



Friends of HARLOW SCULPTURE TOWN

Newsletter November 2021

Contributors:



Friends of Harlow Sculpture Town are the membership body supporting Harlow Sculpture Town (an initiative of Harlow Art Trust, registered charity 212559).

1

For more information including how to join, please visit www.sculpturetown.uk/friends/

Message from the Chair

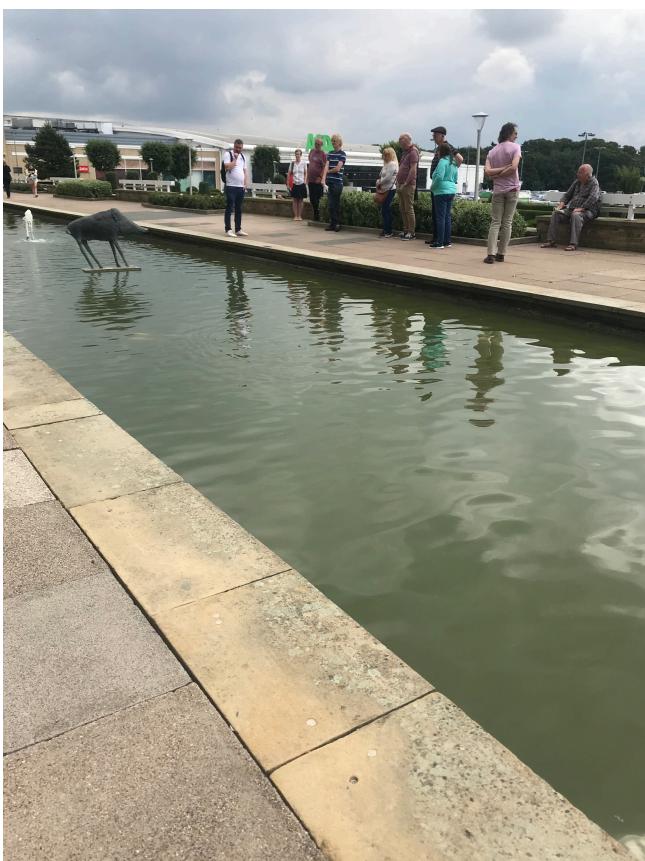
Pete Cronin

Dear Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this latest newsletter from the Friends of Harlow Sculpture Town. After a long wait, please find here a variety of articles and updates from us sharing our busy year.

After joining forces with Harlow Art Trust, we have benefitted from dedicated administrative staffing, as well as becoming an integral component of the organisation itself. All members of Harlow Art Trust are unanimous in their gratitude to the Friends, a community of supporters who, like the Trust, consider the legacy of Harlow's art a privilege to take care of. It has been a tough year or so for all of us, and I send best wishes and thank you for your ongoing support. I have been lucky to see some of you through the year and will be out and about in Harlow through the winter too. A special thank you to the wonderful volunteers who have continually helped us through thick and thin, every effort you make helps us to keep going, sharing the amazing art of Harlow!

Coming out of a sequence of lockdowns this year and last, our main priority was to reinstate our sculpture tours. We delivered town walks, tours for St Clare's Hospice, a day of tours at Harlow Museum, as well as going out of Harlow to deliver talks on the sculptures. We have also carried out collections research. We have a raffle to be drawn on November 20th for a beautiful watercolour painting by Robin McCartney, so please do pick up a ticket or three at The Gibberd Gallery during its open hours, if you haven't already done so.



Images top to bottom:

Crumbs of, Meriel Clarke 2021 Photo Roman Sheppard Dawson
Boar, Elisabeth Frink 1970, Harlow Sculpture Town Summer Sculpture Walk 2020 Photo Nina Preece



As you may know, the reopening of the Gibberd Gallery has seen two exhibitions before year end for our Sculpture Town Artists In Residence, Meriel Clarke whose exhibition is reviewed here by Jenny Lushington, and Romane Courdacher, who is interviewed in this newsletter. The private view of Romane's exhibition is on Friday 12th November 6-8.30pm. Please join us to celebrate her achievement and see her immersive new sculptural installation.

