Grayson Perry: *Super Rich Interior Decoration*

Exhibition 25 September–20 December 2019

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

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.

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


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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