

ARTworks in Teesdale presents:

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# godsbridgeX



# 10 artists create their responses to God's Bridge

How do artists create? Where does their inspiration come from? How do they make their decisions? The God's Bridge Artists' Mentoring Project, an innovative professional development project, has attempted to address these queries.

Lead artist Tania Kovats mentored 10 professional artists over almost one year, who were asked to create work in response to God's Bridge, a limestone formation spanning the River Greta, high in the Pennines.

The artists were given complete creative freedom to devise a piece of work that would represent their experience of God's Bridge.

This exhibition; godsbridgeX is the culmination of the project and displays the artists' very different creative responses to the same place.

Siting these contemporary landscape pieces within The Bowes Museum's permanent collection encourages the visitor to search for the artworks, very much as the artists had to seek out God's Bridge.

The development of the project and the artists' progression over the period were documented on video, which can be viewed in The Bowes Museum's foyer or go to [www.artworksinteesdale.org](http://www.artworksinteesdale.org)

For more information about the project, its aims and outcomes go to [www.artworksinteesdale.org/god-s-bridge-artist-project/](http://www.artworksinteesdale.org/god-s-bridge-artist-project/)

Suzanne Williams



Suzanne Williams is a visual artist who lives and works in County Durham. Her recent practice consists of a series of sculptures, drawings, paintings, digital photography and video. The works range from the representational to the abstract, incorporating both every day and traditional art materials. She has exhibited in various venues across North East England, undertaken commissions and runs art workshops.

[www.suzannewilliamsart.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.suzannewilliamsart.blogspot.co.uk)  
[www.suzannewilliamsart.wordpress.com](http://www.suzannewilliamsart.wordpress.com)

Gillian Tallentire



As a local textile artist and teacher, Gillian Tallentire's love of the outdoors has greatly influenced much of her work. Photography is a passion which helps her record images of nature that she translates into a piece of artwork using her fascination with texture and colour. This project has taken her out of her comfort zone – she had no control over the elements that manipulated the fabrics devoured by the river.

[www.vervey.wordpress.com/gillian-tallentire](http://www.vervey.wordpress.com/gillian-tallentire)

Ewan Allinson



Ewan's sculptures unite stonecarving and dry-stone construction to create secular shrines and votives to the genius loci - the spirit of place. Replacing religion with philosophy, these works offer up the tactile prompts to apprehend that genius of place and reflect on its meanings, with all their contradictions.

[www.ewanallinson.com](http://www.ewanallinson.com)

Bryony Purvis



Bryony Purvis is an artist and filmmaker based in Tyneside. Her work focuses on the different ways in which 'place' is given significance. She is interested in how invisible processes and perspectives can become known and contemplated.

[www.bryonypurvis.co.uk](http://www.bryonypurvis.co.uk)

Robyn LeRoy-Evans



Robyn LeRoy-Evans uses her own body, and the objects that surround her, to generate physical, emotional, and psychological responses to the spaces she inhabits, visits, or stumbles upon. Research into erotic literature, fashion photography, and Japanese aesthetics inform her photographic style and content. Robyn is currently based in rural South-West Wales.

[www.robynleroyevans.com](http://www.robynleroyevans.com)

Charli Clark



Concerned with segregation between the urbanised and the natural world, Charli uses a variety of media, working towards increasing reverence and respect for ecosystems and ecological services. She is currently living in Finland researching dramatic changes in climate and cultural differences in an environment where, unlike in the UK, humans are not the only dangerous animal.

[www.charliclark.co.uk](http://www.charliclark.co.uk)  
[www.planetfinn.wordpress.com](http://www.planetfinn.wordpress.com)

Lesley Hicks



Lesley Hicks is a senior lecturer in Fine Art at Teesside University. Her interests include historical and contemporary landscape (natural and urban) with a particular focus upon landscape in flux. The collection and development of her material spans a range of media and methods of working combining painting and drawing made directly on site with that made within the studio.

[www.lesleyhicks.com](http://www.lesleyhicks.com)

Hannah Leighton-Boyce



Hannah Leighton-Boyce's work is an enquiry into the way time and place are felt, experienced and constructed. Ideas are often developed in response to, or created specific to a site, exploring our role in their history and how materials and places bear witness to time passing. Notions of presence, absence and liminality are central to the exploration of a space and the narrative, material and processes that she uses.

