

PATRICK JEFFERSON



Item A MONUMENTAL OVERDOOR DEPICTING A FOX AND A PHEASANT

Date England, probably second-half of the 19th century.

Provenance Removed from a house in Nottingham; the earlier provenance lost.

Dimensions Height 36" (91.5cm) Width 52" (132cm) Depth 13 1/2" (34.5)

Description *Cast and sculpted in plaster; in good condition throughout; small nicks, losses and abrasions; the surface discoloured with age; the iron former original.*

This extraordinary sculpture, depicting a recumbent fox crouching on a ledge with a pheasant in its mouth, formed the pediment to a particularly grand overdoor, which is all that appears to survive from what must have been a spectacular room, presumably from a hunting box or kennels. Such rooms, envisaged to glorify the hunt, were designed for dining or meeting, the most famous of which was a hunting box known as Fox Hall built by Charles Lennox, 1st duke of Richmond, in the small downland village of Charlton, near Goodwood. The Charlton Hunt, established in 1675, appears to be the first having a documented pack of hounds to chase only the fox. Within the space of a few years this hunt attained a popularity amongst the nobility never since equalled, including almost all the sons of Charles II and every noble family in the land. In 1722 Lord Burlington designed a dining room for the hunt, known as the 'Great Room', that was later superseded by Fox Hall, designed by Roger Morris in the Palladian taste, which still stands.

The Aesopian subject of a fox and pheasant has been sculpted with great sensitivity and power, envisaged to be even more dramatic when viewed from below. The original iron former remains visible and accessible on the back allowing the scene to be elevated and hung at any height.

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Fig. 1



Fig.2



Fig.3