




**Bryniau Clwyd a
Dyffryn Dyfrdwy**
Clwydian Range
and Dee Valley
Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Sarah-Joy Ford Beloved

Crafting Intimacies with the Ladies of Llangollen

**April 30th - October 30th 2022, Plas Newydd Historic House.
An Exhibition of New Quilted artworks at Plas Newydd**

Delight of my heart, My sweet love, My Beloved, My B

This exhibition presents a site-specific installation of quilted and textile artworks created by Manchester-based artist Sarah-Joy Ford after a period of artist residency at Plas Newydd Historic House and Gardens in Llangollen. The embroidered intervention is inspired by the deep and lifelong intimate relationship between the Ladies of Llangollen and the extraordinary home that they created together.

Plas Newydd was home to Lady Eleanor Butler (1739–1829) and Sarah Ponsonby (1755–1831), who captured the imagination of Regency society when they eloped from their families in Ireland to begin a life of exquisite retirement together, escaping the confines of their gendered fates of marriage and the convent. After a tour of Wales, – they chose to settle on the outskirts of Llangollen, in the small cottage they christened Plas Newydd in 1780. Here they lived together as life partners, with their maid and friend Mary Carryl who helped them escape from Ireland and create their extraordinary rural domesticity, including caring for a kitchen garden and a myriad of animals, among which included a dog called Sapho.

Over the years, they transformed Plas Newydd into a Gothic fantasy of patchwork stained glass and elaborately carved oak. This beloved cottage orne, situated within the picturesque landscape of North Wales attracted a stream of visitors including Anna Seward, Caroline Princess of Wales, Dorothy and William Wordsworth and the lesbian industrialist Anne Lister.

Beloved Exhibition

The exhibition will be the first of its kind to make an intervention into the house through a radical re-designing of the domestic textiles of the home including quilts, cushions and curtains. The techniques used to create the new artworks directly reference Sarah Ponsonby's own creative practice which included sketching, watercolour painting and embroidery. Through a combination of handcraft and digital techniques Sarah's artistic legacy is woven back into the fabric of the house.

The new works are a loving intervention, and embroidered embellishment of this extraordinary tale of women who lived, and loved, differently despite enormous societal restrictions.

About the Artist

Sarah-Joy Ford is an Artist and Researcher based at Manchester School of Art at Manchester Metropolitan University working with textiles to explore the complexities and pleasures of queer communities, histories, and archives. Her practice sits at the intersection of digital and traditional: using strategies of quilting, digital embroidery, digital print, applique and hand embellishment. Recent exhibitions include Archives and Amazons, HOME (Manchester) and Oranges are not the Only Fruit, Accrington Library (The British Textile Biennale) and Rebel Dykes Art and Archive Exhibition, Space Station 65. Her work has been commissioned by Artichoke Productions, The Pitt Rivers Museum, The Civic and Superbia. Her AHRC funded PhD research explores quilt making as an affective methodology for making re-visioning lesbian archival material.

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Exhibition Launch Event and Symposium

This is a day event celebrating the launch of the exhibition 'Beloved: Crafting Intimacies with the Ladies of Llangollen' created by Manchester-based artist Sarah-Joy Ford after a period of artist residency at Plas Newydd Historic House and Gardens in Llangollen. The site specific embroidered intervention is inspired by the deep and lifelong intimate relationship between the Ladies of Llangollen and the extraordinary home that they created together, as well as Sarah Ponsonby's own creative practices undertaken in the home.

The day will include a symposium hosted by 'Queer Research Network Manchester' with talks from Professor Alison Oram, Freya Gowrley and Sarah-Joy Ford at The Hand Hotel, a visit to St Collen's Church where Eleanor Butler, Sarah Ponsonby and Mary Carryl are buried and a private view of the exhibition, with drinks reception at Plas Newydd Historic House and Gardens.

Tickets: www.beloved-plas-newydd.eventbrite.co.uk

Funding

The project is supported by Plas Newydd Historic House and Gardens, Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The practice based research project is funded by the North West Consortium Doctoral Training Partnership through their Researcher-Led Knowledge Exchange scheme placement scheme, with support from which is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

You can view the case study and information on the project on the NWCDTP website:

www.nwcdtp.ac.uk/partners/plas-newydd

How to Visit

Plas Newydd Historic House and Gardens, Llangollen, is open to the public every day from 10AM- 4PM throughout the summer months.

The exhibition will be installed for viewing for the whole 2022 season at Plas Newydd from April 30th 2022 to October 30th 2022.

For more information about visiting Plas Newydd:

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