathilde Huhn (representational painting), Reginald Wilenski (portraiture), and Wm. P. Robins (etching and dry point), with musical expertise provided by, among others, Arnold Dolmetsch and Edwin Evans, who were to teach and lecture on ancient music and the modern Russian composers, respectively.⁴³

Atkinson appears to have played no part in this scheme, though he would have heard of it. Indeed, given his involvement in Lewis’s and Pound’s circle, he surely knew, and possibly raised an eyebrow at the fact, that the College was to include a music faculty but that he himself would not be joining it, and that Pound had secured Evans to lecture on one of his specialist areas (modern Russian music). The irony here is that Atkinson admired Pound ‘immensely’.⁴⁴ Pound, by contrast, belittled Atkinson as a mediocre poet and painter.⁴⁵ Yet Pound’s views were not widely shared, and Atkinson did not need to join the College of Arts

to teach or to work in multimedial environments. He taught singing throughout the pre-war period, and in and around 1916 maintained a workshop on the top floor of his London residence 'where he painted whenever he had a free moment'; had music pupils at home; taught twice a week at 'a studio in the Aeolian Hall, [in] Bond Street'; and went 'to Liverpool once a week to give [voice] lessons'.⁴⁶ Atkinson was, in other words, generating his own multimedial, educational spaces alongside and beyond his efforts in the Rhythmist and Vorticist networks. In contrast to the fickle nature of the art world, music offered him a source of income that lasted until at least the mid-1920s, when he could also count on exposure from musical settings of his poems.⁴⁷ It was during this period that Arnold Fettes held Atkinson up as a song-poet with 'the true sense of music, not only of versifying', and as a writer 'reviving the most fundamental English art-tradition, that of the minstrel, poet, and musician at once.'⁴⁸

For some, Atkinson's skill in multiple art forms meant that he was chasing too many types of expertise. The Irish poet Katharine Tynan thought that his poetry collection *Aura* (1915) did not lack 'beauty in thought or in words', but nevertheless contended that Atkinson's 'pictorial sense' left his poetry without a 'singing' manner.⁴⁹ She added that *Aura*, despite its flaws, '[made] one wish that Mr. Atkinson would learn his art and give us pleasing things.'⁵⁰ For Tynan, in other words, Atkinson's interest in the visual arts prevented him from writing good poetry, even though her estimate of what constitutes skilful verse necessitated synaesthetic points of comparison (poetry as song). Yet a sympathetic reading of *Aura* might value it on exactly these grounds. Atkinson's links with the Rhythmists and the Vorticists had involved him in two circles devoted in different ways to the possibilities of multimedial and synaesthetic creativity. The development of his painting and sculpture between 1915 and 1922 very clearly shows the influence of these circles, in whose wake he reached after an expressive mode within which he might communicate fundamental properties of experience.

This search, as he wrote in his poem 'XV', involved the production of 'Dream-images' and 'Inarticulate world-forms / That [stole] across / The sky-line of / [His] vision'.⁵¹ It also meant re-evaluating the avant-garde credentials and associations for which he was becoming known and from which he had profited after the Hall Road crash.

Post-Vorticist Abstraction

Richard Cork has claimed that Atkinson 'could never have been more than momentarily content to associate himself with a movement [Vorticism] dominated so forcefully by the personalities of others.'⁵² This is true to some extent, but Atkinson clearly learned much from Lewis and used the Rebel Art Centre in particular, and Vorticism in general, as a creative springboard upon which to develop his increasingly abstractionist style. Atkinson's drawing *Study – Café Tables* (c. 1914-18) and his water-colour *Dance Movement* (c.1914-18) echo Lewis's *Composition* (1913), for instance, Atkinson's diagonal structures emulating the controlled energy and *brio* of Lewis's more accomplished forms. Atkinson's drawings *Vortex No. 1* and *Vortex No. 2*, both of which he exhibited at the Eldar Gallery in 1921, signal his debt to Vorticism through their very titles. Such details, moreover, appear to show that Atkinson was one of the movement's few post-war disciples (as John Rothenstein later argued).⁵³ However, Shipp's account of Atkinson's ideas reveals that he hoped to go beyond the intellectual aesthetic stressed by Lewis and Pound in *BLAST* in search of an abstractionism that would appeal to instinctive, rather than to rational, knowledge.

Writing in the catalogue of the 1915 Vorticist Exhibition, Lewis emphasized that the movement was primarily concerned with 'the energy of a mind'.⁵⁴ Vorticism, in these terms, was meant to impose artistic order upon the world in service of the rational intellect. Hence

Lewis's and Pound's valuations in *BLAST* of the artist's 'function to order and transmute' and of artistically 'vivid consciousness', respectively.⁵⁵ In painting, such priorities meant a refashioning (rather than abandoning) of representationalism that would enable newly meaningful valuations of modern realities and that would force spectators to consider their surroundings anew. As Lewis wrote in the second number of *BLAST*: 'It is always the POSSIBILITIES in the object, the IMAGINATION [...] in the spectator, that matters.'⁵⁶ The quasi-Lewisian artworks Atkinson produced c.1914-18 show that he was broadly in sympathy with these principles. Such studies as *Dance Movement* and paintings like *The Sky Pilot*, which adorned the front cover of *Wheels* in 1918, do not eschew representation. On the contrary, they attempt to evoke the inner meanings of phenomena (dance, an aeroplane) through a geometric ordering that is still mimetic but which is opposed to depictions of 'scientifically ascertainable shapes and perspectives.'⁵⁷ Yet by 1921 Atkinson had become critical of what he saw as the 'conscious intellectualism' demanded by producers and spectators of modernist artworks, and had embraced the notion 'that the artist [...] is most likely to fulfil his function by releasing his mind from the obsession of the conscious'.⁵⁸ Atkinson sought to develop the angular forms of Vorticism away from their rational trappings towards a mode that would be more accessible to the general public, and that would suggest instinctive, rather than intellectual, associations between form and meaning.

