



RETRACING

Albeiro 1933 - 2010

EDUCATION PACK



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1 Early life in India



Crawford Market, Bombay, in the forties

My Dad, Lancelot Ribeiro, was born in Bombay in 1933. He had a half-brother, Francis Souza, who was nine years older, whom everyone affectionately called 'Sonnie' and a sister, Marina. Sonnie was destined to become one of India's most famous painters and my Dad would follow in his footsteps.

These early years were relatively happy ones. His stories of the 1930s and 1940s would conjure up a part of the world I had not known, recreating the sights and sounds of India, its culture, its history and his childhood.

My grandmother, Lily, made her living as a tailor and hat maker (a 'milliner'), setting up her own business in 1925. My grandfather, John, was an accountant. Surrounding the immediate family was an extended group of protective grandmothers and three loving and glamorous aunts, including his favourite, Auntie Biddie.

The family lived in Bombay (now known as Mumbai) which was - in those years - a lively and cosmopolitan city and still part of the immense British Empire.



Ribeiro and his mother Lily, 1934

The city, strategically situated for trade and industry, served as an important military base. It was also a key centre for the arts, culture and sciences and this inevitably shaped the direction of my Dad's – as his friends put it – "encyclopedic knowledge".

My family's third floor flat in 'Hira Building' overlooked Bombay's famous Crawford Market. The area would, in coming years, become densely populated and the noise and pollution from the streets "horrendous". Hira Building was a reflection of Bombay, serving as a home to all who lived in harmony,



Sonnie (standing), Marina and Ribeiro, 1936

whether they were Hindus, Muslims, Christians or Parsees.

My Dad's family would also spend their holidays at their ancestral home of Goa, a picturesque state on India's west coast. Goa was part of the Portuguese Empire and had been its "possession" for 400 years and would remain so until December 1961.



Auntie Biddie and Ribeiro, 1946

Situated on the Arabian Sea, Goa was richly endowed in grains, rice and fruits and its location on the coast served the Portuguese well for trade.

Unsurprisingly, it was known as "Goa Dourado" (Golden Portugal) and my Dad wrote:

"Arriving in Goa from Bombay by air is just 40 minutes but as these minutes go by the change in the landscape is staggering. The choked barrenness of the first 35 minutes give the feeling that whatever vegetation there is blisters and turns to the colour of ash. Trees and shrubs are cinders that seem staked out for a gun fight in an American western. And then! As if in the 36th minute you see Goa bursting from the lip of the Arabian Sea. The intense light from a string of beaches, white, gold and pale brown is fringed with green coconut palms and red earth – Goa Dourado."

Although Goa was part of the Indian subcontinent, customs and traditions were Portuguese and to some it seemed a world away from the wider turbulent events taking place in what was still 'British India'. Portugal had brought the Roman Catholic faith there, and a string of imposing Churches dotted its hillsides.

The visual beauty of this landscape would influence my Dad's paintings, and leave a lasting impression.

Aged six, my Dad had begun to show an early talent in art at school "always painting and drawing". At the age of 9, his mother transferred him to St Mary's Senior boarding school in north India's Mount Abu (in Rajasthan). A deeply religious school, it ran a strict regime and he struggled to settle in,

never able to shake off the feeling that having stood first in the beginning, he would then always come last.



Ribeiro school paintings, 1948

HISTORY NOTE

British Rule in India

The British began to establish overseas trading posts and colonies in the 16th century and by the late 18th century, had established colonies in North America and the West Indies. Over the 19th century, it had added India and large parts of Africa to its Empire. By 1914, the 'mother country' (Britain) laid claim to a quarter of the world's territory and population. For 200 years, the Indian subcontinent was known as the "Jewel in the Crown" of the British Empire or British Raj – a vast territory comprising several of today's modern states: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

After the First World War (1914-1918), it became increasingly difficult for the British Empire to continue. She could no longer afford to maintain it and began to see strong resistance to British rule. 'Self-determination', set out in the peace agreement after the First World War, promoted the right for self-rule and it became difficult for the European colonial powers to support this principle for some countries but deny it to others. India's independence movement gained momentum due to a policy of passive resistance led by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948). In 1935, the Government of India Act gave some local powers to Indians but the country still remained subject to the Viceroy (the ruler exercising authority on behalf of the sovereign), and had no say on foreign policy. After World War II, the British Empire was steadily dismantled and replaced by a voluntary organisation of ex-colonies called the Commonwealth of Nations (1949).



India's Independence Day, 15 August 1947

As these childhood years passed, my Dad and Marina told me of the dances their mother, Lily, held in Bombay for the British troops and their wives.

Meanwhile, the Indian subcontinent was undergoing turbulent political change. Discontent at the presence of the British was everywhere. Sonnie too played an active role in the 'Quit India' movement which in 1945 had him expelled from the prestigious Sir J.J. School of Art.

On 15 August 1947, India secured its Independence from Britain. A family friend - the Indian poet - Partha, recalled the two most significant events of the era as Independence and the horrors of Partition.

My Dad, only a teenager at the time, narrowly escaped a bullet which lodged in a door frame of their home. Whenever he spoke about this period, he would tell me that India had been a place where different communities, which had coexisted in peace

for centuries, were torn apart by Britain's 'Divide and Rule' policy; a policy that had its roots in Britain's long colonial history and left a legacy of problems for generations to come.



The Colonialist, 1961



Roofscape, 1962

Independence and Partition

Indian troops played a key role helping the British control their Empire by fighting for her in the two world wars. Around 1 million Indians served in the First World War, while 2.5 million in the Second. Women from the Indian sub-continent (present day India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan), also played a considerable part in the Allied war effort during the Second World War. The Women's Auxiliary Corps India (WACI), was established in 1942 and by the end of the war over 10,000 Indian women had served in its ranks.

The struggle for Independence

The campaign for Indian Independence affected all parts of British India. Religious strife began to emerge and spill onto the streets and split communities which had once lived peacefully side by side. Violence and religious intolerance became an everyday occurrence. India's independence movement gained momentum due to the non-violent campaign led by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Gandhi had led a series of protests, strikes and boycotts which resisted British laws. On 15 August 1947, India secured its Independence from Britain.

Partition

At the same time as Independence was secured, the Indian subcontinent was partitioned into two independent nation states: a Hindu-majority India and a Muslim-majority Pakistan. This resulted in one of the largest migrations in history, as millions of Muslims moved to West Pakistan and East Pakistan (now known as Bangladesh) while millions of Hindus and Sikhs left their homes and headed in the opposite direction to modern day India. Communities which had coexisted for almost a millennium attacked each other in unprecedented acts of violence.



