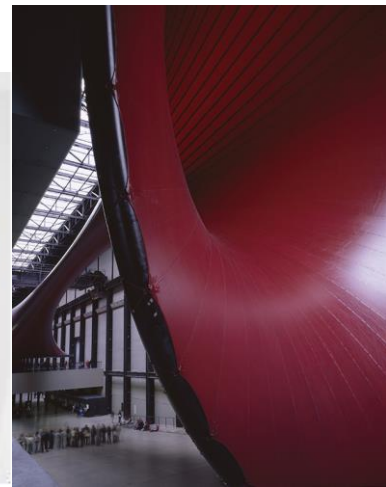
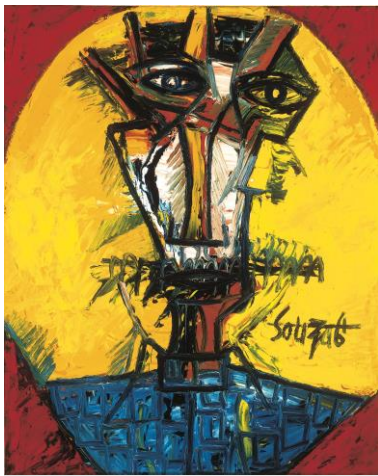


PRESS RELEASE

ONLINE EXHIBITION

Midnight's Family: 70 Years of Indian Artists in Britain

Launching 7 August 2020



Images (l to r)

Francis Newton Souza, *Self-Portrait*, 1961, oil on board, Ruth Borchard Collection courtesy PIANO NOBILE, Robert Travers (Works of Art) Ltd, © Estate of F N Souza. All rights reserved, DACS 2020

Sutapa Biswas, *Housewives with Steak-knives*, 1985, oil, acrylic, pastel, pencil, white tape, collage on paper mounted onto canvas, Bradford Museums and Galleries © Sutapa Biswas. All rights reserved, DACS 2020

Anish Kapoor, *Marsyas*, 2002, steel and PVC, Tate © Anish Kapoor. All Rights Reserved, DACS 2020

Raqib Shaw, *Self-Portrait in the Studio at Peckham (After Steenwyck the Younger) I*, 2014, acrylic liner, glitter, rhinestones, and enamel on birchwood © Raqib Shaw. Image courtesy of the Artist and White Cube

Shanti Panchal, *Grenfell Pyre and Rescued Family*, 2017, watercolour on paper, 102 x 82 cm © The Artist

The Singh Twins, *"Get Your Knee Off Our Necks"*, 2020, digital mixed medium © The Singh Twins:



Due online 7 August 2020

Co-curated by Rachel Dickson and Shanti Panchal

Academic advisor: Dr Zehra Jumabhoy, Courtauld Institute of Art, London

www.benuri.org

Introduction

This timely exhibition which coincides with the date of Indian Independence (declared at midnight on 15 August 1947) addresses the representation of Indian immigrant artists (both first and second generation) working in Britain for more than 70 years. It is part of the ongoing series of exhibitions and the focus of the 'Ben Uri Research Unit for the Study of the Immigrant and Jewish Contribution to the Visual Arts in Britain Since 1900', known as BURU. It is BURU's first exhibition to explore a non-European émigré artistic community, following previous investigations since 2016 into Austrian, Czech, German and Polish nationals who migrated to Britain - narratives which were significantly impacted by the Second World War and the Nazi domination of Europe.

Ben Uri's intention is to provide a snapshot of Indian artists in Britain. The exhibition includes artists from varied backgrounds and across different time periods. Modernists, such as F.N. Souza and S.K. Bakre, lived in the UK only briefly, whilst others, such as the Singh Twins, are second generation Britishers who consider this country to be their home. Meanwhile, artists such as Anish Kapoor, feel they are 'just' artists, for whom questions of national belonging are incidental. For the last category, both the terms 'Indian' and 'British' need to be used with circumspection. Hence, the exhibition includes a cross-generational range of practitioners, who work across diverse media and with differing approaches to the question of identity; of being an 'Indian' artist in Britain.

A small number of major London museum shows have addressed Britain's South Asian diaspora in the past 30 years, notably, *The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Postwar Britain* (Hayward Gallery, 1989), curated by British Pakistani artist and pedagogue Rasheed Araeen. Dedicated solo shows of Indian artists with a British connection include Tate Britain's Bhupen Khakhar retrospective in 2016. Commercial galleries, such as Grosvenor Gallery, Osborne Samuel and the Noble Sage have an ongoing focus on Modern and Contemporary South Asian art, and support exhibition and scholarship relating to this cohort and have made London a seminal meeting-point for the South Asian artworld (its artists, curators, academics, collectors and dealers) to congregate.

Like all museums across Europe and the Americas, Ben Uri has been closed owing to the COVID19 pandemic, so all parties are delighted to present this project, at least initially as an online exhibition. This iteration allows for a more ambitious range of works beyond the physical limitations of Ben Uri's gallery space, as well as beyond temporal, geographical and basic practical considerations. This new reality has become another spur contributing to Ben Uri's strategic shift from the 'physical' to the 'digital', which began in 2018, and which will be fully unveiled on 23 July 2020, with a new pioneering and extensive envelope of online content, as a viable alternative to an unaffordable - and thus unachievable - large, centrally located, 'physical' building.



Artists and works

Artists include: key figures who came in the first wave, post 1947, such as F.N. Souza (1924-2002), his half-brother Lancelot Ribeiro (1933-2010), S.K. Bakre (1920-2007), and Avinash Chandra (1931-1991, whose painting was the first modernist work by an Indian artist to enter the national collection at Tate in 1965; Balraj Khanna (b. 1940), Saleem Quadri (b. 1949), Paul Gopal Chowdhury (b. 1949), Anish Kapoor (b. 1954), Dhruva Mistry (b. 1957), Prafulla Mohanti (b. 1936), Shanti Panchal (b. late 1950s; exact date unknown), who all came as adults in the 1960s and 1970s; Sutapa Biswas (b. 1962), who although born in India, grew up in Britain; younger artists who have recently moved here to seek the best art education, such as Raqib Shaw (b. 1974) and Hormazd Narielwalla (b. 1979), whose collage, *Bands of Pride* is the first work by an Indian émigré artist to enter the Ben Uri Collection; Shivangi Ladha (a recent graduate of the RCA); and those of the second generation who were born in Britain, such as Chila Burman (b. 1957) and The Singh Twins (b. 1966). Across this diverse group, recurring themes and motifs are presented, inspired by autobiography and issues of race and identity, by memories of a lost Indian culture and homeland, and a history and heritage impacted by empire and colonisation. Artworks will range from paintings in various media and techniques, printmaking, works on paper, sculpture and digital mixed media.

Images of the artworks will be accompanied by short biographies for each artist, a curator's introduction and a scholarly text by Dr Jumabhoy, to provide a wider art historical context. A timeline will further indicate the significant presence of Indian artists within the UK's exhibition history post 1947.

Editors notes:

For high resolution images and further information, please contact the co-curator of the exhibition, Rachel Dickson at racheld@benuri.org

Ben Uri Art Society was originally founded in 1915 by Jewish émigré artists/craftsmen in London's East End ghetto, and much of its exhibition history and permanent pre-eminent and core collections (numbering some 800 works) reflects trajectories shaped by narratives of migration, identity and belonging.

The exhibition also coincides with South Asian Heritage Month 2020.