[www.hannahleightonboyce.com](http://www.hannahleightonboyce.com)

Steve Messam



Steve Messam is a landscape artist based in the North Pennines. He creates site-specific installations in rural landscapes across the UK and around the world. His often large-scale works aim to uncover the layers of narrative within landscapes and make visitors see familiar places in a new light.

[www.stevemessam.co.uk](http://www.stevemessam.co.uk)

Henna Asikainen



Henna uses different mediums to explore issues concerned with nature and the environment. Henna's work contributes to the debates around the complex ecological issues that surround these concepts and explores the poetics of our fundamental relationship with nature, the aesthetic value of nature and the experience from which these arise.

[www.hennaasikainen.wordpress.com](http://www.hennaasikainen.wordpress.com)

Tania Kovats – Lead artist



British artist Tania Kovats makes drawings, sculpture, installations and large-scale time-based projects exploring our experience and understanding of landscape. Her most recent artworks consider water in the landscape as a connective element. She has exhibited widely both here and abroad and her sculptures and drawings are in many public and private collections.

Jill Cole – Photographer



Jill Cole is a documentary photographer based in the north of England. She lectures in photography at Cleveland College of Art and Design whilst undertaking commissions for charities and organisations that support environmental and social change. Her work combines still life, landscape and portrait images in an attempt to engage audiences both critically and responsively.

[www.jillcole.com](http://www.jillcole.com)

1

**Low Flow**  
**Suzanne Williams**

Location:  
1.1: *Low Flow*, Foyer  
1.2: *Visit God's Bridge*,  
Ground Floor  
1.3: *In Spate*, Picture Gallery



The vibrant abstract, collaged, mixed media paintings are Suzanne Williams' response to the God's Bridge landscape, inspired by its millennia of geological history. In contrast to the strata of natural limestone, she has created new manmade layers by adding and uncovering forms and colours found in the photographic images and drawings made during many visits to this special site. Additional work consists of a watercolour painting made into a poster and postcards, acknowledging the 1930s railway posters advertising the Teesdale countryside.

Image: *Low Flow* – mixed media on canvas, 106 x 121 cm

2

**Flow**  
**Gillian Tallentire**

Location:  
2: *The Stream Galleries*



"I do not know much about gods; but I think that the river is a strong brown god; sullen, untamed and intractable." T S Eliot, *Four Quartets - The Dry Salvages*.  
Using the River Greta as my collaborator, fabrics have been manipulated and discoloured by the turbulent and ever-changing movement of water, rocks and debris. Natural finds, together with Man's unwanted rubbish have been salvaged from the rocky riverbed in the vicinity of God's Bridge, and melded together they tell a story about this beautiful, wild landscape traversed by the Greta.

Image: *Flow* – fabric, various sizes

3

**Vinotonus' Shrine**  
**Ewan Allinson**

Location:  
3.1: *The Fountain (Gardens)*  
3.2: *Fragment of altar found at Bowes Deo Vinotono*



Vinotonus' Shrine is a sculpture you complete when you enter it. Invoking an ancient Romano-British deity unique to the vicinity around God's Bridge, it is built dry-stone, replete with velvet, coal and carvings. It is a clash and reconciliation between God's Bridge's wild aesthetics and the museum's ordered opulence.

Image: *Vinotonus' Shrine* – stone, coal, velvet, water, 2 x 2 x 3 m

4

**This Much is Uncertain**  
**Bryony Purvis**

Location:  
4: *European Decorative Art*



This Much is Uncertain is a response to the dissolution of limestone on the River Greta, part of the process that formed God's Bridge. The dissolved rock, is carried downstream over thousands of years leaving behind the distinctive Karst scenery.

This Much is Uncertain is a quest, a walk from God's Bridge to the sea searching for traces of the sediment that once filled the space under the bridge.

