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ART FAIR

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# ART IDENTITY MIGRATION

**BEN URI COLLECTION:** 880 works; 390 artists from 45 countries of birth; 29% women; 70% immigrants to Britain, see [benuri.org/collections](https://benuri.org/collections)

**BEN URI RESEARCH UNIT:** for the study and digital recording of the Jewish and immigrant contribution to British visual culture since 1900 – more than 600 published profiles to date, see [benuri.org/researchunit](https://benuri.org/researchunit)

**BEN URI ARTS & MENTAL HEALTH:** 100 researched art interventions from our diverse collection and planning digital programming, see [benuri.org/artsandhealth](https://benuri.org/artsandhealth)

**BEN URI DIGITAL:** the first full scale virtual museum and research centre announced in 2018, see [benuri.org](https://benuri.org)

**BEN URI** welcomes you to our exhibition on the ground floor, and to our newly refurbished gallery on Boundary Road, NW8 and expansively online at [benuri.org](https://benuri.org)

**BEN URI** Uses Art Differently as Dominican born artist Tam Joseph, London-based since 1955, sees the world differently with his *The Hand Made Map of the World*, acquired for the Collection in 2016



[benuri.org](https://benuri.org)



[benuri.org/collections](https://benuri.org/collections)



[benuri.org/researchunit](https://benuri.org/researchunit)

Ben Uri Gallery and Museum is delighted to present *Art, Identity, Migration*, a display of highlights from the permanent collection featuring paintings, drawings, collage, and sculpture by 32 artists of Jewish and/or immigrant origin from across the past century. This exhibition explores - in reverse chronological order - three principal waves of migration to Britain, illustrating the history, width and breadth of the institution and its collection with representative works by artists including Frank Auerbach, David Bomberg, Marc Chagall, Benedict Enwonwu, Eva Frankfurter, Josef Herman, R. B. Kitaj, Lancelot Ribeiro, Zory Shahrokhi and Chaïm Soutine.

BEN URI GALLERY AND MUSEUM

# Art, Identity, Migration



LANCELOT  
RIBEIRO  
*King Lear*, 1964, oil on  
canvas, 99x52.7 cm  
Courtesy of The Estate  
of Lancelot Ribeiro

Ben Uri is a small, purposeful, scholarly institution that uses art and technology differently to deliver distinctive national programmes. Founded in Whitechapel in 1915 by Russian-Jewish artist Lazar Berson to support fellow Jewish immigrant artists working outside the cultural mainstream, it initiated its collection in 1918 and opened its first gallery in 1925, but effectively closed 70 years later in 1995. In 2002, it relaunched in a new gallery, widening its focus to embrace immigrant artists from all ethnicities, nationalities and religions, who have made a distinct contribution to British art since 1900.

In 2018 the Museum published a transformative Sustainability and Public Benefit Strategic Plan, making a prescient shift to create the first full-scale digital museum ([benuri.org](http://benuri.org)) and Research Unit ([buru.org.uk](http://buru.org.uk)) to complement Ben Uri's vibrant gallery programming. Its Arts and Mental Health department develops researched art interventions and digital programming for the 70+ demographic, often living in social isolation and/or with dementia. The redefined, fully digitised Ben Uri Collection ([benuricollection.org.uk](http://benuricollection.org.uk)) uniquely reflects the wider British immigrant contribution with some 880 works by 390 artists, 70% immigrant and 29% women, from 45 different countries of birth.

The display opens with a vivid portrayal of *The Dancer* (Agbogho Mmuo - Maiden Spirit Mask), one of the characters from the Nigerian masquerade by pioneering African modernist **Ben Enwonwu**, reflecting his Igbo heritage. After studying art, and latterly, anthropology in England (1944-48), he maintained studios in London and Lagos, and exhibited internationally, fusing indigenous traditions with Western techniques. ▶



JOSEF HERMAN  
*Refugees*, c. 1941,  
 gouache on paper,  
 47x39.5 cm  
 Courtesy of the Estate  
 of Josef Herman



ZORY  
 SHAHROKHI  
*Revolution Street 2*,  
 2019, pen and ink and  
 gold pen on paper  
 49x69 cm  
 Courtesy of the artist

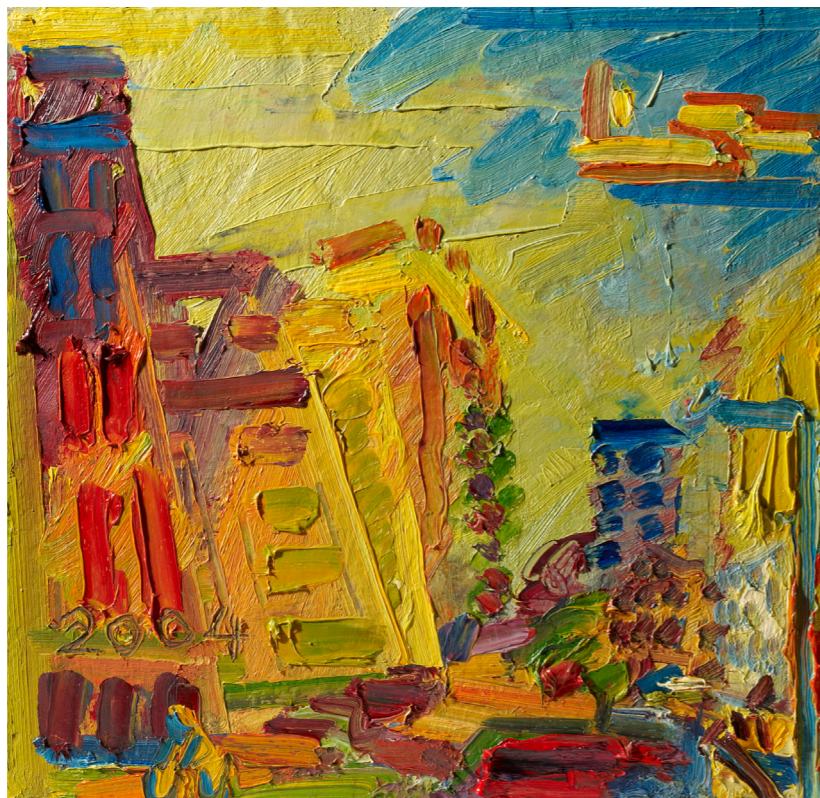
Enwonwu is flanked by **Lancelot Ribeiro's** bold *King Lear*. Born into a Catholic family from Goa (then a Portuguese colony) in Bombay (now Mumbai), **Ribeiro** also arrived in Britain postwar. His friend, Indian poet, translator and critic R. Parthasarathy, observed that Ribeiro's 'true subject' was his 'origins – Goan roots, estrangement from India, and exile in London', noting his attempts to reconcile 'multiple histories and in the process achieve wholeness'.

