

# GERMAN VISUAL CULTURE

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Dr Christian Weikop  
Senior Lecturer  
Edinburgh College of Art  
University of Edinburgh



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## SITES OF INTERCHANGE

MODERNISM, POLITICS AND CULTURE  
BETWEEN BRITAIN AND GERMANY, 1919–1955

EDITOR

LUCY WASENSTEINER



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## 9 Metropolitan Exile: London, Refugee Artists and Places of Contact in the 1930s and 1940s

Cities were changed by the influx of exiled artists and – conversely – urban topographies shaped the actions and interactions of these artists. This essay seeks to elaborate the thesis that the topographies in which the artists moved and worked had an impact on their professional lives and influenced their cultural and linguistic assimilation.<sup>1</sup> Émigré artists often settled in certain urban areas – today described under the term ‘arrival cities’<sup>2</sup> – gathering there due to low rental costs, because immigrants were already settled there and/or because these areas were favoured by other artists and intellectuals, enabling new contacts to be made.

In the London of the 1930s and 1940s many emigrants, among them Walter Gropius, László Moholy-Nagy and Ernő Goldfinger, lived and worked in Hampstead, where avant-garde artists like Ben Nicholson or Barbara Hepworth had long been living. An estimated 14,000 refugees lived in the Hampstead area by 1940.<sup>3</sup> This leads to questions about the

- 1 This text was made possible by the ERC Consolidator Grant ‘Relocating Modernism: Metropolises, Modern Art and Exile (METROMOD)’, Horizon 2020, Grant agreement No. 724649. The research project (2017–22) looks at six global arrival cities for artists and intellectuals forced to flee in the first half of the twentieth century. London is one of these cities with different ‘exile locations’ and contact zones. For more information see METROMOD’s archive on the website of the project, available at: <<https://archive.metromod.net>>, accessed 21 August 2021.
- 2 See Doug Saunders, *Arrival City. How the Largest Migration in History Is Reshaping Our World* (London: William Heinemann, 2010).
- 3 Monica Bohm-Duchen, ‘Modernist Sanctuary: Hampstead in the 1930s and 1940s’, in idem, ed., *Insiders Outsiders. Refugee from Nazi Europa and Their Contribution to British Visual Culture* (London: Lund Humphries, 2019), 157–64.

importance of neighborhoods for the life and work of emigrants. Proximity and distance to other émigrés but also access to infrastructures might have impact on the 'arrival' in exile. In the following essay I shall map contact zones in London such as art institutions, social venues and private homes, zones where exiled and local artists met and worked together or where joint exhibitions were organised. The essay aims to rethink how the actors (the émigrés), the output of their work (the art objects and concepts) and the relevant urban places interacted, conceiving them as part of a dense network. Here I take up Walter Benjamin's idea of translating key markers in a life into a sign system like that of a city map: 'For a long time – for years, in fact – I have toyed with the idea of representing the space of life – bios [*den Raum des Lebens – Bios*] – graphically through the form of a map.'<sup>4</sup> The overall aim of the following is twofold: to inform exile studies with an understanding of how networks function in a metropolitan or urban setting, while integrating perspectives on life in exile into urban studies.

It is important to note at the outset that only certain emigrants in London had the opportunities enjoyed by figures such as Ernö Goldfinger, to build their own house, for example. The vast majority of emigrants who fled the European continent after 1933 lived in the British capital in financially difficult circumstances. They often had to work in professions that did not correspond to their education. Many of them changed quarters and neighborhoods several times, as shortly after their arrival they found only provisional accommodation – furnished rooms and lodgings. Others, on the other hand, were unable to free themselves from the precarious living conditions and were therefore repeatedly on the lookout for even cheaper dwellings and studios. The changing residential addresses of artists such as Jussuf Abbo, of Ludwig and Else Meidner or of the art historian Rosa Schapire illustrate the difficult living and working conditions of many German-speaking emigrants in British exile.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless,

4 Walter Benjamin, *Berliner Chronik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), 12. The translation was taken from Leland De La Durantaye, *Georgio Agamben: A Critical Introduction* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2009), 145.

5 The addresses of Abbo, Meidners and Schapire were researched and published by the author in: Burcu Dogramaci, 'Still Fighting for Modern Art. Rosa Schapire in England', in idem and Günther Sandner, eds, *Rosa und*

the urban environment with its access to museums, galleries and libraries was elementary for their work in London. Although their work did not inscribe itself into the matrix of the city as much as Goldfinger did, who gave his stay in London with his own house an architectural visible form, Schapire and the Meidners were also metropolitan exiles.