Image: *This Much is Uncertain* – mixed media, dimensions variable

godsbridgeX

# The exhibition, at The Bowes Museum April 5th – July 6th 2014

Open daily, 10am to 5pm

The Bowes Museum admission prices apply

The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, County Durham DL12 8NP

"God's Bridge is a landscape of absence, the River Greta's slow erosion of the limestone over centuries, making you reflect on what has been taken away from the place dispersed into the flow of water and time passing, much like the dispersal of thoughts and conversation amongst this cell of artists, uniquely brought together for this moment." **Tania Kovats**

Front cover image: Hannah Leighton-Boyce



5

**Offerings**  
**Robyn LeRoy-Evans**

Location:  
5.1: *John and Josephine*,  
Story Galleries  
5.2: *John and Josephine*,  
Story Galleries



God's Bridge, with its profound relationship to time, existence and memory, compelled Robyn to exist beneath it for a while, to feel the stone on her bare skin. To accompany her unique, bodily response, Robyn also used locally sourced objects and fabrics to develop a visual narrative about God's Bridge and the surrounding landscape.

Image: *Offerings* – mixed media, dimensions variable

6

**The Red Coat**  
**Charli Clark**

Location:  
6: *Lady Ludlow*,  
Porcelain Collection



Wrap yourself in softness, surround your skin with life, feel what is around you and be grateful for its presence. Imagine another world invading yours and see that you are already intertwined with it. 'The Red Coat' is a living lining, subtle yet significant, framed for the human form.

Image: *The Red Coat* – Sphagnum moss, velvet coat, PVC fabric and slub silk, 82 x 66 x 100 cm

7

**Sediment**  
**Lesley Hicks**

Location:  
7: *Sediment*,  
Silver and Metals Gallery  
*Drift*, located throughout  
the Museum



Walking from Bowes to God's Bridge on 1st May 2013, I photographed the pieces of plastic carried by the River Greta caught in the undergrowth along its banks. It is these (un-natural) shapes that populate this drawing and playfully suggest the build up of sediment, a crucial element in the creation of limestone, the sedimentary rock that forms God's Bridge.

Image: *Sediment* – graphite on paper, approximately 1.20 x 5 m

8

**Vindauga**  
**Hannah Leighton-Boyce**

Location:  
8: *Silver and Metals Gallery*



Vindauga – window, from Old Norse from vindr 'wind' + auga 'eye.'

An optical horizon enclosed within a glass sphere filled halfway with water, a stilled moment. The work draws on ideas of stillness and passing, the materials of light and water, and processes of illusion and distillation to enclose a view and create a portal from one place and time to another.

Image: *Vindauga* – glass sphere and base, 11 cm diameter

9

**Curlew Machine**  
**Steve Messam**

Location:  
9: *Picture Galleries and*  
*Silver Swan*



The 'Curlew Machine' is a mechanical device which recreates the sound and experience of the call of a curlew high above the fells and dales of the North Pennines. An attempt to create an artificial life and audible landscape – a 'God Machine'.

