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JENNIFER FARRELL

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Fig. 03 Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson (British, 1889–1946). *Returning to the Trenches*, 1916. Drypoint, 9 3/4 x 11 in. (24.8 x 27.9 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Leslie and Johanna Garfield Gift, Lila Acheson Wallace, Charles and Jessie Price, and David T Schiff Gifts, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, Dolores Valvidia Hurlburt Bequest, Peco Foundation and Friends of Drawings and Prints Gifts, and funds from various donors, 2019 (2019.592.425)

incidentally, attended the exhibition, though he does not seem to have expressed an opinion of Nevinson's work.

After war broke out, Wadsworth continued to develop his woodcutting skills, experimenting with Vorticist compositions.⁵⁰ Wadsworth sometimes included woodcuts in the care packages he regularly sent to Gaudier-Brzeska, who was fighting in Flanders, and who in exchange mailed him drawings. The woodcuts offered some respite to Gaudier; on November 18, 1914, he wrote to Wadsworth, "I have your letter with the woodcuts – it's a great relief to touch civilisation in its tender mood now and then."⁵¹ Six months later, Gaudier was killed in action.

Wadsworth had joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, and in June 1916 he was sent to the Aegean to work as an intelligence officer. Based on the Greek island of Ispathio near Mudros, which was not a combat zone, Wadsworth's experience of war was very different from that of Gaudier, Lewis, and Nevinson, and he felt no impetus to disavow either abstraction or a Vorticist aesthetic. Wadsworth drew designs for woodcuts on blocks, which he engraved after he returned to England in 1917, suffering from ill-health. Before he left for Greece Wadsworth had experimented with printing in different color variations on various shades of paper, and he developed this practice after his return. Seven color variants are known for *Riponelli: A Village in Lemnos* (fig. 04); some, like figure 04, were in a muted range of grays with black, but one impression exists in purple and orange.⁵² That Wadsworth's choice of colors and papers was strategic

rather than impulsive is revealed by a letter he wrote to the New York lawyer and collector John Quinn, who was avidly buying British modernist works. Quinn had mentioned how much he admired Wadsworth's woodcuts. In response, the artist wrote, "The woodcut, I must say, appeals to me more than any of the other similar mediums (etchings, lithographs, mezzotints, etc.): it leaves nothing at all to accident."⁵³

After his return to England, Wadsworth was assigned to supervise the painting of warships with strongly contrasting bands of color. "Dazzle camouflage" was invented in 1917 by marine artist Norman Wilkinson who theorized that the form of the ships would be broken up by the designs and would confuse enemy submarine operators.⁵⁴ Whether this strategy was successful is debatable, but, in any case, the ships provided perfect material for a Vorticist woodcutter. Wadsworth, who worked in Bristol and Liverpool, kept photographic records of

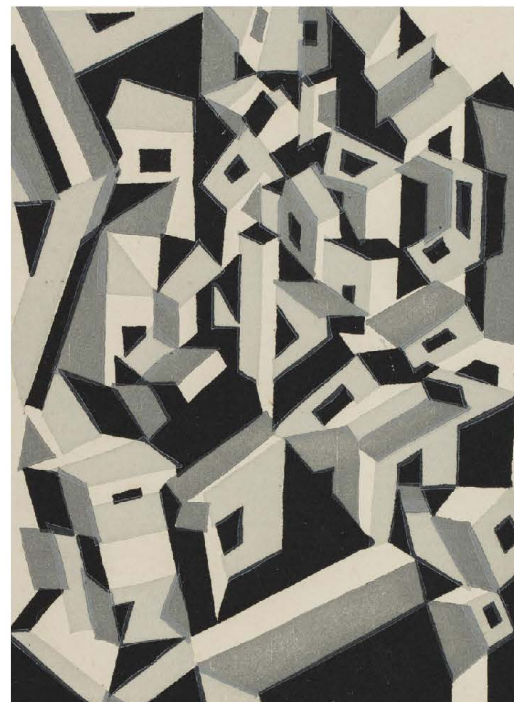
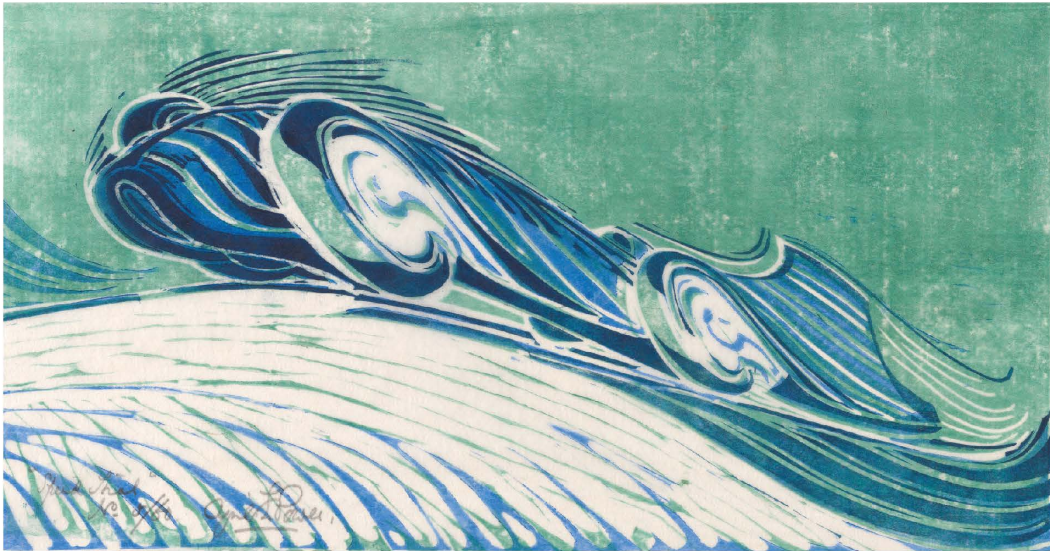


