

## PRESS RELEASE

February 2025



Joséphine Bowes, *Fruit, Flowers and Vegetables*, c.1860-1874 ©The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle

### From Joséphine Bowes: Trendsetters and Trailblazers

8 February - 29 June 2025

The Bowes Museum is pleased to announce its major new exhibition *From Joséphine Bowes: Trendsetters and Trailblazers*, celebrating 200 years of its visionary – and spirited – co-founder, Joséphine Bowes (1825-1874). Opening in February 2025, and with works spanning 300 years, the exhibition features more than 60 artists, designers, and makers shaping trends in western culture today: from **Sophie Anderson** (1823 - 1903) and **Pablo Picasso** (1881 - 1973), to **Grayson Perry** (b.1960), **Magdalena Odundo** (b.1950), **Phoebe Cummings** (b.1981), and **Lucy Waters** (b.1999). Like Joséphine's story, *From Joséphine Bowes: Trendsetters and Trailblazers* is full of surprises.

Joséphine was a nineteenth-century warrior woman: humble in roots and bold in spirit. She lived at a time when Modern art and Impressionism were gaining momentum. Still, women did not have the right to vote, and the civil rights movement was yet to begin. The daughter of a clockmaker, her life as a Parisian actress and dancer transformed in 1852 when she married and followed her heart to the North of England. With access to a considerable fortune through her husband's inheritance, as an illegitimate heir, a racehorse win, and the sale of a wedding gift, within ten years, Joséphine had defied many societal norms to become a pioneering artist, collector and patron of the arts. Fiercely independent, like the communities of her adopted home in Teesdale, Joséphine was unusually successful in navigating the dominant rules of gender, geography, class and taste, when she laid the first stone of The Bowes Museum in 1862.

The Bowes Museum now explores the contemporary continuation of Joséphine's collection and imagines where its female founder's knowledge of artistic trends might take The Bowes Museum next. *From Joséphine Bowes: Trendsetters and Trailblazers*, is organised into four thematic sections. Presenting works in wide-ranging media, from painting, drawing, film and photography to sculpture, ceramics, furniture and textiles, every aspect of The Bowes Museum is shown in a new light. Highlights from Joséphine's eclectic and expansive eighteenth and nineteenth-century collections are paired with significant loans from twentieth-century European history and new works by leading artists today in the North of England.

In the first section, which is dedicated to our relationship with nature, visitors are greeted by one of **Joséphine Bowes's** most accomplished large-scale still-life oil paintings, *Fruit, Flowers and Vegetables*, c.1860-1874. This is paired with two new, previously unseen works, including a digital piece, *Physalis*, 2024, by **David Lisser** (b.1987), and a major commission for the exhibition by **Phoebe Cummings** (b.1981). From The Bowes Museum's collection, *Fruit and Flowers*, 1866, by **Henri Fantin Latour** (1836 – 1904), also joins the display.

The intimate second section focuses on the female versus male gaze, past and present. It features a provocative selection of works, including the empowering portrait of a woman, *Scheherazade*, date unknown, by **Sophie Anderson**, adjacent to the painted plate, *Woman's Face*, 1953, by **Pablo Picasso and Madoura Pottery**, and an earthenware *Urn*, c.1990, by **Grayson Perry**. The bold figurative wall-textile, *Bodyscape No.4*, 2023, by **Daisy Collingridge** (b.1991) and two moving portrayals of women embracing in, *As I Stood, Listened and Watched, I Said this Woman is Not for Burning*, 1985, by **Sutapa Biswas** (b.1962) also feature.

**Joy Labinjo's** (b.1994) *Chosen Family*, 2024, lies at the heart of section three, which has a focus on collecting and belonging. Here, recent sculptures by **Leilah Barbirye** (b.1985), including *Kalibbala from the Kuchu Nsenene (Grasshopper) Clan*, 2023-24, for example, stand proudly alongside *Traccia (Table with Bird's Feet) Cassina Edition*, 1973, by **Meret Oppenheim** (1913 – 1985), and a photograph series by **Gillian Wearing** (b.1963).

The exhibition concludes with open skies and seas, full of possibilities. Among the selected works, the wild waters of *Maree Montante, pres Boulogne-sur-mer*, 1870, by **Joséphine Bowes**, is seen side by side with **Paul Merrick's** (b.1973) large and enigmatic abstract painting, *Lagoon*, 2020.

