The Vanity of Small Differences

Grayson Perry

An exhibition from the Arts Council Collection

Education information pack for exhibition venues 2020–2022

Arts Council Collection

Grayson Perry, *The Annunciation of the Virgin Deal*, 2012 (detail)
Wool, cotton, acrylic, polyester and silk tapestry
200 × 400 cm

The Vanity of Small Differences

Grayson Perry

Education information pack

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Section 1
How to use this resource and its values

Who is this pack for?
This pack is designed for use by teachers and other educators including gallery education staff. As well as providing background information about Grayson Perry and the creation of the tapestries, the pack explores the tapestries through a number of different themes inspired by the work, offering ideas for educational projects and in-gallery activities. The tapestries provide particularly rich inspiration for learning in Art and Design, PHSE and Relationship Education. There are also many links to literacy, geography and ICT.

What are our values?
Our work is written, shared and designed to be used by you based on your learning goals, whether those are formal or informal. We recognise continued barriers to access within our collection and seek to offer tools you can customise. Diversity and representation matter in both our words and actions. Artist commissions within this pack demonstrate our ongoing commitment to address equality and access in our collections. This process is ongoing, and with others we continue to learn and provide new opportunity. We warmly welcome sharing, critique and feedback — please share with us how you have used this pack. Please share your feedback with loans@artscouncilcollection.co.uk or on our social media sites:
Twitter: **A_C_Collection**
Facebook: **ArtsCouncilCollection**
Instagram: **artscouncilcollection**

How can this pack be used?
The activity suggestions are targeted primarily at Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils though could be adapted for older and younger pupils. They may form part of a project before, during or after a visit to see the tapestries. Ideas are informed by National Curriculum requirements and Ofsted subject guidance. While resources in this pack are designed with Key Stage 2 and 3 learners in mind, they are also ideal for Key Stage 4 learners and above if scaled up or altered.

The paper sculpture resources (Section 5, Resource Three) designed by Alex Josephine Gwynne (https://folduptoys.com) are made with Key Stage 2 and 3 in mind. Please do build and design sculptures inspired by the collection and your visit to the art works. These are also ideal for remote learning — if you cannot or choose not to visit in person, consider remaking the exhibition via paper sculpture in your own learning environment. This is a useful reflection tool considering the exhibition, pieces, characters and learning from the space.

The visual resource map by artist Jimmy Rogers (https://booyeah.co.uk) is made specifically to highlight and support accessibility in the collection. It takes the learner through a visit to the collection purely visually with very limited written content. The intent is to offer options on how we respond with sensory learning. This is particularly relevant for neuro-diverse learners, visitors with complex learning needs, visual learners and non-English speaking and English as a second language audiences.

The drawing games "Ways of Seeing" are great ways to be creative within a gallery space or beyond. They focus attention through repetition on art works, building a deeper relationships and attention to detail. If you are forming a learning journey record, consider using these techniques to record the pupil's responses.

Can I reproduce the images in this pack?

This research pack is intended as a private resource, to be used for internal educational purposes only. We welcome you using and reproducing the pack and its resources with your learners and others in the community for non-commercial use. This includes reproducing art works in your learning space or reproduction for accessibility. For commercial use, the art work images included within this pack are for internal use only and may not be copied, distributed or used for any other purposes without appropriate permissions being sought. To obtain Arts Council Collection images for other uses please contact acc@southbankcentre.co.uk

Anything I should know in advance before I plan on visiting this exhibition?

Themes and content within this pack have the potential to be challenging — please consider the following:

- In the sixth tapestry, *Lamentation*, Tim crashes his Ferrari into a lamppost in a bloody accident and dies an untimely death. Contained here are depictions of injury and grief. Adult themes permeate the collection as a whole.
- The word 'transvestite' is used in this pack. We recognise both that this is how the artist Grayson Perry self-identifies, and that the word has the potential to cause distress for some in LGBTQ communities.
- Some themes/images within the collection directly reference Christian faith identity and belief.
- Each tapestry is large/tall in person and may be in galleries that do not offer space to view the art work from a large distance — a consideration if your learners are differently abled.
- The artist's work and shows are popular. Please anticipate that spaces can be busy at times with the associated sensory distractions.