Untitled (Townscape), 1964



Untitled (Townscape), c1962

2 Journey to a post-war England



Bomb damaged Theobalds Road in London, 1940s

As a teenager, my Dad like many others of his generation had dreams of finding a better life in Britain. He came as one of the newly-arrived immigrants from the Commonwealth in 1950. His brother had arrived in 1949 and had written home that Lancy should be sent to London to study accountancy, as prospects in Britain were promising. He wrote to his 15-year old brother:

“...London life is throbbing. The ‘Underground’ of London is an amazing feat of engineering. To go underground to the tiny trains called ‘tubes’ all one has to do is to stand on a staircase which moves and you reach below or brings you up as you wish. They are called escalators, which you must have heard about... the sensation at first on it is something unexplainable.”

TV in homes was still relatively rare while cinemas, he wrote, ran feature-length films day and night.

My Dad embarked on his own journey to England aboard the P&O steamship, named the ‘Mooltan’. His voyage lasted 21 days and left Bombay docks on 26 August 1950. He described life on the ship as having been “his city for three weeks”, where he walked its decks aimlessly.

GENERAL FOREIGN
PASSENGER AGENTS
PENNSYLVANIA
RAILROAD

THOS. COOK AND SON
(Continental and Overseas) LTD.

COOK'S BUILDING,
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P. O. BOX 46,
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TELEPHONE: 36073 (Four Lines)

REFERENCE SAL/1816

Date.....22nd August.....1950

DEAR SIR ~~XXXXX~~

With reference to your ~~request~~ application for passage to U.K. for.....YOURSELF....., we have pleasure in offering you accommodation in the P. & O. S.S. "...M.O.O.L.T.A.N..." scheduled to sail from...B.O.M.B.A.Y...on...25th AUGUST 1950...for.....U.K..... class...TOURIST.....

NAMES	CABIN	BERTHS	RATE
Mr. L. B. Rebeiro.			@ £52/- Rs 694/9/-

We should be glad to have your confirmation of acceptance of this offer ~~as later than~~ Immediately 19 , after which date, in the event of no reply from you, the accommodation will be released. If accepting, please forward your deposit of Rs. 300/- as is required under the steamship company's regulations.

ACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE ALLOWANCES

The following is the scale of free accompanied baggage allowance to passengers:—

First class or cabin class full fare		40 c. ft.
Tourist class		20 c. ft.

Children are allowed free baggage allowance in proportion to the fare paid.

The term "Baggage" includes packages containing the personal clothing and effects of passengers, but does not include packages containing jewellery, plate, objects D'arts, other valuables, furniture, wines, spirits, etc. Such articles should be shipped as cargo on a Bill of Lading.

Above: Thomas Cook and Son invoice for Ribeiro's passage on the P&O's 'Mooltan' steamship, 1950
Below: Post-war food and clothing ration books

R.B.1
16
MINISTRY OF
FOOD
1953-1954

SERIAL NO. 1
BR 583554

RATION BOOK

Surname...COUSIN JULIETTE...
Address...23 Belsize Avenue
Hampstead
N.W.3

IF FOUND
RETURN TO
ANY FOOD
OFFICE

F.O. CODE No.
L - A
2

CLOTHING BOOK 1947-48
GENERAL CB 1/10

This book must not be used until the holder's name, full postal address and National Registration Number have been written below. Detach this book at once and keep it safely. It is your only means of buying clothing.

HOLDER'S NAME...MASON, E.A.C.
(in BLOCK letters)

ADDRESS...150 IVERSON RD.
(in BLOCK letters)
W.HAMPSTEAD, N.W.6.

HOLDER'S NATIONAL REGISTRATION No.
AKW / 167 / 2

IF FOUND please take this book to
any Food Office or Police Station

FOOD OFFICE CODE No.

THIS IS NUMBER
41191

However, he experienced a deep sense of self-doubt at his decision to come to England, particularly when he saw London's famously depressing weather for the first time:

"I have never forgotten those early days, disillusioned and troubled days. Days and nights spent in anguish and tears. Fear had begun to take a shape. I was alone, with nothing but a constantly growing fear."

Why had I left home and all that I knew, felt and could touch? Was it just the obsessive restlessness that made me want to move or was it an inner compulsion to come to Britain... Britain was a country of make-believe... from the colonized to the colonizers."

He was here during London's famous five day great yellow smog (also known as a 'pea-souper') of December 1952. This was a lethal mix of coal pollution and unusually cold, windless weather so thick "you couldn't see your hand in front of your eyes".

London was then a grim, bomb-damaged city and still recovering from the Blitz.

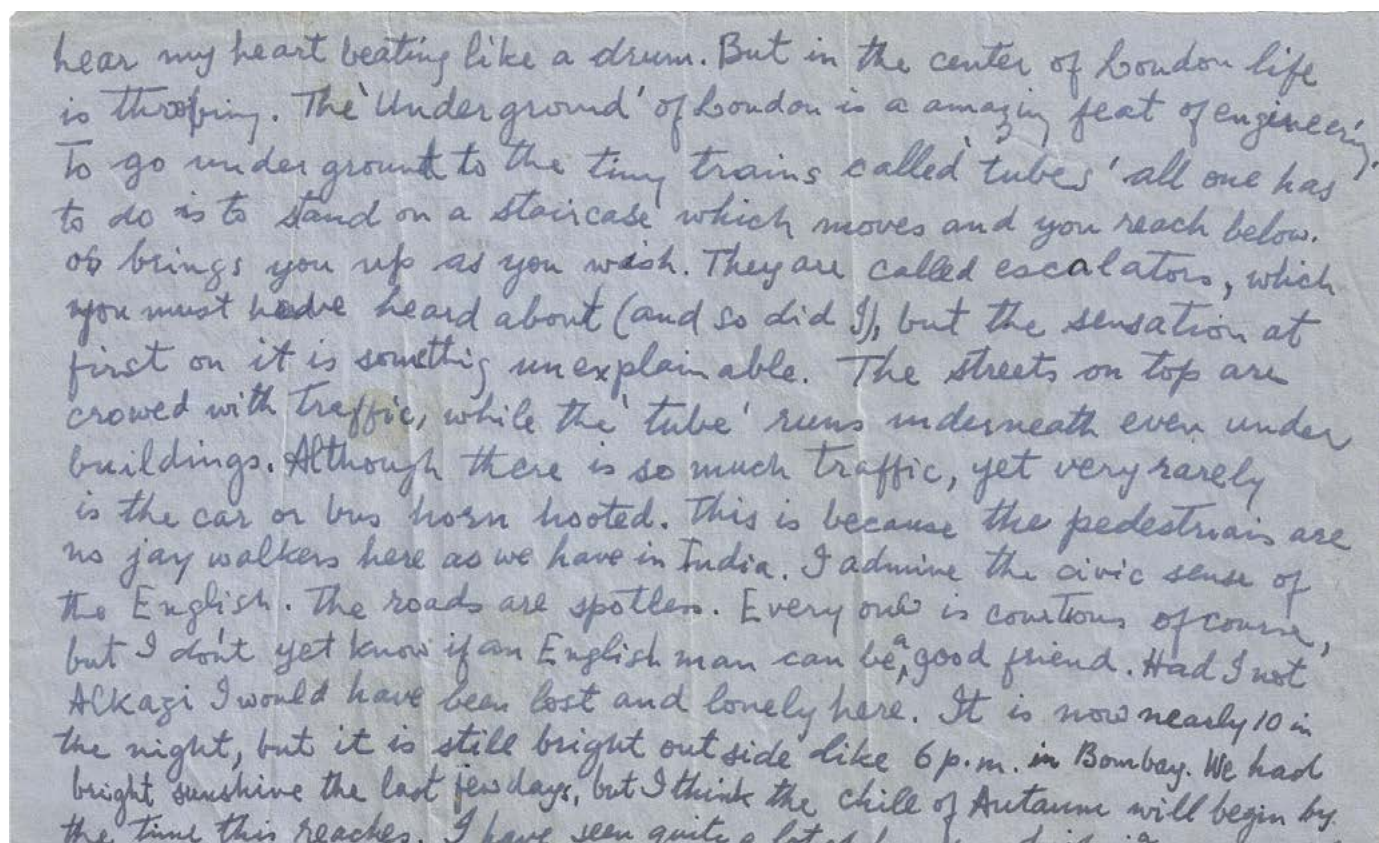
Food and clothes rationing, which had been in force since 1940, was to remain in place until 1954.

