



Grayson Perry

Potter

TV personality

Born: 24 March 1960

ARTY FACT!

From an early age he liked to dress in women's clothes. Perry frequently appears in public dressed as a woman, his female alter-ego is called "Claire". Perry has designed many of Claire's outfits himself.

In 2003, Grayson Perry was awarded the Turner Prize, a big Art award.

Grayson Perry's life

Grayson Perry was born in Chelmsford, an English city northeast of London in Essex, England.

He was born into a working-class family. When he was four years old, his father left home and his mother remarried. He spent his childhood moving between his parents, and to help with his anxiety of having two families, he created a fantasy world based around his teddy, Alan Measles.

Grayson thinks that a person's early experiences are important in shaping how they see things, and who they will become.

Later in life his art teacher encouraged him to use his imagination by studying art. He did an art foundation course to see what kind of art he liked doing best, before his BA degree in Fine Art at Portsmouth College of Art and Design, graduating in 1982.

Grayson Perry's work

Grayson's work is inspired by ceramic traditions from the past, such as Greek Pottery and Folk Art. His clay forms are made by coiling, a method where sausage shaped lengths of clay are built up on top of one another and smoothed. Most of his work has interesting surfaces that use many techniques; such as glazing, incising, embossing, and the use of photographic transfers which require several firings in a special oven called a 'kiln'.

To some he adds 'sprigs', which are little relief sculptures stuck to the surface. What he adds is not just decoration but has meaning. Grayson's pottery is more than craft. Craft pottery is merely decorative or utilitarian- to be used but not to express ideas. His work looks decorative from a distance, but when you look closely, the surface decoration often includes quite challenging images and messages that tell a story of his life, feelings and thoughts. There is a strong autobiographical element in his work.

WHAT CAN YOU SEE?

Can you find the sculpture of 'Melanie' by Grayson Perry on display in the gallery? Look at the surface. There are lots of pictures decorating the clay and made shiny with glaze. Some of them are pictures of food. What food can you see? What is your favourite thing to eat?

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Grayson Perry uses different techniques to add decoration to the surface of his pots. Be inspired by 'Melanie' and cut out pictures to stick down and create your own collage. Perhaps your collage can be autobiographical? What pictures tell a story about your life? You could include pictures of your family, pets, hobbies or favourite things.