In this newsletter, you will also hear from the very wonderful Diane Maclean, sculptor of *Ripple* in the town centre. Further, you'll hear from Erleen Anderson, and our Artistic Director Kate Harding, who details the temporary loan of *Contrapuntal Forms* to Hepworth Wakefield, from whom Eva Rothschild's *Bright Eyes* was lent in return.

I would like to invite you also to meet us at the Gibberd Gallery on Saturday November 20th at 2pm for tea and cakes, where I will talk further about our plans for next year and answer any and all questions.

Next year we hope to start our activities without hindrance and would love to hear if you or someone you know would be interested in volunteering with us. Please feel free to email me.

All best wishes for the rest of 2021 and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Peter Cronin pete@harlowarttrust.org.uk
Chair of the Friends of Harlow Sculpture Town
Trustee, Harlow Art Trust

Sculptor Focus | Diane Maclean

Pete Cronin



Diabolo is a 2018 work recently installed at University of Hertfordshire Arts in Hatfield. Diane's method of creation is often through experimentation, using materials, shapes and models to develop ideas. This often results in unexpected combinations, which allow the fulfilment of the ideas, which in the case of *Diabolo* began with experimenting with cones, before alighting on the possibility of placing two cones end to end. A playful method means a playful artwork, and here Diane's experimentation found connection with the traditional children's toy of the same name, standing 4.5 metres tall shining through pinks, reds, and oranges.

UH Arts already displays Diane's wonderful *Mountain*, a work originally commissioned by the Natural History Museum in 2005 before being donated to the university. *Mountain* is made up of some 10 geometrically shaped polished steel pieces fixed into a ground of slate and encompassing both the sounds of glacial movement, and illuminated photographs of minerals. The space encourages the viewer into the space and to consider both mineralogy and climate change, the themes a result of Diane's collaborations with scientists.

As a graduate of the UH Arts, it may surprise you to learn that until the 1980s Diane was a painter, receiving international portrait commissions. Based for a time in New York, Diane was intrigued by the possibilities of sculpture after seeing the work of David Smith, Alexander Calder and Richard Serra. Returning to England from South Africa in the late 1970s, Diane took up a fine art course at UH Arts, where it seemed like the fun was being had in the metal workshops. Here Diane was impelled to begin learning skills such as welding and shaping metals.

Harlow's wonderful collection of sculptures includes *Ripple*, commissioned for the redevelopment of the Water Gardens, Harlow Town Centre, in 2004. Created in polished steel, the artist Diane Maclean sought to create a sculptural equivalent to water to relate the sculpture to the surroundings. Upon its installation, Lady Gibberd apparently commented that the three sculptures also appear much like trees. Here the sculpture complements its urban settings, in fabricated metal while alluding to the organic.

Indeed, the sculpture relies on physics for its colour; made of polished steel the surfaces are treated with oxides which react to light. This way, as the light reflects on the metal we see shades of blue or green, yellow, purple or indigo. Diane has designed the sculpture so that it requires little maintenance. The steel poles are tall, and therefore the treated panels are out of reach, and for that matter, not convenient for perching birds either. Speaking to Diane recently she explained that when taking on a commission for a public sculpture she respects the service she is undertaking on behalf of the public, and therefore endeavours to give the highest quality she can. Diane Maclean lives near St Albans in Hertfordshire and works from her studio there, and with a metal fabricators in Ware to produce her final works. Diane has public sculptures all over the UK and beyond, born in Scotland, several of her works can be found in Scotland, while we are also lucky to have many in Essex and Hertfordshire too.



Images top to bottom:

Ripple, Diane Maclean, 2004 Photo James Smith

Diabolo, Diane Maclean, 2018 Photo Pete Cronin

Mountain, Diane Maclean, 2005 Photo Pete Cronin

Artistic Director's Review | Contrapuntal Forms Loan Project

Kate Harding

This May saw the loan of Barbara Hepworth's grade-II listed *Contrapuntal Forms* to The Hepworth Wakefield Gallery in Yorkshire. *Contrapuntal Forms* (1950–51) was commissioned by the Arts Council for the 1951 Festival of Britain to stand on London's newly developed South Bank. Carved in Irish blue limestone by Hepworth and three assistants, it stood as one of the centrepieces of the Festival near the iconic Skylon and Dome of Discovery. After the close of the festival, it was given to Harlow New Town Development Corporation, and became the very first artwork in Harlow's sculpture collection. It was sited in 'Area 1' in 1952, now known as Glebelands, to mixed reception.