HISTORY NOTE

The Blitz

The Blitz (short for Blitzkrieg – the German word for lightening) refers to the sustained and heavy German aerial bombing raids against Britain during the Second World War, targeting Britain's industrial and civilian targets.

The campaign lasted eight months, from September 1940 to May 1941.



hear my heart beating like a drum. But in the center of London life is throbbing. The 'Underground' of London is a amazing feat of engineering. To go under ground to the tiny trains called 'tubes' all one has to do is to stand on a staircase which moves and you reach below. It brings you up as you wish. They are called escalators, which you must have heard about (and so did I), but the sensation at first on it is something unexplainable. The streets on top are crowded with traffic, while the 'tube' runs underneath even under buildings. Although there is so much traffic, yet very rarely is the car or bus horn hooted. This is because the pedestrians are no jay walkers here as we have in India. I admire the civic sense of the English. The roads are spotless. Every one is courteous of course, but I don't yet know if an English man can be a good friend. Had I not Alkazi I would have been lost and lonely here. It is now nearly 10 in the night, but it is still bright outside like 6 p.m. in Bombay. We had bright sunshine the last few days, but I think the chill of Autumn will begin by the time this reaches. I have seen quite a lot of London since I arrived.

Extract of Sonnie's letter to Ribeiro, 1949

3 First years in Britain



Ribeiro (front row, wearing bow tie) with the International Language Club, East Croydon, 1951

Fifties' Britain had a post-war mood of recovery. Rock 'n Roll and jive music were playing in the many dancehalls dotted around the city. My Dad and his friends followed the bold and fashionable style of the 'Teddy Boys', inspired by American Rock 'n Roll.

On arrival, he first stayed with his brother Sonnie in London's Chalk Farm where their lives were an 'open book'. He had been sent to study accountancy in the hope that this would secure him a promising future. His other friends, who would also eventually become artists, had similarly been encouraged by their families towards what were perceived as 'decent professions'. One, the artist Balraj Khanna, when asked what he intended to do, responded he would do: "what any young man from my kind of background could have done at the time. That is to join the government or Foreign Service".

While studying for his exams, he took up a short refresher English course at the International Language Club in East Croydon.



Ribeiro and friend, 1950s London

These were times of financial strain for the family and they wrote of their anguish at hearing the young Ribeiro had had to pawn his clothes for cash. However, despite the hardship, these were also years when he made good friends and immersed himself into London's communal spirit of the post-war years. His friends asked:

"How did the Festival of Britain go? You must be preparing for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth, were you present for the funeral of King George the VI?"

His cousin Joy, wrote from India that there were getting mixed impressions about England from those that had returned:

"The picture they paint about the place is simply horrible... sheer murder going there..."

Hating accountancy, my father soon abandoned his course and took up life drawing at Saint Martins School of Art (1951-53) while travelling to Europe.



Ribeiro's life drawing, 1959

HISTORY NOTE

Key Events in The 1950s

3 May 1951: Festival of Britain

King George VI inaugurated the Festival of Britain, opening the Royal Festival Hall on the South Bank which had been built for the occasion. The Festival marked 100 years of the Great Exhibition of 1851 and celebrated Britain's contributions to the arts, sciences, technology and industry. Cheering and flag-waving crowds lined the streets as the King travelled from Buckingham Palace to St Paul's. Events were held across Britain.

15 February 1952: King George VI funeral

King George VI died in his sleep aged 56. Princess Elizabeth, aged only 25 at the time, was in Kenya. She returned to London to take the Royal Oath and seal her accession to the throne. The House of Commons was suspended as a mark of respect. Cinemas and theatres closed and the BBC cancelled all programmes except for news bulletins. Flags in every town were held at half-mast. Despite the bitter cold and rain, a silent, weeping crowd stayed until long after dark.

2 June 1953: The Coronation

Queen Elizabeth II was crowned at a coronation ceremony in Westminster Abbey in London, with guests which included prime ministers and heads of state from around the newly-established Commonwealth. An estimated 3 million people lined London's streets to catch a glimpse of the new Queen as she made her way to and from Buckingham Palace in the golden state coach. Street parties were held throughout the UK as people crowded around their TV sets to watch the ceremony.

National Service

My Dad would be one to be conscripted into National Service which had been introduced in Britain in 1939 to cope with a shortage of soldiers during World War II. Men aged between 20 and 22 were called up, although this would be extended and applied to women in the cause of fighting the war.

Although the war ended in 1945, National Service remained in operation, requiring men between 17 and 21 to spend 1 ½ years in the armed forces in training. They could be called up to war, if needed, for 4 years. By the 1950s, nearly 2 million men did their National Service and nationals from the British Empire were equally compelled to do service, as my Dad would discover.

On his brother's advice, he would travel to Europe to escape conscription. However, one day he was caught by two military police and then sent to do service in the Royal Air Force.

The days consisted of 'square bashing', passing out parade and rifle and basic training. He found himself forced to shoot rabbits due to the highly-infectious disease called myxomatosis which had hit the UK rabbit population.

Meanwhile, tensions in the Middle East were escalating. He wrote home that the RAF would soon be sending him to Egypt. At the time, Nasser (leader of Egypt's nationalist movement), was obstructing the Suez Canal which was used by Britain to access its East Asian markets in India, Burma and Thailand.

