

# Out of Austria: Berggasse to Finchleystrasse

Eighty years ago the Nazis annexed Austria and many of the refugees from the 'Anschluss' settled in North London, where the anniversary is marked with screenings and exhibitions finds **Annie Scott**

**If you had caught a bus to Swiss Cottage 80 years ago, you might have heard the conductor jokingly shout 'Finchleystraße' as you reached your destination.**

Those were the days when the cream of Viennese society were crammed into Belsize Park boarding houses; where you would see Mittel European Emigres in well-shined shoes and formal attire eating Wiener Schnitzel in Finchley Road's Cosmo cafe.

You might even have spotted the father of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud walking down from his home in Maresfield Gardens for coffee and goulash.

March 12 marks the 80th anniversary of the Anschluss when Nazi forces crossed the Austrian border and the persecution of Austrian Jews began in earnest. The thousands who fled before and after included writers, musicians, scientists and intellectuals who like Freud made their home in North West London.

Events marking the date explore the positive influence of these immigrants on London - not

least at a time when issues of migration remain hotly debated.

"It's a reminder that, in most cases, immigration benefits society in the long term", explains Tony Britten, Director of Through Lotte's Lens, which premieres at the Phoenix Cinema on March 12.

"Showing kindness to people from harsh regimes in real fear for their lives is a mark of a rational civilisation".

There's a post screening Q&A for the film, which tells the extraordinary tale of the 'Hitler Emigrés' - who escaped the Nazi regime in the 1930s and found refuge in the UK. Told from the perspective of Austrian portrait photographer Lotte Meitner-Graf it explores the richness of achievement they brought to this country. Meitner-Graf herself arrived in Britain with her family in 1937 and set up a studio in Bond Street, photographing famous names from Gielgud to Yehudi Menuhin.

Britten says The Phoenix was the perfect place for the premiere. "There will be many people in and around East Finchley who



Joe Horovitz one of the interviewees in Through Lotte's Lens which premieres at the Phoenix Cinema in East Finchley

will have direct or inherited experience of the shock of the Anschluss" he explained.

"I hope that members of this community and a wider group of film lovers will enjoy a film that seeks to entertain, celebrate - and remind".

Meanwhile Out of Austria at the Ben Uri Gallery in Boundary Road (March 14 - April 29) brings together more than 40 works by Austrian artists who fled here during the era of National Socialism. The exhibition includes work by sculptor Georg Ehrlich who left Austria after the Anschluss in 1938. Siegfried

Charoux whose left-wing views led him to leave Austria in 1935 settled in North London and created many public art sculptures in the capital.

Artist Hugo Dachinger also came in 1938 and like Charoux was interned by the British as an 'enemy alien' for several months.

Co-curator, Sarah MacDougall, says the exhibition "honours the fates of both those who perished and those who fled and explores the legacy of the latter, who contributed significantly to wider British cultural life both during the war years and afterwards".

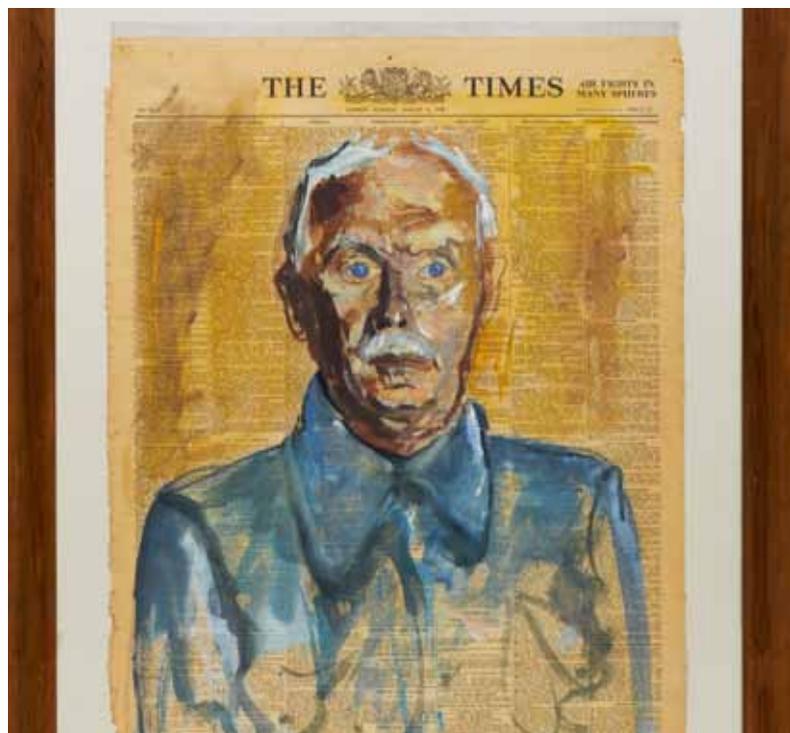
Drawing primarily on works in

their own collection with additional loans from private and publicly owned works Out of Austria examines their legacy and experiences as émigré artists.

The Freud Museum in Freud's former home is marking the 80th anniversary of his arrival in London "to die in Freedom" with events including a guided tour on March 28 on Freud's Escape to England. The talk covers the background to the events which led to him leaving his flat in Berggasse, Vienna in 1938 to come to London. The house, which remained in the family until 1982 houses his study, famous couch and extensive collection of Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiquities. [freud.org.uk](http://freud.org.uk)

The Austrian Cultural Forum in Rutland Gate is hosting an exhibition Vienna-London: Passage to Safety (March 15-April 27) a photographic documentary project by Marion Trestler that highlights the life stories of 21 Austrians who fled to the UK during the 1930s and stayed. Also at the forum on March 14 is a seminar Memories of Anschluss with historian Dorothea McEwan giving an introduction to the events of March 1938 and discussing the burning question of persecution and leaving one's homeland. [acflondon.org](http://acflondon.org)

On April 22, Blue Badge Guide Rachel Kolsky hosts a walking tour of Freud in Hampstead exploring his escape from Vienna, how his Hampstead home became a magnet for European refugees and how his friends and family left their mark on north London. 11am-1pm, price £15. Jewish Museum, Box Office: 020 7284 7384 [admin@jewishmuseum.org.uk](mailto:admin@jewishmuseum.org.uk)



Hugo Dachinger painted Portrait of A Man in 1940 while interned as an 'enemy alien' Ben Uri Collection, and Sigmund Freud moved from Vienna's Berggasse to NW3 in 1938