### Maps, metropolises and émigrés

Migration largely takes place in the metropolis and it is certainly there that it becomes most visible. This not only holds for the present day, but also for historical instances of migration. Claus-Dieter Krohn described German émigrés during the Nazi period as a 'metropolitan population':

Berlin, Frankfurt, Cologne, Breslau were the departure stations for an escape that led them in turn to mainly foreign metropolises: to Paris, Prague and London, to New York and Los Angeles, to Mexico City and Buenos Aires, to Jerusalem and Shanghai [...].<sup>6</sup>

Metropolises were the preferred destination for emigrants – immigrants sharing the same language and background were already living here, an infrastructure supporting immigration was already in place (aid organisations, religious institutions, cultural associations, etc.) and there were better opportunities to earn a living than could be hoped for in the

*Anna Schapire – Sozialwissenschaft, Kunstgeschichte und Feminismus um 1900* (Berlin: Aviva, 2017), 229–56; idem, 'Meidners Londoner Jahre: Produktion und Rezeption im Zeichen des Exils / Meidner's London Years: Production and Reception in Exile', in Erik Riedel and Mirjam Wenzel, eds, *Ludwig Meidner. Expressionismus, Ekstase, Exil / Exile, Ecstasy, Expressionism* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 2018), 257–78; idem, 'Abbo in Exile, oder: Von der Schwierigkeit kulturellen Übersetzens', in Dorothea Schöne, ed., *Jussuf Abbo* (Cologne: Wienand, 2019).

6 Claus-Dieter Krohn, 'Vorwort', in idem and Lutz Winckler, eds, *Metropolen des Exils* (Exilforschung. Ein internationales Jahrbuch, 20) (Munich: edition text + kritik, 2002), 7.

countryside. Moreover, prejudices towards strangers were possibly less pronounced than in rural areas.

However, metropolises had to be first deciphered by the arriving emigrants: address books like the one belonging to the Viennese psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, exiled in London, were extremely important for renewing old or adding new contacts. Street atlases provided orientation: Sandor Grosz (Alexander Gross) was a Jewish emigrant from Hungary who founded the Geographers' Map Publishing Company in London and published a London street atlas in 1913. His daughter Phyllis Pearsall in turn published the first *A to Z Atlas* in 1936, at a time when a particularly large number of emigrants were arriving in the city. This atlas followed the logic of newer city maps, which enlarged the streets over the built areas and integrated house numbers. Convenient to handle, the street atlas was distributed by W. H. Smith, which ran bookstores and kiosks at London's railway stations, and proved a great success.<sup>7</sup> To find their way around London, it is very likely that emigrants purchased this popular street atlas.

Besides already established art academies, exhibition venues and cafes, an array of other contact zones existed in these metropolises, where emigrants had taken the initiative. Jack Bilbo's 'Modern Art Gallery', which existed between 1941 and 1948, was an important forum for presenting modern art. Initially located in 12 Baker Street, in 1943 Bilbo moved to premises at 24 Charles II Street in Haymarket. In his gallery rooms he showed exhibitions of works by British woman artists such as Ena Croom-Johnson and Doris Hatt (1944) as well as by émigré artists like Samson Shames (1942 and 1943), Kurt Schwitters (1944) and Jacob Bauerfreund (1942).<sup>8</sup> That many emigrants were able to exhibit their work in the gallery

7 Phyllis Pearsall, *A to Z. Atlas to London and Suburbs* (London: Geographers' Map Co Ltd, 1936). See Phyllis Pearsall, *A to Z Maps: The Personal Story – From Bedsitter to Household Name* (London: Geographers' A-Z Map Co Ltd, 1990), 49f. See also Sarah Hartley, *Mrs P's Journey: The Remarkable Story of the Woman Who Created the A-Z Map* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2002).

8 See Merry Kerr Woodeson, 'Jack Bilbo und seine "Modern Art Gallery". London 1941–1946', in *Kunst im Exil in Großbritannien 1933–1945*, exh. cat. Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst (Berlin: Fröhlich & Kaufmann, 1986), 50f.; see also the memories of Bilbo: Jack Bilbo, *An Autobiography. The First Forty Years of the Complete and Intimate Life Story of an Artist, Author, Sculptor, Art Dealer,*

is presumably due to the fact that Bilbo – whose real name was Hugo Baruch – was himself an emigrant, having fled Berlin he had finally settled in London after stays in France and Spain. This emigrant experience was certainly a contributing factor to the interest and appreciation he showed for other emigrants. Being able to speak German was another factor of course, meaning that he was a dialogue partner for German-speaking artists, one they could deal with even without any command of English.<sup>9</sup> Bilbo was able to provide artists who had fled to London with an opportunity to establish a public presence, although they had little or no access to functioning networks and often had scarcely any financial resources at their disposal. While Bilbo's Modern Art Gallery was a classical art institution, in the following I would like to look at two unorthodox locations shaped by emigrants, both of which were immensely important for interaction between artists in the city and establishing classical modernism in Britain.

