



# NEWSLETTER

Friends of Harlow

SCULPTURE & GIBBERD GALLERY

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## Friends of Harlow Sculpture and the Gibberd Gallery Newsletter Winter 2014

### New news from the Gallery! No one wants old news so here are a few really exciting developments for 2014

- Our regular Saturday openings for each new show will include “walk and talks” by the artist and accompanying workshops run by a professional artist. This proved successful with our previous show and we’d like to build on this.
- Michael O’Connell’s retrospective The Lost Modernist attracted over 1900 visitors travelling from Northants, Oxford, Reading, Norwich and Australia. Mary Moore flew in especially from Switzerland, so we are now a truly international destination for art lovers! It was our first textile exhibition in 9 years and we had some fantastic feedback from students, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Society, textile group members and fellow batik artists, and of course friends, relations, family and students of O’Connell who had never seen his work exhibited on such a grand scale. We had his own fan club in the form of Iris who was his assistant and brought many people regularly from Much Hadham for mini tours of the work.
- Our funded Education programme means we will be welcoming over 1000 local children to the watercolour collection, sculptures and interactive apps (with tablets), along with a tutored workshop.
- Our inspiring pilot programme for Young Curators is progressing well, with 10 young people age 15-19 years learning about running a gallery and creating a plan to exhibit work from schools and the college in March. They will gain the Silver Arts Award which has kindly been funded by Opera House Bridge; this is the first in Harlow and a rare opportunity to experience this pathway.
- Professional tours of the Gibberd collection start in the Gallery and end in the Gibberd Garden including lunch and transport. This is a new collaboration between Harlow Art Trust and the Gibberd Garden, supported by the expertise of the Friends of Harlow sculpture and the Gibberd Gallery on every second Wednesday, monthly (April – September). Booking is through the Gibberd Gallery- telephone 01279 446404 or through the Gallery website <http://gibberdgallery.co.uk>.
- New technology has been developed (launched in January) which includes 5 tours for walking, driving and cycling around Harlow, each discovering pieces of the Harlow sculpture collection. These are available on Google apps. 27 trails have already been downloaded so watch out for people wandering around Harlow admiring our treasures.
- The permanent collection will now be in a specially created “room” in the Gallery. Launch of this is scheduled for the 8<sup>th</sup> March; this will be celebrated with an opening event. New technology (like the apps for sculpture) will be available in the Gallery and will allow visitors to access the catalogue interactively.
- This is all in addition to our “community area” and “Gallery” window and “Open” for artists. Each of these offers the opportunity for local artists and community groups to showcase their works.
- We appreciate your continued support of the Gallery as it strives to provide Harlow with a visual arts hub and helps highlight Harlow as a cultural destination. If you wish to be kept updated with new events/exhibitions/invites from us please let us know by emailing [gallery@harlowarttrust.org.uk](mailto:gallery@harlowarttrust.org.uk) or by phone 01279 446404.

James Smith talk on "Harlow Estate"



Window Display by local artist Sarah Bracey



### Exhibition plan until Spring

Our New Year's programme kicks off with James Smith's "*Harlow Estate*", a large scale photography show about New Towns and the architectural landscape. He gave a talk to give context to this work on Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup> and over 50 people arrived (we ran out of chairs!). Afterwards he gave technical advice to photographers and students who brought along their images.

In total contrast, for freezing February we have Graham Boyd's "*Interaction*", expressive, abstract oils to warm you up. The PV is on 6<sup>th</sup> Feb and it is open until 28<sup>th</sup> February. We have a Special Saturday opening on the 15<sup>th</sup> with Graham's walk and talk at 12 o' clock: what is his inspiration and why is he fascinated with colour and light? We can find out there.

On 13<sup>th</sup> March – 25<sup>th</sup> April we have our young curators managing the students show, "*Dreams and Fantasy*." It has been over two years since we have had schools' work exhibited and we think it will be one of the best yet.

