

Rabbi and Rabbitzin, 1914, by Mark Gertler (1891-1939)

Art is a powerful medium by which diversity and issues around identity and migration can be expressed.

Artists have long reflected the experiences and emotions of individuals and different communities. They can provoke discussion and reaction about an infinite range of personal and social issues.

London’s cultural landscape has been enriched in recent years by the development of Rivington Place in Shoreditch as an exhibition space for culturally diverse visual arts and photography, and Black Cultural Archives’ new purpose built heritage centre in Brixton which opened last year.

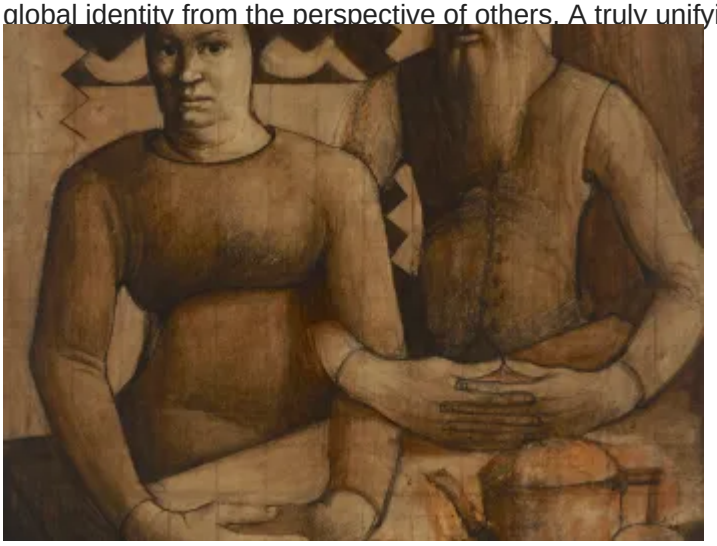
Now, during the second half of 2015, two major London exhibitions will be showcasing artwork of two migrant communities that has its roots in the 20th century. Grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) will make possible exhibitions looking at Jewish émigré art and the work of Black British artists.

Camden-based Ben Uri Gallery and Museum celebrates its centenary this year, but its cramped north London gallery has insufficient space to host a truly representative exhibition curated from its collection of 1,300 internationally renowned artworks. Its grant award means it will be able to mount an exhibition at Somerset House’s Inigo Rooms where, between July and December, Londoners, and visitors to the capital, will be able to view the works of David Bomberg, Jacob Epstein and Mark Gertler, who lived and worked in London; Frank Auerbach and Leon Kossoff, who still do, their continental émigré contemporaries, including Marc Chagall, Chaïm Soutine, and Georg Grosz, and a host of lesser-known names.

Meanwhile, Friends of the Huntley Archives at London Metropolitan Archives have launched their project No Colour Bar - Black British Art in Action 1960-1990. This culminates in an exhibition, also running between July and December, and taking place at The Guildhall Art Gallery in the City of London.

A varied range of visual artwork embracing painting, sculpture, pottery and photography will be on display alongside an installation that recreates the bookshop created as a black cultural hub by the Bogle L'Ouverture Press publishing house established in 1969 by Eric and Jessica Huntley.

Commenting on the twin grant awards, Blondel Cluff, Chair of HLF London Committee, said: "Both projects will enable new audiences amongst those that live, work and visit London, to have their own, personal experience of London's global identity from the perspective of others. A truly unifying experience that should be embraced."



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Two new exhibitions to explore art and diversity in 20th century London