### The Goldfingers' private house and the exhibiting of modern art

In 1937 the architect Ernő Goldfinger, who was born in Hungary and had studied in Paris, designed and built a complex of three townhouses in the London suburb of Hampstead (Figure 9.1),<sup>10</sup> employing reinforced concrete. Goldfinger and his family moved into the middle townhouse, while the other two were with leased or sold.<sup>11</sup> The complex was designed with

*Philosopher, Psychologist, Traveller, and a Modernist Fighter for Humanity* (London: Modern Art Gallery, 1948).

9 See Jutta Vinzent, 'Muteness as Utterance of a Forced Reality – Jack Bilbo's Modern Art Gallery (1941–1948)', in Shulamith Behr and Marian Malet, eds, *Arts in Exile in Britain 1933–1945. Politics and Cultural Identity* (Amsterdam / New York: Rodopi, 2005), 310.

10 See Nigel Warburton, *Ernő Goldfinger. The Life of an Architect* (London / New York: Routledge, 2003), 100–1.

11 *Ibid.*, 81–3.

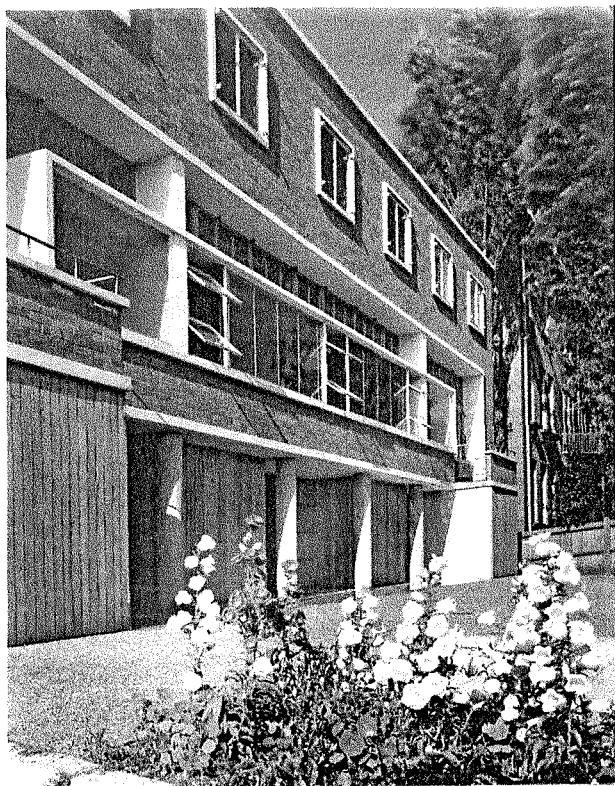


Figure 9.1. Ernő Goldfinger, 2 Willow Road, Hampstead, London, 1939, the street facade, photo: Sydney W. Newbery, 1940 (Architectural Press Archive / RIBA Collections, RIBA3394-55).

the local architectural tradition in mind, but broke with traditional ideas of domestic living in Britain by adopting features of continental modernism such as the outer Cubist appearance, the broad window façade and the pilotis on the front side, borrowing heavily from Le Corbusier.<sup>12</sup> Most notably however, the flexible floorplan was out of the ordinary,

12 See Miranda H. Newton, *Architect's London Houses. The Homes of Thirty Architects in the 1930s* (London / Oxford: Butterworth, 1992), 3.

allowing for a variable use; moveable walls meant that the rooms on the first floor could be converted into one large room<sup>13</sup> according to the needs of the inhabitants (Figure 9.2). For social occasions, but also for exhibitions, which the Goldfingers staged here, a private apartment could thus be turned into a (semi-) public venue with an accordingly representative floorplan.