Vicky Sturrs, Director of Programmes and Collections at The Bowes Museum, said:

*“Joséphine Bowes was a nineteenth-century innovator and tastemaker, a collector of young and emerging talent, who amassed a founding collection of 15,000 objects encompassing fine art to ceramics, glassware to textiles, furniture to mechanical objects. At the time, more early Impressionist works were purchased by The Bowes Museum than by the National Gallery, London. The driving force behind this new exhibition, From Joséphine Bowes: Trendsetters and Trailblazers, is The Bowes Museum reflecting on its founders' vision and what it means to be a collecting institution at the forefront of artistic trends for the North of England and beyond. How, 200 years on, should Joséphine's pioneering vision to create a public museum for everyone, especially the people of Teesdale, live on today and for future generations?”*



Joy Labinjo, *Chosen Family*, 2024, Courtesy of the artist and Tiwani Contemporary,  
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## For further press information:

- Jenny Lea: [jenny@culturecommscollective.com](mailto:jenny@culturecommscollective.com) / 07787773344
- Adela Cragg: [adela@culturecommscollective.com](mailto:adela@culturecommscollective.com) / 07532 685 614
- Morag Wood: [morag@culturecommscollective.com](mailto:morag@culturecommscollective.com) / 07976 081 044

Ends

## Notes to Editors

### Visitor Information

**Open Daily** 10.00am – 5.00pm (3.00pm 24 & 31 December). Closed 25 – 26 December and 1 January.

**Address** Barnard Castle, County Durham, DL12 8NP **Telephone** 01833 690606

Free entry with National Art Pass; and Bowes Membership; under 18yrs & students & carers. Adult tickets £19

### From Joséphine Bowes: Trendsetters and Trailblazers

8 February - 29 June 2025

From The Bowes Museum's collection, *From Joséphine Bowes: Trendsetters and Trailblazers* includes: **Eugene Boudin** (1825-1908), **Joséphine Bowes** (1825-1874), **Roselba Carriera** (1675- 1757), **Paul-Alfred Colin** (1838-1916), **Eugene-Francois-Marie-Joseph Deveria** (1805-1865), **Emilie Galle** (1700-1860), **Herminie or Henriette Herminie Louise Gudin** (1825-1892), **Henri Fantin Latour** (1836-1904), **Mary Linwood** (1755-1845), **Adolphe Monticelli** (1824 – 1886), and **Marie Talbot** (1814-1874).

Contemporaries with connections to the North East include: **Ruth Adams** (1893-1949), **Sutapa Biswas** (b.1962), **Joy Labinjo** (b.1994), **David Lisser** (b.1987), **Paul Merrick** (b.1973), **Katie Moran** (b.1975), **Lucy Waters** (b.1999) and **Zac Weinberg** (b.1990).

Major loans include works by: **Sophie Anderson** (1823 – 1903), **Leilah Barbirye** (b.1985), **Daisy Collingridge** (b.1991), **Evelyn Mary Dunbar** (1905 - 1960), **Charlotte Hodes** (b.1959), **Mary Kelly** (b.1941), **Meret Oppenheim** (1913-1985), **Sir Grayson Perry** (b.1960), **Pablo Picasso** (1881 – 1973), **Dame Magdalena Odundo** (b.1950), **Woody de Othello** (b.1991), **Guiseppe Signorini** (1857-1932), **Alina Szapocznikow** (1926-1973), **Matt Smith** (b.1971), **Bouke de Vries** (b.1960), and **Gillian Wearing** (b.1963).

Major new commission by: **Phoebe Cummings** (b.1981)

### About The Bowes Museum

Located in the heart of County Durham, The Bowes Museum is a proud neighbour to Yorkshire, Newcastle and Manchester. We are a future-thinking museum of artists, designers and makers, and with a spirit of generosity and collaboration, we aim to support and uplift the North of England.

Our collection includes works from artists including El Greco, Canaletto, Goya, and J.M.W Turner, and the Museum also houses a collection of ceramics, glassware, and silverware, including pieces by renowned manufacturers such as Sèvres and Fabergé. Our fashion and textiles collection includes over 13,000 items, from eighteenth-century court dress to contemporary designer clothing. The collection features pieces worn by European royalty and aristocracy, and clothing and accessories made by notable designers such as Chanel and Dior.