In practice, Atkinson's ambitions to 'speak clearly to his fellows' were often lost on those who remained stubbornly invested in the value of traditionally representational art.⁵⁹ P. G. Konody lamented this 'constitutional disability to dissociate the plastic work of art from objective representation', stating that it left Atkinson's work 'unintelligible to the majority.'⁶⁰ Nevertheless, confusion was common. Even well-disposed commentators, such as the author of a review of Shipp's *New Art* published in *The Yorkshire Post*, tended to find Atkinson's work breath-taking yet incomprehensible; in this instance, as having 'only the most shadowy

resemblance to anything one has ever seen – at least in one’s waking moments.’⁶¹ G. S. Layard, reviewing Shipp in *The Bookman*, noted the ‘impressiveness’ of ‘one or two’ of Atkinson’s artworks, yet complained that *Sculpture Alabaster* seemed to be ‘just an amorphous block of fine-grained gypsum with meaningless lines scratched upon its surface’; that *Marchers* amounted to ‘a poor parody’ of one of Christopher Nevinston’s war pictures; and that *Study of a Figure in relation to its Environment* conveyed ‘no Figure, no Environment and no evidence of Study.’⁶² Layard’s response missed the point that Atkinson was constructing forms not meant to evoke figurative equivalences, but to render plastically sensibilities that could be immediately, almost bodily, intuited by his audiences. This goal, in Shipp’s words, had ‘some purpose greater than that served by the picture postcard.’⁶³ It also appealed to a shared racial unconscious. Atkinson’s aesthetic was based on the theory that ‘certain lines and masses have through generations of association come to have certain reactions upon our subconscious minds.’⁶⁴ Hence such a sculpture as his piston-like, quasi-mechanical *L’Oiseau*, which simultaneously attempts to abstract bird-form beyond accepted representational frontiers and tries to capture the essence of birdishness – to embody ‘the avian’ – rather than to depict one, particular bird.⁶⁵

In this respect, Atkinson was taking into new, abstract territories principles not at all dissimilar from Murry’s intuitionist definitions of art as that which expresses ‘the continuous and undying in the world’, and as something that seeks ‘an expression that is new not merely because before it for generations there was nothing, but new because it holds within itself all the past’ (a quality evoked by the title of Atkinson’s undated sculpture, *Eternal*).⁶⁶ Indeed, Atkinson’s defenders stressed his distinctiveness precisely for his efforts to capture collective instinctual meanings. To wit, Leigh Henry’s account of Atkinson’s aesthetic in the exhibition catalogue for his 1921 Eldar Gallery show:

It is based entirely on an analysis of the psychological stimulus produced by architectonical arrangements of abstract mass – quantities, and purely rhythmic linear patterns and contours. Hence it is purposed to appeal directly to the fundamentals of sensibility and comprehension, by means of positive sensation, not through the filter of intellectual deduction. It is intended to produce a state of being, not a train of thought. Thus it works upon the primary and eternal elements of consciousness and avoids the more variable and limited sphere of ideas.⁶⁷

Henry's appeal to the 'rhythmic' properties of Atkinson's style takes us back to the constellation of ideas associated with Murry, Fergusson, and the Bergsonian 'import' of *Rhythm*, specifically to the notion that rhythm 'was the underlying element in all the arts, and thus the leitmotif for a synaesthetic system.'⁶⁸ Such a system, Henry argued, was chiefly a product of Atkinson's experience as a practising musician, an occupation Konody also took to be the chief source of Atkinson's efforts to encourage 'strange emotions which have nothing in common with the emotions aroused by recognizable objects in nature.'⁶⁹

Consider Atkinson's sculpture *Aloof*, a piece in polished wood exhibited at the Eldar Gallery. For those determined to find in the work's abstract contours some human signature, *Aloof* seems to suggest the *Mater Dolorosa*, to imply a reserved, perhaps sorrow-filled personage draped in robes. Here we should keep in mind the fact that *Aloof* is only available to us now by way of Shipp's *The New Art* through a photographic reproduction that presents the sculpture from an angle that encourages anthropomorphic associations. Nevertheless the sculpture does not seem to uphold Sadleir's opinion that the power of Atkinson's sculptures lay in his ability to produce 'carvings and models unrecognisable as human figures or animals' and to suggest 'by line and proportion such emotions as grief, progress, growth, and the like'.⁷⁰ Other works, such as *Evasion*, are more successful in this respect, instantiating a

form of ‘evasiveness’ that gestures non-figuratively, as might a non-programmatic musical piece, to an ideal class or realm of ‘evasion’ beyond it. There is very little about a sculpture like *Evasion* that suggests mimesis beyond an attempt to represent a process or state-of-being, rather than to depict, however abstractly, human characters experiencing such things. The names Atkinson chose for several other sculptures echo the point, their adjectival titles – e.g. *Vital*, *Lyrical*, *Primordial*, *Germinal*, and *Triumphal* – conveying general conditions rather than particular manifestations of this or that attitude or circumstance. His goal was not to produce sculptures ‘void of content’, in Jessica Dismorr’s phrase, but rather to materialize intuitive connections between content and form.⁷¹

