



Josef Herman: Warsaw, Brussels, Glasgow, London, 1938-44.

Opening Reception on Tuesday 20 September 6.30pm - 8.30pm.

Showing from 21 September 2011 – 15 January 2012

To honour the artist in his centenary year, the exhibition *Josef Herman: Warsaw, Brussels, Glasgow, London, 1938-44* follows Herman's tumultuous journey as he fled across these four European cities in six dramatic years. It brings together for the first time much of Herman's surviving work from this formative period, when his art was at its most experimental and his use of colour strikingly imaginative. Most of it is held in private collections and therefore rarely seen, and has never previously been gathered together on such a comparable scale. Included are the few remaining works from Brussels, a series of powerfully expressionist figurative works in oil, gouache and tempera, striking designs for a politically-themed ballet, and many works on paper from the series known as the 'Memory of Memories'. These vivid, often poignant, sketches fired by memory and imagination, carried out in Glasgow between 1940 and 1943, bring the memory of Herman's family (who perished in the Warsaw Ghetto), as well as his lost Warsaw years, back to life.

The exhibition also includes examples of work by Herman's contemporaries in Glasgow: fellow Polish émigré Jankel Adler, Estonian-born sculptor Benno Schotz and Scottish colourist J D Fergusson, alongside whom Herman briefly made a considerable contribution to the Glasgow arts scene. At the Ohel Centre in North London (1943-4), Herman mixed with fellow artists Martin Bloch, David Bomberg, Jacob Epstein and Ludwig Meidner (whose work is also included), as well as with the poets Itzik Manger and Avrom Stencl. The exhibition concludes in mid-1944, when Herman's momentous discovery of the Welsh mining town of Ystradgynlais in South Wales changed the direction of his life and work forever.

The catalogue includes contributions from Herman's biographer, Monica Bohm-Duchen, as well as Professor Jerzy Malinowski (President of the Polish Institute of World Art Studies and Head of Modern and Oriental Art, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun, Poland), Nanny Schrijvers (curator and researcher, the Royal Museum, Antwerp), Douglas Hall (former first Keeper of the Scottish Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh), the artist's son, David Herman, Ben Uri's Head of Curatorial Services, Rachel Dickson and the curator Sarah MacDougall, the inaugural Ben Uri Eva Frankfurter Research and Curatorial Fellow for the study of émigré artists.

The exhibition and accompanying catalogue are part of Ben Uri's continuing exploration of and commitment to the work of émigré artists.

For further information please contact the curator Sarah MacDougall on sarah@benuri.org.uk or for exhibition details and high res images for publication Anna Canby Monk at anna@benuri.org.uk