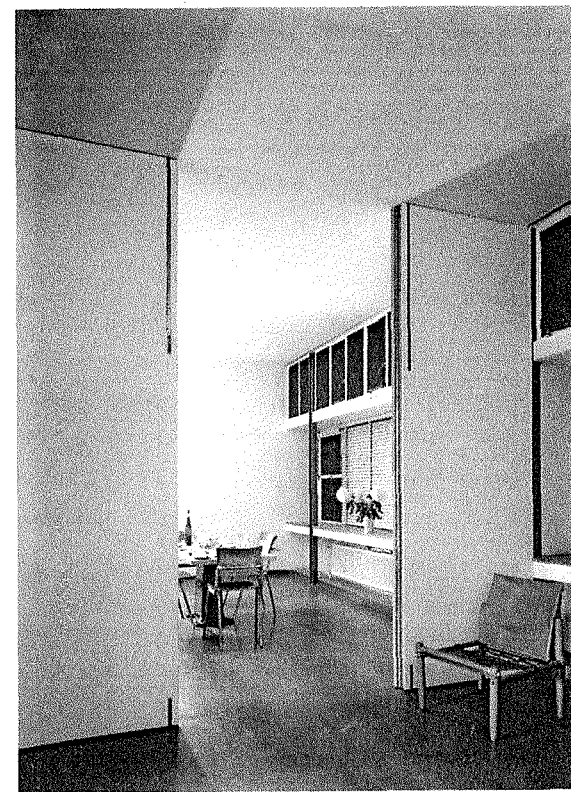


Figure 9.2. Ernő Goldfinger, 2 Willow Road, Hampstead, London, 1939, Interior, Dining Room, photo: Dell & Wainwright, 1939 (Architectural Press Archive / RIBA Collections, RIBA8557).

13 Ibid.

In 1942, when the major museums in London had closed because of the war,<sup>14</sup> Ernő Goldfinger and his wife, the artist Ursula Goldfinger, organised the sales exhibition *Aid to Russia* (Figure 9.3). It featured seventy works by contemporary artists, the venue open to the public every day for several hours. In 1942, the signing of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty, which cemented the political alliance between the UK and Soviet Union against Nazi Germany, contributed to increasing the solidarity of the British public with their wartime ally.<sup>15</sup> Reports on the fighting on the Eastern Front also played a role in public pronouncements of sympathy. For the benefit exhibition held in the Goldfingers' residence at 2 Willow Road, contemporary artists were invited to contribute two works each; in return, they were guaranteed half of the sales price. The remaining amount was then donated to the Aid to Russia fund.<sup>16</sup> As with a museum exhibition, an admission of one shilling was charged; arranged on the walls of the Goldfingers' modernist townhouse were works by Hans Arp, Max Ernst, Barbara Hepworth, Kurt Schwitters, Henry Moore and others.<sup>17</sup> A work loaned from Hugh Willoughby, *La Niçoise* by Pablo Picasso (1937, today known as the *Portrait of Nusch Éluard*, Figure 9.4) was also amongst the works – thus not all were for sale.<sup>18</sup> Running from 5 to 21 June 1942, the exhibition *Aid to Russia* attracted over 1,700 visitors, whereby the generous opening hours of 3.00 to 9.00 p.m. on workdays and 11.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. on Sundays certainly contributed to the success. In addition, posters in underground stations and shops had promoted the exhibition.<sup>19</sup>

14 Barbara Pezzini, 'Aid to Russia and Its Art', in *Flyer of the exhibition Aid to Russia, 2 Willow Road* (London, 2002, Archive of 2 Willow Road), n.p.

15 See Warburton, *Ernő Goldfinger*, 101. On the Anglo-Soviet treaty, which was signed 26 May 1942, see Ben Wheatley, *British Intelligence and Hitler's Empire in the Soviet Union, 1941–1945* (London / New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 97.

16 Warburton, *Ernő Goldfinger*, 101. The exhibition was supported by the Association of Architects, Surveyors and Technical Assistants (AASTA) and its president Colin Penn, member of the Communist Party.

17 See the exhibition and sale catalogue of *Aid to Russia, 1942*, Archives of 2 Willow Road.

18 See the exhibition and sale catalogue of *Aid to Russia, 1942*, 6, Archives of 2 Willow Road. See also Michela Parkin, 'The Goldfinger Collection. Hampstead's Modernist heritage', *Apollo* 141/398 (1995), 48; Warburton, *Ernő Goldfinger*, 102.