Who made this resource?

This pack was commissioned in 2012 by the Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre and was researched and written by Fiona Godfrey, Arts & Education Consultant (www.fionagodfrey.org.uk). This was updated and co-authored in 2020 by Jon Sleigh, Learning Officer and Curator, to include in-gallery activities, new artist commissions and revised text reflecting social change since the pack was produced. (Twitter: jon_sleigh; website https://jonsleighfreelance.wixsite.com/about)

Section 2
Arts Council Collection

The Arts Council Collection supports artists in this country through the purchase and display of their work. Since it was founded in 1946, the Collection's acquisitions policy has always been characterised by a spirit of risk-taking combined with an informed appraisal of current practice. As a consequence, the Arts Council Collection is now the largest national loan collection of modern and contemporary British art in the world, and includes fine examples of work by all of this country's most prominent artists. It is the most widely circulated of all of Britain's national collections and can be seen in exhibitions in museums and galleries across the UK and abroad.

The Arts Council Collection is managed by the Southbank Centre, London on behalf of Arts Council England and has a base in London and at Longside, Yorkshire Sculpture Park. The base at Longside enables the Arts Council Collection team to extend its sculpture conservation and research programmes and to increase public access to the sculpture collection through increased lending and exhibition initiatives. A diverse and stimulating range of exhibitions from the Collection, including displays of some of the most recent acquisitions, can be seen in the adjacent Longside Gallery.

Visit www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk to find out more about us, to search our entire holdings online, or to make your own selection from the Collection.

Follow the Arts Council Collection on social media:
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Instagram **artscouncilcollection**

Background to the exhibition

The six tapestries in the exhibition *The Vanity of Small Differences* came about as a result of Grayson Perry making a series of documentaries with Channel 4 called *All in the Best Possible Taste*, screened in summer 2012. As Perry describes:

> We'd been talking about making a series of TV programmes about taste and it seemed sensible for some art works to come out of the series. We were wondering what sort of art works would be fitting. Pots would have seemed a rather small-scale outcome; whereas tapestries, being large, could work on a public scale. We could produce a series that would fit with the number of programmes we were planning — three social classes, three programmes, six tapestries. Also, compared with pots, tapestries are actually relatively quick to produce.

The three Channel 4 programmes followed Perry as he investigated the taste of those traditionally considered working class, middle class and upper class. Perry's investigations involved him visiting working-class communities in Sunderland, middle-class communities in Tunbridge Wells and upper-class families living in grand homes in the Cotswolds.

Perry's particular interest was in the emotional attachments we make to objects, and how the judgements we make about our own and other people's taste are often delineated along class lines. In order to gather material, he spent time in the company of different groups, interviewing them, photographing them and making sketchbook drawings and notes. In each of the three locations he gained further insights by dressing up as a woman of the class group he was visiting.

