

Grayson Perry: *Super Rich Interior Decoration*

Exhibition 25 September–2 November 2019

Victoria Miro Mayfair, 14 St George Street, London W1S 1FE



Grayson Perry

Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro, London/Venice

For his first solo exhibition at the gallery since 2012 – and first exhibition at Victoria Miro Mayfair – Grayson Perry presents new work including pots, sculpture, large-scale prints, a tapestry and a carpet.

In these new works, the artist casts an anthropological eye on the heady collision of art, money, power and desire. The assertion of identity through cultural or consumer choices and what these reveal about us, perhaps unintentionally, is one theme of a show that broaches the slippery concepts of meaning and significance – what can be authentically experienced or simply acquired. New pots include *Shopping for Meaning*, adorned with images of the artist – in wig, headscarf and various outfits – standing in front of Mayfair’s designer stores, their logos visible behind him. *Searching for Authenticity* collects together symbols of rebellion and rites of passage – the leather jacket, the beard, the CND banner – as if they were a catalogue of lifestyle choices. Fittingly slender in form, *Thin Woman with Painting* depicts an immaculate contemporary art patron at home with her collection which, on close inspection, includes works remarkably similar to Perry’s own: a pot bearing the names of philosophers and theorists, and a tapestry of an urban landscape featuring words and phrases such as ‘appalling wifi’ and ‘cultural desert’.

Very Expensive Abstract Painting is a tapestry that, bearing some of the hallmarks of twentieth-century abstraction, is also a map of London – traversed by the familiar serpentine form of the Thames and containing words that appear to chime with their corresponding locations (the area to the south of the city simply reads: ‘organic’). Polarities of wealth are brought into focus in a carpet, titled *Don’t Look Down*, which, at its centre, depicts a homeless person in crucifix-like pose bordered by a frieze containing images of domestic architecture.

Opposing political affiliations are set on a collision course in two outsized woodblock prints: *Selfie with Political Causes*, 2018, which shows the artist riding a motorbike surrounded by fluttering right-on slogans; and a new companion piece, *Sponsored by You*, which depicts Perry and Alan Measles taking a spin in a sports car powered by an engine labelled ‘pure greed’ through a landscape festooned with the names of global tax havens. While in *Selfie with Political Causes* a fox labelled ‘Tax Evasion’ becomes roadkill, in the new work a rabbit – ‘Social Mobility’ – finds itself a victim of unfettered capitalism. The car’s brakes, meanwhile, are labelled ‘guilt’ – perhaps the only thing that might stop it.

For the first time, this exhibition sees Perry working with material from the photographers Richard Young and Martin Parr and Eleni Parousi. Celebrity photographer Young, whose work since the 1970s has chronicled the party-going glitterati, has provided the images for one pot. Given access to Parr’s archive, Perry has selected images of the well-heeled at leisure for *Money on Holiday*, a table lamp which also features the names of tax havens such as Panama, Cayman Islands and Isle of Man. Parousi’s photographs of Perry, *in situ* in Bond Street and Mount Street, feature on *Shopping for Meaning*.

During the making of the work Perry had in mind Nam June Paik’s famous quote that ‘the artist should always bite the hand that feeds him – but not too hard.’ While some of the works appear to goad the wealthiest in society, indeed the very people who might collect contemporary art, richness here might refer to a profusion of decoration and abundance of reference as much as affluence.

Perry has also produced a handbag in collaboration with Graeme Ellisdon, of Osprey London, which will be on view as part of the exhibition.

About the artist

Born in Chelmsford, Essex in 1960, Grayson Perry lives and works in London. Recent institutional exhibitions include *Grayson Perry: Folk Wisdom* at Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki (13 April–2 September 2018), produced in collaboration with La Monnaie de Paris museum, and *Grayson Perry: Making Meaning*, held at The Gallery at Windsor, Florida (15 January–27 April 2018). *The Most Popular Art Exhibition Ever!*, a major presentation of his work, was on view at Serpentine Galleries, London, during the summer of 2017, travelling subsequently to Arnolfini, Bristol (until 24 December 2017). Institutional venues for other recent national and international solo exhibitions include ARoS Aarhus Art Museum, Aarhus (2016); Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht (2016); Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2015 – 2016) and Turner Contemporary, Margate (2015). In 2018, Perry coordinated The 250th Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. In 2011, The British Museum opened *The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman*, a critically acclaimed show in which Perry combined his own works with historical artefacts chosen from the vast British Museum collection. Other solo exhibitions include the Musée d’Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg (2008); 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan (2007); Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh (2006); Barbican Art Gallery, London (2002) and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2002).

The Vanity of Small Differences, Perry's monumental suite of tapestries exploring the subject of taste in contemporary Britain, was first shown at Victoria Miro, London, in 2012 and was acquired by The Arts Council Collection and British Council and has subsequently toured throughout the UK and Europe. The making of these works was chronicled in the first of Perry's Channel 4 television series, *All In the Best Possible Taste*, a 2013 Bafta Specialist Factual winner. Perry's second Bafta-winning television series *Who Are You?*, about identity, was broadcast in 2014, accompanied by a solo presentation of works at the National Portrait Gallery, London. The series *All Man*, which considered masculinity, followed in 2016, winning in the categories of Best Arts and Best Presenter at the Royal Television Society Awards. Allen Lane publishing the related book *The Descent of Man*. Perry's most recent series, *Rites of Passage*, in which he helps people to tailor ceremonies that are appropriate to their personal situations, was first broadcast by Channel 4 in 2018.

Perry delivered The Reith Lectures, BBC Radio 4's annual flagship talk series, in 2013; his ensuing book *Playing to the Gallery* is published by Penguin. The artist's *A House for Essex*, a permanent building designed in collaboration with FAT Architecture, was constructed in the North Essex countryside in 2015.

Work by the artist is held in museum collections worldwide, including The British Museum, London; Tate Collection, London; Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Stedelijk Museum; Amsterdam; Victoria & Albert Museum, London and Yale Center for British Art, New Haven among many others

Winner of the 2003 Turner Prize, Perry was elected a Royal Academician in 2012, and received a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in 2013; he has been awarded the prestigious appointments of Trustee of the British Museum and Chancellor of the University of the Arts London (both in 2015), and received a RIBA Honorary Fellowship in 2016.

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