

THIRTY SIX POUNDS AND NINETY FIVE PENCE

Artworks by refugees and asylum seekers

13- 18 June 2017



Rahanya E.S., *Free at Last*, watercolour on paper

Celebrating London Creativity & Wellbeing Week and supported by The Maurice Marks Charitable Trust, Ben Uri proudly presents this exhibition of work by New Art Studio, a therapeutic art community for asylum seekers and refugees.

Using the Ben Uri collection and temporary exhibitions as a stimulus, NAS have been supplied with art resources, catalogues and high-quality framed reproductions of collection works, which they used to work with their clients to produce new works.

Art is made in an undirected manner, enabling trauma, loss and fear to be processed, and helping fragmented lives to be rebuilt.

'*Thirty Six Pounds Ninety Five Pence*' is the amount, in vouchers, asylum seekers receive per week. Any paid employment whilst seeking asylum results in deportation or detention.

This group of artists has suffered the untold horrors of political violence and war, having lost family and friends, their cultures, languages, homes and identities. They now face the challenges of building a new life in an often hostile environment. The paintings in this exhibition, reflect the resilience and sensitivity of the migrant's story: one of loss and hope.

Many of the artists in this exhibition do not have the confidence or privilege to talk freely about their experiences therefore we have kept the information about them to a minimum. Pseudonyms or first names have been used to conceal their true identity as the fear for their safety and the safety of their families back home are very real concerns.

There are some governments that can, and do act with impunity, often threatening family members. By sharing their art work in public we acknowledge the courageous steps these artists have taken. We respect and admire their bravery and need for privacy.

The artists have come from Afghanistan, China, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, Kurds from Turkey Pakistan and Ukraine.

This show is a collective endeavour, most members of the New Art Studio have never painted before but some are experienced artists who have had a formal art education. The exhibition reflects each individual response to their experiences of being an asylum seeker – that of loss and hope. The works are memories, fantasies, wishes, dreams or nightmares, real or imagined.

This exhibition also links up with Refugee Week 19 - 25 June, the UK's largest festival celebrating the contribution of refugees and promoting understanding of why people seek sanctuary. Selected works from ***Thirty Six Pounds and Ninety Five Pence*** will be shared on our online 3D exhibition platform, launching on our website alongside works from Ben Uri's collection on 19th June.

The exhibition is supported by a programme of events:

15 June 6.30pm - 8 pm A talk on the Art of Anatomy and the Beauty of Health by Professor Michael Baum.

16 June, 2 - 4pm: Textile Workshop with independent refugee artist Salah Ud Din

17 June, 12 - 1pm: Q&A with New Art Studio;
1 - 4pm: Public art making workshop



Paul, Identity, Paint on paper

To book visit ww.benuri.org/events or call 02076043991

Additional information

Refugee Week takes place every year across the world in the week around World Refugee Day on the 20 June. In the UK, Refugee Week is a nationwide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities.

Refugee Week started in 1998 as a direct reaction to hostility in the media and society in general towards refugees and asylum seekers. An established part of the UK's cultural calendar, Refugee Week is now one of the leading national initiatives working to counter this negative climate, defending the importance of sanctuary and the benefits it can bring to both refugees and host communities.

Through Refugee Week we aim to provide an important opportunity for asylum seekers and refugees to be seen, listened to and valued. www.refugeeweek.org.uk

Creativity & Wellbeing Week is a festival led by London Arts in Health Forum featuring hundreds of public events for people to learn how the arts and creativity can improve health and wellbeing. It presents performances, workshops, talks, film screenings and art exhibitions in hospitals and hospices, schools, community centres, arts venues, care-homes and more.

This year's festival is structured around the life course in line with the findings of an upcoming Inquiry report on arts and health led by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing. Director of LAHF, Damian Hebron, says, "What we're finding is that although the arts can be used to respond to specific healthcare needs, for instance using the arts to rehabilitate people who have had a stroke, we're also seeing tangible health benefits of visiting museums and libraries, singing with a choir, and reading aloud. Before reaching crisis point, the public can engage with their local services to prevent ill-health and improve their quality of life. I hope Creativity and Wellbeing Week will enable people to take an active role in protecting their health and the health of their families, and that relationships strengthen between arts practitioners and healthcare professionals to make full use of what the arts have to offer. Take a look at the festival brochure and discover what's out there." The full festival programme for Creativity and Wellbeing Week, 12-18 June, can be viewed at www.creativityandwellbeing.org.uk

New Art Studio provides a place of creativity and friendship, offering a full day of undirected art making each week to refugees and asylum seekers. Founded and managed by two experienced Art Psychotherapists, Tania Kaczynski and Jon Martyn, the studio is unique in its approach as a therapeutic arts community focusing on specific areas of trauma: loss, isolation, alienation and fear. All members suffer from PTSD, having fled war and persecution in a wide range of countries. Through the restorative power of art making, fragmented lives can be rebuilt and nurtured. Despite the many different languages spoken, New Art Studio communicates through the shared international language of art making. www.newartstudio.org.uk

Ben Uri Gallery and Museum is the only specialist art museum in Europe addressing universal and ever-more central issues of identity and migration through the visual arts. Emerging from and representing the Jewish community, its collection principally reflects the work, lives and contribution of British and European artists of Jewish descent, interpreted within the wider context of twentieth and twenty-first century art history, politics and society. From its inception as an art society in Whitechapel in 1915, to its current status as a museum with an international reach, the collection has grown to near 1400 works across 30 different mediums.

Made up of both historical and contemporary works, the Ben Uri collection spans 120 years and includes 380 artists from 35 countries, of which 67% are émigrés and 27% women. From its temporary exhibition space in St. John's Wood, Ben Uri presents an exciting and varied exhibition programme, exploring and incorporating works from its collection. The gallery hosts a pioneering wellbeing programme, working with a range of community partners, as well as an extensive education programme for teachers, schools and families, including free visits, workshops, art classes and projects with local schools. www.benuri.org

Thirty-six Pounds and Ninety-Five Pence

13 June 2017 – 18 June 2017

Free Admission

Ben Uri Gallery & Museum 108a Boundary Road (off Abbey Road), London, NW8 0RH

0207 604 3991 – Opening hours: Mon – Fri 10 - 5.30, Sat – Sun, 11 - 5

For all press/image enquiries please contact Katie Harris: katieh@benuri.org

For all enquiries concerning New Art Studio, please contact Jon Martyn or Tania Kaczynski: jonathan.d.martyn@googlemail.com, taniakz@yahoo.com

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FREE ENTRY | 020 7604 3991 | www.benuri.org

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