

'UPROAR!'

THE FIRST 50 YEARS OF THE LONDON GROUP

1913-1963

50 Works by 50 Artists for 50 Years

31 October 2013 – 02 March 2014



Clockwise from top left: Matthew Smith, *Fitzroy Street Nude No. 2*, 1916, Oil on canvas, British Council Collection; David Bomberg, *Ghetto Theatre*, 1920, oil on canvas, Ben Uri, The London Jewish Museum of Art; Gertrude Hermes, *Butterfly*, 1937, Walnut, Private Collection; C. R. W. Nevinson, *Returning to the Trenches*, 1915, drypoint etching on paper, British Museum London.

To celebrate The London Group's centenary year in 2013. Ben Uri presents a major historical exhibition, 'Uproar!': The first 50 years of The London Group 1913-1963, examining the first half century in the group's turbulent history.

The London Group exploded onto the British art scene in 1913 as a radical alternative to the art establishment and in the wake of two modernist exhibiting platforms, Frank Rutter's liberal Allied Artists' Association and The Camden Town Group, headed by Walter Sickert, both of whose members the new group absorbed. The first minuted meeting took place on 25 October 1913, and Jacob Epstein is credited with coining the Group's name the following month.

The often inflammatory language of the press response to The London Group is exemplified by the 'uproar' which followed the exhibition of Mark Gertler's *The Creation of Eve* at the Group's third show in 1915, and which lends its name to this exhibition.

The half century surveyed explores: The London Group's inception, its Camden Town Group roots, the controversy of the early (particularly First World War) years; the influence of Bloomsbury in the 1920s; the strong showing of Jewish and women artists, Official War Artists, avant-garde sculptors; the 'shadow of the right' during the 1930s; the participation of newly-arrived émigré artists during the 1930s and 1940s; and the contribution of specific artists' groups, ranging from the Vorticists to the Surrealists, the Abstract-Creationists and the Euston Road School.

This is the first extensive survey of visual highlights from the Group's extraordinary first 50 years. During these early decades, these often innovative and daring works consistently provoked a sense of 'uproar' stimulating the public's appetite for the new.

This exhibition and book embody the essence of British modernism, and a hundred years later, many of these 'Uproarious' radicals are now cornerstones of twentieth century British art history, providing important and lasting influences on successive generations of experimental artists. Indeed, as a direct response to *Uproar!*, on 15 November 2013 – one hundred years to the day on which Jacob Epstein coined the name for The London Group - Britain's longest-running artists' group opens their complementary exhibition in the capital: **+100: The London Group Today**. This unique exhibition connects Britain's leading contemporary artists to their historical counterparts, with each work on display by a current London Group member directly inspired by an historic work selected from *Uproar!*

+100 The London Group Today 16 November-13 December 2013, The Cello Factory, 33-34 Cornwall Road, Waterloo, London SE1 8TJ Open daily 2–6pm, admission free There is a full programme of events – for details visit www.thelondongroup.com

Background:

This partnership between Ben Uri and The London Group is a revealing reflection on both institutions' early and entwined histories. The London Group was founded by a grouping of free-spirited artists. A number of them experimented with Cubism and Futurism and were determined to embrace the new practice and movements arriving from Europe, particularly France, to set a new agenda for a new century. Founded in opposition to the Royal Academy, The London Group quickly became a magnet and an exhibiting forum for

progressive artists, who were often considered rebellious, and even in some quarters, notorious, during these crucial early decades.

Ben Uri was founded less than two years later, in July 1915, in the Jewish ghetto in London's East End, also in response to establishment prejudice and exhibiting restrictions. In this instance, the artists (irrespective of their practice) were 'outsiders' as both Jews, and what was probably worse, mostly immigrants, or the children of foreign-speaking immigrants, seeking an exhibition platform.

Editors notes:

Dates: 31 October 2013–02 March 2014

Location: Ben Uri, 108a Boundary Rd, off Abbey Road, St John's Wood, London NW8 0RH.

Open Sunday - Friday (closed Saturday).

Images: please contact Rachel Rotrand at alixs@benuri.org.uk

Curatorial: please contact Sarah MacDougall at sarahm@benuri.org.uk and Rachel Dickson at racheld@benuri.org.uk

Artists:

Eileen Agar, Kenneth Armitage, Vanessa Bell, Robert Bevan, David Bomberg, John Bratby, Lynn Chadwick, William Coldstream, Jessica Dismorr, Frank Dobson, Jacob Epstein, Frederick Etchells, Hans Feibusch, Roger Fry, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Mark Gertler, Harold Gilman, Charles Ginner, Spencer Gore, Duncan Grant, Barbara Hepworth, Gertrude Hermes, Ivon Hitchens, Stanislaw de Karlowaska, Leon Kossoff, Jacob Kramer, Rupert Lee, Wyndham Lewis, L. S. Lowry, Edna Manley, Kenneth Martin, Mary Martin, Dorothy Mead, Bernard Meninsky, Henry Moore, Rodrigo Moynihan, Paul Nash, C. R. W. Nevinson, Victor Pasmore, John Piper, Ceri Richards, William Roberts, Claude Rogers, Ethel Sands, Walter Sickert, Matthew Smith, Ruskin Spear, Euan Uglow, Paule Vézelay and Edward Wadsworth.

Lending partners:

Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums Collections; Annely Juda Fine Art; British Council Collection; British Museum; Estate of Lynn Chadwick; Gillian Jason, Modern and Contemporary Art; The Hepworth Wakefield; Jonathan Clark Fine Art; Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge; Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Art Gallery); Leicester Arts and Museums Service; Manchester City Gallery; Museums Sheffield; The National Trust; Norwich Museum and Archaeology Service; Pallant House Gallery; Ruth Borchard Collection, c/o Robert Travers Works of Art Ltd, Piano Nobile; The Samuel Courtauld Trust; The Courtauld Gallery; Southampton City Art Gallery; Tate; University of Leeds Art Collection; Victoria and Albert Museum; Whitworth Art Gallery, The University of

Manchester; Williamson Art Gallery and Museum, Birkenhead; and other private collectors who prefer to remain anonymous.

Writers:

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Co-curators and Editors: Sarah MacDougall and Rachel Dickson

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**Ben Uri Museum & Gallery:
Art, Identity, Migration**

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