

## The Michael Marks Charitable Trust Supplement

### Recent acquisitions at The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle

THE BOWES MUSEUM at Barnard Castle in County Durham is housed in an immense French-style château built by Jules Pellechet as a museum for John Bowes, son of the 10th Earl of Strathmore, and his wife, Joséphine. Their collection was chiefly formed in Paris in the period 1862–74, adding to a modest group of early Italian pictures acquired by Bowes in the 1840s. The couple purchased extensively, not just paintings and sculpture but ceramics, glass, furniture, tapestries and objets d'art of all kinds. Most unusually for this period, Bowes bought El Greco's *The tears of St Peter*, one of several Spanish works in the collection; his wife, an amateur painter, added contemporary works by Boudin and Courbet to earlier paintings by Boucher and Tiepolo. Outstanding in the collections are fine examples of German faience; Sèvres porcelain; and Second Empire furniture. The Museum opened to the public in 1892 and gifts and purchases have continued to be added to its holdings.

After threatened closure in 1998–99, The Bowes Museum reverted in 2000 to governance by a separate body of Trustees and a Director dedicated to transforming it into one of the world's finest non-national museums. This change in governance enabled the Museum to take maximum advantage of the public and private grants offered for improvements to facilities, display and amenities, which now include a new roof, picture store, textile, metalwork and picture galleries, as well as a newly catalogued library and archive. However, the Trustees and Director have always been conscious of the Museum's history and its standing in the national field as the major museum of European fine and decorative arts in the north of England.

Specifically we have been keen to explore the relationship between the fine and decorative arts in France in the nineteenth century – an area of collecting not always covered by the more specialised national holdings – while also adding high-quality items to the existing historic collections. Although finance has always been tight, generous grants and gifts from the Friends of The Bowes Museum, The Art Fund, the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and others, including the Heritage Lottery Fund, have led to a range of acquisitions over the last ten years that reflect the Museum's character. Durham County Council continues to support our core funding, while our status as an Arts Council Major Partner Museum Consortium brings confidence to our vision for the future. The Museum now feels that it is operating a local and national remit worthy of its collections.

ADRIAN JENKINS, *Director*



I. Glazed earthenware plaque depicting a young woman against a background of blue and red hydrangeas, by Paul Helleu (1859–1927). French, factory of Théodore Deck, c.1887–90. Earthenware, 67 by 36.5 by 2 cm. Purchased with the aid of grants from The Art Fund, the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Friends of The Bowes Museum (inv. no.2005.32).

Paul-César Helleu trained as a painter and entered the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, in 1870, but quickly formed a group of close friends among advanced artists such as Degas, Whistler, Alfred Stevens, Boldini and Sargent. In his early days he worked for Théodore Deck, producing many plaques of beautiful women of a decorative or historical character. This one, however, shows a smart modern woman of the town – a Parisienne – against a Japanese-style background of hydrangeas. The design is indebted to the work of Tissot, who taught him the technique of drypoint etching in 1886, which is reflected in the underlying design of this plaque. It must date from between 1887, when he had met the poet the comte de Montesquiou, who had adopted the hydrangea as his personal badge as a symbol of his unique and singular nature, and before 1890, when Helleu ceased working for Deck.



II. (Upper left). *Bowes Tower, Yorkshire*, by J.M.W. Turner (1775–1851). c.1832. Watercolour on paper, 24.6 by 17.8 cm. Purchased with the assistance from the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, The Art Fund and the Friends of The Bowes Museum (inv. no.2007.34).

The village of Bowes may be the origin of the name of the family that eventually built The Bowes Museum in nearby Barnard Castle. It is the site of a Roman fort and later a Norman castle, which was painted by Turner as a title vignette to 'Rokeby' in an edition of Walter Scott's *Poetics Works* published in 1833–34. On-site research suggests that Turner raised the height of the cliff for dramatic effect, and has elided three distinct views. The Museum is planning a major exhibition devoted to 'Rokeby' in 2013.

III. (Lower left). A pair of hardwood moulds for a Neo-classical helmet, together with a drawing for the completed decoration. French, early 19th century. Moulds, 10 cm. high; drawing 32 by 11.8 cm. From a single collection of French moulds, tools and drawings for sugar paste table decoration bought with aid of grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, The Art Fund and the Friends of The Bowes Museum (inv. nos.2002.7/3 and 2002.7.83/25).

Elaborate sugar paste table decorations were an essential part of fashionable dining in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and complemented the finest porcelain and silver of the day. The acquisition of these moulds enabled food historian Ivan Day to recreate these settings for the exhibition *Royal Sugar Sculpture* in 2002.

