



Seaton Delaval Hall is now home to Hattie Keel's winning design from the National Trust Rising Stars creative partnership.

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Northumbria supports search for next generation of creative talent

The National Trust and leading architecture practice, GT3 Architects, have teamed up with Northumbria University to search for the next generation of talented architects as part of a project supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The Rising Stars creative partnership is a strand of the National Trust's *The Curtain Rises* project, centred on conservation and improvement work at the historic Seaton Delaval Hall, which was acquired by the trust in 2009.

A live project inspired by the building was set up to give students an opportunity to flex their creative skills and offer invaluable industry experience. With more than 20 students from Northumbria's BA Interior Architecture programme taking part in the project, Hattie Keel was crowned the winner with her striking structure centred around visual trickery.

Hattie's installation was unveiled with a celebration at [Seaton Delaval Hall](#), where it has now been constructed for visitors to enjoy.

After recently graduating from Northumbria, Hattie has secured a job with GT3 and is now working as a designer for the company, which has studios in Newcastle and Nottingham.

She explained: "My time at Northumbria gave me great insight into the industry through numerous live projects, including this partnership with the National Trust. Throughout the process I also worked alongside GT3 Architects, giving me valuable career experience in the industry.

"The Rising Stars competition put my foot in the door to life after graduation; the knowledge it gave me boosted my confidence in my creativity and design capabilities. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity provided by Northumbria, as this enhanced my portfolio and assisted in securing my role as a Graduate Interior Architectural Designer at GT3."

Thanks to a donation from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, since 2018 Seaton Delaval Hall has been the focus of *The Curtain Rises* project, where as well as improvements to visitor facilities and extensive conservation work, the stories of Seaton Delaval Hall's colourful past are now being brought to life through initiatives like the Rising Stars creative partnership.

Speaking about her winning entry to the project, Hattie added: "My design was inspired by the playfulness and trickery of the Delaval family, who lived in Seaton Delaval Hall in the 18th century. I wanted to provide a space for visitors to sit and dwell within the structure. The seats therefore follow the natural folds of origami, enabling visitors to interact and engage with the structure.

"I've really enjoyed the entire process and seeing my initial concept brought to life."

Paul Ring, Associate Professor and Head of Architecture at Northumbria, said: “In creative partnership with the National Trust, Rising Stars provides a folio of live project experiences for our students across many creative disciplines, and we are delighted that Hattie’s design was chosen and then built for the National Trust’s visitors at Seaton Delaval Hall.

“GT3 worked with students to guide them through client meetings, design detailing, budget, and fabrication decisions. Hattie is without doubt a more informed and accomplished designer thanks to this experience and we are exceptionally grateful to GT3 and the National Trust for the opportunity, their expertise, and their support to our students.”

Taylor Grindley, project architect at GT3, was the day-to-day lead on the work. He said: “We really enjoyed taking part in the Rising Stars project and working closely with the National Trust and Northumbria University. All the designs were fantastic and incredibly creative, but Hattie’s really blew us all away.

“We worked really closely with Hattie to ensure all aspects of the design were viable and that we could bring it to life, with the construction handled by Raskl. We love educating and inspiring the next generation of architects and designers, so the Rising Stars project has been a brilliant experience.”

Emma Thomas, the National Trust’s general manager of Seaton Delaval Hall, said: “Hattie’s excellent design helped us achieve our ambition of telling the stories of the Hall and our National Lottery Heritage Fund-supported project more creatively to members and visitors. The Rising Stars project has supported the employment and soft skills development of Northumbria University’s students and at the same time helped the National Trust realise several creative and conservation-based ambitions.”

The installations are available to visit in the Saloon at Seaton Delaval Hall.

There are a range of study options available within the department of Architecture and the Built Environment at Northumbria. Find out more here about the courses and facilities on offer.

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