

Press Release 2019



## Grete Marks exhibition at Pallant House Gallery marks Bauhaus centenary this summer.

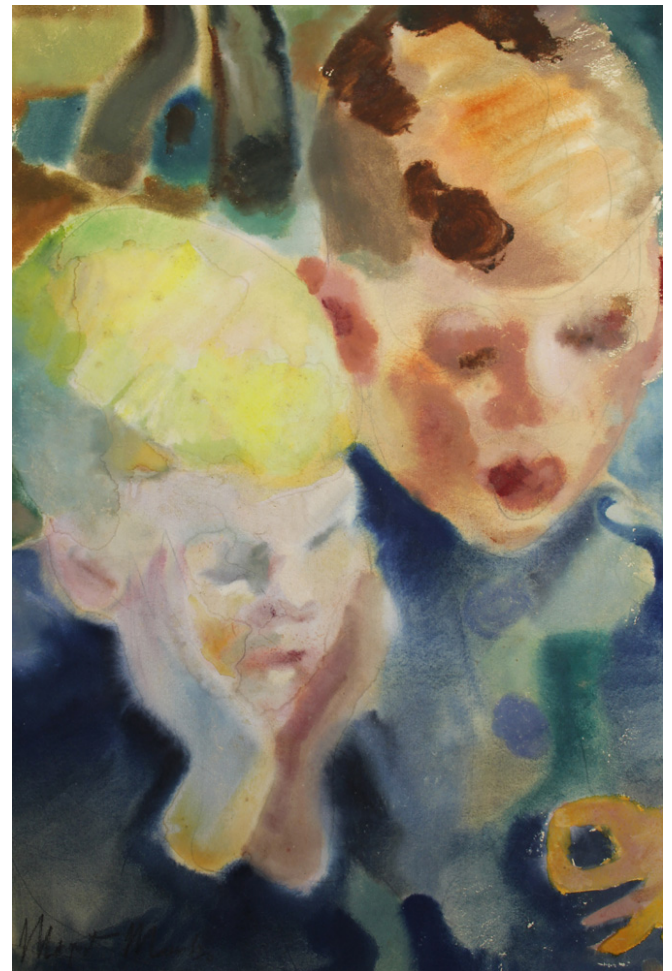
26 June - 27 October 2019

Grete Marks (1899-1990) was an artist who fought for her artistic integrity during some of the most turbulent moments the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of the first female students to be admitted to the famed Bauhaus school of art and design, Marks is best known for her ceramics, which were declared “degenerate” by the Nazis.

This summer, Pallant House Gallery continues its mission to celebrate overlooked artists by telling Marks’ story through a free display of her previously neglected watercolour portraits. ‘Grete Marks: An Intimate Portrait’ explores how Marks forged an uncompromising path dedicated to making art on her terms during a period when her gender, religion, artistic medium and nationality each placed barriers in her way.

The exhibition focuses on a series of intimate portrait paintings and drawings from the 1920s and 30s. It also marks the centenary of the foundation of the Bauhaus in 1919. It is part of Insiders/Outsiders, a nationwide arts festival taking place throughout 2019 to celebrate refugees from Nazi Europe and their contribution to British culture.

Also known as Margret Marks or Margarete Heymann, Marks was born in Cologne, Germany in 1899. She entered the Bauhaus school of art and design in Weimar in November 1920, and



Grete Marks, Untitled, n.d, watercolour on paper ©  
Courtesy of the Artist's Estate

was one of the first female students to be admitted. It was here that she first proved her artistic mettle by refusing to conform to the school’s expectations for women. Founding director Walter Gropius attempted to steer his female students towards practicing weaving - in his eyes, a suitable activity for women. Marks

however fought to study ceramics. Her determination to do things her way however soon saw her clash with her teacher Gerhard Macks and she left Bauhaus after only a year.

Despite her short tenure at the school, Marks was heavily influenced by the Bauhaus style and ethos throughout her life. She married Gustav Loebenstein in 1923 and they established Haël Werkstätten, a factory that soon became a leader in pre-war pottery in Germany. When her husband died in 1928, Marks took over the running of the factory.

As a single Jewish mother and artist associated with the left-leaning Bauhaus, Marks soon attracted the attention of the Nazi party. Her work, with its Bauhaus designs and emphasis on primary geometric shapes, was declared degenerate. Some of her vases were derided in an article by Joseph Goebbels in *Der Angriff* (The Attack) in 1934, and included in the infamous Degenerate Art exhibition in 1937.

In 1935, Marks was forced to sell the factory for a pittance. One of her clients, the London department store owner Ambrose Heal, helped her and her two children leave Germany for Britain. She found work at Mintons pottery in Stoke-on-Trent, where she insisted on joining the board – an unheard of position for a designer, let alone a woman. She went on to found Greta Pottery, which closed when World War II began.

She married the educator Harold Marks and moved to London where she began concentrating on painting. According to her daughter Frances, “ceramics and painting were of equal importance throughout my mother’s life”. By the 1950s, Marks was a regular exhibitor at the Redfern Gallery in Cork Street, London alongside Ben Nicholson and John Piper. She died in 1990 at the age of 91.

Despite the obstacles she faced throughout her life Marks used her talent and tenacity to forge her own path. Her goals as an artist were to produce works on her terms, even if that meant rejection. This new exhibition reveals a little-known facet of an artist who is inspirational in her determination and individuality.

**Grete Marks: An Intimate Portrait opens on 26 June and continues until 27 October 2019. Entry to the display is free.**

--End--

**Notes to editors:**

#### **About Pallant House Gallery:**

Pallant House Gallery in Chichester is a leading UK museum that stimulates new ways of thinking about British art from 1900 to now. As well as an original and critically-acclaimed exhibition programme and a public programme with inclusion at its heart, the gallery houses one of the best collections of Modern British art in the country - all within a distinctive setting of an 18th century townhouse and a 21st century gallery. [pallant.org.uk](http://pallant.org.uk)

#### **Opening Hours**

Tuesday – Saturday: 10am – 5pm (excl.  
Thursday: 10am – 8pm)  
Sundays/Bank Holidays: 11am – 5pm  
Mondays: Closed

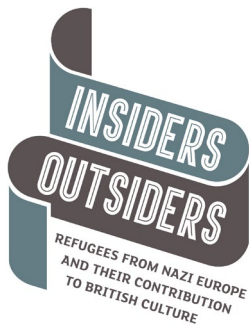
**Insiders/Outsiders** is a nationwide arts festival celebrating refugees from Nazi Europe and their contribution to British culture. The festival takes place throughout 2019, the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War.

Insiders/Outsiders highlights the indelible contribution of the artists, photographers, writers, architects, designers, actors, film-

makers, dancers and musicians as well as publishers, art historians, dealers and collectors who, in fleeing Nazi-dominated Europe in the 1930s and 1940s, greatly enriched this country's culture.

Insiders/Outsiders brings together exhibitions, concerts, dance and theatre performances, film screenings, walks, lectures and poetry readings in cultural institutions across the UK.

[www.insidersoutsidersfestival.org](http://www.insidersoutsidersfestival.org)



INTERVIEWS/ IMAGES: Sarah Jackson, Communications Officer [s.jackson@pallant.org.uk](mailto:s.jackson@pallant.org.uk) 01243 770831 / 07810 173 655 and Anna Zeuner, Head of Communications [a.zeuner@pallant.org.uk](mailto:a.zeuner@pallant.org.uk) 01243 770 823 / 07734 710 212