

Lancelot Ribeiro: Heads – In and Out of Our Time
Ben Uri Gallery NW8 0RH (18 September – 29 November 2024)



Lancelot Ribeiro, *Paranoid*, 1965 Estate of Lancelot Ribeiro

This revealing exhibition is part of Ben Uri's principal focus on researching, digitally documenting, disseminating and celebrating the importance of the Jewish, Refugee, and wide Immigrant contribution to British visual culture since 1900 – see buru.org.uk and diasporaartists.net both resources within benuri.org.

The Ben Uri Research Unit (BURU) is honoured to partner with the Estate of Lancelot Ribeiro to present Lancelot Ribeiro: Heads – In and Out of Our Time, borrowing its title from the artist's own long-planned but unrealised concept for an exhibition. Featuring 20 paintings and drawings, it focuses on Ribeiro's

preoccupation with portraiture and imagined heads from two of the most innovative decades of his practice, the 1960s and the 1990s

Born into a Catholic Goan family in present-day Mumbai in 1933, Ribeiro first followed his older half-brother F N Souza to Britain in 1950, in the wake of India's independence and Partition. After returning to India and becoming an artist, Ribeiro settled permanently in Britain in 1962. Inspired by Indian and Goan architecture and the Christian tradition in which he was raised, he utilised his heads and portraits to explore concepts of power and evil, described by one reviewer as: 'Colonialists, kings, tyrants, Christ (resurrected), tycoons, women and thugs' (Bombay Artist Aid Centre review, 1961), among them the monumental Crowned King (c. 1963) and powerful King Lear (1964, Ben Uri Collection). Ribeiro's experiments with new materials, among them, polyvinyl acetate or PVA (a precursor of acrylic paint), sometimes mixed with other nontraditional media, including string, resulted in a set of radical, faceless, abstracted heads, known as the Psychedelic Man series. In his later work, Ribeiro often worked on a large scale, employing brilliant acrylics mixed with elements of collage, while disassembling, reimagining and reinvigorating the head in works including the vivid blue Madonna, Rising from the Banks of Main. Yet Ribeiro's close friend and fellow poet, Indian translator and critic R. Parthasarathy, suggests that Ribeiro's 'true subject' was always his 'origins – Goan roots, estrangement from India, and exile in London'.

A supporting display in the lower galleries features a further display of 20 stylistically diverse and innovative paintings, sculptures and works on paper of heads and portraits from the Ben Uri collection by artists including Frank Auerbach, David Breuer-Weil, Dodo, Alfred Harris, Sarah Lightman, Alfred Lomnitz, Hormazd Narielwalla, Oscar Nemon, Mosheh Oved, Paul Richards, and Samuel Fyzee-Rahamin.

A series of related talks and events and a fully illustrated online publication with essays by contributors including the artist's daughter, Marsha Ribeiro, poet and critic R. Parthasarathy and conservator Patricia Smithen, will accompany the exhibition.

Ben Uri Gallery & Museum, 108a Boundary Road, St John's Wood, London NW8 ORH
Open: 18 September–29 November, Wednesdays to Fridays: 10 am – 5.30pm.

Notes for Editors:

This exhibition reflects Ben Uri's core research focus on the Refugee and Immigrant contribution to British visual culture since 1900 – see buru.org.uk & diaspora-artists.net

About the artist:

See full biography on <https://www.buru.org.uk/contributor/lancelot-ribeiro>

Born into a Catholic Goan family in Bombay (now Mumbai), India, Lanceloté José Belarmino Ribeiro (1933– 2010) first moved to England to study accountancy in 1950, taking part-time classes at St. Martin's School of Art. After returning to Bombay in 1955, he became an artist in 1958; his first solo exhibition in 1961 sold out and he executed a large mural commission for Tata Iron and Steel, also participating in the exhibition tour (Europe and North America) of Ten Indian Painters. Nominated for the All-India Gold Medal, Ribeiro returned to London in 1962, cofounded the Indian Painters' Collective, UK (IPC) in 1963, initiated the exhibition Six Indian Painters in 1964, and held a solo exhibition in Hampstead in 1965. He also exhibited alongside his half-brother F. N. Souza in shows including The Arts of India (Towner Art Gallery, 1966) and Five Indian Artists (1976), organised by Maria Souza's ARTS 38. In 1976 Ribeiro co-founded the Rainbow Art Group, which evolved into the Indian Artists UK group in 1978. In all, he participated in around 70 solo and group exhibitions across India, the UK, continental Europe, the USA and Canada. Lancelot Ribeiro died in London, England in 2010. His work is represented in UK collections including the Ben Uri Collection, the British Museum, Burgh House, Hampstead, New Walk Museum & Art Gallery, Leicester, Tate, the University of Sussex and the V&A, as well as in public and private collections in India and the USA.

About Ben Uri

See: www.benuri.org

Founded in 1915 in Whitechapel, London. In 2018 Ben Uri transformed the standard museum operating model and launched the first full-scale virtual art museum and research centre focusing exclusively on the Jewish, Refugee, and wide Immigrant contribution to British visual culture. In 2024 Ben Uri is recognised as a leading academic research resource on its distinctive focus areas with over 3200 profiles published on buru.org.uk and diaspora-artists.net.

Ben Uri artists include: Moich Abrahams (b. 1941 Herts, England), Albert Abramovitz (1879 Riga, Russian Empire (now Latvia) – 1963 New York, USA), Frank Auerbach (b. 1931 Berlin, Germany), Jack Bilbo (né Hugo Baruch, 1907 Berlin, Germany – 1967 Berlin, Germany), David Breuer-Weil (b. 1965 London, England), Alfred Daniels (1924 London, England – 2015 London, England), Isaac Dobrinsky (1891 Makarov, Russian Empire (now Ukraine) – 1973 Paris, France), Dodo (née Dörte Bürgner, 1907 Berlin, Germany – 1998 London, England), Samuel Fyzee-Rahamin (né Samuel Rahamin Samuel, 1880 Poona (now Pune), India – 1964 Karachi, Pakistan), Alfred Harris (b. 1930 London, England), Eugen Hersch (1887 Berlin, Germany – 1967 London, England), Susanna Jacobs (b. 1966 London, England), Lom (né Alfred Lomnitz, 1892 Hessen, Germany – 1953 London, England), Gerald Marks (1921 London, England – 2018 London, England), Hormazd Narielwalla (b. 1979 Mumbai, India), Oscar Nemon (né Oskar Neumann, 1906 Austria-Hungary (now Croatia) – 1985 England), Mosheh Oved (né Edward Goodack 1885 Poland – 1958 England), Paul Richards (b. 1949 England), and Bruno Simon (1913 Vienna, Austria-Hungary (now Austria) –1999 Bergamo, Italy).

Curated by Sarah MacDougall and Marsha Ribeiro

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