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Open-air art exhibition comes to the O2 Centre celebrating refugee and immigrant artists' contribution to British visual culture

By Ldn-Post · June 11, 2025 ·

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A powerful new open-air art exhibition, curated by the Ben Uri Gallery and Museum has launched at the O2 Centre in West Hampstead, transforming the hoarding around the former Homebase site into a vibrant public gallery. Featuring works by refugee and immigrant artists who lived and worked in north London, the exhibition celebrates their major contribution to constantly evolving British visual culture and invites visitors to reflect on the diverse histories, identities and experiences that have shaped the area.

The exhibition, Always Changing. Always Welcoming, showcases rarely seen works from the gallery's collection into public view, creating an accessible space for local communities to connect with art that's often tucked away in archives.

Among the featured works is The Hand Made Map of the World by Caribbean-born artist Tam Joseph. His playful, thought-provoking piece reimagines the world map and challenges conventional ideas of geography and identity.

Also included is Head by Elisabeth Tomalin, a refugee from Nazi Germany who became a leading British textile designer. Her work reflects the layered stories of people who came to London and shaped its creative legacy.

Sarah MacDougall, Director of the Ben Uri Gallery and Museum, said: "Ben Uri is delighted to collaborate with Landsec and the O2 Centre to bring this important range of artworks to a wider audience beyond the traditional gallery space in this innovative open-air exhibition. Both the artists' own histories and their powerful individual artworks tell ever-relevant stories of identity and migration, which we hope will inspire both current and future generations."

Ant Foran, O2 Centre Director, said: "This is a celebration of North London's past and present of the people, the cultures and the creativity that have made this part of the city what it is today. We hope those who come visit the O2 Centre will enjoy these incredible works displayed where all can be inspired."

Local people will have an opportunity to engage with the artwork on display as part of Human Rights Today Festival on 18 June during Refugee Week 2025. Curated and managed by WE RESTART – Art Centre of Sanctuary, the festival will be a lively day of exhibitions, performances, workshops and discussion will be hosted within the O2 Centre from 3:30pm – 9:00pm, which includes dedicated tours of the new hoarding exhibition led by the team at the Ben Uri Gallery and Museum.

More information on the event day will be shared on the O2 Centre website shortly, but all activities will be free for all to attend. www.o2centre.co.uk/en/event-listing-page

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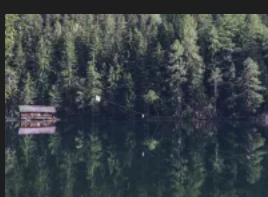
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