

CRAFTS

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From dairy to doll's house

Emma Love previews the final of the 'Unravelling' trilogy at Uppark House

In 1825, Sir Harry Fetherstonhaugh, the 70 year-old owner of Uppark House and Garden in Petersfield, married his 20 year-old dairymaid, Mary Ann Bullock, and caused a huge society scandal. The story is one of many being brought to life by 11 artists in *Unravelling Uppark*, the third in a trilogy of projects from arts organisation Unravelled, in which site-specific works are created in response to the history of National Trust properties (the previous two were at Nymans in Sussex and the Vyne in Hampshire).

'We fell in love with Uppark,' says artist and Unravelled co-founder Caitlin Heffernan. 'It felt like a doll's house on a hill. The landscape has remained very much unchanged and the history of the house, which was devastated by a fire in

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CAITLIN HEFFERNAN

1989 and then reconstructed, is fascinating.' Unravelled put out an open call for artists and then balanced up the proposals based on subject matter and the materials people wanted to use. (Many wanted to make work around the tale of Emma Hart, later Lady Hamilton, who had been one of Fetherstonhaugh's entourage, and allegedly once danced naked on Uppark's dining table.)

One artist interested in the fire was Zoë Hillyard, whose patchwork ceramics are displayed among the existing ceramics collection in the red drawing room. She was given access to an off-site storeroom to photograph fragments rescued from the debris. 'It's amazing: there are crates stacked floor to ceiling with salvaged ceramics, most still covered in soot.' Hillyard digitally printed her



images onto fragments of silk, wrapped it around broken, second-hand vessels and then stitched the pieces back together. 'In the fire the whole of the roof went so the bottom floor was exposed to the sky. My main vessel is left incomplete to show that brutality, and I've left broken fragments next to it so it looks like it's just fallen over.'

The fire was a source of inspiration for another of the Unravelled co-founders, artist Matt Smith. 'There are a row of functional fire buckets in the basement and a sprinkler system in the upper rooms. I was interested visually in how what happened upstairs and downstairs was very different,' he explains. 'I also thought about how the dairymaid from downstairs was transformed into a lady upstairs.' Smith has produced seven

Clockwise from right: *The House of Eloi* (detail), Helen Felcey and Alice Kettle; *Trade*, Steven Follen; *Remnants*, Caitlin Heffernan; *Garniture: The Bullock Buckets*, Matt Smith. All work 2014



buckets, all hand-thrown in segments, joined together and decorated with hand screen-printed decals of his own holiday snaps as a reference to the idea of the grand tour.

Similarly, Heffernan has merged two stories of the house for her installation in the stables: the charred remnants from the fire which had been left in one of the bays and the contrast between the stables being a place to show off the best horses with the manual labour involved in taking care of them. Other works on display around the house include Steven Follen's origami toy boats, made from folded sheet metal, which relate to Harry's father Sir Matthew Fetherstonhaugh's link to the shipping industry; Gen Doy's sound piece in the dairy; and a collaboration between ceramist Helen Felcey and

textiles artist Alice Kettle that stems from H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine*, whose mother was a housekeeper at Uppark.

Kettle remembered a giant doll's house she saw on a visit to the house as a child, so the pair have created a futuristic version out of Perspex with stitched fabric and ceramic figures using Wells's post-human race Eloi as a starting point. 'I've never made anything like them before, but we wanted to pick up on those creatures and take our work in a new direction,' says Kettle. 'The whole thing is a magical space, something a bit curious.' The same could be said for the exhibition and Uppark itself.

'Unravelling Uppark' is at Uppark House and Garden, South Harting, Petersfield GU31 5QR, from 4 May – 2 November. www.unravelled.org.uk