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Download high-resolution photographs of the display and objects here: [Stories in Stitch at The Bowes Museum](#). ©The Bowes Museum, photography by Claire Collinson Photography.

### A RICH TAPESTRY: LAST CALL FOR STORIES IN STITCH

There are just over two weeks for visitors to explore *Stories in Stitch* the captivating textile exhibition at The Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle, which closes on Sunday 29 September. This special display presents a collection of rarely seen samplers and embroidered pictures, highlighting different stitching styles side-by-side for the first time.

*Stories in Stitch* explores the development and popularity of domestic embroidery in Britain, highlighting the female makers who shaped its evolution. It also illustrates the impact of art and social history and the development of embroidery materials, techniques and teachings from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Rachel Whitworth, Curator (Fashion and Textiles) said: “Some of the items have local connections to Barnard Castle and nearby towns, and to the Bowes family whose ancestral home was Streatlam Castle near Staindrop. The works give valuable insights into the social and historical importance of needlework to girls and women as part of their education, a hobby or pastime, or, for some, in their profession as an artist maker.

“The exhibition has been hugely popular with visitors to the Museum and we are inviting people to come and enjoy this unique collection before it ends.”

The exhibition also showcases Joséphine and John Bowes’ textile purchases which formed the founding collection of the Museum, alongside donations from the 20<sup>th</sup> century that have enriched it further by bringing unknown local and personal perspectives to the fore.

Visitors have acclaimed the show as ‘Stunning!’, ‘Inspiring’, ‘a feast for the eyes’ and as a ‘beautifully displayed, totally absorbing window into the past’.

Highlights of the display include the work of Mary Linwood (1755-1845), a pioneering artist with an international reputation. From the late 1770s, Linwood produced ‘needle paintings’, embroidered pictures copied from Old Masters and contemporary British artists such as Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough and John Russell. Drawing inspiration from work she owned or saw on show at public exhibitions or in private collections, Linwood used crewel wool and silk highlights to produce images in long and short and satin stitches, imitating brush strokes.

Presented alongside examples of Linwood's 'needle paintings' is the work of her contemporary, Anne Eliza Morritt (1724-1795) of Rokeby Park. Morritt created nearly 50 embroidered works, all of which are still in the family collection. Many are based on paintings belonging to her family, but others are copied from engravings of works now in public collections. Morritt was referred to in Arthur Young's *A Six Months Tour through the North of England* in 1770 as "a lady of most surprising genius". Every brushstroke was reproduced intricately in wool or silk, a truly ambitious body of work.

### **Creative Workshop:**

Visitors inspired by the show can book a taster session to learn different stitch styles from the skilled and knowledgeable members of Take a Stitch 2 Durham on Saturday 19 October, 1.00 – 3.00. This workshop is recommended for ages 8+ and is suitable for all abilities. Spaces are limited and bookings can be made via the Museum's website <https://thebowesmuseum.org.uk/whats-on/needlework-bags>.

A select number of items from *Stories in Stitch* will remain on display in the Fashion & Textiles Gallery after the exhibition closes, providing further opportunities for visitors to see some of the spectacular embroidered works in the Museum's permanent collection.

Lovers of textiles and history must not miss this chance to see exquisite examples of historical needlework up close in *Stories in Stitch*, open daily, 10.00 – 5.00, at The Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle. The exhibition is free for Members and is included in normal admission charges.

### **Note to editors:**

For all press images, filming, photography and media enquiries, please contact our Marketing & Communications Coordinator Sarah Webster [sarah.webster@thebowesmuseum.org.uk](mailto:sarah.webster@thebowesmuseum.org.uk).

The Bowes Museum is a charity managing a Grade 1 listed accredited Museum and Grade 2 listed parkland in Barnard Castle. Founded by Joséphine & John Bowes 150+ years ago, this purpose-built Museum brings together an extraordinary, Designated collection of European fine and decorative art as a cultural resource for the people of Northern England, where today we celebrate artists, designers and makers.

The Bowes Museum receives funding from Durham County Council and, as a National Portfolio Organisation, receives support from Arts Council England. Arts Council England is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives. [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

The Bowes Museum is a member of the Discover Durham partnership of attractions, whose commitment is to promote Durham as an exciting and vibrant group travel destination and to provide the travel trade with a professional and knowledgeable service. [discoverdurham.co.uk](http://discoverdurham.co.uk)

Admission to The Bowes Museum is £16.00 for local members (residents of County Durham and Darlington), £18.00 for members (residents elsewhere), £19.00 for a day ticket, £20.90 for a day ticket including gift aid. Under 18s, full time students and carers are free.

As a registered charity (number 1079639) The Bowes Museum needs to generate more than half of its income each year to care for the historic collection, buildings and parkland. Your donations are vital to that work. Visit <https://thebowesmuseum.org.uk/support/> for more information.