

CULTURE OF WOOD
ROBERT KOENIG RETROSPECTIVE

1st August – 26th September 2009

GALLERY
Gibberd

CULTURE OF WOOD

The Gibberd Gallery and the Friends of Harlow Sculpture Collection presents an exhibition of sculpture by carver Robert Koenig.

The role of the Friends of Harlow Sculpture Collection is to protect and promote the town's sculpture collection. Each summer the Friends work in partnership with the Gibberd Gallery to profile the work of artists who are represented in Harlow's sculpture collection. In previous years the gallery has shown the work of Fred Watson, Gerda Rubinstein and Paul Mount. This year's show celebrates Robert Koenig's longstanding relationship to the town with a retrospective exhibition of work that includes relief panels, carved wood figures as well as drawings and other studies.

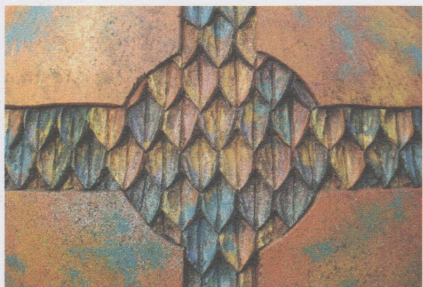
In 1984 Lady Gibberd purchased a Robert Koenig relief that she subsequently donated to the Harlow Art Trust. The piece, 'Grizedale Panel', was one of one of a series of works produced early in Robert's career. Koenig was one of the first artists to be invited to participate in the Grizedale

Forest Sculpture Project in the Lake District and he spent seven months during 1982/83 living and working in the forest environment.

A consistent theme in Robert's work has been the carved and painted wood relief panel. The earliest examples of this type of work appeared in 1981 with panels like 'Rustic Umbrellas', purchased by the Arts Council of Great Britain and '104 Seated Figures', exhibited at the time in the Whitechapel Gallery, London. What typified these and later panels were the use of the repeated motif used in order to achieve a sense of pattern and rhythm.

Robert's recent work address issues of ancestry, belonging, heritage and tradition. He has carved numerous figures, several of which will be on display at the Gibberd Gallery. These themes culminate in his latest and ongoing project called 'Odyssey' which will be the topic of Robert's talk at the Gibberd Gallery in September.

Jackie Storey, Chair - Friends of Harlow Sculpture Collection



'Yellow Cedar Disc' 1994 and 'Fisherman' (detail) 1989

ROBERT KOENIG RETROSPECTIVE

Robert Koenig belongs to the culture of wood. More so, he belongs to its specific circle in which it survived to the present day in an untainted form. Jerzy Madeyski, 1997

I am interested in the culture of wood. As a student I enjoyed looking at the large carved wood reclining figures of Henry Moore, the sculpture of Gaudier Brzeska, Brancusi and Michelangelo and also the renaissance woodcarvers of Central Europe.

They were all inspirational people but did not directly influence my work. I found my own way, decided what were my personal concerns and developed an inherited facility with working wood to make my statements. I have carved, assembled, constructed, painted, used tree trunks, planks and sawdust to tell my stories. I am still impressed at how gracefully carved wood grows old, be it an Ancient Egyptian wood figure or a Renaissance limewood altar by Wit Stwosz.

Robert Koenig



'Ram's Head Triptych' (detail) 1987, 'Grand Orchard panel' (detail) 1980 and (above) 'Planty' (detail)

24 July 2009

Culture of Wood: Robert Koenig Retrospective

Saturday 1st August – Saturday 26th September 2009
Gibberd Gallery

Images: 'Grand Orchard' panel (detail), 'Fisherman' (detail) and 'Ram's Head' panel by Robert Koenig.

This summer the Gibberd Gallery in partnership with the Friends of Harlow Sculpture Collection celebrates the launch of Harlow Sculpture Town with a programme of exhibitions, talks and children's activities, including a stunning exhibition of carved wood sculptures by Robert Koenig.

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Robert Koenig recalls: "Lady Gibberd bought her first carvings from me in 1983 at an exhibition in the South London Gallery. This purchase included the large "Grizedale Panel" which was donated to the Harlow Art Trust. She was the first to appreciate and acquire an early example of the large wood relief panels, which developed into a series over the following 15 years. I remember with fondness the conversations we had about her family background in Krakow, Poland. I studied briefly at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow in 1983. It gives me great pleasure to be able to return to Harlow to show work that spans the early 1980's through to the present day."

Jenny quote

Photo Opportunity: To arrange a photo opportunity with the artist alongside his work on display at the Gibberd Gallery on Tuesday 28th July 2009, please liaise with Dan Atkinson on 01279 446274.

Talks

Robert Koenig Talk

16th September, 7pm.

A talk by Robert Koenig on his artistic practice including details about his latest and ongoing