Image: *Curlew Machine* – mixed media audio automata

10

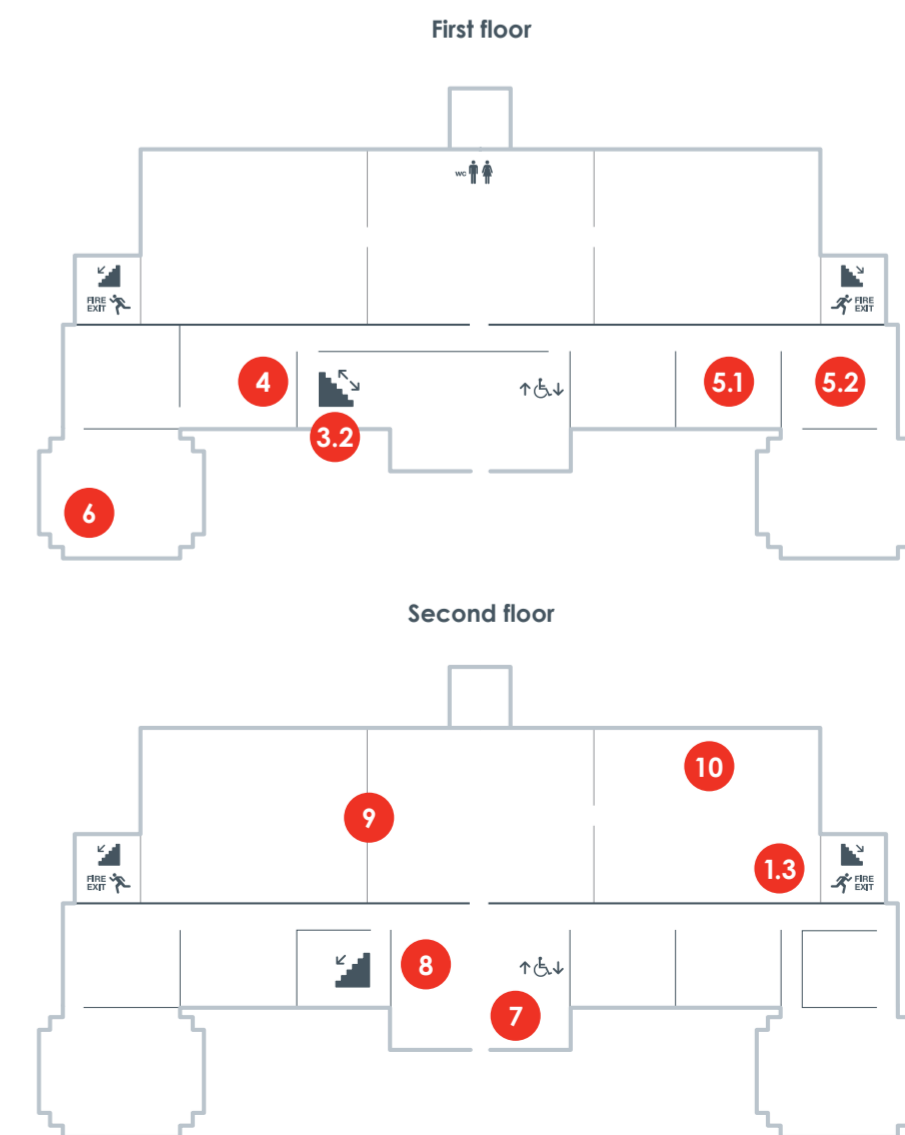