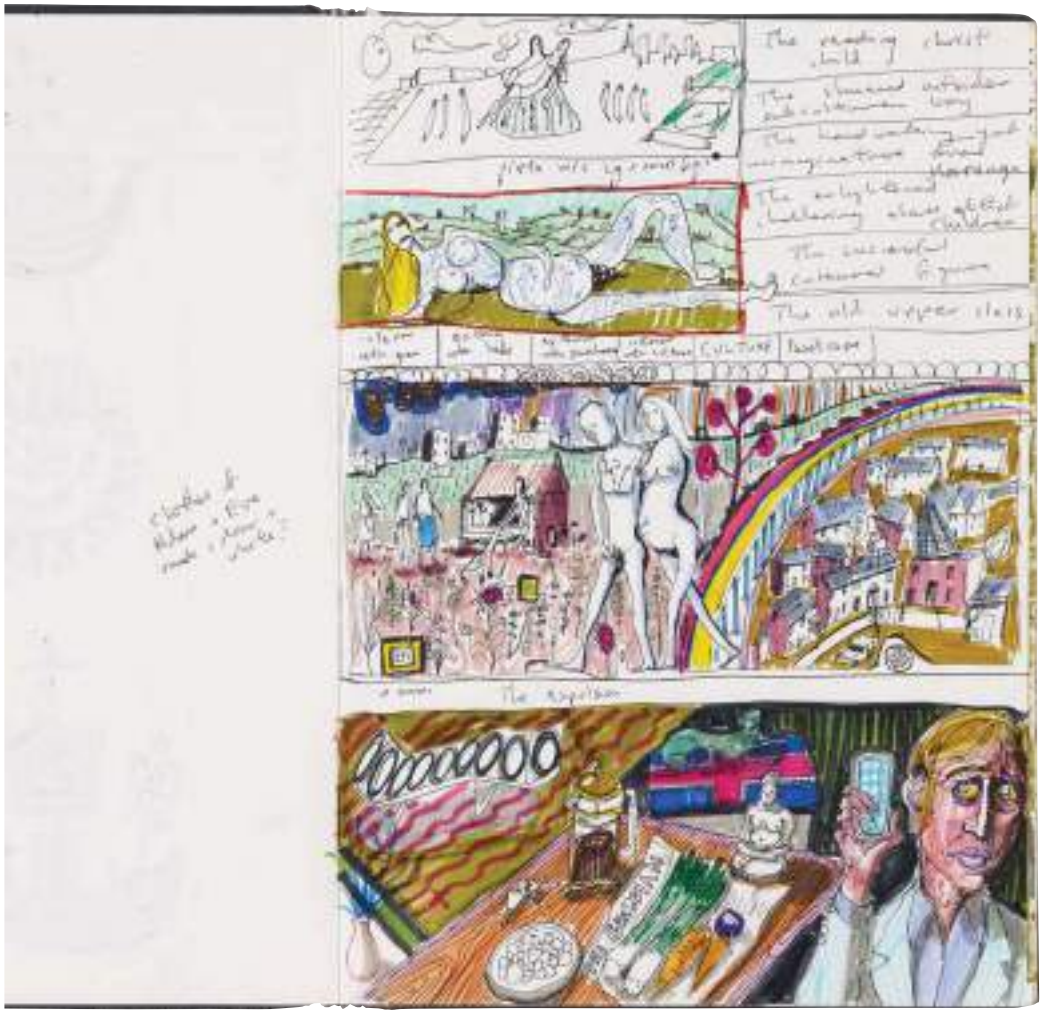
In Sunderland, he was curious to investigate aspects of working-class taste that are sometimes deemed 'tacky' or 'tasteless'. He observed the pleasure that women took in dressing up for a night out on the town, and the enjoyment the young men took in displaying their cars. He noticed how these displays create an almost tribal sense of belonging. He discovered how much emotional affection people have for the objects in their homes and he also saw an enduring and nostalgic allegiance to the industries that had given the town a sense of unity in the past.

In middle-class Tunbridge Wells, Perry discovered two distinct 'taste tribes'. The first group he spent time with was the new affluent middle class whose homes were filled with signs of wealth. Here the emphasis was often on owning brand new, designer things. People in this group seemed concerned to fit in by surrounding themselves with objects that conformed to a social norm typified by smartness and newness.

In contrast, the second middle class group Perry identified gravitated more towards the individual, surrounding themselves with all things vintage, shabby-chic, hand-made and organic. He sensed among this group a desire to be individual — yet this individuality still had to fit within a particular set of norms. Among this group he noticed a lot of anxiety about health and the environment. He also noted that the second group placed more value on owning books than the first group.

