

Media release
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**Nathan Coley: *You Create What You Will* and *Tate Modern on Fire*
(14 June 2025 – 1 March 2026)**



Nathan Coley, *You Create What You Will*, (2014) © The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle. Photography by Claire Collinson.

Artworks *You Create What You Will* (2014) and *Tate Modern on Fire* (2017), by Turner prize nominee and Glasgow based artist Nathan Coley, are set to exhibit outside and inside The Bowes Museum, County Durham respectively from 14 June 2025 - 1 March 2026.

Both works exemplify Coley's distinctive artistic practice, which interrogates public space and examines how systems of personal, social, religious and political belief shape our towns, cities and ultimately, our sense of self. **As a museum dedicated to artists, designers and makers, the museum offers a fitting context for this critical exploration**, providing a space where visitors are invited to question the nature of art, its role within society and their own relationship to it.

On the museum's grounds, visitors will first see Coley's *You Create What You Will*, a piece of illuminated text on a scaffolding support around five and a half metres high. Coley's installation, set against the backdrop of the museum's parkland perched high on the grass bank, invites viewers to question the profound power of creation and draw parallels between the installation and the museum's founders' mission of supporting and uplifting artists. The text references Bernard Shaw's play, *In the Beginning: B.C. 4004*, which is a symbolic satirical tale of Adam and Eve, exploring the biblical narrative of creation.

Within the museum, visitors will be able to see *Tate Modern on Fire*, an architectural abstract model of the London museum. From the front, 2D flames emerge from the museum's boiler house, while from the open back, elements associated with the museum are displayed, such as a cabinet of curiosities. The piece reflects on the fragility of cultural institutions and the precarious relationship between museums and society, art and the environment.

Artist, Nathan Coley said: "I'm excited to have my work displayed at The Bowes Museum. The museum's history and outdoor space make it an interesting place for my art to connect with visitors. My work is all about exploring the places we live and the stories they tell, so it will be intriguing to see how people engage with it here."

Senior Programme Manager at The Bowes Museum, George Harris expressed: "We are delighted to present Nathan Coley's thought-provoking art at The Bowes Museum. Coley's work invites us to reflect on the relationship between language and visual image and how we construct wider meaning. His art has been on display across the world, and having these two artworks at the museum encourages the viewer to think about our founder's intentions."

The use of the 'readymade,' a term coined in the early 20th century by Marcel Duchamp to describe the ordinary manufactured objects that artists choose and modify, is central to Coley's work. In both artworks, he refers to objects that already exist, in this case, Bernard Shaw's play and the Tate Modern. **The re-contextualisation of recognisable places and words means that the artworks are ambiguous and open to multiple interpretations from every viewer.**

Nathan Coley's works are on display *You Create What You Will* (2014) and *Tate Modern on Fire* (2017) from 14 June 2025 till 1 March 2026.

-ENDS-

Note to editors:

Pictures of Coley's *You Create What You Will* are [here](#).

For film and photography requests and more information, please contact our Marketing & Communications Coordinators:

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About Nathan Coley

Nathan Coley's artistic practice interrogates public spaces and questions how systems of personal, social, religious and political belief structure our towns and cities, and thereby ourselves. He spans a diverse range of media, including sculpture, installation, photography and video. Coley's works often involve large-scale, immersive installations that transform spaces and invite interaction.

Coley was nominated for the Turner prize in 2007 and has exhibited extensively both nationally and internationally. Highlights include *Tate Modern on Fire* exhibited at the Parafin Gallery in 2017 and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in 2017, as well as *You Create What You Will* displayed at the Abu Dhabi Public Art Biennale in 2024 and Roche Court Sculpture Park in 2015.

<https://www.studionathancoley.com/>

About The Bowes Museum

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. 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

Admission to The Bowes Museum is £17.70 for local members (residents of County Durham and Darlington), £20.00 for members (residents elsewhere), £19.50 for a day ticket, £21.45 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 thebowesmuseum.org.uk/support/ for more information.



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