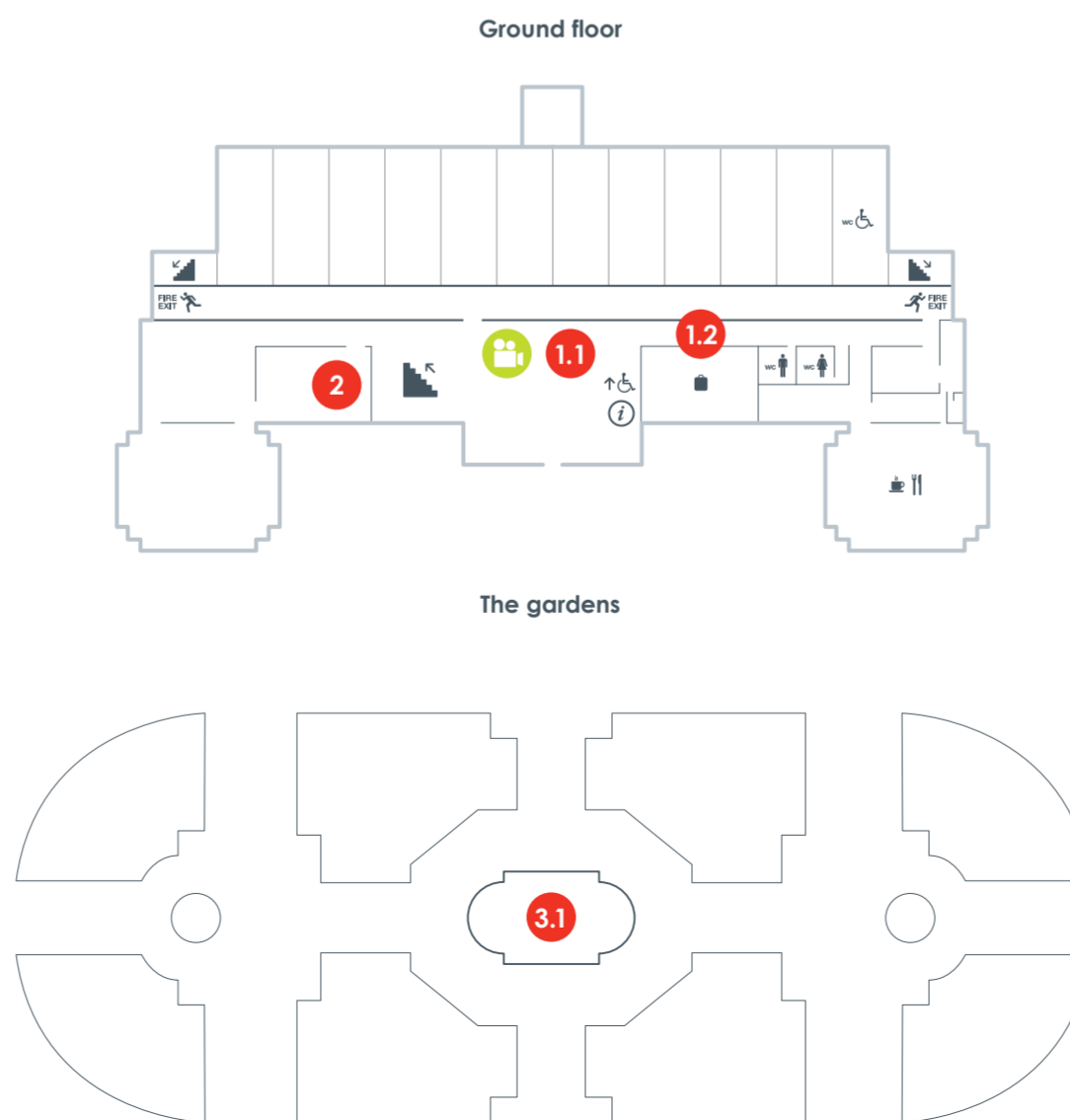
**Leaves**  
**Henna Asikainen**