My Dad managed to leave the RAF on compassionate grounds in 1955, narrowly escaping the Suez Crisis of 1956. With the family panicking back home, it took the intervention of his brother and V K Krishna Menon (India's first High Commissioner) to secure his discharge. He left for India in 1955.



Untitled (Townscape), 1958



Ribeiro (top row, third in from right) in the RAF, 1954



Items from the Ribeiro Archive displayed at the Burgh House and Hampstead Museum, London, 2016

4 The Poet vs. The Painter



Ribeiro in front of his 12' mural 'Urban Landscape', 1961

Having returned to India in 1955, my Dad had started writing poetry. He had, hoped to become a published poet rather than a painter which had happened by fluke (see 'Retracing Ribeiro: The Poet'). He had grown up in the vibrant and cosmopolitan city of Bombay alongside other poets and artists who would become some of India's great artistic and literary figures.

Over the next few years, he started to paint, however, and was soon to see success with his first exhibition in 1961. From then on, his destiny as a painter was set, and further exhibitions followed. In 1962, my Dad, then married, made the decision to move permanently to Britain, which seemed the

place where he would thrive. For my Mum - who had lived her life in Goa - it was an exciting prospect. He arrived first and my Mum, with my baby sister, followed by ship six months later, arriving in Tilbury Docks on a cold January 1963 day with only the £5 allowed by the British authorities.

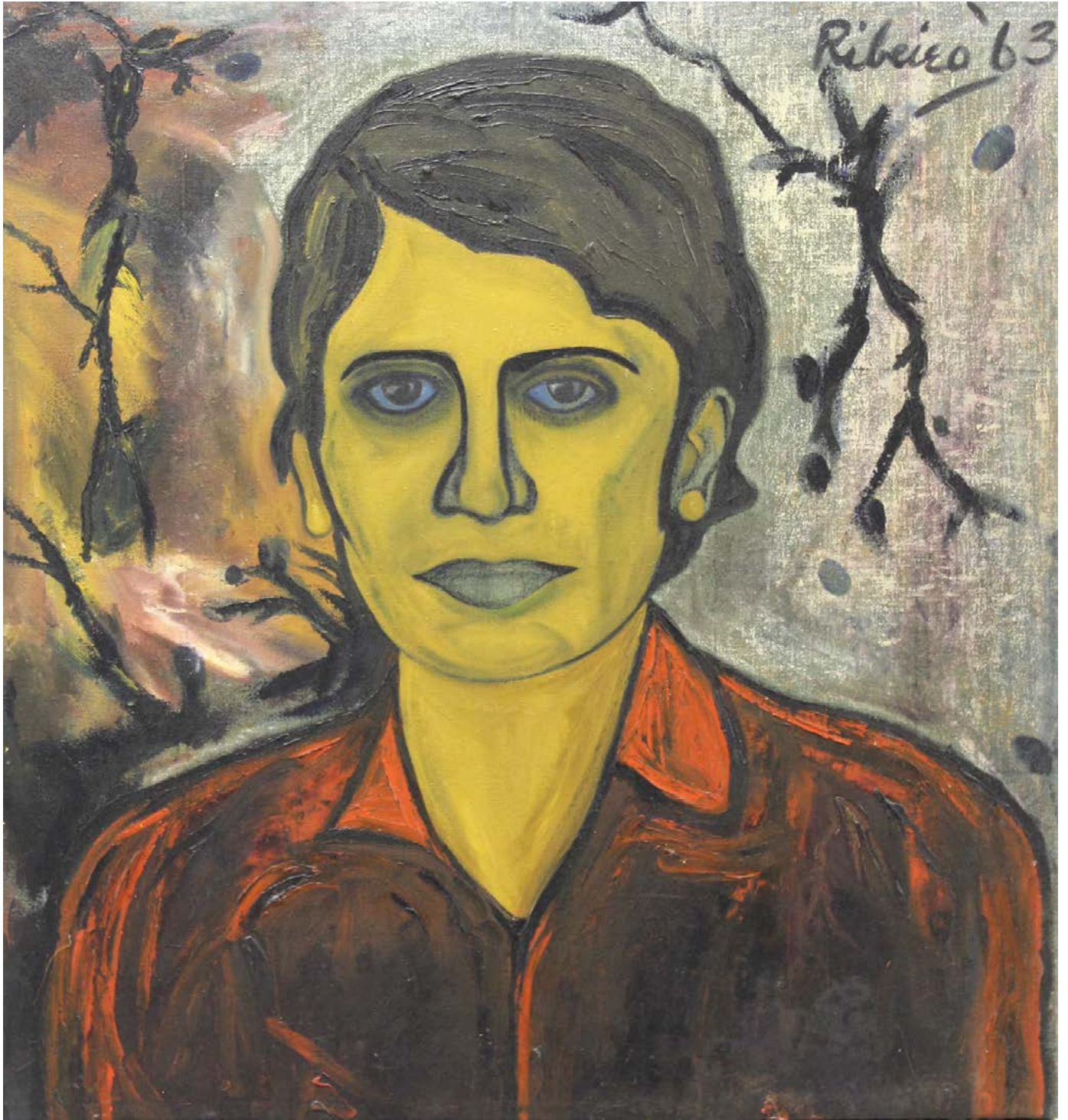
With his brother and close friends in London, these were happy years and his work proved popular. He soon had the support of gallerist, Nicholas Treadwell who had become famous for his fleet of mobile galleries decked out in a double-decker bus and vans. With his fleet, he took art into the homes of likely customers to Britain's suburbs.



My newly-married parents and a friend, c1961



Souza (left) and Ribeiro in Belsize Park, 1965



Untitled (Portrait of Ribeiro's wife, Ana Rita Ribeiro), 1963



Nicholas Treadwell inside his first Mobile Art Gallery



Nicholas Treadwell's second Mobile Art Gallery

Recalling these times, many of the new-home-owning households “with wall space waiting to be filled” had never been into a stuffy art gallery, and were given access to art for the first time. In recalling this era, Treadwell writes in his autobiography ‘Kiss My Art’:

“In the early sixties, hardly anyone bought contemporary art and it was virtually impossible for artists to live from the sale of art alone.”



Treadwell's Mobile Art Galleries – The Fleet, 1965

Politically, the climate in Britain was hostile and becoming more so by the day. Over the 1950s, Britain's immigration policy had been highly liberal, encouraging people from their current and former colonies over to help fill the country's acute labour shortage. Filling a need in key industries and public services (such as the National Health Service), newly set up in the post-war period, many people found that there was a general sense of goodwill to welcome them. The first wave of Commonwealth citizens were able to enjoy an unrestricted entry into and stay in the UK.