Among the upper-class estates in the Cotswolds, Perry found a sense of poverty and decay. This was a group of people who seemed content to live with the shabbiness of antiquity. Here he met families burdened by their assets — crippled by taxes and lacking the money needed to stop the decay of their buildings or to lavish on their own comforts. He sensed the huge weight of responsibility bestowed on this class by their inheritance. He also met those determined to find new ways to bring new life, creativity and investment to the historic buildings and countryside in their ownership.

The photographs and drawings that Perry made as a result of these investigations were amalgamated into a series of compositions.



Each of these six compositions was then interpreted as a tapestry, designed in Photoshop and then woven by computer-operated machinery at the Flanders Tapestries in Belgium. The labour of making the tapestries was in the designing, with Perry taking around two weeks to turn his drawings into compositions. It then took three months to adapt his computer files, and programme the computers that control the looms. Yarns had to be specially sourced and dyed to carefully match the colours in Perry's drawing. Different yarn combinations had to be trialled to ensure a good colour match. Threading a loom ready for weaving took about four days. With the design finalised, the actual process of weaving each tapestry then took about five hours. Several copies of each tapestry were produced; each run of the same design is known as an 'edition'. An edition of six was produced of each design, plus two trials, known as 'artist's proofs'.

Perry's decision to immortalise his visits and observations in a series of tapestries was partly inspired by the history of tapestry-making as a traditional means of recording stories, as well as by their associations with wealth and grandeur. Interviewed for Channel 4, Perry said:

> Why tapestries? I always work with traditional media. Each historic category of object has accrued over time intellectual and emotional baggage. I depend on this to add inflection to the content of the works. Tapestry is the art form of grand houses. On my television taste safari I only saw tapestries hanging in stately homes. They depicted classical myths, historical and religious scenes or epic battles like Hannibal crossing the Alps. I enjoy the idea of using this costly and ancient medium to show the commonplace dramas of modern British life.

Perry's six tapestries tell a story of twenty-first century social mobility. In them we see the character of Tim Rakewell man rising from a working-class birth, making money, marrying into the middle classes, experiencing the crippling financial burdens of the upper classes, and finally dying an untimely death.

Hogarth, William
A Rake's Progress IV: The Arrested, Going to Court, 1733
Courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum, London / The Bridgeman Art Library

Perry's tapestries make direct reference to the series of paintings called *A Rake's Progress* by William Hogarth (1697—1764), which hang in the Sir John Soane's Museum in London. Hogarth has long been an influence on Perry's work. The eight paintings in Hogarth's series tell the story of Tom Rakewell, a young man who inherits a fortune from his father and who goes on to squander his inheritance on fashionable pursuits. Tom marries for money, gambles away his second fortune, is imprisoned for his debts and finally ends his life in 'the madhouse'.

The tapestries also pay homage to early Renaissance painting, another favourite art form of Perry's.

Section 3
Grayson Perry biography

Grayson Perry is an artist, writer, broadcaster and curator. Perry is a mixed media artist, working in ceramics, fabric, drawing and painting. His work is often autobiographical, reflecting his life and interests. Associated with this you'll often see him with childhood toy teddy bear Alan Measles, or as Claire, a part of Grayson's identity. Perry self-identifies and uses the term 'transvestite'. His identity encompasses both male-presenting and female-presenting clothes. Grayson Perry came to greater public attention when he won the Turner Prize in 2003.

He was born into a working-class family in 1960 and spent the first years of his life in Chelmsford, Essex, attending Broomfield Primary School. When he was five his father left home, leaving his mother to marry the milkman with whom she had been having a relationship. Together they had two more children, a boy and a girl. At this point Perry's father disappeared from his life. When Perry was eight, he moved with his mother and stepfather to the village of Bicknacre and he changed schools to Woodham Ferres C of E Primary.

Perry's secondary schooling was at King Edward VI Grammar School in Chelmsford. Shortly after starting secondary school, Perry renewed contact with his father, at which his mother threw him out of the family home, insisting he go and live with his father. This domestic residency subsequently ended, and Perry returned to his mother and stepfather's until he was 18.