A request to show the sculpture in the exhibition 'Barbara Hepworth: Art and Life' was first received by the trustees of Harlow Art Trust from The Hepworth Wakefield in November 2020. It detailed an exciting proposal to install it in the gallery's new garden alongside another sculpture *Turning Forms*, which was also commissioned by the Arts Council for the Festival. If the loan went ahead, it would be the first time they would be shown together since leaving Hepworth's studio 70-odd years before. In return, Harlow would be sent *Bright Eyes*, a contemporary work by leading artist Eva Rothschild, to stand in its stead until *Contrapuntal Forms* returned.

At the time however, the second national lockdown had just come into force and museums and galleries were closing their doors once more.



Trustees deliberated hard: outdoor public art had found new meaning and appreciation during those middle months of 2020. Was now really the right time to move one of the town's most treasured artworks? In addition, the sculpture's grade-II listing, and the general environment of uncertainty meant the Trust would need to work hard to get the necessary permissions in place from both Historic England and Harlow Council to move it in the first place.

On the other hand, the loan project was an opportunity to bring innovative sculpture to the public realm, just as Hepworth and the Arts Council had done 70 years ago. After much discussion and consultation with the sculpture's immediate neighbours at Glebelands, we decided the request was unique and too good to pass up.

The process of moving a listed, 8-foot-tall unique Hepworth carving had many hurdles: planning permission was sought, a legal agreement drafted and signed, and last-minute emergency conservation had to be undertaken on some fresh and expletive graffiti a few days before the deadline. Nonetheless on the morning of the 10th of May, all was in place for expert art movers MTEC to safely de-install the sculpture and drive it up the M11 to Yorkshire some days later.

Once in Wakefield, *Contrapuntal Forms* resonated beautifully with the concrete surfaces of The Hepworth Wakefield's contemporary building. It was sited in pride of place in the garden and added an outdoor element to the largest retrospective of Hepworth's career in the 45 years since her death. The exhibition is on until 27th February 2022. It is well worth a visit.



Images top to bottom:

Contrapuntal Forms in the garden at The Hepworth Wakefield, Photo Jonty Wilde

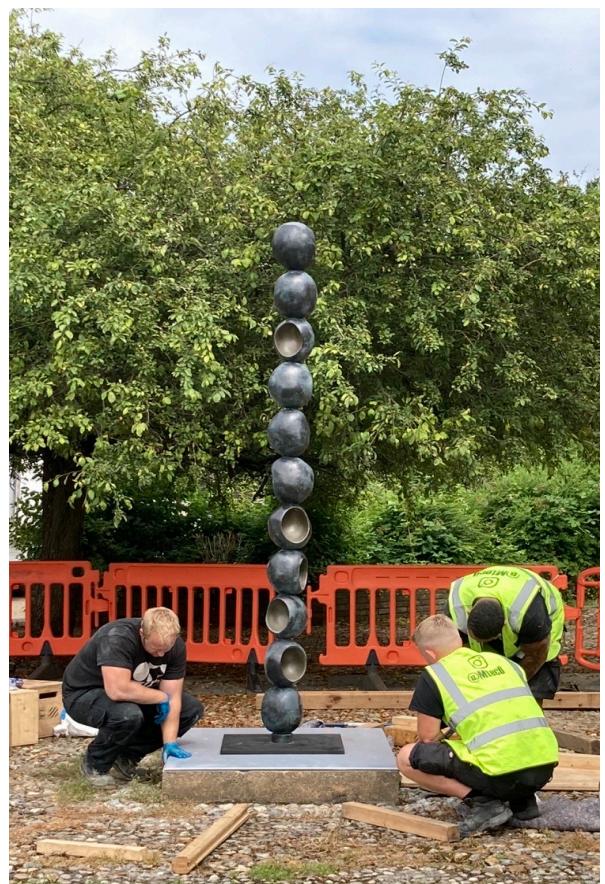
1950s cartoon, Harlow Museum Archives

Contrapuntal Forms Loan Project ctd.