However, as the numbers arriving into Britain grew and looked to settle, perceptions towards immigration began to change. In 1962, the Commonwealth Immigration Act

was passed. The 1962 Act controlled the immigration of all Commonwealth passport holders into Britain, except those who held UK passports. Applicants now had to have work permits, graded according to their employment prospects. These were mostly given to skilled migrants (such as doctors and nurses).

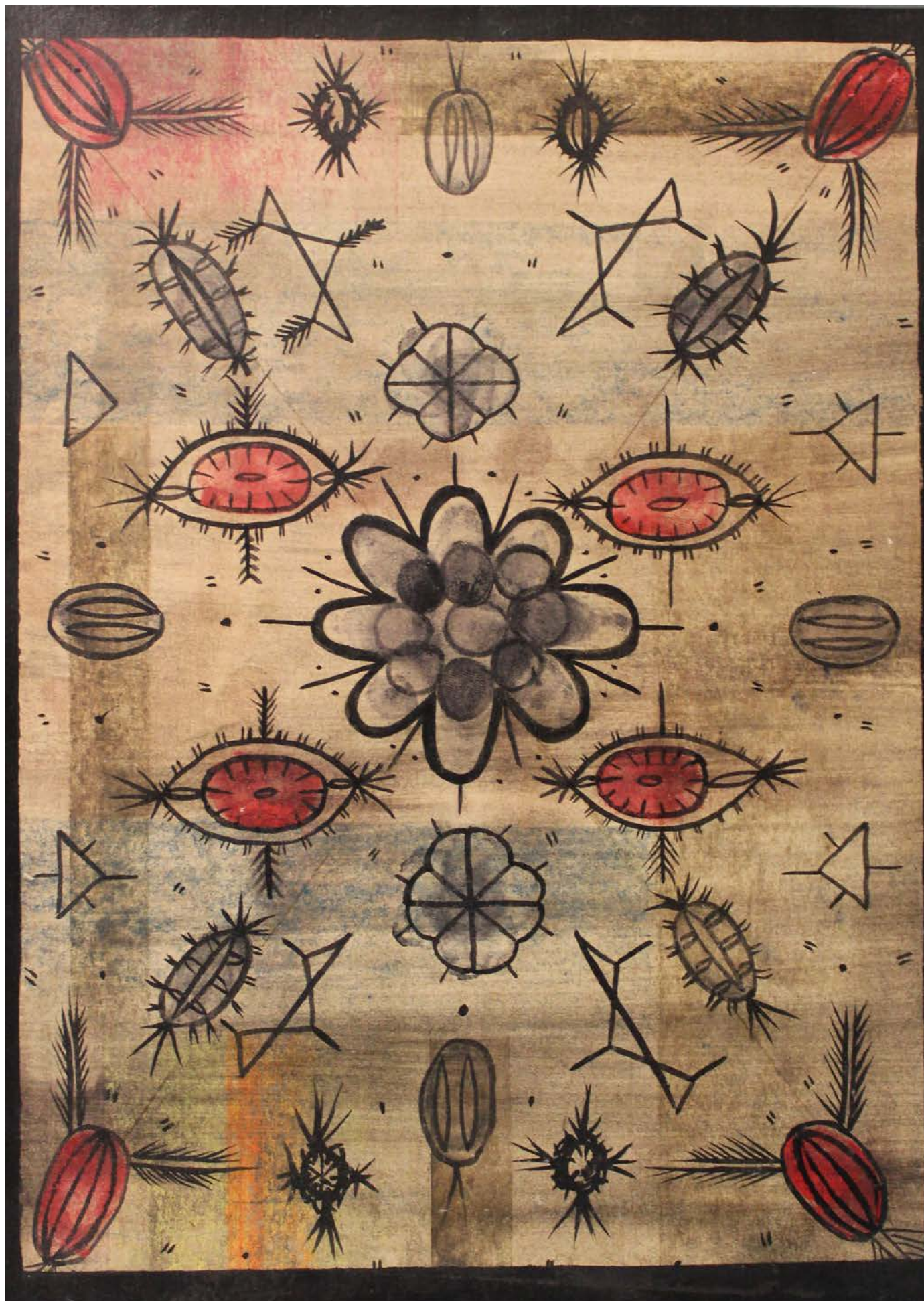
1964 was a General Election year, and the British election campaign was one of the most toxic fought. This was followed by a further tightening of Commonwealth Immigration Controls in 1968 and 1971.

These events inevitably helped fuel discrimination and racial tensions reached new highs. My parents recalled signs appearing in newspapers for jobs and housing. Whether it was “No Irish, no Blacks and no Dogs need apply” or “No Pakis are allowed” in the windows of shops and cafés, racism was an everyday experience for many and in plain sight across Britain.

Events reached a head with the Conservative MP Enoch Powell's inflammatory “rivers of blood” speech in 1968 where he attacked government policy, stating his belief that the effects of mass immigration would lead to racial violence. His speech caused an immediate furore and destroyed his political ambition.



Nicholas Treadwell remembers Ribeiro, 2016



Untitled (Graphic), c1960

5 A collective power



Ribeiro in his Belsize Park studio, c1964

Against this hostile backdrop, my Dad, angry, fiery and passionate by nature joined forces with other Indian artists to fight discrimination levelled at Indian artists in Britain. Together, they co-founded the Indian Painters' Collective, UK (IPC) in 1963. These seven artists "hoped to catapult themselves on the British art scene".

These artists never forgot their Indian heritage and were not going to take prejudice lying down. All had established strong reputations in India and were individual in style and all were ardent advocates fighting for equality and recognition as to what they had contributed to British culture. Each had had a bitter taste of discrimination and knew they could better overcome the challenges they had suffered as individuals if they worked together.

The painter Balraj Khanna was one of the group and a close friend of my Dad's. He told me that the sixties was a time when Asian artists were given "dirty looks" whenever they approached London galleries.

An Indian government official stationed in London, Salman Haidar who would eventually become India's Foreign Secretary, explained how: *"...a group of young men burst in, with Lance in the lead, and told me I had to organize an exhibition of their work at India House. They were artists from India, and were looking to make their mark in the great abroad, which in those days meant London".*

These artists were *"determined that he and the entire group of young artists then in London should make an impact on the local art scene."*