Perry talks openly about the difficult times of his childhood and how these experiences have fed into his work. His stepfather created a world of violence and fear, and Perry's survival tactic was to retreat into an imaginary world of play: a world of island kingdoms, wars and rebellion, in which the central hero was his teddy bear Alan Measles. (Alan Measles now has his own website and Twitter account.) Between the ages of five and 15, this became Perry's place of refuge from the unstable and sometimes violent world of his family. In this world, Perry's creative spirit flourished as inventor, maker and designer — of guns, planes, cranes and vehicles. He also discovered his ability to represent this world through his skills in drawing. Another influence on Perry's creativity was the early memory of his father's shed. This was a world of cobbled-together cupboards and drawers with mismatched drawer knobs, of improvised tools and a colourful wall where his father tried out different paints. In his autobiography, Perry describes how these experiences shaped his appreciation and enjoyment of his own creativity:

> My own creativity and art practice has been a mental shed — a sanctuary as well as a place of action — where I've retreated to make things. It gives me a sense of security in a safe enclosed space while I look out of the window onto the world.[1]

When he was about eleven, Perry began to become aware of his enjoyment of female-presenting clothes and dressing up in other identities. He has become almost as well known for his sub-personality Claire as for himself, as he often publicly dresses as Claire in overtly feminine clothes. This discovery informed a teenage and adult identity that also featured model aeroplanes, motorbikes, punk music and a heterosexual/heteronormative relationship.

For a while, Perry wanted to train as an army officer. Instead he was encouraged to pursue his abilities in art. He joined the Art Foundation course at Braintree FE College and then applied for a BA in Fine Art at Portsmouth Polytechnic, believing he was unlikely to be accepted by the top London art colleges. He graduated from Portsmouth in 1982 with a 2:1 degree. During these years, he was welcome at neither his mother's nor his father's homes, and spent much of his holidays living in squats in Portsmouth and London, getting involved in a life where creativity pervaded all aspects of existence, from conversations to parties, dress and décor.

1. Wendy Jones, *Grayson Perry: Portrait of the Artist as a Young Girl* (London: Vintage, 2007), p. 23.

Henry Darger (1892-1973), *Untitled (Idyllic landscape with children)*, mid-20th century
Watercolour, pencil, carbon tracing and collage on pieced paper
24 x 106 ½ in
Collection American Folk Museum, New York
Museum purchase with funds generously provided by John and Margaret Robson, 2004
© Kiyoko Lerner Photo by James Prinz

Another influence on Perry's work during his time at art college was the work of so called 'outsider' artists. 'Outsider artists' is now a contested term that signifies developing an artist practice without formal art school training or tuition. An exhibition called *Outsiders* was shown at the Hayward Gallery in 1979. The exhibition comprised pictures and sculptures by people with no formal art training, many living on the fringes of society. Perry saw the exhibition and was particularly drawn to the work of Henry Darger, a reclusive figure, much of whose childhood had been spent in a psychiatric hospital. Perry describes the influence of Darger on his work:

> Darger is the artist I identify with most in terms of his creative pathways. I feel a kindred spirit with how his imagination worked, the way he sought refuge in a fantasy world in the same way that I secreted my imagination and artistic practice into a shed where I retreated to do my work in an enclosed, secure environment while observing the world. I see in Henry Darger's work that the real world was too painful to bear, so he made an alternative.[2]

Perry's first experience of success as an artist came in 1980, at the end of his first year at art college, when he made a small sculpture that appeared something like a gutted fish or a boat, with a wigwam roof. This was accepted for an annual exhibition of art student work organised by the Institute of Contemporary Arts called *The New Contemporaries*.

On leaving art college, Perry moved back to a squat in London with fellow students from Portsmouth, living on benefits and supplementing this income by life-modelling. During this time he became involved with a group called the Neo-Naturists, who staged anarchistic nude performance art events, revisiting the spirit of nudism that had been alive in the 1960s. During this time, Perry remained committed to becoming an artist, continuing to make small sculptures from junk as well as filling sketchbooks with detailed collages.