In making such pieces, Atkinson was, Shipp urged, ‘simply building from his inner consciousness a form which embodied certain ideas or emotions in the lines and masses which satisfied his mind as being the incarnation of those ideas.’⁷² Another of Atkinson’s sculptures, *Adastral*, invites us to consider these principles from a different point of view. In the Eldar Gallery exhibition catalogue the work is listed as a ‘Study for [a] Memorial’.⁷³ Quite which ideas or emotions such a piece is meant to make incarnate, however, or what exactly the sculpture could be said to memorialize, is not immediately obvious. The work’s title gives us at least one clue. ‘Adastral’ implies something orientated towards (ad-) the stars (-astral). As a memorial, then, and presumably as a memorial for those who had recently died in the First World War, *Adastral* seems to signify two things at once: the vanishing of dead souls from the earth, on the one hand, and the perspective of the living as they watch the dead ascend into the sky, on the other. Shipp saw Atkinson’s carvings as proto-monuments that might improve upon ‘the pictorial realistic sculpture’ that had ‘for so long tyrannised [England’s] public places’, and transcend ‘a purely Christian symbology’ to ‘adequately express the deep things of the emotions which are our heritage from the European War.’⁷⁴ Lutyens’s Whitehall Cenotaph, which was unveiled in November 1920, seems to have been

one of Shipp's targets here, but these comments also recall Lewis's claim that Atkinson's sculpture, if 'executed on a proper scale, would have been, in the public places of a modern city, appropriate monuments, and a welcome contrast to the obscene and idiotic rubbish that is hourly raised to commemorate and to parody some heroism.'⁷⁵ Whereas Henry argued that Atkinson's work gestured towards a realm that preceded the social, Shipp and Lewis claimed that it could be used to articulate new perspectives on communal life.

By 1921, then, Atkinson not only had developed sufficiently as a sculptor to attract the support of some of the art world's key critics and practitioners, but also had found a way of working plastically that was indebted to, but which ran deeper than, his experience as a musician. All of Atkinson's allies in the post-war period linked his sculptural aesthetic to his musical background, thereby projecting onto his work a synaesthetic unity that Atkinson himself appears to have resisted. To take just three examples, Shipp contended that music 'moulded Atkinson's mind to an appreciation of the fact that enjoyment and kinæsthesia may come from a non-representational method of speaking through the senses to the emotions'; Konody noted that Atkinson treated 'plastic material from a musician's point of view'; and Henry maintained that Atkinson's sculpture heralded the first manifestation of the 'essential nature' of music.⁷⁶ Yet according to Shipp, Atkinson was less interested in establishing a synaesthetic basis for sculpture than he was in finding sculptural forms which might work through and past the 'sensuous', and therefore material, appeal that music can generate. Put another way, Atkinson was not trying to create music in stone, wood, or plaster, but rather through those media to bridge the gap between art forms that can be 'sensuously beautiful' and those that are 'as intellectually self-sufficient as a problem in mathematics.'⁷⁷ This effort led to some of Atkinson's most intriguing, because least figurative, sculptural experiments. It also established him as the ideal principal of a new centre for multimedial experiment and interdisciplinary learning.

A Multimedial Endeavour

The 5 November 1921 edition of *The Musical News and Herald* listed an advert for ‘A Novel Scheme’. The scheme in question was the first inkling of the *atelier* Atkinson hoped to found as a belated successor to Lewis’s and Lechmere’s Rebel Art Centre and Pound’s College of Arts. At first the venue was to be established near Tintern, in the Wye Valley, though in subsequent advertisements and prospectuses different iterations of the scheme mention sites in central London and allude to a possible residential centre on the outskirts of the city. In all of these different versions of the project, however, what remains consistent is Atkinson’s idea to recapture the structure and spirit of the pre-war avant-garde milieu. He envisaged ‘a centre for the study of music, painting, sculpture, acting, dancing, and stagecraft’ that would ‘attract first-class teachers to become residents’ and that would take the shape of a community where students could work ‘in rural calm, free from the distractions and inconveniences of city life, and under conditions conducive to physical health.’⁷⁸ By April 1922 these proposals had become more modest. Though Atkinson still had in mind a centre that would bring together ‘the various branches of art’, the venue was now intended to be an urban workshop focusing on tuition and creativity.⁷⁹ In yet another restatement of the project, Atkinson returned to the idea of a rural retreat as a counterpart to an urban studio. Echoing the Wye Valley proposals, he promoted a residential centre outside London that would ‘perform a much needed service for Modern Art’ by hosting an ‘interchange of ideas offered under ideal conditions’, and by establishing a space in which students could ‘come into residence to study and work out their art in an atmosphere conducive to the best production.’⁸⁰

