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## **Striking out into the vast unknown**

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Conrad Shawcross: Continuum

EXHIBITION National Maritime Museum, SE10

THERE is life after the YBAs. They are less brash and attention seeking than the likes of Damien Hirst and Tracey Emin, but the latest generation of British artists will find that their renewed interest in traditional artistic concerns, such as form and beauty, will be repaid with longevity. The tendency is exemplified in the work of 27-year-old sculptor Conrad Shawcross, one of the rising stars of the British art scene. His first solo show in a public space takes place in the stunning surroundings of Inigo Jones's Queen's House.

In the central room sits a beautifully constructed, huge, mechanical, wooden sculpture - an unbroken wooden coil set in slow, compelling and unceasingly inward motion by motors at the piece's centre. Designed in response to its settings, the work echoes the classical architectural and artistic principles, laid down in Roman times by Vitruvius and revived in the Renaissance by architects such as Palladio and Jones. Their work held up proportion as a foundation for visual beauty, especially in relation to the proportions of the human body. Standing at twice human height, Shawcross's work has a mansized space at its centre, reflecting in its incessantly spiralling form the humanistic idea of the order of the world emanating from the glory of man's reason.

Elsewhere, looked down upon by scores of portraits of old admirals and First Sea Lords, long since dead, sit two wooden craft. Shawcross ventured out to sea in them, armed only with a home made paddle. The 360-degree videos shot on those trips play on screens mounted on the boats and convey the sensation of the water's swell. Combined with the sounds of creaking wood and paddling they make for sensitive works that evoke the fear and mysterious promise of striking out alone into the vast unknown.

Until 6 February. Information: 0870 780 4552.