2. Ibid., p. 126.

> The collages' obsessive detail, busyness and horror vacui[3] set the tone for the work I make now: even if it is a pot that doesn't have detail on it has to have a texture; it has to have marbling or crackle. I find it difficult to leave empty space, my instinct is to cover up emptiness and always elaborate, to my detriment sometimes. It's part of my psychological make-up that I'm a detail freak.[4]

In 1982, Perry decided to join a pottery class, and took great delight in the skills, techniques and possibilities of ceramics, as well as discovering a wealth of examples of decorative pottery, such as in the V&A museum, including slipware. Perry's work at this time was provocative and angry: sculptural pieces incorporating bits of broken pottery and glass. This work was shown in a mixed exhibition in a little gallery opposite the British Museum.

Grayson Perry, *Spirit Jar*, 1994
Earthenware
45.7 × 20.3 cm
Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London
© the artist

It wasn't until the 1990s that Perry really began to realise that pottery was a medium he enjoyed. He had thought that the glamorous world of film-making might be more in keeping with his lifestyle. However, part of the attraction of pottery for Perry was its low status as an art form and also its British wholesomeness, against which he could play with being provocative. Pottery also has wide associations in folk art and is a form on which stories have often traditionally been told, as in for example the vases of Ancient Greece.

3. A term used in art to denote the filling of an entire space with detail, from the Latin meaning 'fear of the empty'.
4. Jones 2007, p. 183

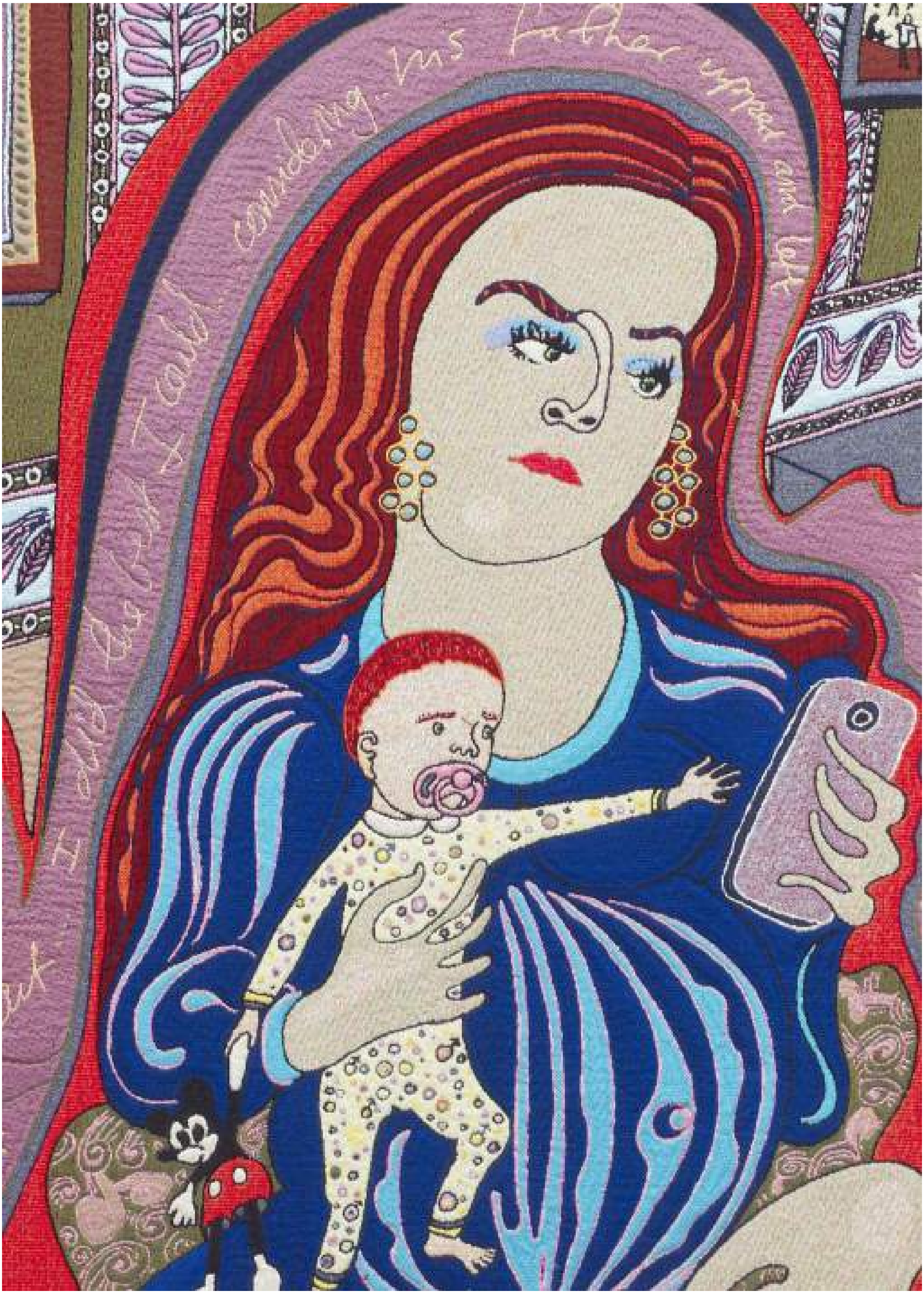
His work developed into making the large pots for which he is perhaps best known, and which sell for many thousands of pounds. These are one-off pieces, hand-built using the traditional method of coiling. Perry uses colourful glazes and underglaze colours, lustres and photographic transfers to decorate his pots with motifs and figures that often suggest narratives, maps and family trees. These symbolic combinations often sum up experiences of the absurdity, curiosity and pain of everyday human experience. He describes in his autobiography how he never likes to do trials. Trials take place on the pot itself, maybe in a new combination of colours, glazes and transfers. He often 'bodges' with gold lustre when something goes wrong. He sees 'bodging' as part of being human.