On 22 April 1922 *The Daily Mirror* announced that Atkinson's venue would enable 'artists of real merit to give recitals or hold exhibitions free of cost', and promoted a list of forthcoming events including 'modern English and Russian music, German Lieder and old English songs, English and French painting and sculpture, lectures on Stravinski, Schonberg [*sic*] and Scriabin, dramatic productions and other artistic treats.'⁸¹ An article published in the next day's *Observer* noted that 'Music, Literature, and Stagecraft' were within the scope of this 'ambitious scheme', which aimed to form 'a nucleus in England' where artists from all over the world could meet, and to give space for 'exhibitions and musical recitals to artists of real ability'.⁸² Among those who agreed to exhibit at the Centre were some of the key names associated with Vorticism and with the period's art world more generally: Gabriel Atkin, Frederick Etchells, Charles Ginner, Lewis, and William Roberts.⁸³ Adverts for the Orchard Street version of the project (the Centre of Modern Interpretation), all of them stressing the multimedial strengths of the endeavour, appeared in *The Musical News and Herald* and *The Sackbut*, and the project seems to have been widely feted.⁸⁴

As with the Rebel Art Centre and the College of Arts, Atkinson's Centre was in the first instance concerned with using multimedial artistic interaction as the basis for a new kind of non-institutional pedagogy. In this sense, the Centre aimed to be a nexus for artistic production and schooling that would straddle several disciplines, with music at the forefront under Atkinson's personal direction. He played down his recent success at Milan, presumably because he still saw himself as a student of sculpture who could learn from the pupils and faculty he hoped to attract, and let his musical background feature prominently in the Centre's advertising as part of a broader, multimedial remit. Thus the Centre not only continued Lewis's and Pound's investment in medial collaboration and experimentation – 'one art [being] the constant illuminator of another' – but also reasserted the collaborative spirit of the pre-war avant-gardes.⁸⁵ Lewis's and Pound's efforts to organise non-institutional

academies showed Atkinson what might be achieved on a collective scale in the right circumstances and given the right contacts. More specifically, they demonstrated the importance of using moments of acclaim (or provocation) to attract interest from potential students, faculty, and investors. In the wake of his victory at Milan, Atkinson found himself in one such moment. Despite his move away from the Vorticist aesthetic, Atkinson seems to have had in mind a sort of Vorticism *redux*, a new collaborative enterprise that would bring back many of the old players to teach the post-war generation. Hence his claim in one of his prospectuses that ‘Vital Art Movements in the past have arisen when artists and students have come together in continuous application to their work in confraternity with others of like interest’, and his desire to found ‘a laboratory’ in which ‘workers [could] turn for a period of co-operative study of the problems of their arts.’⁸⁶

Was the Centre a Vorticist project? Not explicitly. Neither its advertisements nor its pamphlet materials mention Vorticism by name or allude to Atkinson’s involvement in the movement or as a signatory of the *BLAST* manifesto. However, the fact that he rhetorically situated the Centre in a line of ‘Vital Art Movements’ suggests that he wanted prospective students and faculty to view the project as a recapitulation of the ‘moment’ of the pre-war avant-gardes, a moment in which Vorticism arrayed itself against Futurism under Lewis’s direction, and when Atkinson himself experienced at first hand the excitement of setting up a multimedial artistic studio. In the early stages of the project Atkinson appears to have received moderate practical support from Lewis, who in 1919 became ‘actively involved with the Arts League of Service (an organisation intended to make the arts accessible to ordinary working people), for whom he produced some drawings and gave a lecture on “Modern Tendencies in Art”’.⁸⁷ Such details should make us review how neatly we identify Vorticism as a movement that operated in a distinct moment in time, rather than in a succession of

related stages; how tidily we construct the extent of its membership; and how briskly we neglect Atkinson's role as an artist-pedagogue *manqué*.

Alan Munton has written that on the basis of the Rebel Art Centre we can see that 'Lewis might have made a great practical educator'.⁸⁸ So too might have Atkinson, especially given the fact that by the early 1920s he had already established himself as a music teacher of high repute. Had the Centre succeeded he may well have made his name as one of the great multimedial educators and impresarios of the post-war period. However, this was not to be. Atkinson's Centre shared the destiny of its Lewisian and Poundian predecessors. Beyond an exhibition of paintings and drawings by Atkin, it is not clear how many of the events mentioned in the publicity material for the Centre took place; a general absence of archival evidence implies that it was short lived.⁸⁹ Published evidence for the project is slim after July 1922, though the Centre's apparent failure should not blind us to the distinctiveness of Atkinson's desire for 'a career as benefactor to artists in general'.⁹⁰ Indeed, it may be that it was exactly Atkinson's enthusiasm for the arts which undermined the very project that that keenness inspired. Successful or not, and *contra* Cork, the nature and scope of Atkinson's various plans for different kinds of workshop show that he was far from being an isolated or reclusive figure in the early 1920s. More importantly, even on the grounds of its rather brief existence, the Centre of Modern Interpretation adds another site of interest to the cultural-historical map of inter-war modernist London, and situates Atkinson within post-war attempts to revive the avant-garde and to educate those who wished to participate in its revolutionary *élan*.

