

# Press Release

# Victoria Miro Gallery

## Grayson Perry

## The Charms of Lincolnshire

7 July – 12 August 2006

Presented in association with The Collection, Lincoln

Victoria Miro Gallery presents *The Charms of Lincolnshire* by Grayson Perry. This unique exhibition weaves a narrative three-dimensional poem between new works by Perry and historical arte facts selected by the artist from the museums of Lincolnshire.

Grayson Perry was born and grew up in rural Essex. Living and working in London the artist's practice has largely dealt with metropolitan themes. *The Charms of Lincolnshire* allows Perry the possibility to think and create work about the countryside. This is not a historical exhibition about Lincolnshire. It focuses on the Victorian era and themes that have a strong emotional charge for the artist such as death, childhood, religion, folk art, hunting and the feminine. From thousands of items in the collections Perry has selected categories of objects around each theme and in response to them has created new works, including pots, ceramics, embroidery, photography and for the first time pieces in cast iron.

“My initial idea was to focus these themes around an unknown artist, a mentally ill (Victorian) farmer's wife driven insane by the loss of her children. Her ghost and those of the children haunt the choices and works I have made for the show.”

The centre-piece of the exhibition is a hearse dating from 1880, which inspired the artist to create a cast iron child's coffin entitled *Angel of the South*. He describes it as both a non-triumphal monument to the countless victims of empire building in the Victorian age and the north of England's technological dominance. The coffin bears images that relate to medieval cathedrals and Benin Bronzes from West Africa - part of the developing world - “the south”, where today premature death is still pre-dominant amongst children.

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open Tuesday to Saturday  
10am to 6pm, admission free  
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tubes, Old Street and Angel

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The title for the exhibition *The Charms of Lincolnshire* invokes a bucolic cliché of National Trust England (Perry has even designed the ubiquitous souvenir tea towel), whilst also suggesting that the items exhibited are talismans of some forgotten, arcane, rural voodoo.

“The biscuit tin idyll of cosy village Britain is luckily in the past, for it was a candlelit back-breaking, sexist, tubercular child-death hell. The ghosts of long-ago children flicker in the dead-eyed familiars of wax, porcelain and wooden dolls I have chosen and in the stitches of the samplers worked by young pious hands”.

*The Charms of Lincolnshire* was first exhibited at The Collection, Lincoln in February 2006. The Collection is a critically acclaimed, £12 million new museum in Lincoln. Designed by Panter Hudspith Architects, it opened in 2005. The exhibition is presented in association with the Museums of Lincoln and the Arts Council.

### ***Recipe for Humanity*, 2005**

Sampler by Grayson Perry. Edition 250, price £500 + VAT, unframed.

This contemporary embroidery, made after the artist looked at many samplers stitched by young Victorian children, features a poem by Perry which sites the four givens of existence – “You will die, you are alone, There is no god upon his throne, Impose thy will upon earth’s mess, Else your life is meaningless, No hell below, no heaven above, Live life now and act with love”

### **Publication**

A 38pp catalogue produced by The Collection, Lincoln accompanies the exhibition with a text by Grayson Perry. Available from Victoria Miro Gallery, special exhibition price £5.

### ***The Charms of Lincolnshire* souvenir tea towel**

Designed by Grayson Perry, available from Victoria Miro Gallery, price £5.00

### **Biography and Background**

Grayson Perry was born in Chelmsford in 1960. He studied at Braintree College of Further Education and received a BA in Fine Art from the Portsmouth Polytechnic. In the early 1980s Perry was a member of the Neo-Naturist group, and took part in performance and film works. He has continued to create work in a variety of media that includes embroidery and photography but is best known for his ceramic works. Grayson Perry won the Turner Prize in 2003. His exhibitions include solo presentations at the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, USA, 2006 and Galeria Il Capricorno, Venice 2004; A Secret History of Clay from Gauguin to Gormley, Tate Liverpool, 2004 Collection Intervention, Tate St. Ives, St. Ives, 2004; Guerilla Tactics, Barbican Art Gallery, London, and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 2002. He will have a major solo exhibition at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art Kanazawa, Japan in 2007.

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