Bright Eyes is now on view at Glebelands until *Contrapuntal Forms* returns in March next year. The work recalls one of the forms central to Hepworth's philosophy and practice, what she called the 'standing form', which highlights the relationship of the human figure to its environment. The artist has also talked about the ovoid elements in her work as being prompted by 'an awareness of that Modernist form', referring to Hepworth's carvings. In situ at Glebelands, the oval forms nicely echo the pebbles set in concrete around it.

Postscript:

Some months after the completion of the project, while conducting a thorough clean of our store cupboard, I unearthed a photograph of *Contrapuntal Forms* standing on the South Bank in 1996. I was surprised, because until that point, the trustees and myself believed in earnest that the sculpture hadn't been moved since the 1950s. If anyone reading has further information about this, please get in touch! (kate@harlowarttrust.org.uk)



Images top to bottom:

Bright Eyes being installed at Glebelands, July 2021. Photo Kate Harding

Contrapuntal Forms being moved from Glebelands, May 2021
Photo Nina Preece

Contrapuntal Forms at South Bank, 1966. Photo unknown

Interview | Romane Courdacher

Pete Cronin



Can you tell us more about the learning workshops that formed a part of your residency?

At Passmores Academy where I did my workshops, I was delighted to find my experience of working with children and making art came together for the first time. I had worked with kids at holiday camps in the past, and education seems too obvious, I had even done craft workshops with children, but the idea of making some art with children had never really clicked in my mind before.

In Harlow having the opportunity to do 6 workshops with Passmores, really worked well. I had never worked in a school context before, and for this project I prepared a presentation for the children which felt funny, but the children are used to seeing screens of course! Claire and Abby, the two art teachers at Passmores helped me a lot, they were really supportive, always in the classroom to help me with technical vocabulary especially.

I asked the children to think of an experience of Harlow that they've had, and we came up with three themes: the history of Harlow, nature, and the places we pass on our way to school. From there we made drawings which we transferred onto hexagonal ceramic tiles, and these will be fitted to a 3D-printed column. So there is a honeycomb structure, and the tiles are orientated both vertically and horizontally, and all will be glazed to make one cohesive artwork. I would really like to exhibit it at Passmores Academy after the exhibition too!

Can you tell us a little bit about your experience as Harlow's Sculpture Town Artist in Residence?

Before Harlow, I was doing my own thing, and at the start of the residency I worked on other things at the Gatehouse Arts studio, other projects that helped me developed techniques that I'm using now. I first came in 20 November 2020 and have done say 2 or 3 days at the studio ever since, sometimes 5 days in a row, sometimes less.

I was in France when I first heard about the residency and was incredibly excited, and I prepped the whole thing while on holiday with my grandparents. Before I heard about the residency, I applied for lots of things because I felt like that was the only way to carry on making art after my Masters at the Royal College of Art. I wouldn't have been able to afford a studio for example. What clicked when I started looking deeper into the Harlow residency was working with schools, and the community, and how the idea of Harlow is based on having sculpture as part of everyday life, because that's what my life is like, experiencing everything like its art. So, it just made sense, to have a residency where the thinking as the same as my own thinking when I make art.

I researched Harlow, and found the sculpture trail, and I liked the idea of having sculptures in different places, like different points of thinking. One of my obsessions is architectural follies, and the reason I like follies so much is that they are a really good way.... I like going to a park and feeling there is a journey, going from one point to another, and the walking from one to another, the physical activity of it generates different kinds of thoughts.

Thinking of landscape painters, such as Claude Lorrain, they integrated classical architecture into their paintings and were thinking about how the architecture displaces time and space, and the same goes for public sculpture in the landscape, they have this frozen moment in them, where you get lost in time, and you can use that space as a thinking canvas. For me, having Harlow as like a huge-scale sculpture park felt like being in this thinking space, especially as I would leave London and arrive here, I would feel transported, and because this is a place where people live this dynamic thinking space had this activity already within it.