Contemporary Iranian-born **Zory Shahrokhi**, came to Britain in 1979, following the revolution. Her practice explores cultural/political agendas and issues and perceptions around displacement, exploitation and gender oppression. Her commissioned piece, entitled *Revolution Street 2* (2019), invokes 'the Girls of Enghelab (Revolution) Street' movement, started in Tehran in 2018, after a woman removed her headscarf in protest against the compulsory wearing of the hijab. The swallow, a symbol of freedom and migration, is contained within a diamond-shaped pattern referencing the headscarf. The companion piece features six fabric swallows made from scraps of Persian cloth sent to the artist from friends and relatives in Iran.

Dominican-born artist **Tam Joseph** migrated to England in 1955 at the age of eight. His work explores the many multi-faceted inspirations, aspirations, and contradictions that shape contemporary realities. *The Hand Made Map of the World* playfully reorders conventional geographies, blurring boundaries and suggesting new and unexpected possibilities for the world political map.

Three artists represent the pre-Second World War 'Hitler émigré' generation in flight from Nazi persecution: Polish artist **Josef Herman** arrived in Glasgow in 1940; his *Refugees* (1941), draws strongly on his eastern-European Jewish heritage and his own forced journey, but also represents the wider displacement of all peoples uprooted and exiled by the upheavals of war. **Frank Auerbach**, a German-Jewish child refugee, arrived in 1939, afterwards studying with **Leon Kossoff** at **David Bomberg's** Borough Evening Classes, as well as St Martin's and the Royal College of Art. ▶

FRANK  
 AUERBACH  
*Mornington Crescent*,  
*Summer Morning II*  
 2004, oil on board  
 51x51 cm  
 Courtesy of the artist  
 and Geoffrey Parton



His vibrant landscape depicts Mornington Crescent in Camden Town, north London, where he has lived and worked since 1954. His lively yellow and blue palette, applied with characteristic impasto, transforms the choking London traffic into a vigorous surge of pigment that captures the transient beauty of a fleeting summer's day. **Eva Frankfurter**, who shared a similar background, also trained at St Martin's alongside Auerbach. Her double portrait of *West Indian Waitresses*, her fellow workers at Lyon's Corner House, Piccadilly, documents the arrival of the postwar 'Windrush generation'. Her loose brushwork in a restricted palette, focuses on the women's faces and postures, observing them with empathy and dignity.

Finally, representing the first generation of Eastern-European Jewish immigrants and their children are representatives of the loose, informal group of 'Whitechapel boys', associated with London's East End Jewish quarter, who studied at the Slade School of Art, and engaged with early British modernism. **David Bomberg's** radical *Racehorses*, executed in 1913, demonstrates his understanding of European avant-garde movements including Cubism and Futurism, skilfully reworked into a drawing of startling power. Romanian-born **Clare Winsten** (née Clara Birnberg), the only 'Whitechapel girl', was also a member of the Women's Freedom League which campaigned for women's suffrage and sexual equality. Her contemporaneous *Vorticist Figures* (c. 1911-12), with its lively palette and flattened, pared down figures, signals her own rapid modernist trajectory.

Their forerunner, **Alfred Wolmark**, from Ben Uri's founding generation, closes the display. His monumental painting, *The Last Days of Rabbi ben Ezra*, formed the centrepiece of his first solo exhibition in London in 1905, the year of the British 'Aliens Act', designed to stem the tide of Jewish immigration at source: an act of cultural identity reconciling his Polish, Jewish and English roots, underlined by the inclusion of a self-portrait in the background of the painting.

Ben Uri extends huge thanks to the London Art Fair for this wonderful opportunity to share our collection, research unit and mission and for all their generous help and support. We also thank the sponsors without whom this exhibition would not have been possible: **IBI Logistics, Hiscox, Blackwall Green and TM Lighting.** ■

**Sarah MacDougall**  
 Director, Ben Uri Gallery and Museum  
 Find out more at [londonartfair.co.uk/museum-partner](http://londonartfair.co.uk/museum-partner)



**EVA FRANKFURTER**  
*West Indian Waitresses*,  
 c. 1955, oil on paper  
 76x55 cm  
 Courtesy of The Estate  
 of Eva Frankfurter

**CLARE WINSTEN**  
*Vorticist Figures*, c.  
 1911-12, oil on canvas,  
 45.8x81.4 cm  
 Courtesy of the Estate  
 of Clare Winsten

