

PRESS RELEASE

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**Fashion and Textile Artist Meg Fletcher Soars at The Bowes Museum
with Striking Flags Bridging Fashion, Theatre and Heritage**

The Bowes Museum is proud to unveil a captivating new commission by Northumberland-based fashion and textile artist Meg Fletcher, whose work delves into identity, storytelling, and the theatrical nature of dress.

Fletcher has created a series of bold, visually stunning flags inspired by the museum's upcoming exhibition, *Vivienne Westwood: Rebel – Storyteller – Visionary*. The flags will be on display from 1 March and the exhibition opens 28 March 2026.

Titled *Character Studies – 3 Acts*, Fletcher's installation features three specially designed flags displayed on the museum's terrace from 1 March 2026. These flags creatively link the rebellious spirit and visual legacy of Dame Vivienne Westwood (1941–2022) with the pioneering vision of The Bowes Museum's founder, Joséphine Bowes (1825–1874).

Each flag reimagines Joséphine Bowes as a contemporary figure, blending elements from her iconic pink-dress portrait (c.1858, attributed to Louis William Desanges) with silhouettes and motifs drawn from Westwood's groundbreaking fashion archives and the museum's historic collections:

- **Rebel:** Inspired by Westwood's *Pirates Collection* (1981), this flag combines striking silhouettes with decorative influences from 16th and 18th-century porcelain vases housed at The Bowes Museum.
- **Storyteller:** Drawing on Westwood's *Mini-Crini* (1986) and *Harris Tweed* (1987/88) collections, this flag reinterprets Bowes's portrait details through a lens of historic and textile references.
- **Visionary:** Referencing Westwood's *Anglomania* (1993/94) collection—famously worn by Kate Moss - this flag incorporates classical art from the museum's collection, including *The Birth of Venus* by Pierre-Jacques Cazes.

Meg Fletcher explains, "I believe there is an ethos that we dress to become different versions of ourselves. Westwood was never afraid to blur the lines between fashion and costume to create strong looks. By exploring Joséphine Bowes's history as an

artist, actress and rule-breaker, I wanted these flags to celebrate that shared spirit of reinvention.”

Vicky Sturrs, Director of Programmes and Collections at The Bowes Museum, adds, “These flag commissions are pivotal in our mission to support regional artists, designers, and makers. Meg Fletcher’s work brilliantly captures the essence of Vivienne Westwood’s legacy alongside Joséphine Bowes’s visionary spirit. They’re playful and powerful and really resonate with our museum’s history and future focus.”

Visitors can experience *Character Studies – 3 Acts* from 1 March 2026 on The Bowes Museum terrace, where fashion, history and art converge in a vibrant celebration of creativity and identity.

The exhibition *Vivienne Westwood: Rebel – Storyteller – Visionary* opens 28 March 2026.

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PRESS IMAGES can be found [here](#).

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Notes to Editors:

www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk

About Meg Fletcher:

Meg is a Northumberland-based fashion and textile artist whose work explores identity, storytelling and the theatrical nature of dress. Her practice bridges fashion and performance, often drawing on heritage narratives and psychological research. She frequently examines how clothing shapes character and perception; ideas that also underpin her developing ready-to-wear label, CHARACTERS. More info at <https://www.megfletcher.co.uk/about>

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

The Bowes Museum needs to generate more than half of its income each year to care for the historic collection, buildings and parkland. Visit thebowesmuseum.org.uk/support/ for more information.