



Growing Up in King's Cross

This exhibition tells stories of growing up in King's Cross from World War Two to the present day. Using recordings of local people, it highlights the challenges faced by those growing up and raising children in an ever changing inner city landscape.

The exhibition presents the stories of six very different people, each with their own unique story. Despite their differences, all six have spent key periods of their lives in the King's Cross area. Here they reflect on growing up in King's Cross and the experiences that have made them who they are today.

▶ Listen to the memories of our storytellers using audio players available at reception.

You can listen on your own device at www.storypalace.org

Growing Up in King's Cross is the first in a series of three exhibitions sharing memories of the local area. The next one will be held at the Hugh Cubitt Centre in September 2018.

About the Project

King's Cross Story Palace is a project celebrating and sharing the history of the King's Cross area over the past 100 years. The two-year project has been made possible by National Lottery players through a grant from the **Heritage Lottery Fund**. It is being delivered by Historypin and The Building Exploratory.



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#kxstorypalace



The Building Exploratory

historypin



Your memories of growing up
in the area....





“You could play football in the street”

Arthur Mills



Left Children playing
in bomb damaged site.
© Hackney Archives

Right Fitting for
long trousers.
© IWM (D 11587)

Born in 1929, Arthur Mills moved to a block of flats on the corner of Wynford Road and Penton Street when he was five. His mother refused to evacuate the family during the war and because the schools closed, Arthur's early childhood was spent playing in the streets and bombed out houses. Wartime austerity meant money was tight and Arthur recalls not getting his first pair of long trousers until he was eleven years old. ▶ **Track 1: Arthur's Story**



“If I could do anything wrong I would”

