

## **Modernism Meets Upton Country Park – PEDAS - DAW 2018 Artist Statement –Marylyn Cropley**

This has been an interesting and enlightening journey. Upton Country Park (UCP) has a special place in my memory and in my creative life. As an artist with the Poole and East Dorset Art Society (PEDAS), I have visited UCP many times and exhibited in The Gallery Upstairs. Whilst employed by the Borough of Poole, I supported, trained and worked alongside people doing work experience in the Tea Rooms. As a well-being practitioner I offered creative, wellbeing sessions in the Education Centre. As an author, I drew inspiration for some of the illustrations in my book “Planet Earth Needs our Help” from the grounds of UCP. As a resident in Poole, I have walked and explored the house and grounds, enjoying activities with family and friends, soaking up its simple tranquillity and peace, with sometimes the occasional breeze and energetic flow of live music and dance.

Like a swan, above an underpinning flurry of activity and experiences, UCP presents an air of serenity, a curtain of calm that sits like a haunting haze over the turbulence of modern life. Over 200 years of heritage gently whispers a history, which commands to be noticed, despite a tsunami of commercialism that threatens to engulf this “shangri-la”.

Visitors return time and time again to UCP, despite recent changes to accommodate the growing numbers and to generate income. I am still not sure about some of these changes - only time will tell! As I observe the love, care and loyalty that is shown by many visitors (especially the volunteers, the Friends Of Upton Country Park and PEDAS at The Gallery Upstairs), I live in hope that this Heritage, left in trust for the people of Poole to enjoy, will continue to remain easily and freely accessible, so all can reap the therapeutic benefits now and in the future.

These were the thoughts influencing my work for this exhibition. I wanted to create an impression of past, present and future through the eyes of artists such as Rousseau, Gauguin, Picasso and the Art Deco movement.

A Wikipedia quote; “Rousseau claimed he had “No teacher other than nature”. He describes his frequent visits to the Jardin des Plantes: “When I go into the glass houses and I see the strange plants of exotic lands, it seems to me that I enter into a dream”. This is the impression I get when I feel the age and heritage of the house and see the plants in the walled garden, at UCP. The arches, like windows of a soul, look from past to present, leading into futures unknown. I see primitive elements of Picasso’s masks, reflected by the corbels, structures that hang like Bucranium, ox shaped guardians, protecting the walls and portals of antiquity. The simple use of colour, shapes and lines by Gauguin and Rousseau and the Art Deco Movement seemed to match the rich, exotic, atmosphere and feelings that exude from the house, gardens and surrounding areas of UCP. I wanted to portray in my own style, the meeting of Modernism and UCP: the sophisticated, primitive essence and elegant grace of a past heritage, seeping through the walls of the house, the architecture, the arches and foliage; meeting the modern lines, simplicity and shapes of today in the Tea rooms, Gallery Upstairs, that comfort and inspire visitors to the park.

If time had not run out I would have created a Dali impression of the car park with the lone tree standing on a deserted platform, a melting parking pay machine, and cars buried in the ground like tombstones. An impression my partner planted in my head, he is such an inspiration. Again one doesn’t have to be a practicing artist to view the wonders of UCP in such modern ways!

In this exhibition you will find two paintings of mine and 20 cards inspired by Upton Country Park. Please turn over for details about my work in this exhibition. For further information about me and my book please see my website. [www.freeplay.1me.net](http://www.freeplay.1me.net)  
Thank you for visiting our exhibition and Upton Country Park!

Marylyn

Marylyn Cropley – DAW 2018 @ The Gallery Upstairs – Upton Country Park, Poole – [www.freeplay.1me.net](http://www.freeplay.1me.net)

**“Back to the Present”** is an interpretation of heritage, a portal to the past, represented by the window arches and ageing walls of the house, the primitive Picasso mask like effect of the corbels watching over, while people today walk through a gateway in time and space. Here, in reverse to the first piece of work, a curtain of foliage frames the arch. There is a hint of nature past (peacock) and nature future, preserving, protecting bees and wildlife, which I am pleased to say, appears to be one of the many projects UCP is developing.

**“Through the Arches”** was inspired by a photograph I took a few years ago while sitting in a dark corner of an alcove, in the walled garden. I looked out through the old brick archway, framed by exotic plants, into the sunlight, shining on newly mowed grass. The Art Deco design, influenced by the windows in Upton House, creates a modern frame to the foliage, replacing the old brickwork, a point where modernism meets UCP. Today a family picnics, amongst the rich, exotic foliage, possibly a scene Gaugin or Rousseau would find captivating!



### **“Back to the present”**

Arches and stone corbels @ Upton Country House (almost Bucranium shaped, like an ox head). Guardians of the past, present and future!



### **“Through the Arches”**

Modernism meets Upton Country Park. Art Deco arches replace the old brick work and through the foliage, we see a familiar picnic scene. Inspired by Rousseau and Gaugin, but with a personal touch!