19 Warburton, *Ernő Goldfinger*, 102.

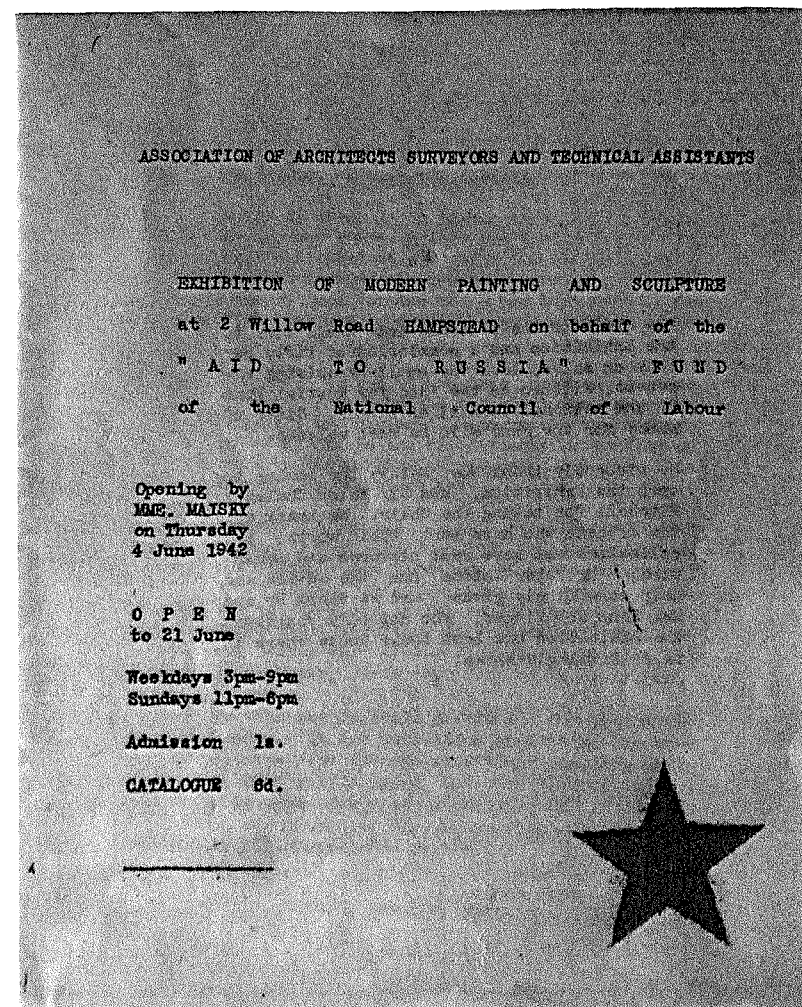


Figure 9.3. Catalogue of the *Aid to Russia* exhibition, 1942. Photo: Archive 2 Willow Road, National Trust Collections. With kind permission of the Goldfinger Family. Copyright Ernő Goldfinger.



Figure 9.4. *Aid to Russia* exhibition in 2 Willow Road, 1942, with Pablo Picasso's *La Niçoise*, 1937 – today known as the portrait of Nusch Eluard. With hat: Nancy Cunard. Photo: Archive 2 Willow Road, National Trust Collections. Collections. With kind permission of the Goldfinger Family. Copyright Ernő Goldfinger.

The Goldfingers' home in Hampstead was thus a location where solidarity with Russia was expressed and anti-fascist engagement demonstrated. At the same time, modernist art was promoted, and the usual boundary between private and public space dissolved. This was noted in a letter by a visitor to the exhibition: 'The clear light, the spaciousness and subtle simplicity of your delightful rooms gave an atmosphere more conducive to 'art appreciation' than the usual run of shows. I feel that we should aim more at this method of picture showing.'<sup>20</sup> Eighteen works were sold at the exhibition, and the Goldfingers themselves purchased a few works, amongst them Henry Moore's sculpture *Head* (1938).

Goldfinger's exhibition at 2 Willow Road should be placed in a larger context of (semi-)private exhibition and modern exhibition practice. These

20 Parkin, 'The Goldfinger Collection', 48.

included the first Impressionist exhibition in 1874 in Nadar's Paris studio and an exhibition by Japanese artist Koichiro Kondo in his private apartment. This show, which took place in 1931 at 10, avenue Camoens in the 16th district of Paris, was reported in the daily newspaper.<sup>21</sup> Goldfingers, who lived in the French capital at the time, may have been familiar with the exhibition.

Ernö and Ursula Goldfinger had been collecting art since their time in Paris during the 1920s and 1930s, purchasing many pieces from their circle of friends and acquaintances or receiving them as gifts. The artists who were part of the private and professional networks of the couple included Man Ray, Max Ernst and Amédée Ozenfant; Ursula Goldfinger studied under the latter.<sup>22</sup> Works by all three artists were found in the Goldfinger collection, along with the lithograph *La tour* (1910) by Robert Delaunay.<sup>23</sup> Max Ernst was a regular guest at Willow Road. Ernst's painting *Jardin gobe-avions* (1935) is also part of the collection.<sup>24</sup> At Ernst's solo exhibition of 1937 in the Mayor Gallery in London, the Goldfingers purchased the artist's diptych *Le passé et le présent* (1934/5).<sup>25</sup> Another work in the collection is by the British Surrealist and art patron Roland Penrose. The Goldfingers were also on very friendly terms with Penrose and his wife, the artist Lee Miller.<sup>26</sup>

21 For informations on the less known exhibition of Kondo and the press review see Kuniko Abe, 'Malraux et le peintre Kondo', in *Présence d'André Malraux sur la Toile (PAMT). Revue littéraire et électronique*, Article 71, December 2009, available at: <[https://malraux.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/images\\_documents\\_aber.pdf](https://malraux.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/images_documents_aber.pdf)>, accessed 30 July 2019.