Conclusion

The ephemeral nature of Atkinson's Centre seems to explain why, beyond a brief mention in William Roberts's *Cometism and Vorticism: A Tate Gallery Catalogue Revised* (1956), it does not appear in reminiscences of the period. Yet the fact that Atkinson tried to establish an artistic workshop after the First World War shows that the collective impulse by which Vorticism was powered endured far further into the 1920s than has usually been assumed, and that therefore the movement was far from 'snuffed out by the outbreak of war' in 1914, as some critics still claim.⁹¹ Indeed, Atkinson's example allows us to see from a new perspective the problems generated by using the War as a dividing line between moments within the broader context of the early twentieth-century avant-garde. Where Vorticism is concerned, Atkinson's career helps us map more accurately the constellation of artists and agendas that fed into the movement and that *BLAST* embodied in its very textuality, and to chart more fully the movement's aesthetic and institutional afterlives, thereby adding nuance to histories of a key phase in England's cultural past. In the case of avant-garde experiment in the period in general, Atkinson's move from singer to sculptor produced an aesthetic at least as interesting as anything produced on the Continent at this time, and one, moreover, that received international contemporary acclaim as a result. Ultimately, it was Atkinson's musical training that allowed him to take Vorticism in a direction not pursued by his peers, thereby complicating received wisdom about the movement's 'incomplete' or 'unmusical' artistic agenda.

Reed Way Dasenbrock, for instance, has argued that although no Vorticist music existed in 1914 it was nevertheless 'conceivable', and that Pound later 'tried to place [George] Antheil retroactively in the slot he would have had in Vorticism' had Antheil been present in the Great London Vortex before the War. Dasenbrock stresses that the fact that 'not all of the arts were included in Vorticism was above all a function of the small number of artists involved in the movement', and that Lewis, 'who personified the interaction of the arts

Pound could only talk about', was 'the only man in Vorticism who worked in more than one art'.⁹² However, it should now be obvious that the example of Atkinson, who plays only a marginal role in Dasenbrock's account of Vorticism, definitively shows that the movement contained musical elements; that it contained more than one figure who succeeded across the arts (and in this case across more arts than Lewis); and that, to reiterate the point, it was not simply 'erased' by the intervention of the War, finding new artistic expressions in Atkinson's Vorticist paintings and post-Vorticist sculptures. Atkinson was not alone in continuing Vorticism after its pre-war 'moment', but he was the only figure associated with *BLAST* who attempted to revive its institutional and pedagogic ambitions. Indeed, his plans for the Centre of Modern Interpretation indicate the persistence of an interdisciplinary pedagogy across substantial changes in the period's avant-garde landscape and in the face of global disorder. Atkinson's involvement in so many different artistic networks offers another reminder of the complex overlappings between the avant-gardes at this historical moment, and of the surprising ways in which aesthetic practices could combine to form new creative projects.

Atkinson's sculptural practice brought the geometric impulse he had acquired through Vorticism to bear upon the Rhythmist search for pure form. His sculpture sought to capture, to quote Murry again, 'the essential music of the world', but this did not mean that he meant in the first instance to make sculpture emulate musical configurations. On the contrary, as we have seen, Atkinson's ambition was to locate artistic structures that would speak across cultures by virtue of their pre-rational meanings. Not everyone appreciated this effort, however. Kineton Parkes slighted Atkinson's 'small work in stone and clay' in *Sculpture of To-Day* (1921), deeming it 'as near to chaos as it is possible for sculpture to be'.⁹³ In a similar vein, *The English Review* and *The Saturday Review* carried derisive pieces on Shipp and on Atkinson, who was also unfavourably cited in Louis Golding's *Seacoast of Bohemia* (1923) alongside loathsome 'Vorticist Furniture'.⁹⁴ Yet many others welcomed Atkinson's

experiments, and in subsequent years he has been cited as a stimulus for, or an important precursor of, Merlyn Evans, Ben Nicholson, and Barbara Hepworth.⁹⁵ All of which is to say that Atkinson's paintings and sculptures perceptibly exuded modernity in their original contexts, and have continued to do so ever since. Indeed, this distinctiveness seems to have been why some of his artworks were confiscated by the Nazi Military Administration during the Second World War.⁹⁶

Atkinson did not live to see that war – he died in 1931, having moved to Paris – but by the time of his death he had formulated one of the most advanced abstractionist sculptural styles England had ever seen; worked through Vorticism to elaborate an aesthetic influenced by his musical experiences, which in turn had been recalibrated through his encounters with the British Rhythmists; and tried to relaunch the pedagogic spirit that had informed the 'Vital English Art' movements of the pre-war past. Henri Gaudier-Brzeska may have been the 'sole Vorticist sculptor' working at the time of *BLAST*, but Atkinson's example indicates that among the movement's post-war legacies was a distinctive sculptural practice that took the philosophical and artistic commitments outlined in *BLAST* in new directions.⁹⁷ Moreover, Atkinson proves that the dissemination of Vorticism after the First World War took place through a range of medial forms and practices, and was not limited to the posters created by Frank McKnight Kauffer, as Cork has suggested.⁹⁸ Such details indicate that the Vorticist movement was in fact rather more longlasting and successful than many commentators have assumed. They also suggest that while Atkinson may very well have been 'amusing', as Huxley called him, 'Renaissance man' seems a better epitaph.⁹⁹

¹ Several individuals have commented on, or have helped me locate material for, the ideas presented in this article. Thanks to Mary Ann Davison, Paul Edwards, Robert Ferguson, Andrzej Gąsiorek, Jenny Hill, Garry Keenor, Chris Leach, Graham Lane, Alan Munton,

Kirsten Pairpoint, Alex Postan, and Peter Thorpe. My thanks also to the anonymous peer-reviewers for the present journal.

² See Richard Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art in the First Machine Age – Volume 2: Synthesis and Decline* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1976), 541.

³ Aldous Huxley, *Selected Letters*, ed. James Sexton (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2007), 70-71.