IV. (Below). Miniature cabinet. Oak carcass, burr elm veneer and painted decoration, 33 by 15.5 by 10.5 cm. English, c.1800. Presented by Carlton Hobbs Ltd., London (inv. no.2002.1/FW).

This is a miniature version of the well-known botanical specimen cabinet made for John Bowes's grandmother, Mary Eleanor Bowes, Countess of Strathmore (1749–1800), and acquired by the Museum in 1961. Its exact origin is unknown, but it must be the 'model of a cabinet' bequeathed to John Bowes by his aunt Mary, daughter of Mary Eleanor Bowes, in 1856, two years after she had presented the larger cabinet to him. It is recorded on a chimneypiece in the Bowes family home of Streatlam Castle, Durham, in 1915, but seems to have left the family collections between the wars.



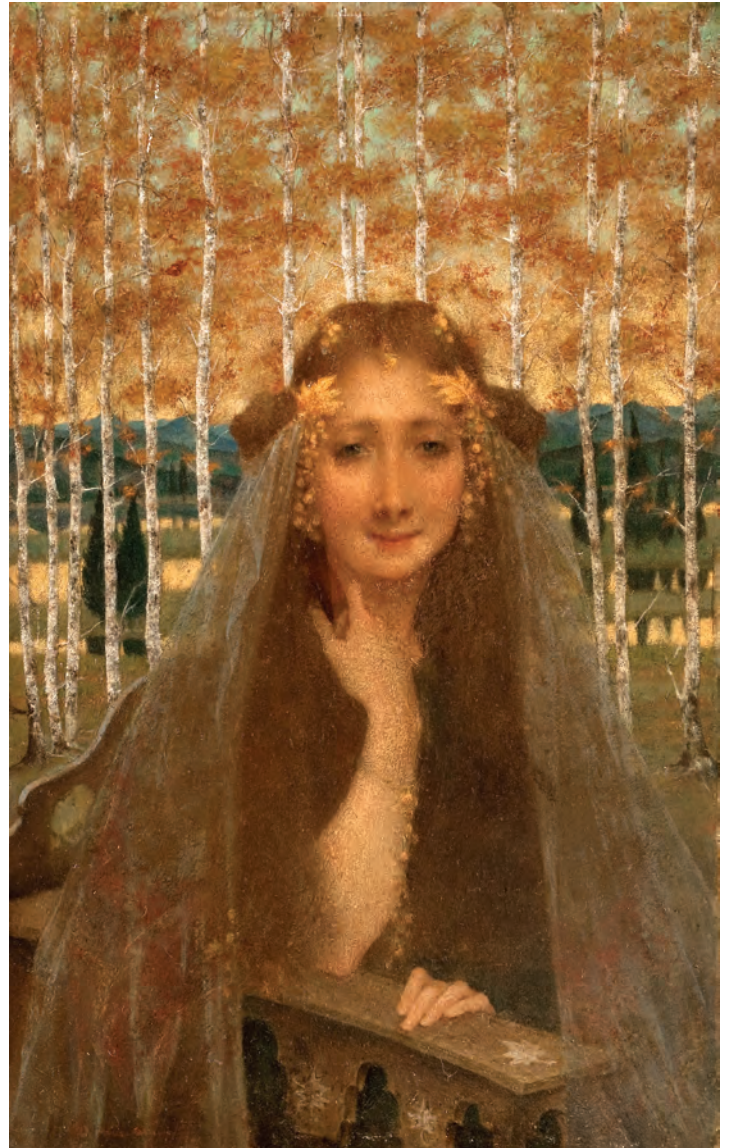
V. *A view of Barnard Castle from the river*, by Philip Wilson Steer (1860–1942). 1896. Canvas, 50.8 by 61 cm. Purchased with assistance from the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, The Art Fund and the Friends of The Bowes Museum (inv. no.2008.12).

Between 1893 and 1911 Steer visited the north of England on a number of occasions, and in 1896 he worked in Barnard Castle, an ancient market town on the borders of the counties of Durham and Yorkshire, recently dignified by The Bowes Museum, which had opened in 1892. Like most artists, Steer chose to depict the historic castle and the County Bridge, although with emphasis on the now-demolished nearby mill buildings. It is likely that Steer visited the newly opened Museum, as his travelling companion, fellow artist Fred Brown, and a guest are recorded in the Museum's visitors' book on 19th August 1896.