Location:  
10: *Picture Galleries*



Leaves explores the acts of observing and explaining the phenomena that we call 'world'. The process of collecting and organising the leaves speaks of the methods of collectors such as John and Josephine Bowes. The pinning of the leaves – using specimen pins – figures as a performative element replicating the labour of collection and categorisation and the 'world building' that this generates. The accompanying video invites one to wander along to God's Bridge, to question and to wonder at the very existence of our perceived world.

Image: *leaves* – mixed media leaves of a White Poplar, insect mounting pins and video. Dimensions variable



Key:

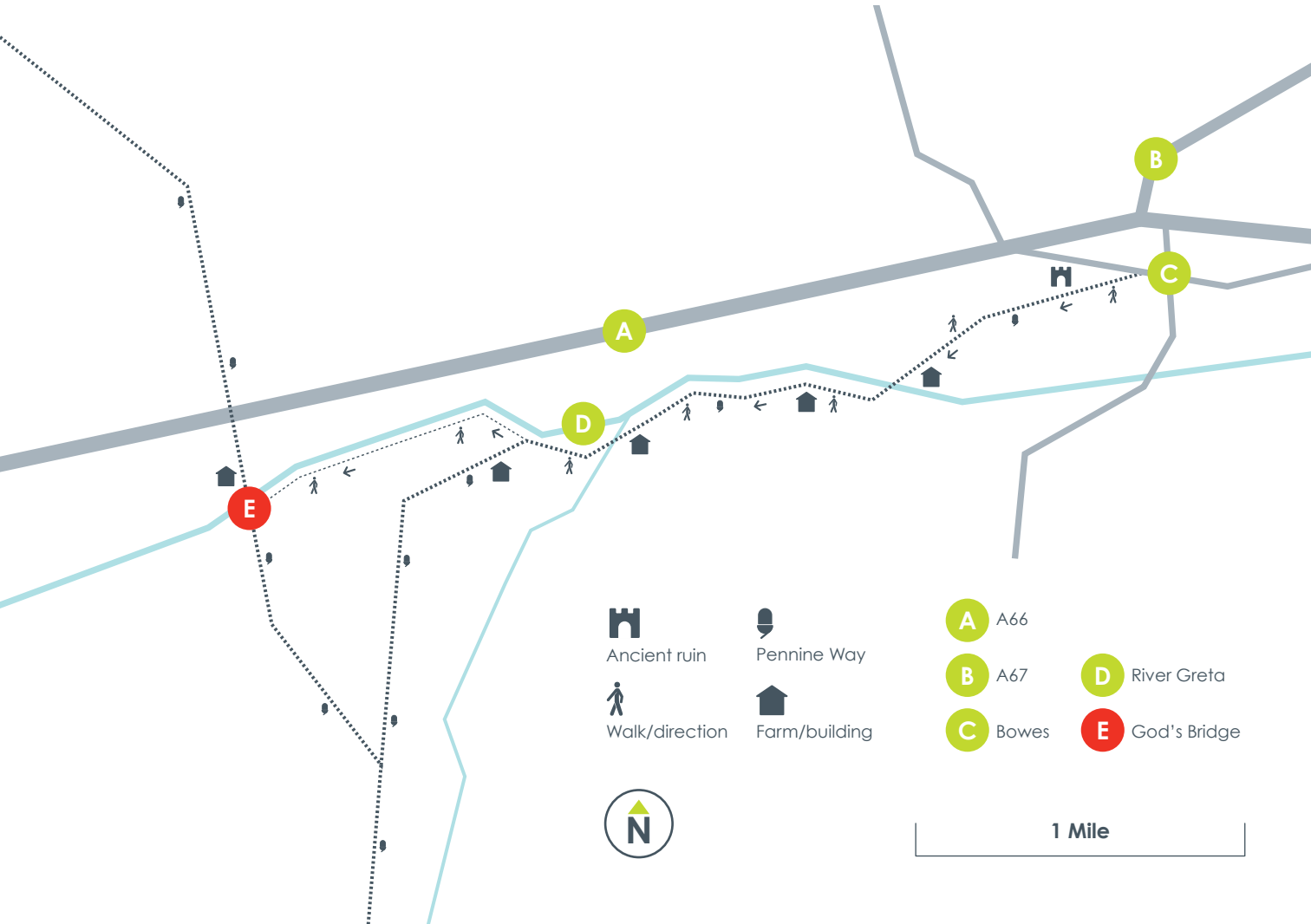
- Reception
- Disabled toilets
- Disabled lift
- Emergency exit
- Stairs
- Museum shop
- Toilets
- Cafe Bowes



A video documenting the project is screened in the foyer for the duration of the exhibition. Alternatively, scan the QR code using your smartphone device or visit [www.artworksinteesdale.org/god-s-bridge-artist-project/](http://www.artworksinteesdale.org/god-s-bridge-artist-project/) to view the short documentary.

# God's Bridge

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# ARTSCAPES

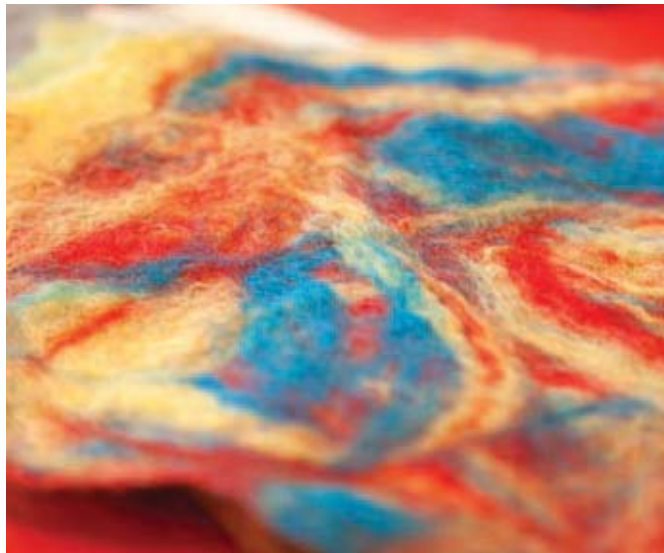
The Witham, Barnard Castle  
**April 4th – May 2nd 2014**

A series of 7 distinct landscape based arts activities inspired by different aspects of the wonderful Teesdale countryside delivered to the local community by **ART**works in Teesdale and funded by The Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership.

**Open Monday, then Wednesday to Saturday**  
10am to 4pm (closed Sunday and Tuesday)

**Free entry**

3 Horse Market, Barnard Castle DL12 8LY



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**THE BOWES**  
MUSEUM



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*Barnard Castle*  
**VISION**