

Blooming Art in the Suburb

Flowers are blooming, the days are longer and the sun is shining brighter. It seems that spring is coming to the Suburb after all. Spring for many is seen as an almost magical time of the year, with the gardens starting to come to life and the sound of birds filling the empty silences in the early mornings. Spring is also a time of inspiration for many artists, so it is no surprise that the members of the EFOA (East Finchley Open Artists) are already busy dusting off their brushes and canvases for this year's Open Houses Event. The Suburb is home to some of its members, from jeweller Kochi Ocada to sculptor Rachel Dein and painter Sandra Levine. Today we interview another Suburb resident, silk painter Clara Hancock.

Why Art?

I cannot remember a time without art. I was brought up in Colombia

where my Father used to take me and my siblings to all the museums and art galleries whenever we travelled; it was the norm. When I had to choose my studies for university, my parents pressed me to study law, but I thought that was not transferable to other countries and I wanted to travel. I chose aesthetics and history of art, which seemed to me to be universal around the World – it was part of human nature. After graduating, I travelled to Paris and went on studying art. At that stage I really wasn't making art, more like criticising what other people did!

What was the first piece of art you ever created?

I travelled on to London and there did my first craft and art work: I constructed tandoori ovens for a living and joined classes in sculpture. My first student work was a sitting lady in Ancaster stone; I still have it, 40 years later

and it still gives me pleasure (my critical skills from studies of art may be biased here). My artwork now is principally in painting on silk, glass fusion, sculpture in various materials and ceramics.

What inspires you?

I feel inspired by my travels and the varieties of colours, light and form wherever I go. Hampstead Garden Suburb provides local abundance of all these in the architecture, private gardens and public spaces.

Favourite place in the suburb?

I particularly love Central Square, Big and Little Woods and the always changing gardens.

Describe your art in 3 words?

Form, colours, texture.

Clara will be showcasing her silks at the Open Houses Event which takes place over two weekends in July 2/3 and 9/10. (www.eastfinchleyopen.org.uk)

Clara's Open House in 2015



Letter to the editor

Maurice Walk, NW11

Sir,
Please find below a letter, which was recently published in The Archer newspaper and which I feel would be of interest to your readers. (an edited version appeared in their February issue, No 265)

I am writing today to draw your attention to a matter, which I feel is coming to breaking point in my local neighbourhood (NW11, N3 and N2) and in the borough as a whole.

After attending the Archer Academy public meeting for its admission change consultation on Monday evening, one thing became very clear. There is a SERIOUS, devastating lack of good secondary schools in our area and the borough as a whole. I know that this does not come as a surprise; Barnet have known about this

deficit for many years with its population projections and census information. An amazing team of a dozen people gave up their time, some of them giving up their jobs, to open the Archer Academy – a process which from start to finish took the best part of three years. The Archer Academy is a credit to our local area and we are all extremely proud of its progress, and the faith that the community has put in it. I supported the school from the very beginning and I know personally most of the team who so heroically gave up their time.

So what next? Even if the process was started tomorrow to open another school, it would most likely not come to fruition for at least a year, probably longer. Premises in the three postcodes named above are scarce. Perhaps schools that are failing need to be

looked at and closed. Or council owned land or buildings could be looked at. One thing is clear, tax paying parents of children of a certain age are scared and worried that they will not have quality secondary education for an entire generation of children. To assume that there is another driven, energetic, talented group of parents out there willing to put their lives on hold for nearly a whole electoral cycle is madness. It is not our job to do the work of our elected officials and those who work within the Department of Education; those who have the skills, resources and time to see these types of projects through to completion need to act now. The Archer Academy, while a fantastic school, is not a panacea. Barnet parents need help, desperately, and they need it now.

Yours
Laura Pincus

A comment on schools

For parents schooling is perhaps the most important part of a child's life, after health, about which they have to make decisions. There was quite a lively exchange on the RA e-mail group (see p4 on how to join) about the Archer Academy's admissions policy earlier this year, and The Archer, East Finchley's excellent monthly community newspaper produced and distributed by volunteers, has had pages of articles and letters on the subject every month this year (www.the-archer.co.uk).

Parents naturally react strongly when decisions affect their children and so it has been in this case. The Archer Academy responded to the controversy by having a public consultation and has now published its decision on its admissions policy from September 2017. You can read this at: thearcheracademy.org.uk/Admissions/admissions-policy and clicking on the relevant link.

Laura Pincus's concern goes deeper than just The Archer Academy's admissions policy, but to how ordinary people were forced to give of themselves because the state has decided to step back from providing what all

children need where they need it. Perhaps this stepping back explains the increasing concerns in different parts of Britain about shortages of school places, teacher shortages, rundown buildings and lack of facilities.

Chasing pavements

There has been a lively exchange of e-mails on the HGS e-mail group recently about pavements and the state they're in with residents regularly coming across dangerous paving stones when walking in the Suburb (see page 2 'Suburb Open Meetings').

Last November a resident, using FOI rights, asked Barnet how much compensation it was paying to pedestrians due to accidents caused by the disrepair of pavements. The answer came back with a substantial £493,064.01 in the previous twelve months.

Our councillors have been asked if it might not be worth spending a little more on accident prevention by following up complaints and acting on them. I don't suppose we can expect perfect paving, but it sometimes feels like nothing is ever done.

Incidentally £34,389.19 was paid as compensation for damage to vehicles resulting from the disrepair of roads during the same period. The answer doesn't say if the roads TfL, or the Highways Agency are responsible for, are included in the figures.

Works to trees on your Suburb property



Tree work on the Suburb requires written consent from the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust under the Scheme of Management (for freehold properties) or the terms of leases. It is a criminal offence to undertake unauthorised works to trees on the Suburb (either pruning or felling).

Approval from the London Borough of Barnet is also required. See Barnet's website for details: www.barnet.gov.uk.

Before carrying out tree work, please telephone the Trust office on 0208 455 1066 and book an appointment for a site visit with the Trust's Arboricultural Consultant. Appointments can only be made through the Trust office. Appointments usually take place on a Thursday morning.

Once the Trust's Consultant has visited your property he will forward his recommendations for tree work to the Trust and the Trust will usually issue a decision in line with his recommendations. This process normally takes approximately two weeks from the date of the site visit. Consent shall only be granted to the owner(s) of the property on which a tree stands.

There is no individual charge for a visit from the Trust's Consultant as the cost is incorporated within the Management Charge or Ground Rent for your property.

HAMPSTEAD - GARDEN - SUBURB - TRUST

862 Finchley Road, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London NW11 6AB ~ 020 8455 1066 ~ mail@hgstrust.org ~ www.hgstrust.org ~ twitter: @HGSTrust