

Shaping the Future: New Arrivals at the Ben Uri Collection

Opens 1 March 2023 (until 2 June) every Wednesday through Friday



Marie-Louise von Motesiczky, *Circus*, 1964, oil on canvas, Ben Uri Collection © Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust

In the first exhibition of its kind since the global pandemic and closure following flooding, *Shaping the Future: New Arrivals at the Ben Uri Collection* presents an exciting and eclectic display of new acquisitions and long-term loans to the Ben Uri Collection since 2019. This important selection of paintings, drawings, prints, sculpture, and archival materials reflects the Ben Uri Research Unit's continuing focus on the Jewish and immigrant contribution to British visual culture since 1900.

Among the highlights are works reflecting theatrical performances and ceremonies including: London-born Jewish painter Abraham Solomon's lively portrayal of Molière's *Le Malade Imaginaire* (1861), Austrian-Jewish émigrée Marie-Louise von Motesiczky's celebratory *Circus* (1964), pioneering African modernist Ben Enwonwu's rhythmic *Dancer* (1962), Indian-born Lancelot Ribeiro's striking *King Lear* (1964), and the late South African-born distinguished actor and artist Sir Antony Sher's moving *Self-portrait as Primo [Levi]* (2008), with further self-portraits by Marc Chagall and R. B. Kitaj, and family portraiture by Nasser Azam.

Works addressing war, imprisonment and the Holocaust include Franco-Moldovan Gregoire Michonze's *Stalag Scene* (1940–42), and Polish-born Feliks Topolski's scarf design depicting wartime London, commissioned by Czechoslovakian-Jewish émigré textile designer Zika Ascher (1944), as well as Hungarian-born George Mayer-Martón's *March of the Parents** (1956), the latter painted in the wake of the Hungarian Uprising, and referencing the fate of his parents, who both perished in the Holocaust.

Postwar landscapes include Fred Uhlman's Welsh cottages, while Chicago-born, former wartime navigator Alfred Cohen takes a long view of London from an elevated vantage point, looking towards Trafalgar Square and Rudolf Hradil depicts a bustling London Bridge, Lancelot Ribeiro's collage-like townscape depicts his hometown of Bombay. Hitler émigrée Helga Michie's print, *Headland* (1980), is the first of her works to enter a UK public collection.

Sculptures include works by contemporaries Jacob Epstein, among them his acclaimed head of Einstein (1933) and his contrasting stylised rendering of Romilly John (1907), Dora Gordine's beautifully modelled *Head of an African Woman* (1920s), and Austrian-born Georg Ehrlich's tender bronze, *Two Sisters* (1944–45), commemorating the death of his sister-in-law Mira Bauer-Gutman.

Many publications about the majority of the artists shown are readily available in the newly opened 2500 strong Ben Uri Art Reference Library on the lower floor of the gallery.

108a Boundary Road, off Abbey Road, London NW8 0RH. Open every Wednesday to Friday until 2 June. Contact admin@benuri.org / See Benuri.org for further information.

This exhibition is dedicated to the memory of gallerist, expert and former curator of Ben Uri in the 1980s, Agi Katz (1938–2021).

Notes for editors:

Artists featured: Nasser Azam (b. 1963, Jhelum, Pakistan), **Jo Bondy** (1937 London, England – 2015 London, England), **Marc Chagall*** (1887 Vitebsk, Russia (Belarus)–1985 St-Paul, France), **Alfred Cohen** (1920 Chicago, USA–2001 Kings Lynn, England), **Dorrit Dekk** (1917 Brno, Austria-Hungary, now Czech Republic–2014 London, England), **Georg Ehrlich** (1897 Vienna, Austria–1966 Lucerne, Switzerland)+, **Ernst Eisenmayer** (Vienna, Austria–2018 Vienna, Austria), **Ben Enwonwu*** (1921 Onitsha, Nigeria–1994 Lagos, Nigeria), **Jacob Epstein*** (1880 New York, USA–1959 London, England), **Eva Frankfurter** (1930 Berlin, Germany–1959 London, England), **Dora Gordine** (1895 Liepāja, Latvia–Kingston, England), **Rudolf Hradil** (1925 Morzsg, Austria 2007–Vienna, Austria), **Paul Jeffay** (1898 Glasgow, Scotland–1957 Paris, France), **R. B. Kitaj** (1932 Cleveland, Ohio, USA–2007 Los Angeles, California, USA), **George Mayer-Martón*** (1897 Győr, Hungary–1960 Liverpool, England), **Helga Michie** (1921 Linz, Austria–2018 London, England), **Gregoire Michonze** (1902 Kishineff, Russia (Moldova)–1982 Paris, France), **Marie-Louise von Motesiczky** (1906 Vienna, Austria–1996 London, England), **Hormazd Narielwalla** (b. 1979 Mumbai, India), **Orovida Pissarro** (1893 Essex, England – 1968 London, England), **Solomon Polack** (1757 The Hague, The Netherlands–1839 London, England), **Lancelot Ribeiro** (1933 Bombay (Mumbai), India–2010 London, England), **Sir Antony Sher**

(1949 Cape Town, South Africa–2021 Stratford-upon-Avon, England), **Abraham Solomon** (1823 London, England–1862 Biarritz, France), **Feliks Topolski** (1907 Warsaw, Poland–1989 London, England), **Fred Uhlman** (1901 Stuttgart, Germany–1985 London, England), **Katerina Wilczynski** (1894 Posen, Prussia-1978 London, England), **Alfred Wolmark** (1887 Warsaw, Poland–1961 London, England).*

+This work was purchased in 2020 with the reallocated proceeds of the sale of work by Barnett Freedman, generously gifted by his son Vincent Freeman and supported by his family. Works by artists marked* are on long-term loan to the Ben Uri Collection.

Ben Uri was formed in 1915 in London's East End by Russian-Jewish decorative artist and craftsman Lazar Berson to support Jewish artists working outside the cultural mainstream. The Ben Uri Collection, initiated in 1918, principally reflects three waves of migration to the UK: first- and second-generation Eastern-European Jewish migration prior to the First World War; the so-called 'Hitler émigrés' (1933–45), and wider multicultural immigration after the Second World War. Two-thirds of the artists are immigrants and 29% are women.

For further information and images contact: Sarah MacDougall Sarahm@benuri.org
For further reference on artists exhibited see: www.benuricollection.org.uk and/or www.buru.org.uk