Grayson Perry, *The Walthamstow Tapestry*, 2009
Wool and cotton tapestry
300 × 1,500 cm
Courtesy the Artist and Victoria Miro, London
© the artist

Though pottery continues to play a central role in Perry's work, he also makes work using a wide range of other art forms including printmaking, film and embroidery. His first work using tapestry was in 2009. *The Walthamstow Tapestry* is a detailed depiction of modern day life, including hundreds of familiar brand names.

Perry's first solo exhibition was in Amsterdam in 2002, followed by a solo show at the Barbican in London in the same year. He has also had solo shows in Pittsburgh (2006), Japan (2007) and Luxembourg (2008). In 2008, Perry curated the exhibition *Unpopular Culture*, selecting works from the Arts Council Collection. In 2011, he curated the exhibition *The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman* at the British Museum. This combined Perry's own work in pottery, textiles and sculpture with objects by unknown craftsmen and women from the museum's collection. In the same year, he was elected a member of the Royal Academy of the Arts.

Perry lives in London with his wife, the psychotherapist, artist, broadcaster and author Phillippa Perry and their daughter Florence. He also spends time near Eastbourne where he has a cottage and studio.


considering. his father upped and left

Section 4
The six tapestries

This section provides detailed information on each of the tapestries, along with explanations of the art works that inspired them. The quotations are Grayson Perry's own descriptions.

Grayson Perry
The Vanity of Small Differences, 2013 (installation view)
Sunderland Art Gallery, 2013

All the tapestries measure 200 × 400 cm. All works are reproduced courtesy Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre London and British Council Collection. Gift of the artist and Victoria Miro Gallery with the support of Channel 4 Television, The Art Fund and Sfumato Foundation with additional support from Alix Partners.