⁴ See *Coterie*, 2 (Sep. 1919): 40.

⁵ Atkinson's Christian name is variously spelled 'Lawrence' or 'Laurence' throughout the period.

⁶ Percival Garratt and P. G. Konody, 'New Publications', *The Sackbut*, 3.4 (Nov. 1922): 127-8, at 128.

⁷ L. G.-S., 'London Letter' (30 May 1921), *American Art News*, 19.35 (11 June 1921): 1-8, at 7. See also Michael Sadleir's exhibition report published in *The Educational Times: A Review of Ideas and Methods*, New Series, 3.6 (June 1921): 270. Atkinson's success at Milan also featured in a 'Postscript' published in *The Observer* (8 May 1921): 10.

⁸ Wyndham Lewis, 'Dobson. Atkinson.' (unpublished review). My thanks to Paul Edwards for showing me, and allowing me to quote from, a copy of this document.

⁹ 'Music in the Provinces: Manchester', *The Musical Standard* (31 Dec. 1904): 423.

¹⁰ 'Music and Drama', *The Manchester Guardian* (21 Jan. 1922): 6.

¹¹ Matthew Hofer, 'Education', in Ira B. Nadel (ed.), *Ezra Pound in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 75-84, at 78.

¹² 'Preliminary Announcement of the College of Arts', *The Egoist: An Individualist Review*, 1.21 (2 Nov. 1916): 413-14, at 414.

¹³ Hofer, 'Education', 78. William C. Wees notes that the Rebel Art Centre's 'major project, its art school, never materialized' (*Vorticism and the English Avant-Garde* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972), 70).

¹⁴ Lieut. Col. E. Druitt, *Accident Returns: Extract for the Accident at Hall Road on 27th July 1905* (Board of Trade, 2 Sep. 1905), 72. Available at

www.railwaysarchive.co.uk/docsummary.php?docID=2544. Accessed 15/12/2014.

¹⁵ Ibid. See also John Marshall, *The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1970), vol. 2, 164 (though note that Marshall misdates the crash to 27 July 1904).

¹⁶ ‘Vocalist Obtains £2500 Damages’, *The Aberdeen Daily Journal* (16 May 1906): 7.

¹⁷ See TGA 8912, letter from Beryl Bjerre, Atkinson’s daughter, to Carol Hogben (11 Nov. 1968), Lawrence Atkinson Collection, Tate Archive. This letter answers Hogben’s original letter to Bjerre (15 Oct. 1968), in which Hogben requests details of his career as a sculptor.

¹⁸ Ibid. and ‘The Hall Road Accident – Vocalist Awarded £2,500 Damages’, *The Manchester Guardian* (16 May 1906): 12. I have not found any evidence specifying exactly how Atkinson’s vocal chords were damaged.

¹⁹ This sum was widely reported. In addition to the items listed in the adjacent notes, see: ‘£2,500 for a Vocalist’, *The Daily Mail* (16 May 1906): 2; and ‘General News’, *The Leamington Spa Courier* (18 May 1906): 2.

²⁰ See ‘The Electric Train Disaster’, *The Manchester Guardian* (3 Aug. 1905): 4; ‘Vocalist Obtains £2500 Damages’, *The Aberdeen Daily Journal* (16 May 1906): 7; and ‘Vocalist Gets Damages’, *The Dundee Courier* (16 May 1906): 5.

²¹ Bjerre to Hogben, Tate Archive.

²² ‘Music in Liverpool’, *The Musical Times*, 48.778 (1 Dec. 1907), 814. For further details of the 1907-8 Birkenhead series, see ‘Music in Liverpool’, *The Musical Times*, 49.781 (1 Mar. 1908), 186. For the 1908-9 Birkenhead series, see ‘Music in Liverpool’, *The Musical Times*, 49.788 (1 Oct. 1908): 660-61, at 661; and ‘Music in the Provinces – Liverpool: Birkenhead Subscription Concerts’, *The Musical Standard*, 31.788 (6 Feb. 1909), 92. For the 1911-12 Liverpool series, see ‘Music in the Provinces – Liverpool and District’, *The Musical Times*,

52.824 (1 Oct. 1911): 669-73, at 671; and 'Music in the Provinces – Liverpool: Liverpool Chamber Concerts', *The Musical Standard*, 37.949 (9 Mar. 1912), 155.

²³ H. Saxe Wyndham (ed.), *Who's Who in Music: A Biographical Record of Contemporary Musicians* (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1913), 231

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁵ Richard Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art in the First Machine Age – Volume 1: Origins and Development* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1976), 155. See also Jeremy Lewison, 'Atkinson, Lawrence', in Pontus Hulten (ed.), *Futurism & Futurisms* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986), 421; and Carol Fitzgerald, 'Atkinson, Lawrence', in Alan Windsor (ed.), *Handbook of Modern British Painting and Printmaking, 1900-1990*, 2nd edn (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998): 15.

²⁶ Robert Ferguson, *The Short Sharp Life of T. E. Hulme* (London: Allen Lane, 2002), 179-180. See Catherine Elizabeth Heathcock, 'Jessica Dismorr (1885-1939): Artist, Writer, Vorticist' (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1999), unpaginated list of exhibitions. Note that Atkinson went unlisted in the announcement for this show printed in 'Exhibitions Open During October', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 22.115 (Oct. 1912): unpaginated.

