

Grayson Perry

London: 3 February–25 March 2023

16 Wharf Road, London N1 7RW

Venice: 11 February–2 April 2023

Il Capricorno, San Marco 1994, 30124 Venice, Italy



Grayson Perry, *Morris, Gainsborough, Turner, Riley*, 2021
Tapestry
274 x 360 cm
107 7/8 x 141 3/4 in
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and Victoria Miro

Victoria Miro is delighted to present two exhibitions by Grayson Perry in London and Venice. In London, a selection of textile works from the past eight years, including new tapestries, will be on view. The Venice exhibition features ceramics and works in silver and bronze, and works on paper including collages and a new etching.

Textiles have long been part of Grayson Perry's creative vocabulary. Bringing together a selection of tapestries completed during the past eight years, the London exhibition unites works old and new across the core themes and subjects of his work. Perry's tapestries take an art form traditionally associated with grand houses – depicting classical myths, historical and religious scenes and epic battles – and play with the idea of using this ancient allegorical art to elevate the dramas of contemporary British life. Politics, consumerism, history and art history are bound up in the work, in both subject and medium.

For *Morris, Gainsborough, Turner, Riley*, 2021, Perry combined imagery drawn from the history of British art, featuring work by William Morris, Thomas Gainsborough, JMW Turner and Bridget Riley. These works are not referenced outright; rather, they are digitally altered or adjusted, their colours and orientation changed within the tapestry's rich and layered textures. In *Battle of Britain*, 2017, Perry creates a vista not dissimilar to the landscape of Essex that also, as the artist realised during its making, is redolent of *Battle of Britain*, 1941, by Paul Nash, one of Perry's favourite paintings. He explains, 'Having yet again acknowledged the power of the unconscious I continued with the work, playing up the associations and weaving in references to the current conflicts within our society.'

Large Expensive Abstract Painting, 2019, 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 the social forces, tastes and codes of their corresponding locations. A companion work, *Very Large Very Expensive Abstract Painting*, 2020, enfolds a map of Manhattan and a Jackson Pollock-style abstraction within its imagery. Writing about the work, Perry notes, ‘If I think of American cultural power, the image that pops into my head is a huge Abstract Expressionist painting, a Cold War symbol of a self-confident land of the free. This tapestry is made up of layers that reflect some of the cultural and social archaeology of Manhattan.’

Earlier works include two tapestries made for *A House for Essex*, designed by Perry in collaboration with FAT Architecture in 2015 to evoke a wayside pilgrimage chapel which, instead of a patron saint, is dedicated to the life of a fictional character, Julie Cope. Completed in the style of Renaissance religious paintings, with the main characters shown several times in vignettes within each image, the tapestries illustrate key moments in Cope’s life.

Ceramics on view in Venice include the pots *Luxury Brands for Social Justice*, 2017, and *Searching for Authenticity*, 2018, both of which look at the assertion of identity through cultural or consumer choices and what these reveal about us, intentionally or otherwise. Decorated with images of beaming individuals, blissfully happy at work or at sun-kissed leisure, *Searching for Authenticity* broaches the slippery concepts of meaning and significance, life and lifestyle – what can be authentically experienced or simply acquired. Writing about the work, Perry comments, ‘the narcissistic Instagram culture is a main theme. I often think that when people go on holiday they want to appear in the photographs they have seen in the brochure... *Searching for Authenticity* comes from my fascination with the rapidly crystallising clichés of the so-called “experience economy”. The global conformity of those who refuse to be labelled.’

A new work, the large-scale etching *Our Town*, 2022, is a map inspired by Perry’s experience of social media during lockdown, a place that to the artist seems ‘quaint... but beneath the surface it is seething with snobbery, grievance and disappointment. Wherever you go you could trip over a modern cliché or an annoying neologism. Words are boxes and triggers and slurs. It is best to be a wry flâneur in *Our Town*.’

A new three-part series, *Grayson Perry’s Full English*, in which Perry travels around England as he tries to uncover what Englishness means today, begins on Channel 4 at 9pm on 26 January 2023.

About the artist

Born in Chelmsford, Essex in 1960, Grayson Perry lives and works in London, UK. He has presented major solo exhibitions at institutions including Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, Netherlands (2022); Manchester Art Gallery, UK (2021), The Holburne Museum, Bath, UK (2020–2021), La Monnaie de Paris, France (2018–2019); Kiasma, Helsinki, Finland (2018); The Serpentine Galleries, London, UK (2017); Arnolfini, Bristol, UK (2017); ARoS Kunstmuseum, Aarhus, Denmark (2016); Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht (2016) and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia (2015–2016). Exhibitions curated by the artist include the include the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, London, UK (2022 and 2018) and *The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman*, British

Museum, London (2011–2012). Earlier 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, USA (2006); Barbican Art Gallery, London, UK (2002) and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands (2002).

Perry delivered The Reith Lectures, BBC Radio 4's annual flagship talk series, in 2013. Other major projects include *A House for Essex* (permanent building designed in collaboration with FAT Architecture in 2015) and several Channel 4 television series including *All In the Best Possible Taste* (2013 BAFTA Winner), *Who Are You?* (2014 BAFTA Winner), *All Man* (2016), *Divided Britain* (2017), *Rites of Passage* (2018) *Grayson Perry's Big American Road Trip* (2020) and *Grayson's Art Club* (2020, 2021, 2022); exhibitions of *Grayson's Art Club* have been held at UK venues in 2021 and 2022.

Work by the artist is held in museum collections worldwide, including The British Museum, London, UK; Tate Collection, London, UK; Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht, Netherlands; Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia; Stedelijk Museum; Amsterdam, Netherlands; Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK and Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, USA 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. Perry was awarded the Erasmus Prize 2021 by the Praemium Erasmianum Foundation; an exhibition celebrating the award was held at Kunstmuseum den Haag, Netherlands, in 2022. Perry has been made a Knight Bachelor for services to the arts in the King's New Year Honours list 2023.

Current and upcoming exhibitions include *Grayson Perry: Fitting In and Standing Out* at The National Museum, Oslo, Norway (until 26 March 2023). The largest ever retrospective of Perry's work will take place in 2023 at the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh (22 July–12 November 2023).

For further press information please contact:

Victoria Miro Kathy Stephenson | Director of Communications | kathy@victoria-miro.com | +44 (0) 20 7549 0422

Rees & Co Rosanna Hawkins | rosanna@reesandco.com | +44 (0)7910 092 634