Exhibition posters for Indian Art Collectives, 1970s

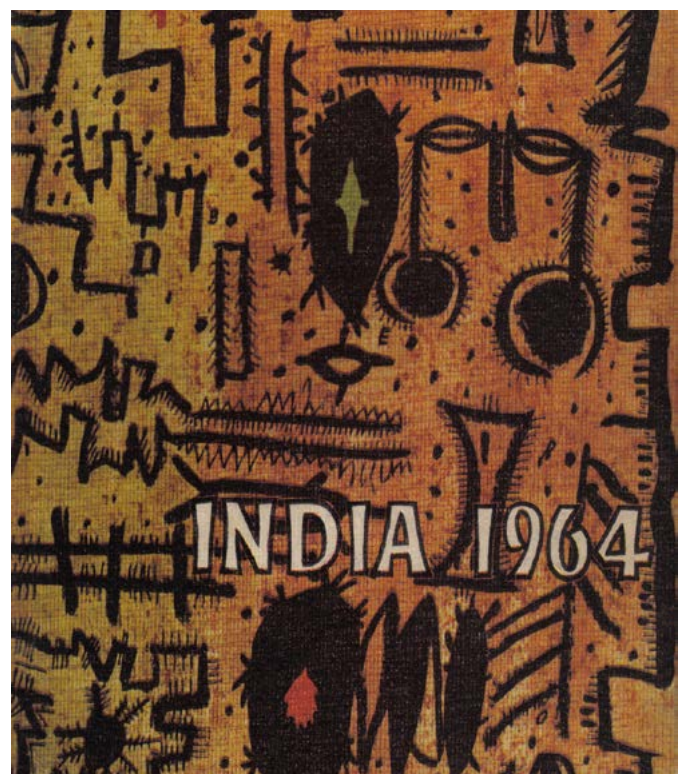
The first show proved to be a real coup for the group. Britain's first Arts Minister, Jennie Lee, who would double spending on the arts and set up the Open University opened the evening.

The IPC were to secure a further exhibition at India House in 1978 and a private exhibition in 1979 at the house of the Indian High Commissioner: "It was a very grand house. Now in Kensington Palace Gardens. Very beautiful house, very beautiful drawing room, ante-room. And we all had one painting each. The whole lot of London came ... For us it was a great party. Some galleries were invited and at least three of them turned up!"

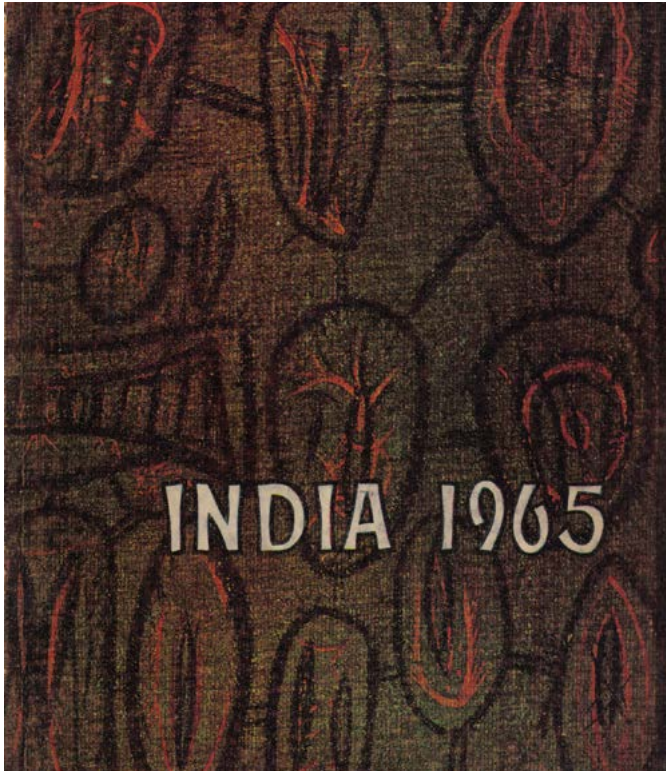
Soon, our Belsize Park home acted as the headquarters for 'Direct Arts International' which looked to foster ties between artists and business and cut out middlemen who were only driven by their desire for profit.



The IPC soon evolved into the Rainbow Art Group in 1978 and then Indian Artists UK (IAUK) in 1978/79.



Ribeiro cover for India Annual Review, 1964



Ribeiro cover for India Annual Review, 1965

My Dad lectured on Indian art and culture for the Commonwealth Institute through talks in schools and colleges.

In 1980, the IAUK put on an 'Indian Month' at the Burgh House and Hampstead Museum. In his opening speech, my Dad – now into the 1980s - said how they were, as a group: *"trying very hard to penetrate seemingly impregnable barriers ... (in a system) hell bent on ignoring them"*.

These groups slowly dissolved, partly as some of the artists went their own ways or petty squabbles arose. Balraj Khanna described it as: *"When you get Indian groups together, it's like Partition all over again"*

However, despite internal quarrels, these groups were ahead of their times, reflecting the defiant mood of the artists and setting in motion new initiatives which would come in the following years to represent and give a voice to artists collectively.



Jennie Lee with the High Commissioner Jivaraj Mehta look at "Landscape at Noon" by Lancelot Ribeiro

Britain's first Arts Minister, Jennie Lee looking at a Ribeiro painting at India House, 1965

WHAT'S ON AT BURGH HOUSE.

New End Square Hampstead NW3 Tel: 431 0144.

DECEMBER

Exhibitions continuing: LORD NORTHCLIFFE IN HAMPSTEAD (until 30th Dec)
THE TOWN CRAFTS SHOW (until 4 Jan)

HOFFNUNG'S WORLD OF MUSIC (until 27 Jan)

CHRISTMAS OPENING

2-5pm 22, 26-30 Dec. Closed 23, 24, 25 Dec. Buttery Closed 23-31st Dec. 1 Jan.

JANUARY

- 5 SAT New Exhibition (until 27 Jan)
- HAMSTID SKDOLS: Photographs of a cross-section of local schools.
- 11 FRI 8pm Recital by Italia Gadeleta: Arias Duets and Trios from Pergolesi, Vivaldi, and Rossini
- 13 SUN 12.15pm SUNDAY SPECIAL: AL ALVAREZ's Pick of Poetry with Moyra Fraser
- 18 FRI 8pm Recital by Judi Axelrod: Russian and Hungarian Songs.
- 23 WED 8pm The Hampstead Story: A series of 10 talks on LOCAL HISTORY by Christopher Wade and Guest speakers.
- 25 FRI 8pm Concert by Paul Knight (piano), Noel Bradshaw (cello) and Chingere Egwuonwu (double bass): Beethoven, Rossini and Rachmaninov
- 27 SUN 12.15pm SUNDAY SPECIAL: PAUL BARRITT (violin) and WILLIAM HOWARD (piano)
- 30 WED 8pm. The Hampstead Story: Second History Talk.

