

Suburban Gardens

The Suburban Landscape:

Two Hundred Years of Gardens and Gardening

Two exhibitions at the Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture (MoDA)
Middlesex University (2007-2008)

Gardening is one of Britain's most consuming passions. From gardening magazines to TV makeovers, the garden is a never-ending source of fascination. But why do so many of us long to get our hands dirty in the garden?

MoDA's exhibition **The Suburban Landscape: Two Hundred Years of Gardens and Gardening (19th June 2007 – 24th February 2008)** explores the history of the suburban landscape over the last two hundred years. It considers the significance of gardens and gardening in the making of what has become the most "English" of landscape environments.

To complement this exhibition, 'MoDA's Sixth Annual Outdoor Show **Sculpting the Suburban Landscape (19th June - 30th September 2007)** challenges the notion of the English traditional domestic garden in modern day Britain. The area around the museum has been divided into ten plots (five front gardens and five back gardens) each of which has been 'landscaped' by artists with a keen eye on the changing nature of the garden.

Plot 1

Julia Dennis

The Untold

Caravan, memorabilia

www.juliadennis.co.uk

julia@juliadennis.co.uk

Julia Dennis explores the garden as a place of '*refuge*', a special place, a place of beauty and shelter, where you can do as you please. She uses the caravan as a sculptural '*retreat*', a symbol of transience and travel: here the landscapes of memory have a place to remember and re-invent.

Julia's blog offers you the opportunity to join in and upload your own caravan memories and images – www.caravanstory.co.uk

Plot 2

Elaine Arkell

In Him We Trust

Mixed media including familiar recycled domestic/horticultural materials and objects.

arkangell58@yahoo.co.uk

The relationship between man and bird is as long as agriculture itself, but often very uneasy: it has given rise to the equally global scarecrow. Elaine Arkell's site-specific sculptural investigations reflect current cultural obsessions as she interrogates notions of value and use

Plot 3

Sen McGlenn + Sonja van Kerkhoff

Cross Pollination

Metal, wood, papier mache, plastic

www.sonjavank.com/crossp.htm

sonja@bahai-library.com

www.sonjavank.com/sensonja

Cross Pollination is a playful interpretation of the metaphor of cultural cross-pollination in a multi-cultural, and very busy, world. The central hive generates the incoherent sounds of layers of activities, each meaningful when separated out and heard in its own right. The flowers bloom in their diversity, and the visitors are invited to become the bees.

Plot 4

Catherine Gamble

The 'Petit Versailles' of a Drinker

Broken bottles, plants

wasticat@yahoo.co.uk

The suburban garden has long been used as an area to express one's status, for recreation, and for practical purposes. The 'Petit Versailles' of a Drinker has pretensions to a classical formal garden such as Versailles.

In-between Plot 4 and Plot 5

Jolanta Jagiello

How Does Your Garden Grow?

Found twisted metal, rusty and broken garden tools

j.jagiello@care4free.net

'How does your Garden Grow?' is inspired by Derek Jarman's garden at Prospect Cottage where he created shingle garden from debris he found on the beach at Dungeness. Like Derek Jarman, Jolanta Jagiello has turned rusty old discarded gardening tools into artistic treasures.

Plot 5

Amrit Row

The New Suburban Garden

Hedging, concrete paving, statuary, hardcore

www.amritrow.com

amrit@amritrow.com

'New Suburban Garden' suggests that multiculturalism, as it exists in the suburbs, is mediated by the need to fit in; and that a degree of wealth that is part of the suburban experience is a great social leveller where all gods are banished to hardcore rubble.

Plot 6

Darryl Moore

All That Glitters

Garden arbours, roses, jewellery

dmoore.design@virgin.net

Two garden arbours face each other, as if in an ongoing conversation, representing contrasting cultural values. One arbour is presented in the traditional English manner, entwined with climbing roses, whilst the other is adorned with gold 'Bling' style jewellery, representing a contemporary urban sensibility, which has spread from city centres to the heartlands of suburbia.

Plot 7

Grace Adam

Suburban Gardens

Garden shed, painted canvases

grace@graceadam.com

Through Suburban Gardens, the artist Grace Adam extends her explorations into what we choose to cultivate. Through this installation piece she explores the idea of the transformation in status of ordinary things through the act of looking at them more closely, putting them together in a way that makes us look afresh.

Plot 8

Deborah Gardner

The International Line

Washing lines, clothes, wax

sculpture4@btinternet.com

Deborah Gardner is fascinated by the visual beauty of lines of washing pinned out to dry. The clothes in *The International Line* are cast in cement, permanently held hanging or flying in the wind. The dynamic, yet permanent configurations of clothes blowing in the wind signify the ever-transforming lifestyles, communities and suburbs of cities and towns.

Plot 9

Mari Terauchi

Play with me, watch with me

Tent 180cm width 200cm height

kawaiinoe@hotmail.com

Mari Terauchi's work invites visitors to experience the differences evident in the gardens of Japan and England. Visitors can play and create their English garden within Mari Terauchi's book. In comparison, Japanese gardens are created for Zen meditation: visitors are invited to sit in front of the garden and simply look.

Plot 10

Sumi Perera

Mad Dogs And Englishmen

Underwear, sun, grass & solar lights

sumi_perera@hotmail.com

The practice of tanning and the resulting suburban lace curtain twitchers is addressed in this artwork. Lace underwear will be arranged to make giant doilies placed on the grass. Over the period of the fourteen week exhibition, these patterns will be rotated fortnightly to observe and record the effects of sunlight.

Indoors on staircase and exterior of the MoDA building

Paul Greco

House and Gardens

Photographs and vinyl wall pieces

paul.greco@northampton.ac.uk

The first part of Paul's work in this exhibition, on the museum staircase, is a personal response to the indoor exhibition. The second, consisting of vinyl pieces on the exterior of the museum, relate to the themes and ideas of the outdoor sculpture exhibition. Paul's aim was to link the two exhibitions and encourage a dialogue between artist, visitor and museum.

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<http://www.moda.mdx.ac.uk/gardens%20pages/suburban-land.html>