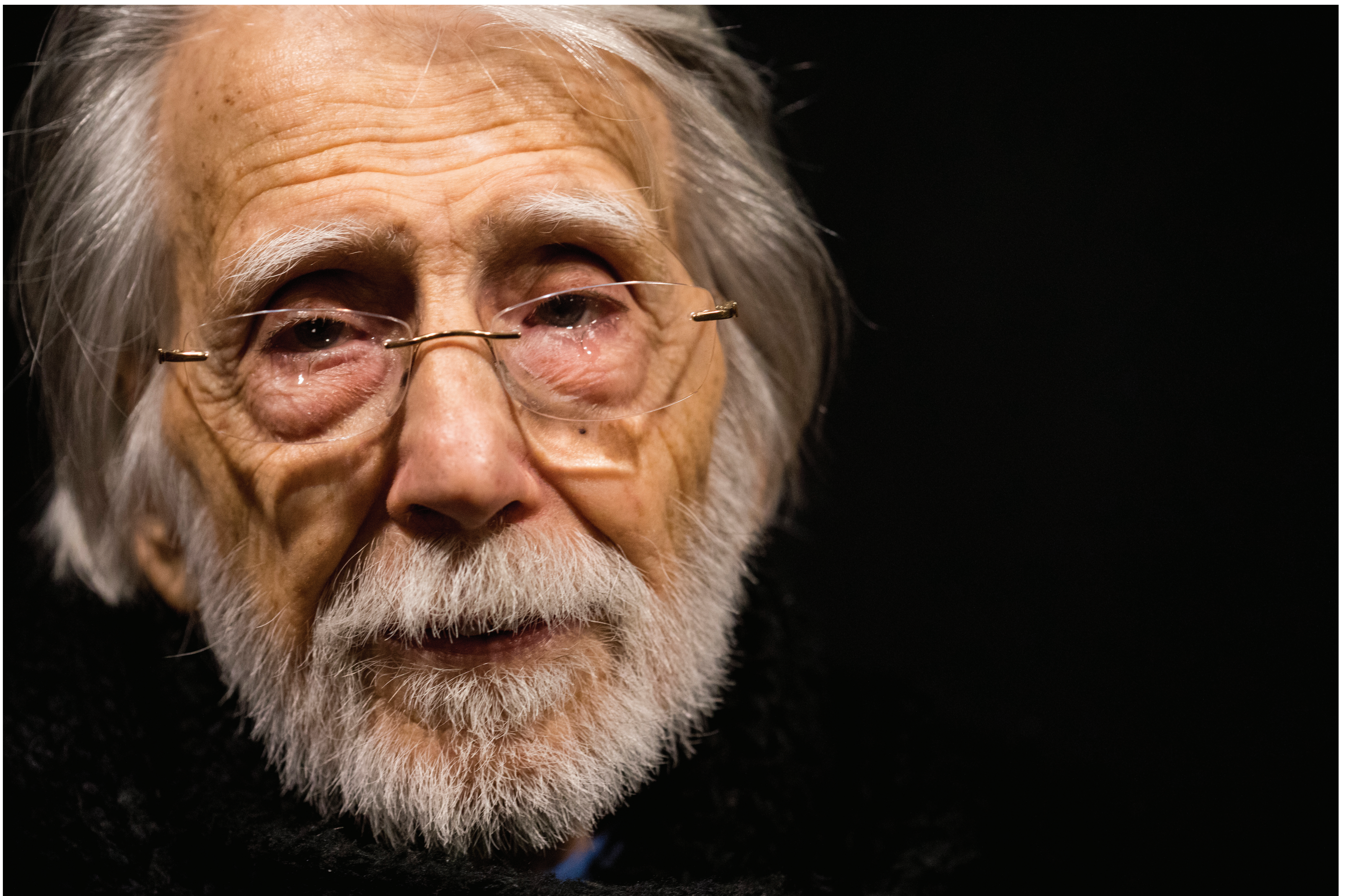
Eileen Fry



Left Eileen Fry circa 1970.
Courtesy of Eileen Fry.

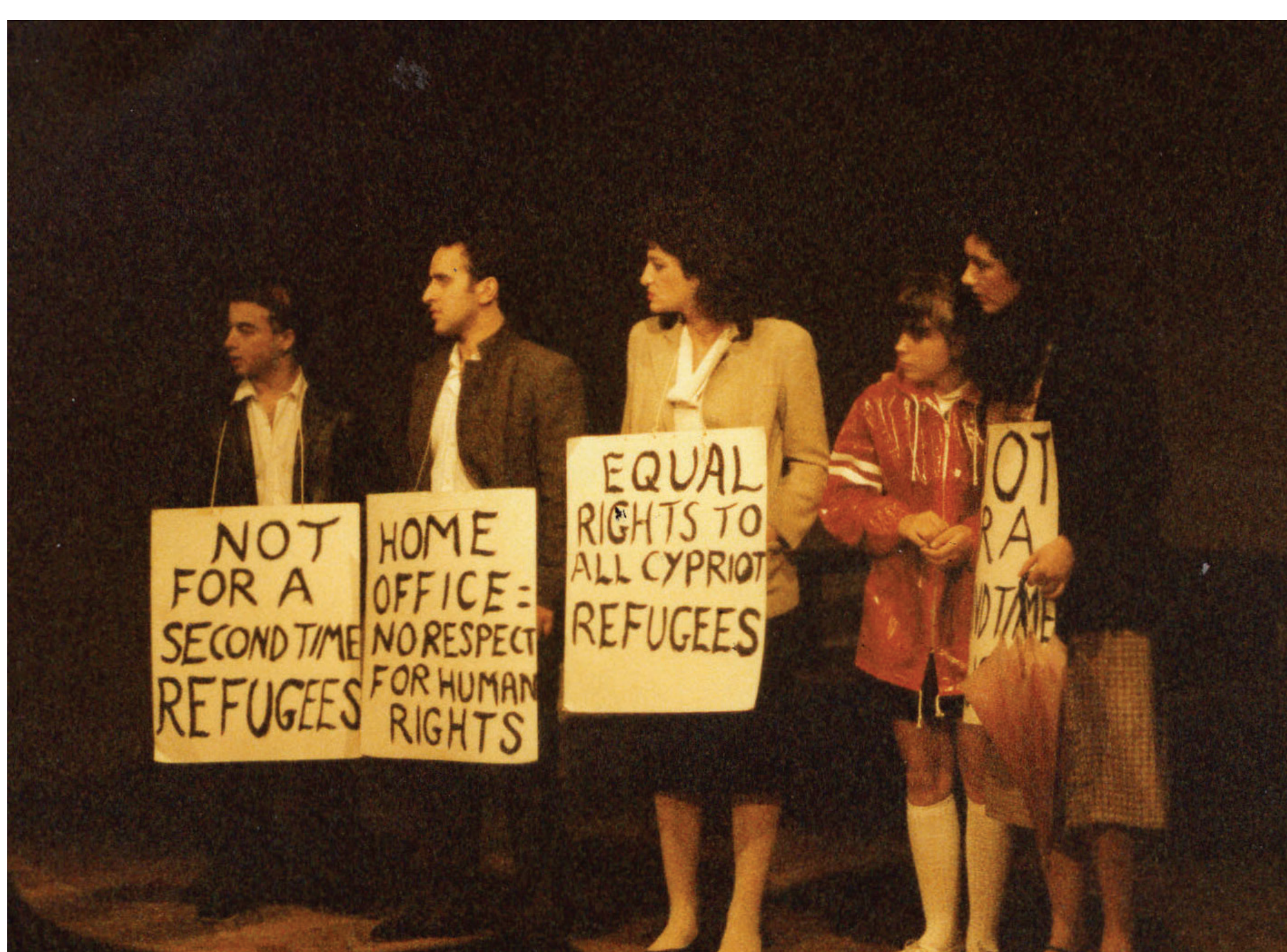
Right Odeon Cinema
1963. Courtesy of Cinema
Theatre Association.