VI. *Soleil couchant, l'Île de Bezons*, by Charles François Daubigny (1817–78). 1851. Panel, stamped 'Vente Daubigny' in red at bottom right and 'No.23' inscribed in red ink on the top back of the frame, 22 by 34 cm. Purchased with the aid of grants from the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Friends of The Bowes Museum (inv. no.2003.2322). Provenance: The artist's studio sale, Paris, 6th–8th May 1878, no.23.

This is one of two oil-sketches of the riverside at Bezons of 1851 sold in the Daubigny studio sale, in Paris, 6th–8th May 1878 (lots 22 and 23). The original collection of John and Joséphine Bowes, as listed in their *Tableaux par artistes vivants en 1866*, included works by the Barbizon artists, including Daubigny and Troyon, but for some reason these left the collection and never entered The Bowes Museum. This painting was acquired locally to enhance the collections in this period of French painting.



VII. *Portrait of the actress Marguerite Moreno (The autumn bride)*, by Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer (1865–1953). c.1896. Oil paint over gold on mahogany panel, 34.2 by 21.5 cm. Purchased with the aid of grants from The Art Fund, the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Friends of The Bowes Museum (inv. no.2008.13).

Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer was born in Algiers, and became artistic director of the Clément Massier ceramic factory in Golfe-Juan in 1887. In 1895 he moved to Paris to pursue a career as a painter and became a major figure in the French Symbolist movement. In this painting he depicts Marguerite Moreno, an actress and friend of the poets Verlaine and Montesquiou, as a bride in an autumnal landscape, no doubt in allusion to the brevity of human beauty and existence. It is one of the very few French Symbolist paintings in a British collection, and fits well into the Museum's already outstanding collections of French paintings and ceramics.

VIII. Evening gown, by Madeleine Vionnet (1876–1975). Paris, February 1934, Model 4763. Silk chiffon printed with a poppy design, bias-cut, with a silk satin sash; under-slip of crêpe de chine and chiffon. Purchased with help from The Art Fund, the Friends of The Bowes Museum, MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and a number of private individuals (inv. no.2009.33.2).

One of a group of dresses by Vionnet bought by the fashionable Lady Foley, between the wars. Vionnet is best known for originating the bias-cut made famous by Hollywood film stars such as Jean Harlow. Such expensive items of French couture are rare in British collections, especially when directly traceable to British patrons. This is one of three Vionnet evening gowns bought by The Bowes Museum following a government export-stop in 2009, acting together with the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, which purchased four, and the Fashion Museum, Bath, which acquired two dresses.



IX. (Above). Silk brocade. French or English, 1750s. Woven silk, brocaded in silver and gold metal threads and coloured silks. Presented by The Order of the Poor Clares (inv. no.2007.36/3).

Part of an important collection of fine vestments, embroideries and woven silks kept in St Clares Abbey, Darlington, given to The Bowes Museum in 2007. The Order was founded in 1614 in Rouen, but they were forced to relocate to England in 1794, bringing many of their treasures with them. This is one of a number of eighteenth-century secular dress silks, all of the highest quality, worn by the aristocratic Catholic families whose daughters were being educated by the Poor Clares in Rouen. Such families traditionally made direct gifts of their finest clothes, such as wedding dresses or court robes, to be made into vestments. Benefactors listed in their records at that period included the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Arundel and Sir Robert and Lady Throckmorton. Published in exh. cat. *Fastes De Cours et Ceremonies Royale. Le Costume de Cour en Europe 1650–1800*, Paris (Chateau de Versailles) 2009, p.82.



X. (Upper right). *Adam*, by Keith Vaughan (1912–77). 1957. Collage, gouache, crayon and pencil, 108 by 59.6 cm. Purchased in 2010 with help from The Art Fund, MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Friends of The Bowes Museum (inv. no.2010.1).

*Adam* is a preparatory textile design by Keith Vaughan on drawing paper inscribed with explanatory weaving notes by Alastair Morton, the director of Edinburgh Weavers. The work was commissioned by Morton for the creation of the *Adam* Jacquard woven textile of cotton and rayon, which received an award from the Design Council in 1958. The *Adam* Jacquard woven textile is a key piece within The Bowes Museum's Design Award Collection, which was formed between 1957 and 1962.

XI. (Lower right). Man's cloak band. English, c.1635. Linen, cutwork and geometric lace, centre front: 14.5 cm.; shoulder width: 55 cm. Blackborne Collection (inv. no.2007.1.28).