FEBRUARY

- 1 FRI New Exhibition: INDIAN ARTISTS Contemporary Works by a UK based collective.
- 2 SAT 11am BUMPER BOOK FAIR (until 4pm) A second-hand book bonanza! Contributions welcome.
- 8pm Indian Poetry and Music given by local artists.
- 6 WED 8pm The Hampstead story: Third History Talk.
- 8 FRI 8pm Hampstead Experts: INDIAN CULTURE by Robert Shelton, Director Indian Section V&A Museum.
- 10 SUN 12.15pm SUNDAY SPECIAL: ROBERT DOUGALL Presents NOW FOR THE GOOD NEWS
- 13 WED 8pm The Hampstead Story: Fourth History Talk.
- 15 FRI 8pm. Hampstead Experts: WORDS TO CONJURE WITH by Anthony Grooch MA, Director Hispanic Studies, LSE.
- 20 WED 8pm The Hampstead Story: Fifth History Talk.
- 22 FRI 8pm (Subject to Confirmation) Two Evenings of Irish Culture, Poetry and Song.
- 23 SAT 8pm as part of the Nationwide "Sense of Ireland" Festival
- 24 SUN 12.15pm SUNDAY SPECIAL: INDIAN FOOD Taste and Learn! (Tickets £2).
- 27 WED 8pm The Hampstead Story: Sixth History Talk.
- 29 FRI 8pm Hampstead Experts: Rex Cowan on Wreck Hunting

The Queen Anne House is open Tuesday-Saturdays 12-5, Sundays 2-5 (closed Mondays)

ADMISSION FREE to Exhibitions - except Hoffnung 20p (children 10p).

All talks cost 50pence each. Sunday Specials: Tickets (bookable) £1 each.

Poetry and Music Recitals/Concerts: Tickets (bookable) £1.50p each.

These events are in aid of Burgh House Funds.

THE BURGH HOUSE BUTTERY

Serves coffee, lunches, teas daily (ex Mondays) 11-5. sells everything about Hampstead.

THE BURGH HOUSE BOOKSTALL

FOR GENERAL ENQUIRIES AND HIRING OF ROOMS FOR MEETINGS, EVENTS ETC. RING THE CUSTODIANS, ROBERT AND VICTORIA HEYLAND ON 431-0144.

6 Experimental fever takes hold



Emerging Planet, 1966

Professionally, my Dad's painting became more experimental as he sought new and faster ways to work with traditional oils. He began mixing tubes of oil paints, colour dyes and a chemical material largely used as a glue for industrial uses (known as Polyvinyl Acetate or 'PVA'). The results were a new medium which had faster drying times and produced a brilliancy of colour. This experimentation led him to be considered "a Godfather" to generations of future artists who would one day use modern day acrylic paint.

His work became increasingly abstract and inspired many of his famous works, including his favourite *The Warlord*.

This, he said, was inspired by US aggressiveness in Vietnam (1955-1975) which was hitting the news headlines at the time.

My parent's first real home and my Dad's art studio occupied a first floor flat in 41 Belsize Park Gardens in London. It was in this studio, which later became our living room, that he painted many of his experimental pieces: oil townscapes, and haunting figures utilizing oil and PVA. Before long, his trademark style had crept onto a thin sliver of wall in the main bedroom, my hand-crafted 'early learning' toddler toy cars and even some of our household furniture.



Ribeiro's Belsize Park studio, c1965



My early learning toys, c1970



The Warlord (Ribeiro's favourite painting), 1966



Items from the Ribeiro Archive displayed at Camden Archives and Local Studies Centre (London, 2016)

The centre of the room had a permanent mound - an imaginary childhood island - and we were well-used to navigating our way around stacked paintings, rolls of canvases, old frames and planks of wood which, for me as a child, served as a perfect makeshift seesaw.

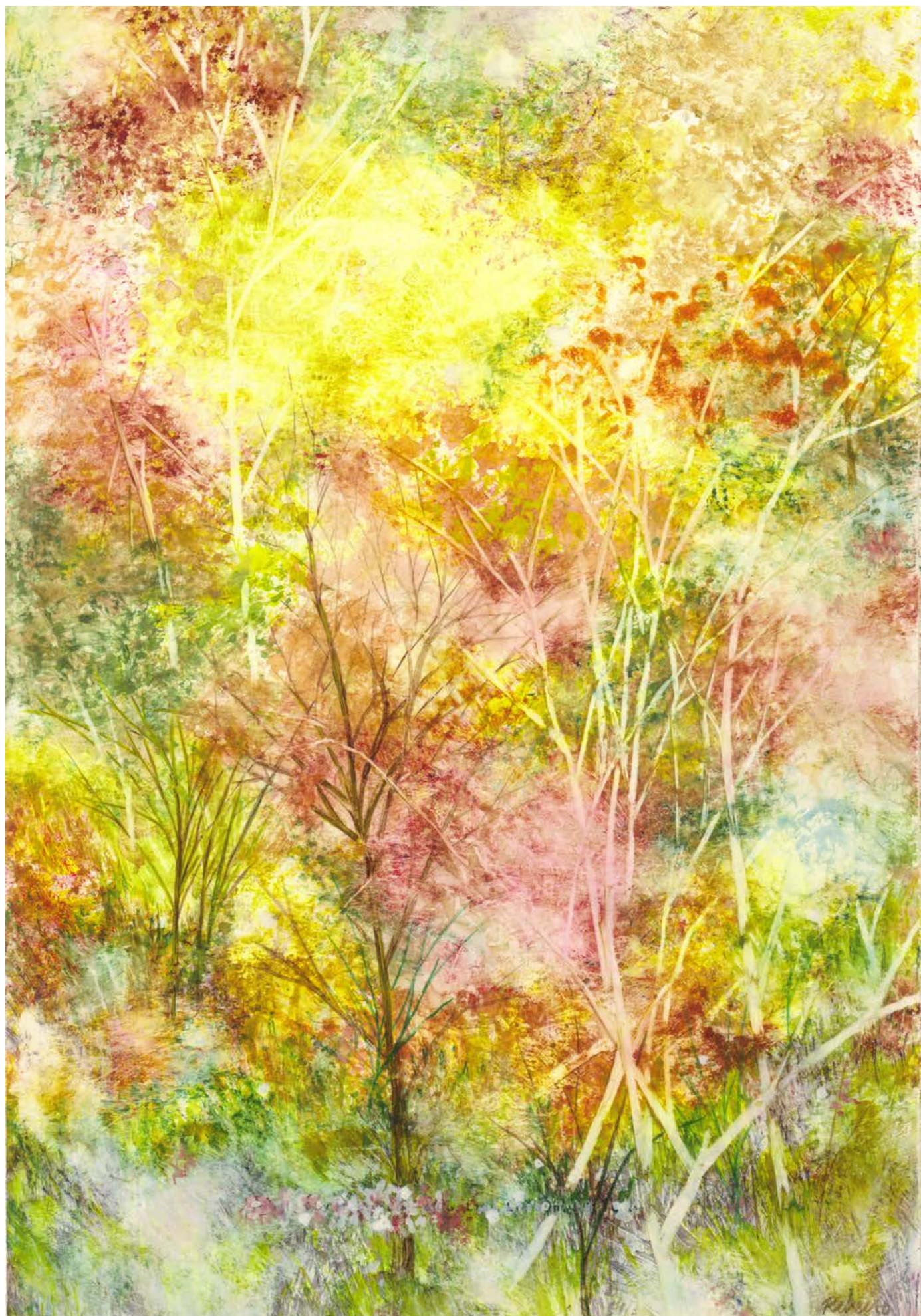
For me, his studio was also an Aladdin's Cave of delights to explore. His 'tools' evolved to match each new artistic phase. Powdered oil paints were stacked in glass jars and containers of brushes were everywhere.