²⁷ See *Exhibition of Pictures by S. J. Peploe, J. D. Fergusson, Joseph Simpson, Anne E. Rice, Jessie Dismorr, Georges Banks, Ethel Wright, C. King, L. Atkinson, Fred F. Foottet* (Stafford Gallery, 1912).

²⁸ Horace Shipp, *The New Art: A Study of the Principles of Non-Representational Art and Their Application in the Work of Laurence Atkinson* (London: Cecil Palmer, 1922), 62.

²⁹ Faith Binckes, *Modernism, Magazines, and the British Avant-Garde: Reading 'Rhythm', 1910-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 2.

³⁰ John Middleton Murry, 'Art and Philosophy', *Rhythm*, 1.1 (Summer 1911): 9-12, at 12.

³¹ Shipp, *The New Art*, 78 and 21.

³² Mark Antliff and Scott W. Klein, 'Introduction: Vorticisms', in Antliff and Klein (eds), *Vorticism: New Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 1-11, at 8.

³³ For a detailed history of the Rebel Art Centre see Richard Cork, *Art Beyond the Gallery in Early 20th Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 190-213.

³⁴ Julian Murphet, *Multimedia Modernism: Literature and the Anglo-American Avant-garde* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 146 and 148.

³⁵ Wyndham Lewis, 'The Vorticists' (1956), in *Wyndham Lewis on Art: Collected Writings 1913-1956*, ed. Walter Michel and C. J. Fox (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1969): 454-8, at 455.

³⁶ Wees, *Vorticism and the English Avant-Garde*, 70.

³⁷ Cork, *Art Beyond the Gallery*, 195 and 311, n. 98. See also Jane Beckett, 'The Abstract Interior', in *Towards a New Art: Essays on the Background to Abstract Art 1910-20* (London: Tate Gallery, 1980): 90-124, at 111-13; Peter Brooker, *Bohemia in London: The Social Scene of Early Modernism* (2004; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 184, n. 11; and Wees, *Vorticism and the English Avant-Garde*, 68. The curtain may in fact have been the work of Cuthbert Hamilton (see Cork, *Art Beyond the Gallery*, 195).

³⁸ Huxley, *Selected Letters*, 71.

³⁹ Cork, *Art Beyond the Gallery*, 191.

⁴⁰ Wyndham Lewis, *Rude Assignment: An Intellectual Autobiography* (1950), ed. Toby Foshay (Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1984), 135.

⁴¹ Hofer, 'Education', 78.

⁴² 'Preliminary Announcement', 413.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Bjerre to Hogben, Tate Archive.

⁴⁵ Ira B. Nadel (ed.), *The Letters of Ezra Pound to Alice Corbin Henderson* (Austin, TX: The University of Texas Press, 1993), 219; and Ezra Pound, *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound: 1907-1941*, ed. D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), 105.

⁴⁶ Bjerre to Hogben, Tate Archive.

⁴⁷ Atkinson's poem 'An Irish Peasant Love Song', which appeared in *Aura*, was put to music by Gerard Williams in 1921. See *Catalogue of Copyright Entries – Part 3: Musical Compositions*, New Series, Volume 16, Part 2, Last Half of 1921, Nos. 8-13, with Annual Index (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922), 1117. Likewise, a piece called 'The Shawl', set to music by Dorothy Hogben, was listed in an Oxford University Press advert published in *Music & Letters*, 8.4 (Oct. 1927), unpaginated back matter. The same piece was advertised in a similar way in *The Musical Times*, 68.1007 (1 Jan. 1927): 95. See also *The Sackbut*, 2.2 (July 1921): 26, and *The Sackbut*, 2.3 (Sep. 1921): 28, where two of Atkinson's poems are reproduced under the shared heading 'Poetry for Music'.

⁴⁸ Arnold Fetters, 'The Poetry of Modern English Song', *The Sackbut*, 3.5 (Dec. 1922): 147-9, at 149.

⁴⁹ Katharine Tynan, 'Poets and an Anthology', *The Bookman*, 48.285 (June 1915): 78-80, at 78.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 78-80.

⁵¹ Lawrence Atkinson, *Aura* (London: Elkin Matthews, 1915), 29.

⁵² Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art – Volume 2*, 408.

⁵³ John Rothenstein, *Modern English Painters: Wood to Hockney* (London: Macdonald, 1974), 211.

⁵⁴ Wyndham Lewis, 'Vorticist Exhibition' (1915), in *Wyndham Lewis on Art*: 96-8, at 97.