22 Barbara Pezzini, 'For an Appreciation of Art and Architecture'. The Goldfinger Collection at 2 Willow Road', *Apollo* 153/470 (2001), 56.

23 See Parkin, 'The Goldfinger Collection', 46f.

24 See Werner Spies, Sigrid Metken and Günter Metken, *Max Ernst. Werke 1929–1938* (Cologne: DuMont, 1979), 321, cat. 2181.

25 Spies/Metken, *Max Ernst*, 296, cat. 2142. Pezzini writes, that Ernst's *La Joie de Vivre* (1936) was bought by the Goldfingers at the London solo exhibition in 1937, see Pezzini, 'For an Appreciation of Art and Architecture', 57. But the catalogue raisonné says that the painting belongs to the collection of Roland Penrose.

26 Parkin, 'The Goldfinger Collection', 46.

The works of the collection were presented in the home and could be easily viewed by friends and acquaintances when visiting; the Goldfingers also lent them for exhibitions.<sup>27</sup> With the matter-of-fact presence of modern art in their private home, the Goldfingers were promoting the art of their time. Moreover, this art was understood as an integral component of the interior architecture, as evidenced, for example, by the large display frame installed in the living room (Figure 9.4),<sup>28</sup> which enabled alternating objects, pictures and books to be put on show. At the *Aid to Russia* exhibition from 1942, it was the Picasso work that was featured in this frame. A similar gesture of exhibiting and showing is evident in the entrance area to 2 Willow Road. The front door was inset in a glass wall, which was simultaneously used to display objects and sculptures, enabling the works of the collection to be staged and highlighted.<sup>29</sup> Presenting the works was thus understood as part of the architecture from the outset.

### Intellectual and social spaces in the context of emigration

Around ten minutes' walk from 2 Willow Road, also in the suburb of Hampstead, were the Lawn Road Flats (Figure 9.5). Designed by Wells Coates and commissioned by Jack Pritchard, the flats were completed in 1934. The conception was based on principles of urban 'good living' and a reduced living space that was to nonetheless offer all the conveniences deemed necessary for comfortable living, such as built-in cupboards,

27 Two works of Max Ernst in the collection of the Goldfingers, *Loplop présente* (1931) and *Jardin gobe-avions* (1935), were shown at an exhibition at Tate Gallery in 1961. See *Max Ernst*, exh. cat. Tate Gallery, London 1961, 48, 51. Ernst's *Le Passé et le présent* (1934/35) and *Jardin gobe-avions* (1935) were loans from the Goldfinger collection to an exhibition in Paris in 1959. See *Max Ernst*, exh. cat. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris 1959, cat. 47, 52.

28 Parkin, 'The Goldfinger Collection', 46; see also Kathryn Felus, 'The furniture of Ernő Goldfinger at 2 Willow Road', *Apollo* 143/410 (1996), 49.

29 Photography of the entrance hall in Felus, 'The furniture of Ernő Goldfinger at 2 Willow Road', 48.



Figure 9.5. Wells Coates, Lawn Road Flats, Hampstead, London, 1934 (Architectural Press Archive / RIBA Collections, RIBA2508-9).

sliding doors, a dressing room and a small kitchen.<sup>30</sup> In addition, service and community facilities were planned, for example, a large kitchen on the ground floor that was to provide residents with meals to order. In 1937 this kitchen was converted into a restaurant with bar, the 'Isobar',<sup>31</sup> which became the social hub of the building.

30 On the architecture and dwelling see Elizabeth Darling, *Well Coates. Twentieth Century Architects* (London: RIBA Publishing, 2012), 65–73.

31 'Isobar' constituted itself from 'Iso' for Isokon und 'bar' for barometer referring to Molly Pritchard's passion for weather forecasts – a barograph was prominently installed. See Florentina-Aventura Freise, *Asketischer Komfort. Das Londoner Servicehaus Isokon* (Artifium: Schriften zur Kunst und Kunstvermittlung, 29) (Oberhausen: Athena, 2009), 124; see also John Allan, 'The Isobar. The Social Hub', in Isokon Gallery Trust, ed., *Isokon Gallery. The Story of a New Vision of Urban Living* (London: Isokon Gallery, 2016), 63.