Fig. 04 Edward Alexander Wadsworth (British, 1889–1949). *Riponelli: A Village in Lemnos*, 1917. Woodcut, TK x TK in. (TK x TK cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Leslie and Johanna Garfield Gift, Lila Acheson Wallace, Charles and Jessie Price, and David T Schiff Gifts, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, Dolores Valvidia Hurlburt Bequest, Peco Foundation and Friends of Drawings and Prints Gifts, and funds from various donors, 2019 (2019.592.299 or 2019.592.309)

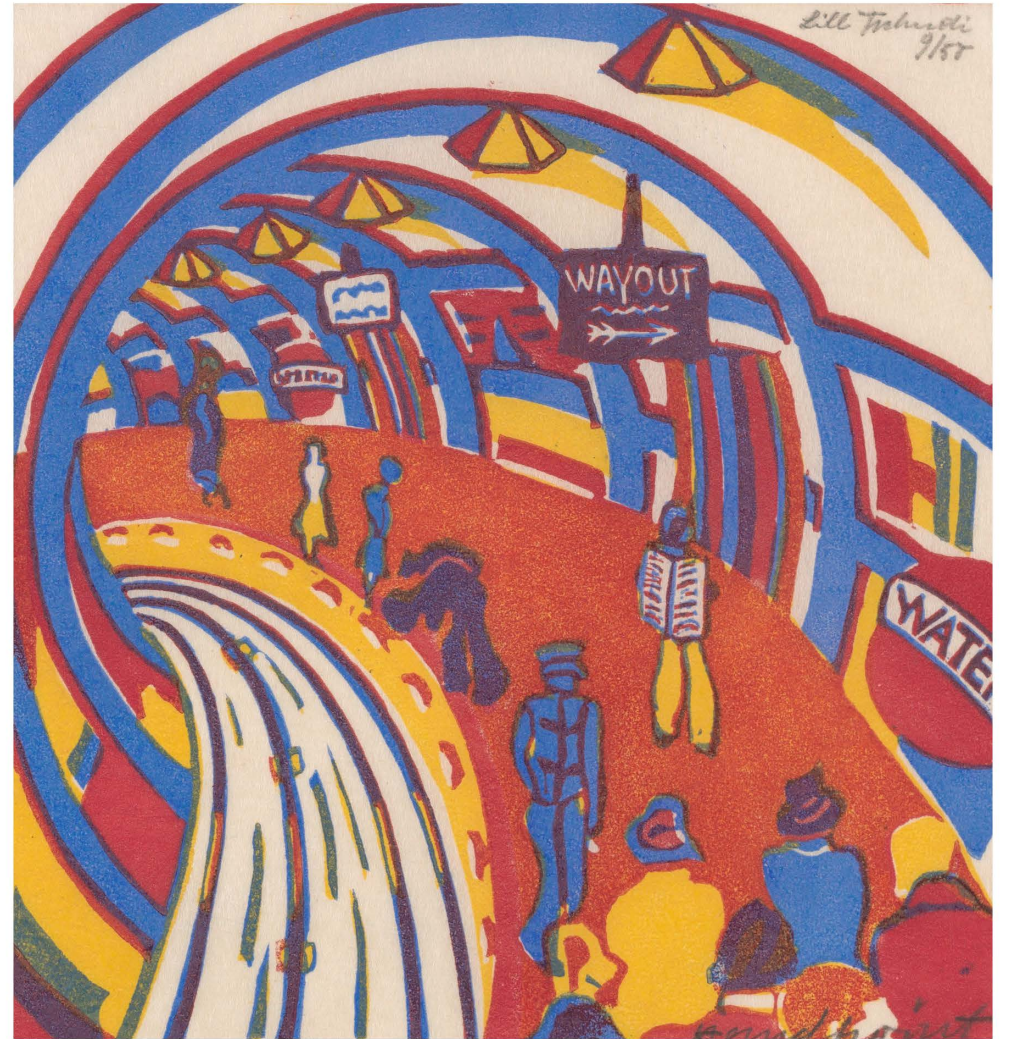


THE GROSVENOR SCHOOL
and Modern British Prints

Jennifer Farrell



3 CYRIL E. POWER, *The Eight*, 1930



4 LILL TSCHUDI, *Fixing the Wires*, 1932



4 LILL TSCHUDI, *Fixing the Wires*, 1932.

