

Fresh Paint: New Acquisitions and Long-term Loans

Ben Uri Gallery, London NW8 0RH, 22 February – 20 May 2022



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

Fresh Paint celebrates the re-opening of Ben Uri Gallery in Boundary Road (after closure for remedial work following last summer's flash floods) with an exciting and eclectic exhibition marking new acquisitions and long-term loans to the Ben Uri Collection since 2019. This important selection of paintings, drawings, sculpture and lithographs marks 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/public performance by London-born Jewish painter Abraham Solomon (whose work joins that of his younger brother Simeon Solomon in the Ben Uri Collection for the first time) with his delightful portrayal of Moliere's *La Malade Imaginaire* (1861), Austrian-born painter Marie-Louise von Motesiczky's celebratory *Circus* (1964), Indian-born Lancelot Ribeiro's striking *King Lear* (1964), 'African modernist' Ben Enwonwu's rhythmic *Dancer** (1962), and the late South-African born distinguished actor and artist Sir Antony Sher's highly moving *Self-portrait as Primo* (2008).

Works addressing war, imprisonment and the Holocaust include leading Scottish artist Peter Howson's immense canvas *Holocaust Crowd Scene II* (2011), Franco-Moldovan

Gregoire Michonze's *Stalag Scene* (1940–42), and one of Polish-born Felix Topolski's iconic depictions of wartime London (1944), commissioned by émigré textile designer Zika Ascher. Laura Knight's two extraordinary coloured-chalk-and-watercolour drawings of *Prisoners in the Dock at the Nuremberg Trials* (1949), studies for her larger painting (Imperial War Museum), observed *in situ*, are remarkable records of this historic court of justice.

Austrian-born sculptor Georg Ehrlich's tender bronze, *Two Sisters*+ (1944–45), commemorates the death of his sister-in-law Mira Bauer-Gutman; Hungarian-born George Mayer-Martón's *March of the Parents** (1956), painted in the wake of the Hungarian Uprising, also references the fate of his parents, who both perished in the Holocaust.

Chicago-born, former wartime navigator Alfred Cohen (subject of a recent centenary exhibition and publication) takes a birds-eye view of post-war London in *The View from Panton House* (1962), while Austrian printmaker Rudolf Hradil captures London Bridge (presented from Derby Museum), and Ribeiro depicts his hometown Bombay (Mumbai) with sharp-edged, collage-like precision. Wartime Austrian-born Hitler émigrée Helga Michie's print, *Headland* (1980), is the first of her works to enter a public collection.

A series of events including lectures, virtual exhibitions and an online issue catalogue will accompany the exhibition with an online curatorial tour by Ben Uri's Director Sarah MacDougall.

This exhibition is dedicated to the memory of gallerist and curator Agi Katz (1938–2021).

Notes for editors:

Artists featured: Marc Chagall* (1887 Vitebsk, Russia (Belarus)–1985 St-Paul, France), Alfred Cohen (1920 Chicago, USA–2001 Kings Lynn, England), Georg Ehrlich (1897 Vienna, Austria–1966 Lucerne, Switzerland), Ben Enwonwu* (1921 Onitsha, Nigeria–Lagos, Nigeria 1994), Jacob Epstein* (1880 New York, USA–1959 London, England), Eva Frankfurter (1930 Berlin, Germany–1959 London, England), Peter Howson (b. 1958 London, England), Rudolf Hradil (1925 Morzg, Austria 2007–Vienna, Austria), Laura Knight* (1877 Long Eaton, Derbyshire–1970 London, England), 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), 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), Felix Topolski (1907 Warsaw, Poland–1989 London, England) and Fred Uhlman (1901 Stuttgart, Germany–1985 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 marked* are on long-term loan to the Ben Uri Collection.

The Ben Uri Collection 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 Collection, begun in 1919, 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. In

contrast to the national average of around 4%), two-thirds of the artists are immigrants and one third are women.

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For opening times: see www.benuri.org