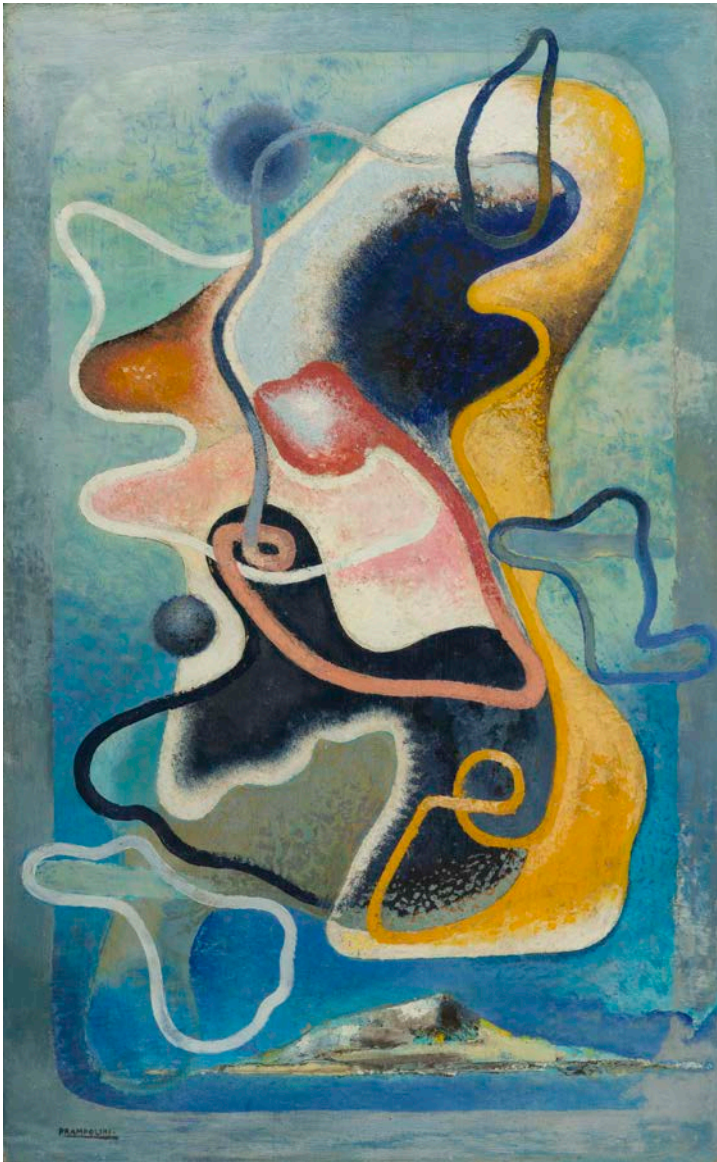


the guardian

Anatomy of an artwork: Enrico Prampolini's *Entità Cosmica*

The Italian futurist painter turns to nature to explore human ingenuity



Beyond the line: Prampolini embraces colour and light.

Oliver Basciano

Friday 10 June 2016 13.00 BST

This 1937 work is included in the exhibition *Painting In Italy 1910s–1950s: Futurism, Abstraction, Concrete Art*, and traces the three major styles at the forefront of an avant garde that flourished in the shadow of two world wars.

Nature

Faced with man-made horror, it is perhaps unsurprising that an artist would turn to nature. This manifests itself here in the curvaceous shapes of coloured enamel and oil paint flowing into each other amorously.

Colour play

As well as an artist Prampolini was also a scenographer who wrote extensively on the theory of set design. His belief was that theatre sets should play with the audience's senses and emotions just as much as the actors or script might. This would be achieved by "chromatic emanations" as Prampolini termed it – that is, the kind of lurid experimentation with colour and light that makes itself felt in this painting, too.

The future

This work saw Prampolini break from the futurist movement. His sharp angles and interest in human ingenuity, speed and technology have disappeared, making it, in a way, a rather pessimistic work.

Decorative

This was made in the latter half of Prampolini's career, around the time he had begun to work with stained glass and mosaics. The influence of both these mediums can be felt here.

Robilant + Voena, W1, to 15 Jul