



**Press Release: Britain '21 Coming up for Air  
9-27 June at St John's Churchyard, Waterloo  
Daily 10am-8pm**

## **The Waterloo Festival 2021**

The Festival's overall theme being: **'Respair'** (the return of hope)



Untitled Paul Tecklenberg LG



Spiritum (Breath) Paul Bonomini LG



Tree Hugger John Crossley LG

*"Waterloo Festival 2021, curated by St. John's Waterloo in and around the local area will take place during May and June and feature a series of live events and online content. The Festival will celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Festival of Britain, (for which the Royal Festival Hall was built and St John's rebuilt), capturing its post-war spirit of hope and creativity as we strive for a more egalitarian and sustainable post-pandemic future".*

The London Group is delighted to participate yet again in this wonderful summer Festival and 31 artists will be exhibiting in St John's Churchyard. 18 London Group members and 13 Friends whose work loosely fits the the discipline of sculpture, installation and performance are responding to the theme of "Britain '21 – Coming up for Air" in acknowledgement of the circumstances that we all find ourselves in, artists and public alike.

**London Group members:** Slawomir Blatton, Paul Bonomini, Clive Burton, John Crossley, Cadi Froehlich, Alex Harley, Aude Hérail Jäger, Chris Horner, Annie Johns, Ian Parker,

Claire Parish, Sumi Perera, David Redfern, Tommy Seaward, Almuth Tebbenhoff, Paul Tecklenberg, Bill Watson, Tina Westerhoff.

**London Group Friends:** Heather Burrell, Jane Eyton, Rebecca Feiner, Mande Gage, Vera Jefferson, Stephen Lewis, Chris Marshall, Venetia Neville, James Roseveare, Graham Tunnadine, Sheila Vollmer, Angela Wright, Natalia Zagorski-Thomas.

For many, it will be the first 'live' show for some considerable time, whilst for others, the discovery of just how creative the digital world can be, has been a passport to a much wider public. The mobile phone camera and online exhibitions have fully engaged both stalwarts of the digital world and new recruits. To reflect this digital direction there will also be an online show running in parallel to the churchyard exhibition. The exhibitors will be showing images to convey the thinking and development behind their idea/s toward the exhibited piece.

A further digital project is planned for a camera drone to record the exhibition from the air at both dawn and dusk, an inclusive record of the artworks as night gives way to day and vice versa.

And so what can be expected after the Covid hiatus? It is 70 years since the Festival of Britain and in that time and particularly in the last 30 years there have been seismic changes as to what visual art and its practice might entail. Not surprisingly in many of the works the natural world and the miracle of breathing feature in many artists' minds and both the ephemeral and the formal language of sculpture, installation and performance will be explored in this exhibition.



Coming up for Air

Susan Haire PLG

To acknowledge the contribution made by the London Group in 1951 to the Festival of Britain, "Coming up for Air" will include a two sided Monolith placed in St John's Churchyard, with printed images from 1951 of London Group artists plus their paintings and sculpture and the context in which they were produced.

Reviews written about the contribution of artists to the 1951 Festival of Britain were in the main focused on realism versus abstraction. Two exhibitions were prominent, a painting

exhibition at the RBA Galleries, "60 for 51" and a sculpture exhibition at Battersea Park. Certain sculptors were also invited to show their work on the South Bank site. It is interesting to note that of the total of 54 painters who eventually showed at the RBA galleries, 36 were members of The London Group at some point in their careers, of the five purchase prize winners three recipients were in the London Group at the time of showing and one, William Gear, was elected in 1952. It was his, apparently contentious abstract painting, Autumn Landscape, that caused a debate in the House of Commons! Of the sculptors, either showing at Battersea or on the South Bank eleven were also London Group members. Cartoons in the popular press directed their attention to ridiculing the figures of, in particular, Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth who, again, were London Group members at some point in their careers.

The mural painter, Hans Feibusch needs a particular mention. He fled, along with other Jewish artists, persecution in Nazi Germany and came to Britain in 1933 aged 35. In 1934 he joined the London Group and in 1951 he was commissioned to paint two murals in St John's Church. St John's had been bombed in 1940 and was being restored as part of the Festival of Britain. Indeed it became the Festival's dedicated Church holding both services and concerts. Feibusch became the most prolific mural artist who ever worked for the Church of England and remained in England until his death in 1998 at the age of 100. In 1951 he also had exhibited a painting in the "60 for 51" Festival of Britain RSA exhibition, a far cry from his inclusion in the 1937 Degenerate Art exhibition held by the Nazi Party in Munich.