In the seventeenth century this style of separate collar was known as a falling or cloak band, as it spread widely over the shoulders. It is best known from the portraits of men by Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641). Blackborne and Company, lace dealers, were instrumental in piecing together the history of high-quality, handmade lace, and owned an impressive collection illustrating designs and techniques from 1500 to the 1890s. The Blackborne Collection was one of the most extensive and important private lace collections in the world. In 2006, the descendants of the Blackborne family presented the entire collection to The Bowes Museum. Consisting of over 6,000 items, it is currently being researched and catalogued with the aid of a grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. See L. Jackson: *Alastair Morton and Edinburgh Weavers: Visionary Textiles and Modern Art*, London 2012.





XII. Vase and cover. Worcester, 1768–75. Soft-paste porcelain, painted in enamel colours and gilt, 55.1 cm. high. The Lady Ludlow Collection, gift of The Art Fund (inv. no.2004.211).

This is one of the largest Worcester vases known and is signed 'JD', possibly the Scottish artist John Donaldson. It was illustrated as the frontispiece to *Old English Porcelain: the Lady Ludlow Collection*, published in 1932.



XIII. (Above). Porcelain dessert plate. Sèvres, 1824. Diameter 24.7 cm. Purchased with funds from the estate of Dr James Donald Sinclair of Darlington and the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund (inv. no.2003.2331).

This plate must be part of a dessert service recorded in the Sèvres factory records for 1825 as a gift from King George IV to the painter Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830): *A Mr Le Chev. r premier peintre du Roi d'Angleterre. Le 11 novembre 1825, Service de Dessers, fond beau bleu mosaïque en or et platine, bouquets de fleurs*. It cost 8,100 livres and comprised 95 pieces, 73 of them plates at a cost of 60 livres each.

XIV. (Upper left). 'Goat and Bee' jug. Chelsea, 1745. Soft-paste porcelain, painted in enamel colours, 10.8 cm. high. The Lady Ludlow Collection, gift of The Art Fund (inv. no.2004.45).

This small jug is historically the most important item in the great collection of English porcelain formed by the widow of Sir Julius Wernher, later Lady Ludlow (for whom, see no.XV). It is rare in being incised and dated 'Chelsea 1745', making it perhaps the oldest dated piece of English porcelain.



XV. (Lower left). Mug, with decoration attributed to John de Lanauze. Bow, c.1770. Soft-paste porcelain, painted in enamel colours and gilt, 14.4 cm. high. The Lady Ludlow Collection, gift of The Art Fund (inv. no.2004.36).

The attribution of this mug is based on its similarity to the signed but smaller mug in the British Museum, London, inscribed on the base *This pint was / Painted for Mrs / Mary Bromley / of Camden Glocshire / by her Loving Son / John de Lanauze / January 1770*. It is from the great collection of English porcelain formed by the widow of Sir Julius Wernher, later Lady Ludlow, between the First and Second World Wars. Her collection was acquired after her death by The Art Fund, and, after being for many years on view at her country house, Luton Hoo, was presented to The Bowes Museum in 2003. The Museum took the gift as an opportunity to recatalogue and redisplay the collection with the aid of a grant from the Headley Trust, and also publish an up-to-date version of the catalogue in 2007 with grants from the Ceramica-Stiftung Basel, The Paul Mellon Foundation for Studies in British Art, the Marc Fitch Fund and the Friends of The Bowes Museum.



XVI. Triptych of stained-glass panels, by Jacques Gruber (1870–1935). 236 cm. high; central panel 120 cm. wide, the two lateral panels 70 cm. wide. Presented by the Friends of The Bowes Museum (inv. no.2011.5).

Jacques Gruber was a designer trained in Paris who returned to his home town of Nancy to contribute to the work of the Ecole de Nancy. During the First World War he returned to Paris and later became a prominent exponent of 'Art Deco' stained glass, some of which was shown in the Paris exhibition of 1925. These panels show him revisiting the Alsace Lorraine landscape for subject-matter, but interpreting it in the modernist idiom of the 1920s. It is one of few French works of applied design of this period in a British public collection.



XVII. Service of table-glass, each piece with the monogram of Napoleon III in a ribbon below a wreath of violets, comprising a decanter and five glasses. Attributed to Charles Gallé, Nancy, c.1855–68. Decanter, 23 cm. high. Presented by the Friends of The Bowes Museum (inv. no.2008.1).

Similar or identical to a service exhibited by Charles Gallé (father of Emile Gallé) at the Paris International Exhibition of 1855, illustrated in Charles Robin's *Histoire illustrée de l'Exposition universelle par catégorie d'industries*, Paris 1855. There are minor difference in shape and detail, perhaps owing to the fact that engravers often used working drawings rather than the objects themselves, which may have resulted in slight differences. Charles Gallé is recorded as having supplied many further pieces in 1861–68, including carafes and glasses for champagne, wine and liqueurs.