

2019: Ben Uri Sustainability and Public Benefit Strategy



**An Enhanced Future
for Our Second Century**

**Ben Uri
Research Unit**

Including Ben Uri Collection

**Ben Uri Arts
and Dementia
Institute**

Launching 14 January 2019

Ben Uri Collection

Achievable Ambition

To continue to build the Museum Collection with the objective of assembling the UK's most comprehensive collection of representative works by immigrant artists to Britain since 1900 in parallel with the Ben Uri Research Unit

This will be achieved through:

1. Curator-led acquisitions, gifts, bequests and loans.
2. Curator-led and designed disposal programme to refine and redefine the current Collection into a more researchable, accessible and increasingly exhibited body of work, without any overall dilution of quality or relevance.
3. Adopt the new Collecting and Collection matrix disciplines to enhance the quality, relevance and manageability of the Collection, linking to and reflecting the work of BURU.

Ben Uri Collection

Current range of 281 Artists from 34 Countries of Birth

<u>Country of Birth</u>	<u>Artists</u>						
Argentina	1	Estonia	3	Latvia	1	South Africa	3
Australia	2	France	4	Lithuania	4	Spain	2
Austria	16	Germany	53	Mauritius	1	Switzerland	1
Belarus	3	Hungary	5	Netherlands	3	Turkey	1
Belgium	2	India	1	Poland	41	Ukraine	8
Bulgaria	1	Iraq	1	Romania	5	USA	8
Czech Republic	9	Israel	5	Russia	18	Virgin Islands	1
Dominica	1	Italy	1	Scotland	3		
England	66	Iran	1	Slovakia	6		

Ben Uri Refined Collection/Collecting Policy

Artist qualification on any one category criteria does not guarantee consideration but non-qualification on any disqualifies, unless under exceptional circumstances and proposed by the Head of BURU/BUC, and the Collections Committee

Category

1. Founding and influential artists within Ben Uri's history
2. First Generation immigrant artists to the UK, including those who were born here from immigrant parents within 10 years of their migration
3. Second Generation artists of very specific merit, either artistically or narratively
4. Artists adversely affected by German National Socialism and, in particular, the Holocaust between 1933 and 1945
5. Immigrant artists of the Ecole de Paris 1900-1939
6. Existing BU Collection works that are fettered either financially or by terms of the gift
7. Works on loan

New Collection quantity matrix; Number of works to represent artists within each category

1. Founding and influential artists within Ben Uri history 3
2. First generation immigrant artists 2
3. Second generation of particular focus 1
4. Affected by Nazi era 1933-1945 1
5. Ecole de Paris artists 1900-1939 1
6. Existing fettered works (financial or terms of gift) no limit
7. Works on Long term or time specified loan within categories A – E no limit

The new collecting and Collection matrix disciplines, based on the objective of improving the quality, distinctiveness and manageability of the Collection, dictates all accessions and disposals

Gifts and Bequests

Work/s offered of merit to be included in the Collection may add intellectual or artistic value but be judged insufficient to enter the ring-fence. In these circumstances a clause has to be explained, agreed and included in the property transfer contract that the work may at some future point be substituted and either disposed of for the benefit of the institution, with the donor credit being transferred, or gifted to another institution where the work will enjoy more productive public engagement.

This allows flexibility to continuously improve the quality of the Collection without regenerating a body of work over-shadowed by new acquisitions, which end up serving little or no public benefit in our long term storage.

Loans

Whilst there is no specific numerical limit, curators will be aware of the numerical matrix and will only accept loans of artworks that are significant, central to an artist's oeuvre and relevant to the BURU focus.

Loans will only be accepted following a discussed and agreed museum 'break clause' allowing the possibility of return to lender or translating into a gift to be sold for the benefit of the institution should, at some point in the future, circumstances and collecting disciplines determine.

Accessions and Disposals based on new Collecting and Collection Discipline

Maintaining new quantitative and qualitative matrix

A year plus long, and exhaustive, curator refinement of the current Collection will, following disposals, generate approximately a 50% reduction in volume of works to around 700 key objects. This contraction is estimated to result in only a 10% reduction in insurance value.

Over 100 works from the disposal schedule have been identified as candidates for free inter-museum transfers. All the works identified for disposal will have greater life in the private or public domain elsewhere than they do languishing unseen in our long term storage facility.

This refinement will part facilitate the redefined strategic expansion of the Collection, the Research Unit (BURU) and the Arts and Dementia Institute (BUAD) to better ensure long term sustainability and simultaneously maximise distinctive public benefit.

We will maintain the new artist numerical matrix discipline within each Collection context. Once an artist numerical ceiling is reached, further more important accessions can only be acquired on the basis of an existing, unfettered and non-ring fenced work being released.

Disposals

The disposal programme is a direct result of the redefined Collection and collecting policies as previously detailed

Principles and Process

Ultimately it is the responsibility of the Trustees to assess, evaluate and decide what strategic decisions are in the best interests of the charity in order to fulfil their principal obligations addressing long term sustainability and enhancement of distinctive public benefit.