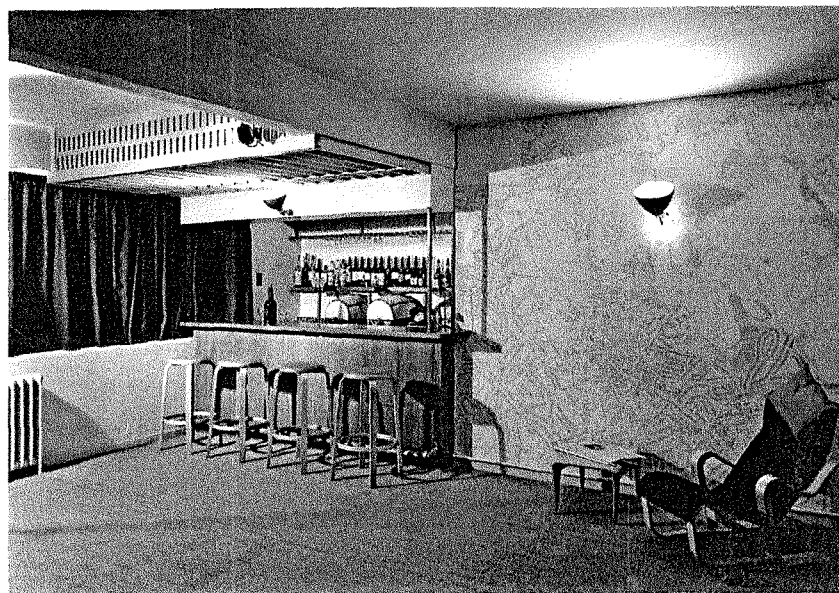


Figure 9.6. Lawn Road Flats, Hampstead, London: The Isobar, photo: Dell & Wainwright, 1937 (Architectural Press Archive / RIBA Collections, RIBA5745).

The Isobar was fitted with furniture by Isokon (Figure 9.6), designed by the émigré Bauhaus artist Marcel Breuer. A map of northwest London was pinned to the wall next to the bar. City, map and bar were thus brought together conceptually and the Isobar marked as an urban location for amusement and conversation. The tenants of the Lawn Road Flats socialised in the Isobar, rubbing shoulders with prominent guests, including the artists Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth, who lived nearby, or the writer Julian Huxley and the sculptor Naum Gabo.<sup>32</sup> The Isobar was also home to the 'Half-Hundred Club', founded in 1937 by Jack Pritchard. The twenty-five members could bring one guest each and be served a multi-course meal for ten shillings, whereby the members were responsible for the dishes to be served, either arranging the preparation or cooking themselves.<sup>33</sup> The Isobar

<sup>32</sup> Allan, 'The Isobar. The Social Hub', 63.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 66.

was thus a site where food was celebrated as a social act. It was also a venue for talks and exhibitions – for instance with works by Bob Wellington and John Piper shown during July 1938.<sup>34</sup>

With respect to the history of exile in London, the bar was a prominent contact zone and location for forming a social community – and a place to be for the residents of Lawn Road Flats. Among them were the founder and director of the Bauhaus in Weimar and Dessau, Walter Gropius and his wife Ise Gropius.<sup>35</sup> While Gropius had tried to establish himself as a freelance architect, he had also worked as the Art Director of the Isokon Furniture Company. As noted above, the owner of Isokon was Jack Pritchard, the initiator of the Lawn Road complex. Marcel Breuer, another Lawn Road resident, was similarly involved with Isokon. He was responsible for a collection of plywood furniture for the company, for which he translated his seating furniture out of aluminium into an aesthetic appropriate for wood.<sup>36</sup> In the manifesto *Circle* (1937), co-written by British avant-gardists and emigrants, Breuer described in an essay the metamorphosis of the materials from aluminium into wood.<sup>37</sup>

The aforementioned émigrés – together with their artistic and intellectual circle – came together in 1937 to send off Walter Gropius, who had decided to leave Britain for Harvard University. The farewell dinner, hosted by the biologist Julian Huxley, took place on 9 March at the Trocadero Restaurant on Coventry Street.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> See Freise, *Asketischer Komfort*, 127.

<sup>35</sup> On the architecture of and the people living at Lawn Road Flats see *ibid.*, 86ff; see also David Burke, *The Lawn Road Flats. Spies, Writers and Artists* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014), 50f.; Alan Powers, *Bauhaus Goes West. Modern Art and Design in Britain and America* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2019); Leyla Daybelge, 'The Lawn Road Flats', in Monica Bohm-Duchen, ed., *Insiders Outsiders. Refugee from Nazi Europa and Their Contribution to British Visual Culture* (London: Lund Humphries, 2019), 165–71.

<sup>36</sup> See Alastair Grieve, *Isokon* (London: Isokon Plus, 2004), 34f.

<sup>37</sup> Marcel Breuer, 'Architecture and Material', in J. L. Martin, Ben Nicholson and Naum Gabo, eds, *Circle. International Survey of Constructive Art* (London: Faber & Faber, 1937), 193–202.

