**Artist Recruitment: Co-Creation for the Reimagine Project -** A Collaboration with UTASS, Weardale Together & The Bowes Museum.

**Deadline:** Friday 9th May 2025

**Interviews:** Friday 16th May 2025

We are seeking two dynamic and passionate artists to join us in the content development and delivery phase of our **Reimagine Project.** This is a unique opportunity to collaborate with local community groups and The Bowes Museum to shape the stories and experiences exhibited in three new gallery spaces.

This project co-creates with community members, exploring their interests, histories, and creative ideas, and translating them into a meaningful, lasting contribution to new spaces at the museum.

### **About the Opportunity**

We are recruiting **two artists** to work with the following community groups:

* **UTASS (Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Service)** – Engaging a rural farming community with deep connections to the land, heritage, and traditional skills. Past activities have explored textile arts, storytelling, and agricultural history.
* **Weardale Together (WT)** – A diverse group from Stanhope, interested in textiles, mixed media, and personal histories, with a focus on contemporary expressions of community identity.

Artists will facilitate **15 half-day creative sessions** with one of these groups, guiding participants through creative processes that will inform and shape their contribution to the new gallery spaces.

**About the Reimagine Project**

The Bowes Museum has successfully secured funding from the Art Fund, Pilgrim Trust, Swire Charitable Trust and The Wolfson Foundation, to redevelop a number of spaces within the museum in co-production, focused on radically readdressing our founding story, inspiring curiosity and conversations, and engaging communities with our collections.

The Reimagine Project at The Bowes Musuem asks:

*How might we create curiosity, connection and future relevance with our communities through a radical retelling of our Founding story in spaces with sustainably displayed and re-interpreted collections? How could we encourage learning, open up museum practices, and connect us to the people and landscape surrounding our museum?*

In total the project will co-produce approximately 308sqm of museum galleries to improve access, display, interpretation, and understanding of Designated collections, encourage greater community relevance, engagement, and interest, and increase visitor footfall.

New gallery spaces will open in April 2026

**Project Goals**

* **Bring community voices into The Bowes Museum** – ensuring their experiences and heritage are represented.
* **Create meaningful, co-produced artistic outcomes** – blending community input with professional artistic guidance.
* **Highlight and reinterpret The Bowes Museum’s founder stories** – giving a contemporary voice to historical narratives through community-chosen themes.
* **Encourage skill-building and ownership** – empowering participants with creative skills and fostering a sense of connection to the museum’s collection.

### **Your Role as an Artist**

* **Collaborate with community groups** – exploring themes, stories, and artistic approaches.
* **Facilitate creative workshops** – using your expertise to inspire participation and engagement.
* **Guide participants in co-creating a final intervention** – which will be integrated into the new galleries, opening in April 2026.
* **Work with museum staff, curators, and exhibition designers** – ensuring a seamless integration of community-led contributions.
* **Adapt and respond** to the evolving interests and needs of the participants, ensuring an inclusive and engaging process.

**Competencies/Qualities/Experiences**

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| **Criteria** | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| **Job-specific competencies/qualities/experience:** |
| Must be enthusiastic and confident working in a public-facing role with a variety of audiences. | ✓ |  |
| Be organised, self-motivated and have a passion for delivering workshops and programmes that embed and share their own arts practice. | ✓ |  |
| Able to demonstrate experience in the delivery of arts-based activities that are accessible and engage audiences |  | ✓ |
| Good communication skills with ability to adapt communication style to the audience. | ✓ |  |
| Awareness of the importance of risk assessments in working with visitors in a museum environment. |  | ✓ |
| Ability to manage a project and adhere to broader time frames and deadlines | ✓ |  |
| Able to work on own initiative within a given framework | ✓ |  |
| Ability to demonstrate arts-based knowledge and skills to audiences in both formal and informal contexts | ✓ |  |
| DBS check – the post is subject to satisfactory completion of the check and the Museum will undertake this. | ✓ |  |
| Interest in fine art and the decorative arts in a museum setting and translating that into inspiring workshops. |  | ✓ |

### **Workshop Details**

Artists are expected to deliver a creative package that supports the storytelling, creative output, and audience engagement goals of the project.

Artists will lead **15half-day (up to 2.5 hour) workshops**, structured to include:

* **Creative exploration & discussion** – exploring and deepening key themes and ideas.
* **Gathering References:** Collect and curate relevant visual and thematic references to inform and inspire your group’s design ideas, ensuring they resonate with the project's context and museum audiences.
* **Hands-on making** – developing artwork inspired by museum collections and community heritage.
* **Finalisation & construction** – shaping a piece/s/approach that will be exhibited in the new gallery spaces.

Sessions will be held between May 2025 and December 2026, the gallery opening in April 2026

**Expectations**

The following ways of working are important to the success of the project:

* **Collaboration** – Co-production is at the heart of this project; you will shape ideas alongside participants. Willingness to iterate based on feedback and active collaboration with the museum team to refine community outputs as the project evolves.
* **Flexibility** – Sessions may evolve based on participant feedback and engagement. Engage in regular reviews with the community participants and museum team, incorporating feedback to refine and align the work with their vision.
* **Inclusivity** – All activities should be accessible and welcoming to diverse audiences.
* **Communication** – Regular updates with project leads and fellow artists are essential.
* **Delivery:** Clear commitment to delivery milestones and responsiveness to project timelines to maintain overall production momentum.
* **Support & Resources**

You will have access to museum archives, collections, and museum team support.

* Museum staff can act as critical friends to shape sessions
* Team members from the museum and each partner will help to provide logistical and administrative assistance for workshop planning.
* A budget for materials and expenses will be available to support your work.

### **Practical Details**

* **Artist Fee:**
* 15 session fees at £130.00 per half-day (up to 2.5 hours) inclusive of workshop delivery/set-up = £1950
* 3 preparation day fees at £250 per full day = £750
* 3 meeting fees at £50 each = £150
* Total Fee = £2850
* Travel expenses: To be agreed upon as needed up to £500
* **Materials Budget:** To be agreed upon as needed up to £500.
* **Production budget:** To be agreed upon as needed up to £1500

**Project Start Date:** May 2025

* **How to Apply**
* **Application deadline Friday 9th May 2025**
* **Interviews to take place Friday 16th May 2025**

**To apply, please send the following to Alia Cruz, Learning Manager, via alia.cruz@thebowesmuseum.org.uk. Use the subject line ‘*Reimagine project artist application*’:** Your CV

* Up to 5 images or video links of relevant works from your art practice Tell us, in no more than 200 words tell us why this opportunity is for you
* In no more than 300 words tell us how you have worked with communities in the past

**Next Steps**

We are thrilled to welcome artists who are passionate about collaborative storytelling and community engagement. Join us in shaping the next chapter of The Bowes Museum’s journey.

If you have any questions, ideas, or would like further information, please be in touch with Alia on alia.cruz@thebowesmuseum.org.uk

Successful applicants will be contacted for interview.