The Trust is very grateful to all the really talented, helpful and skilled people who volunteer in the Gallery as well as the committed Friends. Thanks were given by holding a party in December with food and the ever popular mulled wine – its not all bad..!

Corrina Dunlea

### The Bishopsfield Estate

The publicity for the current exhibition at The Gibberd Gallery of James Smith's photographs "Harlow Estates" features a brilliant but not very flattering view of Bishopsfield's podium. Anyone can see it is badly in need of good maintenance.

Bishopsfield was built in 1966, the result of a competition by Harlow Development Corporation to encourage high-density design options. At 24, Michael Neylan won, and Bishopsfield, known locally as The Casbah was built. It consists of 234 units ranging from 1 bed flats to four-bed patio houses with granny units. Neylan's idea was a hill form. The flats on the podium are at the top of the sloping site, built over a garage tunnel, with single storey patio houses radiating out below. Houses are split level on the slope and level at the top of the hill, L-shaped around enclosed gardens with 18ft high living rooms. Each enjoys privacy and the close-knit architecture has created a successful community. We enjoy living there.

Bishopsfield is up for Grade II listing. Recently The Observer and The Guardian's architectural critic, Rowan Moore, has listed Bishopsfield as no.2 housing estate in the U.K. We are constantly visited by architects from the U.K and abroad. It is a favourite subject for student theses.

The architect Emily Greeves worked on Michael Neylan's architecture for an Institute of British Architects Catalogue last year. Bishopsfield was the main estate featured in a book and in exhibitions locally, on the Gibberd Gallery Community Screens, at The Arc and nationally. Sadly Michael Neylan died last year.

Moir Jones, Secretary, Bishopsfield Residents Association.

### Bishopsfield Inspired Fabric Designs

Bishopsfield has long been a source for inspiration to artists, residents and others outside our local community. Local Artist Co-operative Creative Space artists Sarah Bracey and Jim Brown worked with local residents to create fabric designs inspired by photographs of the estate taken by the artists in question. The blinds were exhibited on the Gibberd Gallery Community Screens before being installed on site. For more images of local Community Art Projects over the past 10 years- <http://creativespaceharlow.weebly.com>

The Common Room Door Blinds on the Bishopsfield estate, with applied fabric designs 2007, (viewed from the inside).



### **Festival of Britain, South Bank 1951**

Lin Hilton gave a lunchtime talk about the Festival of Britain in October while the exhibition of Michael O'Connell's textiles was running. It was well attended by College students and visitors. O'Connell was involved in designing and making textiles for the Festival. His printed version of Abraham Game's logo and a wall hanging, from the series on the British landscape (Caledonia), were on view. Many of his other works dated from the fifties and sixties and showed both a desire for the modern aesthetic and a nostalgia for the traditional.

The Festival, for those who attended and remembered it, gave a chance for the British public to celebrate in the open air the end of wartime conditions, and the government the opportunity to display British prowess in agriculture, transport, science, technology and art. There were glimpses of 'things to come' in building and construction.

Our own Master Town Planner, Sir Fredrick Gibberd, was appointed in 1947 for the task of structuring Harlow, one of the new developments to re-house Londoners after the bombing of their homes. This post-war period brought many young architects to the fore and allowed for a new modernist approach.

The Permanent Collection of watercolours and drawings and the sculpture installed throughout the townscape were part of the original plan to provide the new community with its own art. Many of these works were produced by artists of these post-war years.

*Proceeds from the talk were collected toward Gallery costs.*

Lin Hilton

### **Abbotsweld School Sculpture Tour**

Just before Christmas I had the pleasure of hosting two classes from Abbotsweld School for short sculpture tours.

It really was a pleasure, the children were well behaved and so interested in what they were seeing, and they could already relate the sculptures we saw to others that they knew about. They listened and asked questions about everything, and when we were in the Playhouse just as rehearsals for the Pantomime started and we couldn't hear anything else we all squeezed in to sit on the comfy chairs at the feet of Julia to talk about how she came to be there. They were horrified that anyone would try to take away a sculpture.

