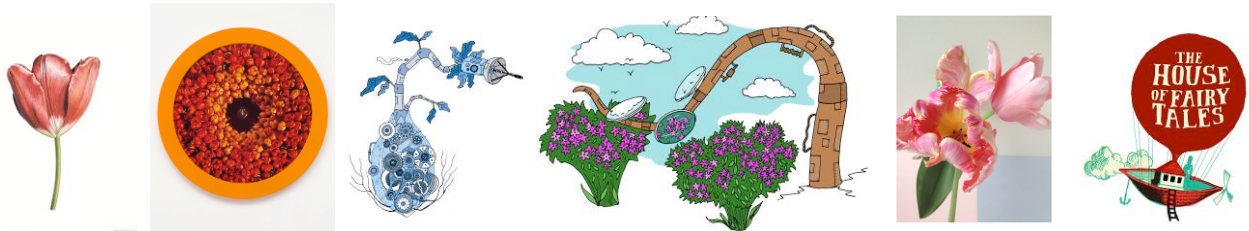


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Media Release



TIPTOE THROUGH THE TURKISH TULIPS AND AN AMAZING CLOCKWORK GARDEN BLOSSOM AT THE BOWES MUSEUM THIS SUMMER 29 July – 5 November 2017

The Bowes Museum continues its 125th anniversary celebrations, opening two extraordinary exhibitions simultaneously this summer for the young and the young-at-heart.

Leading contemporary artist **Gavin Turk** and **The House of Fairy Tales**, the imaginative children's arts charity, inspire symbolic stories of horticulture in these captivating shows.

Turkish Tulips is a travelling exhibition woven through the decorative halls of The Bowes Museum as an exquisite art adventure. It presents new works by contemporary artist **Gavin Turk**, in collaboration with a host of renowned contemporary artists including **Damien Hirst, Michael Craig-Martin, Cornelia Parker, Sir Peter Blake, Fiona Banner, Mat Collishaw, Adam Dant and Yinka Shonibare MBE**. Interwoven amongst The Bowes Museum's permanent collection, the exhibition delves into the complex and paradoxical story of tulips as the artists mine the rich vein of secrets behind this iconic bloom, provoking new perspectives of The Bowes Museum's collection. The exhibition visits The Bowes Museum on a grand tour of the museums of Europe and the Middle East, recently arriving from Amsterdam – the symbolic home of the tulip.

"The exhibition provokes curiosity - challenging us to see things in a new light – the familiar becomes unfamiliar as the tulip's important role in history is presented through tales of romance, beauty, obsession, inequality and extravagance as well as scientific discoveries through the enlightenment," explained Dr Howard Coutts, the Museum's Keeper of Ceramics, and curator of the exhibition.

Gavin Turk and The House of Fairy Tales were drawn to The Bowes Museum as an important site for this ambitious show because of its historic relationship with the aesthetic arts of Europe and its influences from the East. The extraordinary variety of floral designs with hidden tulips woven through the patterns of furniture, ceramics, silver and paintings – revealing the symbolic power of this humble flower.

Gavin Turk articulated his reason for choosing the museum, "I love the fact that Joséphine and John Bowes travelled Europe gathering cultural artefacts, as the traders did with tulip bulbs hundreds of years before. As a Turk by name, the Turkish origins of these iconic flowers make them all the more playful and relevant".

This is not the first time this observation has been made about the Bowes collection. Without realising it, one of founder Joséphine Bowes' protégés, the young French botanist and glass maker Emile Gallé, wrote the same thing to her more than 100 years before . . . 'As an ardent botanist, I hunt only plants. It is the passion that competes in my life with that, perhaps less happy, of ceramics; when I pick a flower, I pick a model and an idea.

Tiptoe through the Turkish Tulips and an Amazing Clockwork Garden Blossom at The Bowes Museum this summer

Sometimes, when I am turning the pages of my herbarium I seem to see only vases, and perhaps one day, when I visit your beautiful faience collection I will think it is a collection of marvellous plants . . .'

The Bowes Museum's complementary exhibition - ***The Clockwork Garden*** – is a bewitching show promising a magical experience for all ages from The House of Fairy Tales. Flying in from a planet far away, a strange mechanical seed has landed in our main exhibition gallery which will be filled with a beautiful, interactive exhibition. The seed needs to learn the secrets that make gardens full of life and beauty, so it can take them back to its own planet, which has no gardens.

Carrying on the theme, in the Museum's more Earthly gardens and grounds there'll be a chance to probe further into the magical story through A Clockwork Garden Adventure Trail. Follow a curious, illustrated map to find tendrils of the mechanical seed, completing tasks and challenges and solving clues left by the wondrous characters of the 'Museum's founders', both historical and fictional.

Both exhibitions open on 29th July, while on 30th and 31st July. The House of Fairy Tales will be visiting the Museum for an opening event engaging families with enticing tasks and games relating to both exhibitions. Tickets for these events will be available online. The exhibitions programme is complemented by a wide range of events, full details of which can be found at www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk or by calling 01833 690606. The Bowes Museum is open daily from 10am – 5pm.

The Bowes Museum is delighted that Darlington Building Society will be our main exhibition partner in this summer's programme featuring *Turkish Tulips* and *The Clockwork Garden*.

For high resolution images and further information about the exhibitions contact: Sheila Dixon, Media and PR Officer, The Bowes Museum. E: sheila.dixon@thebowesmuseum.org.uk, tel: 01833 694616.

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- **Image credits:** 'Tulip 'Helen Josephine (rose breeder) 1975 by Rory McEwen, Watercolour on vellum' – 'Helen Chadwick, Wreaths to Pleasure #1, 1992 – 3 collection of Philippa van Loon' Illustrations copyright of The House of Fairy Tales. 'Georgie Hopton, Tulips with Blue Square, 2013'

Notes to editors:

- The House of Fairy Tales is a children's arts charity founded by Gavin Turk and Deborah Curtis to bring creative learning experiences to children and young people throughout the UK. For more information visit <http://houseoffairytales.org/>
- The Bowes Museum was created over 100 years ago by an extraordinary couple, John and Joséphine Bowes. Together they built up the greatest private collection of fine and decorative arts in the North of England and constructed a magnificent building to house them in. The collection contains thousands of objects including furniture, paintings, sculpture, ceramics, textiles and many other items covering an extensive range of European styles and periods.
- The Bowes Museum receives a core funding grant from Durham County Council and as a Major Portfolio Museum receives support from Arts Council England.
- The Bowes Museum has undergone major redevelopment, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, One NorthEast through the County Durham Economic Partnership, English Heritage, Northern Rock Foundation, The Monument Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, The Foyle Foundation, The European Regional Development Fund, DCMS/Wolfson Museum and Galleries Improvement Fund, Designation Challenge Fund, The Shears Foundation, The Richard and Suzanna Tonks Family Fund at County Durham Foundation, Durham County Council, The Friends of The Bowes Museum, The Headley Trust, Sir James Knott Trust, Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust, Fenwick Ltd, Mercers Charitable Foundation, Welton Foundation.
- The Bowes Museum is a member of the Discover Durham partnership of attractions. Our 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: hotline number 0191 301 8531, www.discoverdurham.co.uk

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