In addition to displaying and interpreting this permanent collection, TBM produces exhibitions, commissions artwork, performances and interventions. The organisation delivers a learning and engagement programme, prioritising working with local constituents, families, and disenfranchised communities of geography, interests, or circumstances.

Our organisation is continuing to change. Alongside opening new co-produced gallery spaces and touring collection vaults in April 2024, our exhibition programme (changing every six months) showcases high-quality, new and existing work by regional, national and international artists and makers. With our communities, our

programmes support and develop cultural confidence, promote art for all and aim to steward the future. As a charity, our refreshed vision is to unlock people's potential to shape a more interesting, equitable and sustainable world.

### **Further 2025 Programme Highlights**

There is something for everyone at The Bowes Museum in 2025, with opportunities for creative discovery, play and reflection in response to the local and global worlds of fashion, literature, ceramics and travel.

#### **Joséphine: a woman of taste and fashion**

22 March 2025 – March 2026

To coincide with *Joséphine Bowes: Trendsetters and Trailblazers*, a dedicated new display from The Bowes Museum's collection opens to showcase the variety and breadth of Joséphine's textile acquisitions, including woven and embroidered chair covers, ecclesiastical textiles, embroideries, lace, and items purchased at the Exposition Universelle of 1867 in Paris. Surviving items of dress belonging to Joséphine are presented alongside archival material, complemented by examples of French dresses from the 1850s and 1860s. More recent examples of French haute couture from the collection including pieces by iconic designers **Jeanne Paquin** (1869 - 1936), **Madeleine Vionnet** (1876 - 1975), **Elsa Schiaparelli** (1890 - 1973), **Jacques Fath** (1912 - 1954), and **Yves Saint Laurent** (1936 - 2008), also feature, giving a glimpse of what Joséphine might have worn had she lived into the twentieth century.

#### **Nathan Coley: You Create What You Will**

From June 2025

For the first time, The Bowes Museum hosts one of Nathan Coley's (dates) globally acclaimed outdoor series of artworks, 'You Create What You Will', on its grounds. This illuminated text on a scaffolding support some 7 metres high originates from Bernard Shaw's (1856-1950) play *In the Beginning: B.C. 4004*, an allegorical tale of Adam and Eve as avatars for aboriginal humanity set at the dawn of creation. Emanating from a re-envisioning of an Old Testament text, 'You Create What You Will' is typical of Coley's practice, which is based on an interest in public space and how systems of personal, social, religious and political belief structure our towns and cities, and therefore ourselves.

#### **Pippa Hale: Pet Project**

26 July 2025 – 1 March 2026

For a major new commission by The Bowes Museum for summer 2025, acclaimed local artist **Pippa Hale** (dates) transforms the museum's renowned ceramic collection into a vibrant and interactive experience for all ages. Turning fragile into shatterproof, this playful exhibition, titled *Pet Project*, invites visitors to engage with ceramics boldly and hands-on, reimagining the collection's precious figurines as 2.5m high, soft, sculptural forms. These giant 'squishes' welcome you to hug, climb and create imaginary play scenes, encouraging personal connections with these larger-than-life shapes as if they were cherished pets or beloved toys. Through interactive activities, *Pet Project* also explores the rich history of ceramics, from decorating and manufacturing techniques to cultural contexts and invites reflection on the timeless bond between people and pets. Visitors can contribute their treasured animal figurines to the show, offering fresh perspectives on value and public collecting, and decorate their bisque-fired object too.

#### **Dressed for Departure: Fashion in the Age of Rail**

September 2025 – January 2026

The Stockton and Darlington Railway (SDR) opened on 27 September 1825, connecting places, people, communities and ideas and ultimately transforming the world. To celebrate the railway's bicentenary, The Bowes Museum presents a new exhibition in the Fashion & Textile Gallery, where visitors can discover historic fashion with railway connections alongside toys and artworks that record the railway's route through Teesdale. Highlights include fashions, both flamboyant and functional, from crucial moments in local railway history, including a guard's coat worn on the first train from Barnard Castle to Redcar in 1856 and the world's first toy train set given by 'Father of the Railway' Edward Pease to his son John.