Amanda came with us and was able to point out the new sculpture on the back wall of the Playhouse - Have you seen it yet? It is called 'Ghost in the Machine' by Tony Stallard -The figure of Harlequin and ghosts of the past reflecting our world!

These lovely groups of children had their drawing books with them and created their own images so quickly that they had plenty of information to take back to school for their project on Harlow.

It is so important that those growing up in our town do learn about their heritage and can appreciate it.

They will grow into adults who are aware, and who knows, maybe one of them will make a future sculpture for Harlow.

I am looking forward to the coming year's programme with lots of school involvement.

Jenny Lushington

## Essex, My Essex



I met with Ian Sansom (Presenter of the Programme) and Connor Garret (the Producer) at the Henry Moore Sculpture in the Water Gardens. Ian had grown up in Ongar and remembered his visits to Harlow as a young child. He was puzzled by his half-remembered images of the Water Gardens and car park and what he was now seeing, but when we discussed the huge changes to the area when the Water Gardens was taken away, a road disappeared and then it was all reassembled as now, his memories were confirmed. He did have very strong memories of Harlow's Family Group, which then as now really is a symbol of Harlow - once Pram Town now a family town. We went up into the Gallery and looked at Harlowbury Chapel, one of the water colours in the Permanent Collection, and then 'met' Sir Frederick in the form of his bust by Gerda Rubinstein. Ian thought him a very distinguished man. We then talked about his Master Plan for Harlow and how the Sculptures were envisioned right from the beginning, and the formation of the Harlow Art Trust which continues to promote the acquisition of new sculptures throughout the town. Ian took note of the Photo Exhibition "Harlow Estate" - London Overspill by James Smith, which is currently on display in the Gallery, and the paintings in the doorway also portraying aspects of Harlow.

We were only able to see a few of the sculptures in the Water Gardens area due to their time constraints, but had a wide-ranging discussion of various aspects of the town and the county.

"Essex My Essex", will be broadcast on Radio 4 at 11 am on 28th February 2014. "In despair over the portrayal of Essex - from Essex girl jokes to *"The Only Way Is Essex"* - Ian Sansom attempts to reclaim this historic county as the home of radicals, artists and revolutionaries, from William Morris to Ian Dury.

Jenny Lushington

## Not in Anger - Leon Underwood

This impressive bronze fist, now back in its rightful place in the Stow after being taken to the Gallery while its plinth was being made safe, is a version of the original Portland stone piece carved in the 1920s.

The subject would have been seen as a statement of solidarity with left-wing causes, and later specifically with the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War. But the title stresses that the clenched fist is peacefully intended. Leon Underwood was born in London in 1890 and studied at the Royal College of Art, and, after serving in the first World War, at the Slade. He was influenced by non-European art and culture, and was also known as a painter, engraver and writer, founding an arts magazine, *The Island*. He started out working with wood and stone, but later became an authority on bronze-casting and other metals. His work features in many collections, including the Tate, the Arts Council and the British Museum. He died in London in 1975.

Barbara Burge



## Friends Trip to Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

We are organizing a visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge for Tuesday 11th February 2014, 9.30-4.00pm.

There is a retrospective of the work of John Craxton covering his early years in post war Britain and the late images of life in Crete.

Some may be familiar with his illustrations to anthologies of British poetry and the dust jackets of Patrick Leigh Fermor's travel books. He was a contemporary of Piper, Nash and Sutherland and can be considered a Neo-Romantic. His debt to Picasso and Miro is apparent in the work and he shared a studio with Lucien Freud in the forties.

Also at the Museum there are Edmund de Waal's porcelain installations among the ceramic galleries, which allow the visitor to re-look at the wonderful collection of Chinese ware.

To book a seat on the coach please phone Lin on 01279 415007, cost approx £12. A prompt response would be appreciated.

Lin Hilton

Items for the next Newsletter to [sarah.bracey1@ntlworld.com](mailto:sarah.bracey1@ntlworld.com) by Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2014