Eileen Fry was born on Christmas Day in 1954. She moved to King’s Cross when she was five and has lived in the same flat ever since. From an early age she had a passion for cinema and regularly visited the Odeon with her brother. When she discovered blues music as a teenager, dancing also became a major part of her life. Not having sixpence for her cinema ticket, or money for the bus home, didn’t stop Eileen from having fun. ▶ **Track 2: Eileen’s Story**



“I knew there was poverty in the community, but not to that extent”

George Eugeniou



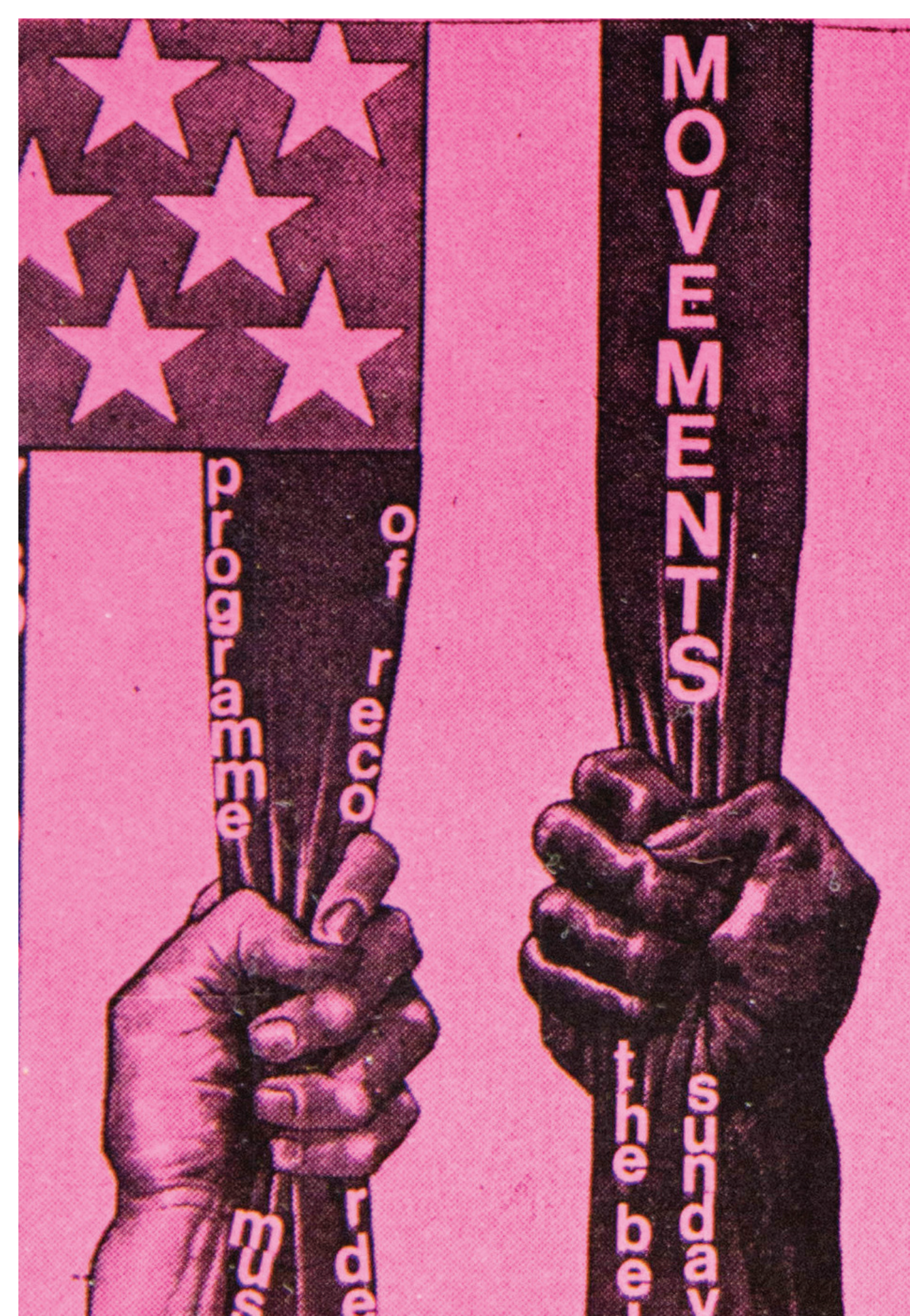
Images from the production, *The Appelents*.

