

Grayson Perry: A Time-line

THE
HOLBURNE
MUSEUM

Grayson Perry: The Pre-Therapy Years

Grayson Perry is one of the UK's leading artists. The exhibition at the Holburne Museum focuses on his early work, from 1981 to 1994, when he employed various media and made his first works in clay. After a series of exhibitions in various small galleries, in 1994 his first mainstream show signaled his establishment, securing what he describes as his distinctive identity as 'the transvestite potter'.

Perry grew up in suburban Essex and sought refuge from a troubled childhood in an imaginary world ruled over by his teddy bear, Alan Measles. At Portsmouth Polytechnic and later, living in a London squat, he was part of a post-Punk group of artists, musicians and film-makers, particularly the Neo Naturists, a performance art collective connected to the New Romantic club scene.

Perry has described this early period as the 'pre-Therapy years', a time when he explored his complex identity through his art, expressing an anger which would later be resolved through psychotherapy. His imagery could be deliberately shocking, sometimes combining Nazi symbols (a trait of British Punk), religious iconography and graphic scenes of unorthodox sexual activity. At the same time, his work satirised such social themes as class and gender and, especially, the conventions of the art world of which he was increasingly a part.

Grayson Perry's Biography

1960

Grayson Perry born 24 March in Chelmsford, Essex

1963

Aged 3, he contracts measles. During his illness he bonds with a teddy bear, naming him Alan Measles.

1964-65

His father leaves the family home after his mother has an affair with the milkman

1973

Becomes aware of his interest in wearing women's clothes

1975

On 5 November, goes out in public for the first time dressed as a woman. This date has since become known as the birthday of Claire Perry, his transvestite alter ego

Leaves home to live with his natural father

1976

Thrown out of his father and stepmother's home after they discover his transvestism. Moves back in with his mother

1978-79

Attends an art foundation course at Braintree College of Further Education

1979

Enrols on a BA Fine Art course at Portsmouth Polytechnic.

1980

Exhibits in *The New Contemporaries* at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London

1982

Graduates from Portsmouth Polytechnic

Grayson Perry's Biography (continued)

1983

Moves to a squat in Crowndale Road in Camden

Takes pottery lessons at the Central Institute, where he makes his first plate, *Kinky Sex*

1984

His first solo exhibition, showing pieces made in his evening classes, is held at James Birch Fine Art on Waterford Road in Fulham, London

1986

Moves out of the Camden squat

Attends evening classes in creative writing, where he meets his future wife, Philippa Fairclough

1987

Buys his own kiln

1987-90

Over a four-year period, has three solo exhibitions at Birch & Conran Fine Art in Dean Street in Soho, London

1990

Breaks contact with his mother after she tells his future wife, 'you must be desperate to marry a transvestite'

Begins to work with David Gill Gallery

1991

Solo exhibition held at Garth Clark Gallery, New York

1992

Marries Philippa Fairclough. Their daughter, Florence, is born in the same year

1994

Begins to work with Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London, with solo exhibition *Grayson Perry: New Work*

1998

Begins psychotherapy sessions, continuing the treatment for six years

2000

A 'coming out' party for Claire is held at the Laurent Delaye Gallery on 30 October. This ceremony marks a turning point for Claire who begins to wear the 'little girl' dresses that Perry is known for today.