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## PRESS RELEASE

### THE HOWSE SHAL BE PRESERVED

**Rockingham Castle**

**Rockingham**

**Market Harborough**

**LE16 8TH**

**11 July 2021 – 28 September 2021**

**Rockingham Castle open times and admission prices apply (from £7.50)**

Fermynwoods Contemporary Art presents *The Howse Shal Be Preserved*, an exhibition situated at 950-year-old Rockingham Castle. The exhibition draws its title from an inscription on a beam in The Great Hall, with artists responding to the history of the castle.

Once the site of an Iron Age fort, later colonised by the Romans to establish a mining community, continuously fed by the landscape, Rockingham Castle was built on the instruction of William the Conqueror, recognising the strategic importance of the site with an abundance of geological features from iron-bearing sandstone beds to dense game filled forests. Home to the Watson family for the last 450 years, having previously been held by the crown, there are very few other homes in England that have been continuously occupied for nearly 1,000 years.

The exhibition features work in the castle and castle grounds by artists David Blyth, Justin Carter, Sarah Gillett, and Onya McCausland.

Justin Carter boiled oak galls from the trees in the castle grounds with household metal objects from inside the castle itself to make ink based on ancient recipes used on important manuscripts. Taking inspiration from the elephant hedge in the castle garden the ink was used to print on historic paper bearing the seal "From Vice Admiral Sir Michael Culme-Seymour", both seeming to reveal and conceal many hidden forms.

Over a year in the making Sarah Gillett's new body of work begins in the family archives of the castle, with her interest in the lives of its female occupants throughout history. The work uses physical and

digital spaces to dig into the resonances left by these women on literature, spiritualism and gardening to remind us of the importance of what we leave behind. Alongside an installation of drawing, objects and sound in The Long Gallery, Sarah has worked with artists Stuart Moore and Sam Mattacott to produce two immersive digital artworks. One takes us inside the body of a clothed woman lying in the gardens of the castle at night, whilst another offers a nighttime experience of the castle and grounds in the game of Minecraft.

With the appearance of arrows falling from the sky Onya McCausland's outdoor sculpture *Landed* refers to Rockingham's 950 year history of occupation, defence and attack, encapsulating iron in all its forms, with a nod to the constructing and making that formed the nearby steel making town of Corby. Over time the sculpture's appearance succumbs to the elements and slowly rusts.

David Blyth's *Forest Law* presents the viewer with a fictionalised collection of poaching and trapping tools that celebrate the ingenuity and creative vigour of the common folk of Rockingham Forest. Suitably confiscated from the castle, the challenging work is available to view in augmented reality by scanning images featuring a painting from the castle's collection containing a representation of a declawed dog.

All online works are accessible at [fermynwoods.org](https://fermynwoods.org)

### Editors Notes

Funded by Arts Council England, *The Howse Shall Be Preserved* is the fourth exhibition of *In Steps of Sundew*, Fermynwoods Contemporary Art's two-year programme of artistic interventions in public spaces, which retraces the movement of people and resources from the landscape, posing questions about the relationship between the natural and the industrial and how these might coexist whilst avoiding climate breakdown. Other exhibitions in the series are at Deene Park, Fineshade Wood and East Carlton Countryside Park.

Fermynwoods Contemporary Art is an educational charity that supports life through art by commissioning innovative and meaningful ways for artists to engage with audiences, in public spaces across Northamptonshire and online.

Fermynwoods Contemporary Art was named Best Contemporary Art Gallery in Northamptonshire in the 2020 Midlands Enterprise Awards and Art Charity of the Year for Central England in the Central England Prestige Awards.