And this was accentuated by the fact that I came first in November 2020, the second lockdown, so there was this sort of eeriness. No one was on the train as I came to Harlow, and no one was around outside in the town centre, then I was in the studio all by myself all day, and because it was Autumn the daylight was going early in the evening, and every time I seemed to arrive it would be misty, so it felt like I was coming to this weird realm every time I arrived in Harlow Town, like I had escaped the reality of London.

Interview | Romane Courdacher continued. Pete Cronin

Can you tell us a bit more about your exhibition at The Gibberd Gallery?

When I was thinking about themes for the exhibition, I was of course thinking about that eeriness when I arrived in November 2020. I've found it inspiring to have all these empty buildings around, especially the building opposite my studio, and knowing that the exhibition would be November this year, it would be just after Halloween, and be dark early, and misty. People would have been through this before they arrive at the exhibition, and I hope that they might make a connection when they see the work.

The exhibition is a series of sculptures of different sizes that interplay, and there will be light, and classical elements, but made using modern materials and making techniques such as 3D-Printing and CNC cutting. I like art that is theatrical so I don't mind if work doesn't look perfect, I want it to have that play, when the viewer can see that the object has been made, it is not seeking to fool the viewer. So there is a column, and an archway, and fabric, so it will feel both like entering this place of follies, an atmosphere, so it may also feel something like a set.

The title of the show is inspired by a passage I found in a book:

'You should sit here, when the evening bathes the castled mind in gold'.

The book, 'Pleasure of Ruins' by Rose Macaulay is beautifully written and meant that I was reading echoed things I have seen, I loved the castle at The Gibberd Garden, and of course the Corinthian columns from Coutts Bank, and the urns, so these things were in my mind. For 10 months I was taking things in, growing ideas inside, and the first thing I did for the exhibition was to read through all my notes, finding words, and started sketching things.

Do you always draw when starting to make work?

Well, I see myself as a painter, I just paint in three dimensions, so yes, this is often a starting point. And yes I take time to allow ideas to develop and come together in my mind, this process sometimes takes a long time, and they I produce quickly. So I didn't start making straight away for this exhibition, it wouldn't have made sense if I made work in January, but it is easy to produce the work when the ideas are fixed in my mind. The exhibition is the physical representation of my ideas, and I want it to address the viewer and be a prompt, for an act of contemplation, so you can stop here, among these evocations of ruins, and enter this dream space.



You should sit here when the evening bathes the castled mind in gold by Romane Courdacher opens on the evening of 12th November 2021, 6-8.30pm.

For Gibberd Gallery opening times, visit our [what's on](#) page:

www.sculpturetown.uk/what-s-on/gibberd-gallery

Volunteer Perspective | Hosting Sculpture Walks at Harlow Museum

Erleen Anderson



The idea started simple enough – combine my love of art and gin into a new tour. The Harlow Museum Garden was a logical location as it not only has several sculptures, but also houses a very sculptural gin still.

A September 18th tour date was chosen with a supportive museum director, Corinna Dunlea (thank you!). The date coincided with the Heritage Open Days for publicity.

As a relative newbie to Harlow's collection, the preparatory reading was good fun, although I should have started sooner. I had a rough talk through with tour veteran Jenny Lushington who offered gentle advice and humoured me before the panic set in about how much work I had left to do.

We had 26 people booked in for three tours on a spectacularly sunny day. Starting in the courtyard, I recommended participants make time to go inside to see pieces by Cedric Christie and Paloma Proudfoot. Heading around to the unusual fruits garden, we passed the Latton Bush Griffin where I learned from a participant about Harlow's Saturday morning music school that was just 6 pence a week. We saw Angela Godfrey's The Flame as well as Stone Seat by Ernest Adsetts and its new seat slab by Paul Mason.

The 17th century garden had a buzzy carpet of ground nesting bees near Nathan David's Sun Dial. It's penny farthing pays homage to the John Collin's cycle collection in the museum. Near the former kitchen gardens of the Mark Hall estate, pieces by Karel Vogel, Jane Ackroyd and Antanas Brazdys led the way to the gin still that was hoisted over the brick wall in 2003.