This criteria is assessed by ongoing critical and realistic evaluation of the return on investment from human and tangible or financial resources in the present and the future.

Disposals – to enhance sustainability and overall distinctive public benefit

Through redefining the Collection to reflect BURU focus we will simultaneously be able to increase investment in each expanded core area of the museum's redefined priorities. Each division, being Collection (BUC), Research Unit on the immigrant contribution to British visual arts (BURU) and Arts and Dementia Institute (BUAD) is designed to significantly enhance our specialist and distinctive public benefit

Disposals and process will be fully transparent and achieved through sale by auction (Sotheby's have been selected to handle the principal works) and other means, as the Trustees and senior staff consider most appropriate, to maximise returns in the best interests of the charity. This will be implemented alongside an extensive programme of over 100 potential inter-museum gifts. No works acquired with the generous assistance of The Art Fund, The V and A and the HLF are affected.

Examples of Works to be Ring-Fenced for Ongoing Public Benefit

The Trustees will seek further curatorial and legal advice, following the implementation of this redefinition of the Collection, to put into place a non-negotiable ring-fence around agreed works considered sacrosanct to the long term intellectual weight, and century-old heritage of Ben Uri

Museum's heritage

David Bomberg: *Ghetto Theatre*, 1920
(acquired 1920)

Mark Gertler: *Rabbi and Rabbitzin*, 1914
(acquired 2002)

Frank Auerbach: *Mornington Crescent, Summer Morning 11, 2004* (acquired 2006)

Jacob Epstein: *Bust of artist Jacob Kramer*, 1921
(acquired 2003)

Samuel Hirszenberg: *Sabbath Rest*, 1894
(acquired 1923)

Isaac Rosenberg: *Self portrait in Steel Helmet*: 1916
(acquired 2009)

Simeon Solomon: *Renewal of vows over the scrolls of the law*, 1893 (acquired 1918)

Solomon J Solomon: *The Breakfast Table*, 1921
(acquired 2002)

Alfred Wolmark: *Ethel Solomon in Riding Habit*, 1909
(acquired 1988)

Tam Joseph: *Hand made map of the world*, 2013
(acquired 2016)

Rarity and historical importance

Marc Chagall: *Apocalypse en Lilas, Capriccio*, 1945
(acquired 2010)

Chaim Soutine: *Jeune Servante*, c1933
(acquired 2012)

George Grosz: *Interrogation*, 1938 (acquired 2010)

Josef Herman: *Refugees*, 1941 (acquired 2014)

Victor Hageman: *The Emigrants*, c1910
(acquired 2013)

Max Liebermann: *Sketches of Josef Israels*, 1912
(acquired 1987)

Ben Uri Archive and Library

Archive

The current original archive will be placed either in whole at, or divided, between Southampton University, London Metropolitan Archives and or Tate where they can be properly viewed and studied in proper context. Copies will be retained of archival material from c1915-c1935 and specific artist and all exhibition records, as part of BURU. These will be immediately accessible for the first time and on open display to the public on gallery open days and by appointment to external scholars. Material can be added to the archive only if of specific Ben Uri connection. No artworks can be added.

Library

For the first time, alongside archives, the extensive Ben Uri Art Library will be displayed and immediately accessible to BURU, the public and by appointment to external scholars and interested parties at Boundary Road.

Continue to build the library, as a core objective, to become in its own right a first stop for scholars on Jewish and immigrant artists to Great Britain since 1900.

Public Engagement and Curatorial

Ben Uri at 108a Boundary Road, St John's Wood, London NW8

The gallery will be reconfigured into five working areas accommodating: BURU, BUC, Library & Archives, BUAD (Ben Uri Arts and Dementia Institute), and Administration. BURU will occupy the Ground floor permanently exhibiting Collection highlights with individual themed exhibitions twice a year. The library and archives will be located in two of the galleries in the lower floor with the Ben Uri Arts and Dementia Institute occupying the third area.

The gallery will be open every Monday with Free Entry plus at events and open/ study days or by prior appointment.

Curate rotating exhibitions at the Boundary Road gallery including financially supported/tax in lieu gifted Collection highlights. Develop ongoing educational events and study days on current themes of BURU.

In addition curate and present a two week, on-site physical exhibition of themed works from within the BU Collection every six months, with scholarly activities that reflect the ongoing BURU research focus. The gallery will be open to the public free of charge every day during these two week exhibition highlights.

Curate a wide range of online Collection exhibitions reflecting the width and scope of BURU focus.

Continue to promote existing 'ready-to-go' fee-paid exhibitions to other institutions (e.g. Tempest; Chagall and Shakespeare/Komar and Melamid's Yalta/Émigré artists from Germany/Austria/Poland/Highlights of the Collection etc.) and mini-Collection shows on BURU themes.

When commissioned, curate Ben Uri Collection dominated relevant exhibitions for third party institutions. In 2018 Ben Uri has curated four exhibitions in five different locations across the UK.

Continue to promote Collection loans to other UK and international museums. In 2018 over 100 Collection works have been the subject of loans to different locations across this country and abroad.

Develop the use of high quality Collection reproduction exhibitions to share and engage audiences outside museum controlled environments.