Peggy Guggenheim in London (online, Jun/Jul 23)

online (via Zoom)
Deadline: Mar 12, 2023

Grazina Subelyte, Peggy Guggenheim Collection

"Peggy Guggenheim in London: The Story of Guggenheim Jeune, 1938-39".
Curated by Gražina Subelytė and Simon Grant.
Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice.

In Spring/Summer 2026, the Peggy Guggenheim Collection will present an exhibition that will celebrate Peggy Guggenheim's extraordinary gallery Guggenheim Jeune at 30 Cork Street in London (1938-39) and the range of pivotal exhibitions that she staged there. An inquiry into this gallery's importance for what was to emerge as a key period in the development of the London art scene is indistinguishable from assessing Guggenheim's personal contribution to the visibility and acceptance of the most contemporary art in the capital at that time. In many ways, the London period was the catalyst for her role as the great collector she became, and therefore instrumental in forming her identity as a patron of the arts. Guggenheim was a key mover and shaker in London in the late 1930s, and her gallery quickly became one of the central places to see the latest developments in art by both local and international artists. During quite a short period, she organized over 20 exhibitions and many curatorial firsts, including first UK solo shows dedicated to Jean Cocteau, Vasily Kandinsky, Wolfgang Paalen, Yves Tanguy, Rita Kernn-Larsen, Grace Pailthorpe, and Reuben Mednikoff, possibly the first show of collage in the UK, and the Contemporary Sculpture exhibition that caused a scandal. The works displayed at Guggenheim Jeune encompassed a variety of mediums and techniques, including furniture, applied arts, painting, sculpture, prints, collage, ceramics, illustrated books, and photography.

Guggenheim's friendships and connections with some of the great modernist figures, such as Hans (Jean) Arp, Samuel Beckett, Marcel Duchamp, Roland Penrose, Herbert Read, and Mary Reynolds helped shape her vision. Their influence and contributions would be an important, and previously underplayed, part of the story of Guggenheim Jeune's critical success. Guggenheim's gallery thrived amid the collaborative, and sometimes competitive network of fellow gallerists also working in the locale, such as the Mayor Gallery, the Zwemmer Gallery, and the London Gallery, and greatly supported through the pages of the London Bulletin, edited by ELT Mesens. The program reflected the healthy cross-pollination of ideas at the time that existed among artists and gallerists. Guggenheim Jeune's program existed during a time of feverish social and political turmoil – and many of the artists involved were inexorably affected by these world events, brought to a head by the start of the Second World War.

For the first time, this exhibition will bring together the works that were originally shown in the Guggenheim Jeune space, alongside works by artists that Guggenheim would collect, and whose

work she would have seen in London during this period.

In order to address of our goal of understanding the story of Guggenheim Jeune and Peggy Guggenheim's contribution to the UK art scene afresh, we are organizing a closed online workshop inviting papers covering a multitude of potential areas of inquiry that could include, but are not limited to the following:
- Context of war and political turmoil, and how it reflects in the Guggenheim Jeune story, the lives of artists/intellectuals involved, and the works exhibited;
- The London-Paris connection and exchange;
- Peggy Guggenheim's support of emerging British artists;
- The role of Winifred (Wyn) Henderson in Guggenheim Jeune's story;
- The role of Hans (Jean) Arp, Marcel Duchamp, Mary Reynolds, Roland Penrose, Samuel Beckett, Herbert Read, and others;
- Relationship with other galleries on the London art scene;
- What impact did Guggenheim Jeune's exhibitions/artists have on the UK art scene? What were Peggy Guggenheim's donations to institutions in the UK?;
- Peggy Guggenheim and Herbert Read, and the idea of a London modern art museum;
- Vasily Kandinsky's first UK solo exhibition (1938);
- Exhibition of Portraits by Cedric Morris (1938);
- Exhibition of Contemporary Sculpture (1938) – breaking new ground in the UK;
- Exhibition of Paintings by Geer van Velde (1938);
- Exhibition of Paintings by Benno (1938);
- First UK Surrealist exhibitions, such as Rita Kernn-Larsen (1938), Yves Tanguy (1938), Wolfgang Paalen (1939), Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff (1939);
- Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture (1938);
- Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by Children (1938);
- Exhibition of Collages, Papiers-collés, and Photo-montages (1938);
- Exhibition of Pottery by Jill Salaman;
- Christmas Exhibition of Paintings, Sculpture, Masks, etc. by Marie Vassilieff (1938);
- John Tunnard's exhibition (1939);
- Exhibition of Sculpture by Henghes (1939);
- Exhibition of Works by Charles Howard (1939);
- Exhibition of Abstract and Concrete Art (1939);
- The last European exhibition of Stanley W. Hayter's printmaking studio Atelier 17 (1939);
- The showing of Gisèle Freund's color portrait photographs (1939).

To participate please send a 1 page abstract and a short biography by 12 March 2023 to curatorial@guggenheim-venice.it. The workshop will take place online (via Zoom) in late June – early July 2023. The papers will be 15 minutes each.

Reference:

CFP: Peggy Guggenheim in London (online, Jun/Jul 23). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 21, 2023 (accessed Nov 17, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/38385>.