Overall, it was a great experience. Museum old-timers taught me new things about Harlow while museum first-timers learned a few things from me. I look forward to the next one.

Review | Looking back and moving forwards

Jenny Lushington



I do nothing for months and then it all happens on the same day! On the same morning as Meriel's exhibition launch, I went to the beautiful St Mary's Church at Little Pardon by the old Rugby Club grounds. I have passed it so often in its isolation from the town and wondered how many people could get to it regularly? Today there were at least a hundred people there in the church yard, visitors and congregation and new people from the Ram Gorse Park Estate. We were all there to celebrate a new hole in the wall connecting the church with the estate.

I say a hole, but it is in fact a new gateway and path topped off with a brand-new sculpture by a young artist called David Murphy. This lovely sculpture made of Corten steel forms an archway over the gateway - but it is nothing like your traditional archway - it is built up from a series of spheres that curve and twist over the space so that it changes shape from different viewpoints.

At its apex is a light that shines onto the path leading the way into the church. The colours of the spheres exactly match and blend with the old walls and roof of the church and can be decorated for weddings and other festivals with magnets designed to hold the ribbons as was the golden ribbon cut to mark its opening by the Team Vicar, Revd Jokey Poyntz. As its opening was blessed by the Area Dean Martin Harris the celebrations continued with tea and snacks all round while fete stalls were open for flowers, jewellery and more bread and cakes! Warm sunshine lit up this lovely morning.

After being in lockdown for ages and being able to do nothing, I was finding it quite difficult to go out and about again... But suddenly I have some good reasons to make a move!

The Gibberd Gallery has now reopened and is easy to visit on Fridays and Saturdays! Saturday 11th September saw the opening of Meriel Clarke's exhibition *A Slip Between, the Glass and the Lip*. Meriel was the 2021 Sculpture Town Artist in Residence and the exhibition was the culmination of working through the dreaded lockdowns. After beginning her involvement and observations in Harlow, Meriel had to complete the work from her home in Ireland, which I think was an amazing effort and took so much planning.

I was surprised at how interesting her exhibition is and how it all comes together. From the 'light' prints all glowing blue, to the Postal Art project for school children (open envelopes), the mysterious window with blinds, down to the not-quite-as-real-as-it-seems kitchen sink, and broken windows, feathers and bird poo! You get drawn into the story by a sudden sound effect!

"What was that?" "Go and look!"



Review | Looking back and moving forwards continued.

Jenny Lushington

The next morning, I was listening to BBC Essex radio while preparing Sunday lunch when I heard the announcer asking for help for the Weekly Quest to find Little Parndon. They were looking for St Marys... Before I could ring in with information someone else did and they eventually found it after several turns around the railway station roundabout... where they were met by Jokey who told them all about the new sculpture joined in voice by our own Artistic Director Kate Harding. I hope lots of listeners around Harlow will be able to find the church and see our lovely new sculpture.

Although locked down and locked in, plenty has been happening this year with regular Zoom meetings to organise and clarify how the New Friends will be organised and be a full part of the Harlow Art Trust. I think we are there now and look forward to a real meeting with all the old friends and some new ones very soon. Have you seen our temporary sculpture in the place where Contrapuntal Forms usually stands in Glebelands? Another interesting use of spheres, but not quite spheres, Eva Rothschild's *Bright Eyes*. Wouldn't it be nice if we could keep this one for the town too even when our Hepworth sculpture comes home next spring!



I am hoping we can get some talks going over the winter months – to give you a reason to pop into the gallery on a Saturday!!! Also, to prepare more walks and tours for next Summer. Anybody interested in joining our group of tour guides do come along to the talks and catch some enthusiasm!!!

I look forward to seeing you all soon! I will be in the Gibberd Gallery sometimes to welcome you but if not me there will be other Friends volunteering there as usual.

Don't forget your invitation to the [Gibberd Gallery](#) for two special events in November:

- Private view of Romane Courdacher's new sculpture exhibition '[You should sit here when the evening bathes the castled mind in gold](#)' on Friday 12th November from 6-8.30pm
- Friends get-together with tea and cakes. Saturday 20th November from 2pm