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- ⁵⁵ Wyndham Lewis, 'The Improvement of Life', *BLAST* (20 June 1914): 146; and Ezra Pound, 'Vortex. Pound.', *BLAST* (20 June 1914): 153-4, at 153.
- ⁵⁶ Wyndham Lewis, 'A Review of Contemporary Art', *BLAST* (July 1915): 38-47, at 45.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Shipp, *The New Art*, 91 and 22-3.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., 67.
- ⁶⁰ Garratt and Konody, 'New Publications', 128.
- ⁶¹ H. T., 'Music and Art', *The Yorkshire Post* (3 Nov. 1922): 3.
- ⁶² G. S. Layard, "'Uplift" in Art', *The Bookman*, 63.374 (Nov. 1922): 104.
- ⁶³ Shipp, *The New Art*, 22.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., 21.
- ⁶⁵ P. G. Konody made exactly this point in 'Puzzles in Paint: P. G. KONODY, for the Defence', *The Strand* (Apr. 1927): 342-5, at 345.
- ⁶⁶ Murry, 'Art and Philosophy', 9 and 10.
- ⁶⁷ Leigh Henry, 'A Link with the Pyramids', in *Laurence Atkinson: Abstract Sculpture & Painting*, Exhibition Catalogue (London: The Eldar Gallery, May 1921): unpaginated.
- ⁶⁸ Mark Antliff, *Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 72-3 and 90.
- ⁶⁹ P. G. Konody, 'In Defence of Abstract Art', in *Laurence Atkinson: Abstract Sculpture & Painting*, unpaginated.
- ⁷⁰ Michael Sadleir, 'Noteworthy Exhibitions', *The Educational Times*, New Series, 3.6 (June 1921): 270.
- ⁷¹ Jessie Dismorr, 'Critical Suggestions', *The Little Review*, 6.5 (Sep., 1919): 31-5, at 33.
- ⁷² Shipp, *The New Art*, 8.
- ⁷³ See *Laurence Atkinson: Abstract Sculpture & Painting*.

⁷⁴ Shipp, *The New Art*, 113-14.

⁷⁵ Lewis, 'Dobson. Atkinson.'

⁷⁶ Konody, 'In Defence of Abstract Art'; Henry, 'A Link with the Pyramids'; and Shipp, *The New Art*, 69.

⁷⁷ Shipp, *The New Art*, 69.

⁷⁸ 'A Novel Scheme', *The Musical News and Herald*, 61.1545 (5 Nov. 1921): 449.

⁷⁹ Advertisement, 'Centre of Modern Interpretation', *The Sackbut*, 2.10 (Apr. 1922): 37.

⁸⁰ TGA 8912, undated prospectus, Lawrence Atkinson Collection, Tate Archive.

⁸¹ [The Rambler], 'To-Day's Gossip: News and Views About Men, Women, and Affairs in General', *The Daily Mirror* (22 Apr. 1922): 4.

⁸² 'Postscript', *The Observer* (23 Apr. 1922): 10.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ The advertisements appeared in *The Musical News and Herald*, Vol. 62.1567 (8 Apr. 1922): 445 and 62.1570 (29 Apr. 1922): 541; and *The Sackbut*, 2.10 (Apr. 1922): 37.

⁸⁵ 'Preliminary Announcement', 413.

⁸⁶ TGA 8912, undated prospectus, Tate.

⁸⁷ Paul Edwards, *Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 217.

⁸⁸ Alan Munton, 'Twentieth-Century Palette: The Artist as Man of Action', *Wyndham Lewis Annual*, 9-10 (2002-3): 4-5, at 5.

⁸⁹ 'Exhibitions', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 41.232 (July 1922): unpaginated. Neither Arthur Lawrence nor P. G. Konody mention the CMI in their 'Puzzles in Paint' exchange, published in *The Strand Magazine* in April 1927, in which Atkinson's art is referred to (approvingly and reproachfully) several times. See 'Puzzles in Paint', *The*

Strand Magazine (Apr. 1927): 338-41 ('ARTHUR LAWRENCE, for the Prosecution') and 342-5 ('P. G. KONODY, for the Defence').

⁹⁰ [The Rambler], 'To-Day's Gossip'.

⁹¹ See, for instance, Matthew Gale, 'Vorticism: Planetary Abstraction', in Leah Dickerman (ed.), *Inventing Abstraction, 1910-1925: How a Radical Idea Changed Modern Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2012): 154-6, at 156.

⁹² Reed Way Dasenbrock, *The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound & Wyndham Lewis: Towards the Condition of Painting* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 16. See also Glen MacLeod, 'Modernism and the Visual Arts', in Michael Levenson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 245-267, at 254; and Miranda B. Hickman, *The Geometry of Modernism: The Vorticist Idiom in Lewis, Pound, H.D., and Yeats* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2005), 256-7, n. 7.

⁹³ Kineton Parkes, *Sculpture of To-Day, Volume 1: America, Great Britain, Japan* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921), 130. See also the slightly more favourable references to Atkinson in Parkes's *The Art of Curved Sculpture* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1931), vol. 1, 33, 121, and 141.

⁹⁴ 'Books: Art', *The English Review* (Nov. 1922): 473-4, at 474; 'The Old Patter', *The Saturday Review*, 135.3516 (17 Mar. 1923): 374; G. S. Layard, "'Uplift" in Art', *The Bookman*, 63.374 (Nov. 1922): 104; and Louis Golding, *Seacoast of Bohemia* (London: Christophers, 1923), 231.

⁹⁵ See Benedict Read and Peyton Skipwith, *Sculpture in Britain Between the Wars*, exh. cat. (London: Fine Art Society, 1986), 68; Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art – Volume 2*, 410; David Thistlewood, 'Introduction – Contested Significance in the Work of Barbara Hepworth: Absolutist and Relativist Interpretations', in David Thistlewood (ed.), *Barbara*

Hepworth Reconsidered (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press and Tate Gallery Liverpool, 1996): 1-22, at 6.

⁹⁶ Bjerre to Hogben, Tate Archive.

⁹⁷ Jonathan Black, *Edward Wadsworth: Form, Feeling, and Calculation – The Complete Painting and Drawings* (London: Philip Wilson, 2005), 23.

⁹⁸ Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art – Volume 1*, 280.

⁹⁹ Huxley, *Selected Letters*, 71.