Courtesy of Theatro Technis.

Born in Cyprus in 1931, George Eugeniou came to London when he was nineteen to study theatre; working in a dressmaking factory by day and taking acting classes at night. In 1957 he set up Theatro Technis which found a place in the heart of the Cypriot community. People trusted George and he used his position to help thousands of refugees arriving in the area during the mid-1970s. The company's founding principle is 'from life to art, back to life'. ▶ **Track 3: George's Story**



“And they didn’t twig he was gay!
Serious?” **Debbie Smith**



Left The Bell dance floor circa 1984. Courtesy of Debbie Smith.

Right Poster for Movements, The Bell, People at The Bell. Courtesy of Berni and Martyn, Movements.

Debbie Smith moved to King’s Cross as a teenager in the mid-1980s. She squatted in a house on Wren Street with staff from The Bell, a gay pub on Pentonville Road. This meant she never had to pay the entrance fee and when she was barred, she was allowed back the next night. The Bell was a haven, wild but safe, for Debbie and her younger brother, where they could work out what it meant to be young and queer in the eighties. ▶ **Track 4: Debbie’s Story**



“It’s an ongoing, eternal quest”

Andrea Smith



Left The alter at St Pancras Old Church.

Right The Cock Tavern on the corner of Chalton Street.

Photos by Michael Hall.

Andrea Smith was born in 1966. She grew up in Manchester and moved to London in the early 1990s. Andrea was adopted as a baby and wanted to find her blood family, which sparked a lifelong hunt and research into her family tree. The discovery that her birth mother came from Chalton Street led to a pilgrimage to St Pancras Old Church, where Andrea realised that every question answered led to a swarm of new ones. ▶ **Track 5: Andrea’s Story**



“In the face of such adversity, people got closer together” **Sioned Churchill**



Left King's cross County Show, at Coram's Fields. Circa 1992.

Right St Chad's Place. Circa 1988.

Courtesy of Sioned Churchill.

Sioned Churchill started working in the Neighbourhood Centre on Argyle Street in the late 1980s. She was struck by the strong sense of friendship she found, especially amongst older people, many of whom had lived through the hardships of World War Two. A promotion led to more responsibility and a sense that she needed to change the environment children were growing up in. Sioned helped to set up the King's Cross Partnership, working with local residents, drug workers and the police to try and improve the area. [▶ Track 6: Sioned's Story](#)