<sup>38</sup> Peder Anker, *The Bauhaus of Nature* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), 9. See the essay of Karen Koehler in this volume.

The Trocadero was a representative and well-known venue in London, with a history going back to the nineteenth century and having undergone a redecoration in 1930.<sup>39</sup> The guest list of 135 shows that both Londoners and foreigners were invited, amongst them artists and architects such as László Moholy-Nagy and Wells Coates as well as the prominent historians of architecture Sigfried Giedion and Nikolaus Pevsner.<sup>40</sup> The menu card was designed by Moholy-Nagy, the Bauhaus artist who had also fled to London and was responsible for the brochures of Isokon.<sup>41</sup> Such a farewell dinner, in honour of an émigré, with guests comprising both fellow émigrés and figures from Britain, underlines that a transnational community of artists had gathered in London in 1937. The guest list for the Gropius dinner also underlines how many of the invitees departed London after 1937. Of course, Gropius himself was foremost here, moving to the United States where he continued his architectural practice and teaching at Harvard, and became the 'American Gropius'. László Moholy-Nagy moved to Chicago and became the director of the New Bauhaus. Nikolaus Pevsner however remained, spending several years working on his monumental study *The Buildings of England*. The architect Ernst L. Freud, the son of Sigmund Freud, also continued to live in London, where he designed residential buildings and was involved in planning housing for migrants.<sup>42</sup>

The places connected with the figures mentioned mark out a unique and unconventional map of life and work in exile London. They refer us to urban topographies, to inner-city districts, outlying suburbs and streets, to places where interaction took place, but also to the venues used for exhibitions and collaborative projects. Urban locations were of particular importance not only for communicating, forming networks and formulating theories; they were also stations on the diverse paths of exile. Of course, to give an authentic picture of the situation, the other side of life

39 For the illustrated history of the Trocadero Restaurant see <<http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/TrocaderoLeicesterSquareLondon.htm>>, accessed 10 October 2021.

40 See the designs in the Archive of Tate Gallery.

41 Grieve, *Isokon*, 28f. See also the essay of Leah Hsiao in this volume.

42 On Ernst L. Freud see the essay of Volker M. Welter in this volume.

as an emigrant needs to be included on this biographical map, for example, the public administrative offices or travel agencies, locations of increasing agitation for the emigrant community following the outbreak of war and as the threat of German occupation grew. In his autobiography *The World of Yesterday* (1943), Stefan Zweig noted:

I will never forget the sight which once met me in a London travel bureau; it was filled with refugees, almost all Jews, every one of them wanting to go – anywhere. Merely to another country, anywhere, into the polar ice or the scorching sands of Sahara, only away, only on because, their transit visa having expired, they had to go on, on with wife and child to new stars, to a new language-world, to folk whom they did not know and who did not want to receive them.<sup>43</sup>

In this way, the 'bios' imagined by Walter Benjamin as a 'space of life' is a time-bound map, for places change just as situations and personal and historical narrative(s) do.

In summary, both the Goldfinger house and the Isobar, presented within the matrix of London, were 'sites of interchange' in the best sense of the term. They were sites where contact was established and communication took place, but they were also both venues where modernist art was presented to the public. While the Isobar addressed a more select and intellectual clientele, which included emigrants, the Goldfingers' private residence was open to a broader public and neighbouring residents. Here the specific setting in a modernist house may have added to the interest shown. These settings were important forums for establishing and spreading both British and European modern art. Given that the involved artists included

43 Stefan Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern. The World from Yesterday* (Munich: E. Mühllthaler's Buch und Kunstverlag, 1997), 720. For the original see the first edition of the book: Stefan Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern. Erinnerungen eines Europäers* (Stockholm: Bermann-Fischer, 1942), 481f.: 'Nie werde ich vergessen, welchen Anblick sich mir bot, als ich einmal in London in ein Reisebüro geriet; es war vollgepfropft mit Flüchtlingen, fast alle Juden, und alle wollten sie irgendwohin. Gleichviel, in welches Land, ins Eis des Nordpols oder in den glühenden Sandkessel der Sahara, nur fort, nur weiter, denn die Aufenthaltsbewilligung war abgelaufen, man mußte weiter, weiter mit Frau und Kind unter fremde Sterne, in fremde Sprachwelt, unter Menschen, die man nicht kannte und die einen nicht wollten.'

figures such as Kurt Schwitters and Max Ernst, they were also sites where a counter-project could perhaps be realised to the 1937 Nazi exhibition *Degenerate Art* held in Munich, where the very same artists were amongst the outcast, defamed and branded as deranged.

*Translation by Paul Bowman*