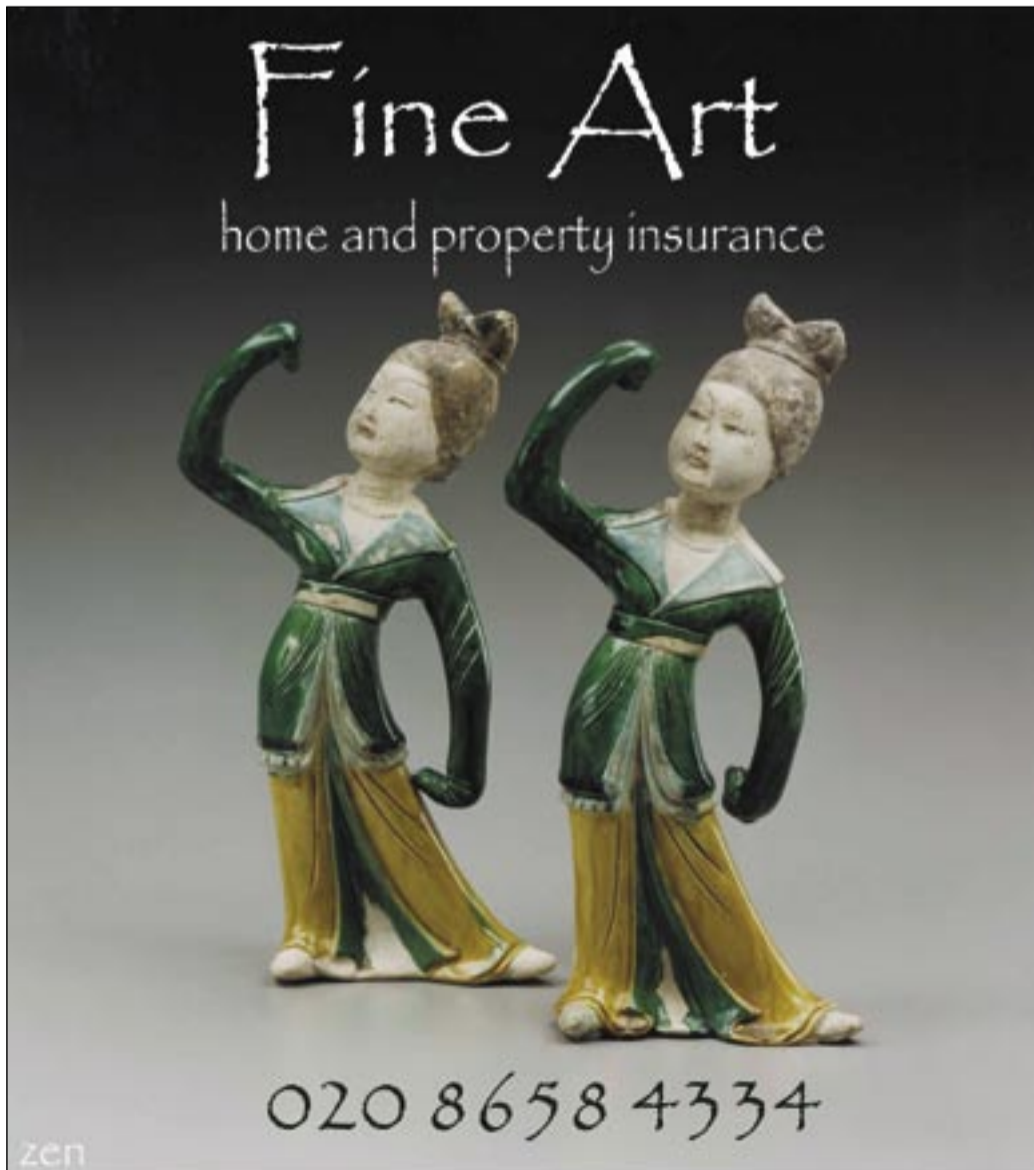


SUBURB Style

Suburb
Style editor
Deborah
Warland,
talks to
residents
about some
of their
favourite
things



Deborah
Warland



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SUBURB

Culture

featuring Sheila Seepersaud-Jones

Sheila has lived on the Suburb since the 1970's along with her husband Richard, a Consultant Diabetologist at St. Thomas's and Researcher into insulin. They have a daughter, Emily, a director and producer of television programmes. Sheila was born in Guyana and came to the UK when she was in her early twenties. She is a trained nurse and is now a renowned sculptor, potter and designer with an interest in silk painting; much of the inspiration for her work comes from travelling and absorbing different cultures, Krakow was her latest overseas visit.

Sheila started her arts studies at the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute, and then went on to St. Martin's where she got an Honours degree in Fine Arts, specialising in sculpture. "John Enderby, the principal at the time, was very pleased with me," says Sheila "He told me I was the first art student to go from the Institute to an art school like St Martins." Her thesis involved returning to Guyana where she went into the interior to trace the Carib Indians from the time that the white settlers arrived until the present day, looking at architecture there which she both photographed and wrote about.

After graduation Sheila continued to sculpt – from her kitchen table! She was also involved with many activities regarding race relations. One of these was when she was asked by the GLA to select eight artists who could create four murals for London in 'sensitive' areas – this was just post the Brixton riots. She has continued her work in the anti-racism field not only in the arts, but also she was a founder member of 'Equality network' for the Royal College of Nurses which advise on race and equality issues.

In 1984 Richard was asked to go to Texas to do further research, so Sheila and Emily joined him. Sheila was then invited to become resident artist at the University of Houston, where she had many exhibitions and one of her sculptures was bought by NASA.

On their return to the Suburb, Sheila decided that the kitchen table was not sufficient. So in typically enthusiastic fashion she decided to build her own studio. It was designed by architect friend Graham Parkinson and, working closely with the Trust who gave permission for it to be built in the garden, and together with two builders "We created it in three months," says Sheila who learned how to be a concrete mixer, a bricklayer and a plumber's mate – her husband Richard doing the plumbing! All the tiles for the studio were personally selected from demolished houses and the bricks chosen from the West Country.

Sheila still works in nursing as an Endocrine Research Sister, despite her busy schedule in the arts. She is now involved with the 'East Finchley Open', a group of local artists and crafts people promoting themselves through a series of exhibitions and open days. In the Autumn she already has shows lined up in Manchester at the Portico Gallery and Library, in North Wales and Devon. Her work is always at the Garden Suburb Gallery and a major exhibition is planned for later in the Summer.



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