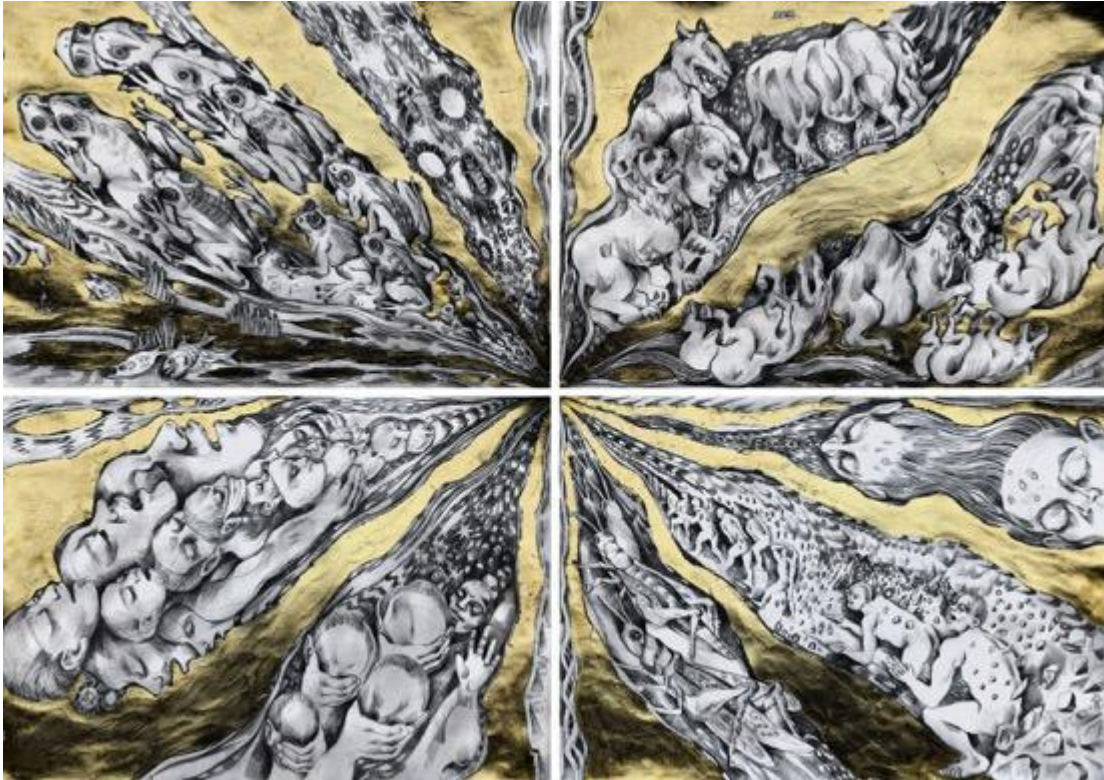


PRESS RELEASE



Benuri.org, the first full scale virtual museum and research centre,
presents

DAVID BREUER-WEIL'S RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC 'GOLDEN DRAWINGS AND THE COVIAD'



David Breuer-Weil, *Ten Plagues* (from *The Coviad*), 2021, pencil and gold leaf on paper, 118.8 x 168.2 cm

With the initial and successful rollout of the vaccines and an end hopefully in sight we can now start to engage with art emerging from, and reflecting, the scale and diversity of impact resulting from the pandemic. Benuri.org presents online David Breuer-Weil's '*Coviad*' in anticipation of a gradual but definite renewal of freedom without fear. **Breuer-Weil's response is articulated on Benuri.org through a film launching on 5th April, exhibition on 12th April and the book on 19th April.** The Ben Uri Research Unit for the recording of the Jewish and immigrant contribution to British visual culture since 1900 will publish its extensive biography of the artist on 26th April.

The Coviad is a contemporary version of the Bayeux Tapestry for the age of Covid, and of identical size - some 350,000 square centimetres. *The Coviad* was

executed prior to the current debate about the proposed restoration of the Bayeux Tapestry in the UK, making it uncannily relevant.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbpUUrkhkVE&ab_channel=DavidBreuer-Weil

This epic work, executed in pencil and gold leaf, and one of the largest drawings in history, tells of the experiences of the last year in breath-taking detail. From the mysterious origins of the pandemic, to its global spread, the artist transforms many symbols that appear in the tapestry into contemporary icons. *The Coviad*, the title being a pun on the epic poem, *The Iliad*, charts the spread of the pandemic carried by planes, boats and people, the lockdowns, divisions into support bubbles, Thursday night clapping in support of the NHS, the masked population, daily walks, separation from loved ones and tragic fatalities. It also portrays significant concurrent events, the murder of George Floyd, the protests and toppling of statues and general physical and mental health instability.

The artist, who contracted Covid-19 during Spring 2020, also engages with biblical comparisons and uses imagery of the Passover to particularly relevant effect, the 10 plagues and debates about the evils of slavery. *The Coviad* ends on a positive note as the vaccines arrive like angels from heaven and the world returns to an unknown form of normality. No one knows what the new normal will be as people enter their old lives with inevitable and understandable trepidation. The last of the 70 connected panels sees a telescope looking at Perseverance landing on Mars, a symbol of hope for the future. *The Coviad* is exhibited here literally just weeks after its completion (during the third lockdown) and stands as a testament to the threat to humanity in our time.

The Coviad is exhibited together with a selection of the 66 Golden Drawings the artist executed during the first lockdown, published in a monograph by Gli Ori, Italy in 2020. In these works, the artist mastered the techniques and themes that would take on such dramatic effect in *The Coviad*.

The artist has commented: *"I had just completed The Coviad when the Ben Uri approached me about exhibiting the Golden Drawings. The Ben Uri is one of the first museums to have recognised the future for virtual exhibitions, long before Covid, and has been prescient in its anticipation of the future of museum shows. Its innovation has allowed the public to see a relevant artwork within weeks of its*

completion, and that is a major development in closing the gap between the creation of urgent art and the viewing public.”

David Glasser, Chair of Trustees of the Ben Uri Museum and Gallery has commented: *“In 2018 when Ben Uri turned the standard museum model on its head and transformed into a digital institution, supported by its small physical space, we turned physical and financial constraints into unlimited possibilities. Benuri.org allows us to share unlimited possibilities with a global audience. Today we have over 40 exhibitions online at Benuri.org and it would have been impossible for us to present this exhibition physically as the scale of The Coviad is prohibitive for us and all but a very few museums, whether in the UK or abroad. This important representation of so much of the effects of Covid-19, in minute and meaningful imagery, is realistically only possible to share digitally and the agility of technology allows us to share within weeks of completion, having immediacy and relevance combined.*

This is a greatly ambitious project by a greatly considered and insightful artist and we are proud to present his work for the second occasion.”

David Breuer-Weil, *Golden Drawings and The Coviad*, at Benuri.org, the first full scale virtual museum and research centre (Ben Uri Gallery and Museum)

The 4 week schedule of film, exhibition, book and biography launches on the 5 April 2021 and will remain online in their separate presentations within the extensive and growing library of engagements on Benuri.org which is open 24/7. All films, exhibitions, books and biographies are free to engage and enjoy.

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