In the seventies, watercolours became his medium of choice and took central stage on his desk. The individual Rowney watercolour pans of every tantalizing hue were kept in an old Swiss chocolate wooden box and intrigued me the most. Pens of varied nibs, compass sets, pastels and drawing inks were stacked neatly away and also were added to my collection.



Ribeiro's watercolour set and other materials

In 1980, he moved into a smaller attic flat where the limitations of space meant he could only really work - at least initially - on a small scale. This led to a series of watercolours, inspired by the English country landscape. However, he was to confide to a close friend that the watercolours: *"gave me a lot of joy, were extremely relaxing and perhaps levitational. I've never enjoyed doing any of my other work which has always been compulsive"*.



Woodland Reflections by the Heath, 1986

Living close to Hampstead Heath, a new series of finely-detailed grass and tree scenes, often reflecting the Heath through seasonal change started to appear. The Heath not only inspired his watercolours, but its grasses soon occupied home-made vases, such as my favourite hexagon-shaped jam jar painted in metallic blue, red and silver.



Repurposed jam jar, converted into a vase

Every recyclable object was a canvas for him. Even two cardboard urinal pans from a short stay at London's Royal Free Hospital were pocketed away, glued and varnished with a splash of paint added to serve a useful function.

In the mid-eighties, he moved into a new experimental phase with watercolours, special varnishes, metallic inks and laminated card to produce townscapes, reduced to the bottom of the image, dominated by a seemingly active and explosive sky.

Personally, the late-eighties were troubled times for him. In 1985, he suffered a racist assault outside Hampstead police station which left him hospitalised. At a major London exhibition, a painting was slashed in an act of vandalism just days before it was due to close. On the home front, in 1987, "tanks burst during the night" - the worst nightmare for any artist, causing significant damage to some of his early classic oil paintings on paper.



Untitled (Tree Scene), 1986



Compositional Townscape (V&A Collection), 1987



Compositional Townscape, 1986

However, as the decade drew to a close, his spirits were to revive. Over the 1990s, my Dad started to work on a large-scale again but this time using modern acrylic paints on paper. These conveyed his sense that destruction, devastation and chaos were



Compositional Townscape, 1987

everywhere. He wrote: *“We are led from catastrophe to catastrophe... with all the awe-inspiring power of natural forces and, as if this were not enough, we deal out cataclysmic excesses of our own – causing pain and deprivation.”*



Ribeiro in his attic flat, 1997



HEAD - In the Abundance of Nothing, 1998

7 Revival



Ribeiro in his Belsize Park studio, c1965

As is the case with many painters, my Dad's life was marked by a mix of incredible good fortune and ill luck in equal measure.

The early years of his professional life brought immediate success and glamour but over the following years, he suffered many disappointments. Professionally and personally, he came across many barriers yet he continued undaunted. He not only showed an unwavering dedication to his art but was someone who stayed true to his beliefs.

He, himself, had witnessed the growing interest in Indian art, particularly for that of his late brother, Sonnie (F.N. Souza, 1924-2002) and I often think back to how he must have felt, campaigning so tirelessly as a young artist to secure that recognition for Indian

talent that would follow some 50 years later. His own work built up over half a century, was experimental in both style and technique and has now been the source of inspiration for newer generations of artists through the 'Retracing Ribeiro' project.

It has been with considerable emotion that I have watched individuals, of all ages, not only take a Ribeiro painting on a journey of their own putting their own artistic stamp on it but also share their own rich histories with us. I often wonder now how my Dad would have felt had he witnessed this himself. I do know that if he had known one of our workshop participants would one day say they realized "How art can change the way you feel", he would have felt immensely proud after a lifetime of struggle.



Retracing Ribeiro exhibition at the Burgh House and Hampstead Museum (London, 2016)



Burgh House and Hampstead Museum, Families Workshop, January 2017



Rosetta Arts Centre, East London (V&A Community Arts Programme), April 2017



Young @ Arts, Bromley by Bow (V&A Community Arts Programme), July 2017



After Adoption, Bromley by Bow (V&A Community Arts Programme), July 2017



Nova New Opportunities, V&A Museum (V&A Community Arts Programme), August 2017



Bloomsbury Festival 2017, St George's Church, Holborn, October 2017

Suggested classroom activities

Using different reference materials (for example dictionaries, history books and online resources), research for yourself the meaning of the following terms:

Empire	Partition	Conscription
Colonialism	Pea-souper	Teddy Boys
Self-rule / Self-determination	Blitz	Discrimination
British Raj	Ration	Immigration
British Empire	Rationing	Commonwealth Immigration Act 1962
Commonwealth of Nations	The Coronation	
Independence	Festival of Britain	Commonwealth Immigration Controls 1968 and 1971
	National Service	

1. Research your own family history, and share one/two of the earliest memories your parents and grandparents have.
2. Describe your home (street, village, community) and a place that particularly stands out for you and why.
3. Imagine you have to start a new life in a new place (perhaps abroad), imagine how you might describe your first impressions of the people and this new place?

Suggested art projects

1. Using the Townscape on page 2 in this pack, create your own 'Townscape' of your local area. These could then be hung together to produce a group city-scape.
2. Using Ribeiro's painting of an individual building on page 9 in this pack, design your own concept of what a building of the future might look like. These could then be hung together to produce a group city-scape of the future.
3. Using the portrait of Ribeiro's wife on page 18, paint your self-portrait with the aid of a mirror or a portrait of a friend or family member.
4. Decorate a recyclable object of your choice (such as an old cardboard box or small plastic container) using Ribeiro's jam jar vase on page 30 for inspiration.

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Compiled by Marsha Ribeiro and designed by Nicholas Hart.

We hope you find this resource useful to your experience and study of Lancelot Ribeiro.

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Further resources

Retracing Ribeiro website: www.retracingribeiro.co.uk

Retracing Ribeiro The Poet (available on the Retracing Ribeiro website)

Retracing Ribeiro The Artist's Torment (available on the Retracing Ribeiro website)

Retracing Ribeiro Word Search (available on the Retracing Ribeiro website)

Retracing Ribeiro film (available on the Retracing Ribeiro website)

Lancelot Ribeiro, An Artist in India and Europe written by David Buckman, published by Francis Boutle Publishers

Restless Ribeiro, An Indian Artist in Britain published and distributed by River Books Co. Ltd.