The Adoration of the Cage Fighters

Grayson Perry
The Adoration of the Cage Fighters, 2012
Wool, cotton, acrylic, polyester and silk tapestry
200 × 400cm
One from edition of six plus two artist's proofs

'The scene is Tim's great-grandmother's front room. The infant Tim reaches for his mother's smartphone — his rival for her attention. She is dressed up, ready for a night out with her four friends, who have perhaps already "been on the pre-lash". Two "Mixed Martial Arts" enthusiasts present icons of tribal identity to the infant: a Sunderland A.F.C. football shirt and a miner's lamp. In the manner of early Christian painting, Tim appears a second time in the work: on the stairs, as a four-year-old, facing another evening alone in front of a screen. Although this series of images developed very organically, with little consistent method, the religious reference was here from the start: I hear the echo of paintings such as Andrea Mantegna's *The Adoration of the Shepherds* (c.1450).'

Text (in the voice of Tim's Mother): 'I could have gone to Uni, but I did the best I could, considering his father upped and left. He [Tim] was always a clever little boy, he knows how to wind me up. My mother liked a drink, my father liked one too. Ex-miner, a real man, open with his love, and his anger. My Nan though is the salt of the earth, the boy loves her. She spent her whole life looking after others. There are no jobs round here anymore, just the gym and the football. A normal family, a divorce or two, mental illness, addiction, domestic violence… the usual thing… My friends they keep me sane… take me out… listen… a night out of the weekend in town is a precious ritual.'

Historical art references

Perry's composition was inspired by Mantegna's painting *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, c.1450. Mantegna was an early prodigy of the Italian Renaissance, and this painting was made when he was only in his early twenties. Artists at the time were just working out how to use perspective to create a sense of distance. Although the perspective is flawed in some places (for example the bars on the building), we can see Mantegna experimenting with and demonstrating his skills, as he also does by foreshortening the figure of the infant Christ. He uses architectural detail in the foreground to show closeness and a carefully detailed landscape to show distance. The way the scene is shown is typical of a trend at the time that encouraged worshippers to think about biblical scenes in everyday terms, hence shepherds are tatty in dress and ugly in appearance. Mantegna's depiction of the holy family also shows his love of the 'classical'[1] art of the Ancient Greeks, who had been interested in the ideals of human beauty, excellence and architectural perfection.

Andrea Mantegna (1431–1506)
The Adoration of the Shepherds, c.1450
Tempera on canvas, transferred from wood
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

In the scene, Mary worships her newborn, while Joseph sleeps in the left of the painting. The bare tree that stands out above the shepherds in the right of the painting perhaps suggest the cross on which Jesus' life will end. The orchard on the left has been read to symbolise Mary's fertility.

1. The description 'classical' comes from the Latin word 'classis' which means of a superior class.

The Agony in the Car Park

Grayson Perry
The Agony in the Car Park, 2012
Wool, cotton, acrylic, polyester and silk tapestry
200 × 400cm
One from edition of six plus two artist's proofs

'This image is a distant relative of Giovanni Bellini's *The Agony in the Garden* (c. 1465). The scene is a hill outside Sunderland — in the distance is the Stadium of Light. The central figure, Tim's stepfather, a club singer, hints at Matthias Grünewald's *Isenheim Altarpiece*. A child-like shipyard crane stands in for the crucifix, with Tim's mother as Mary — once again in the throes of an earthly passion. Tim, in grammar school uniform, blocks his ears, squirming in embarrassment. A computer magazine sticks out of his bag, betraying his early enthusiasm for software. To the left, a younger Tim plays happily with his step-grandfather outside his pigeon cree on the allotments. To the right, young men with their customised cars gather in the car park of "Heppie's" social club. Mrs T and the call centre manager await a new recruit into the middle class.'

Text (in the voice of the Tim's stepfather): 'I started as a lad in the shipyards. I followed in my father's footsteps. Now Dad has his pigeons and he loves the boy [Tim]. Shipbuilding bound the town together like a religion. When Thatcher closed the yards down it ripped the heart out of the community. I could have been in a rock band [above graffiti of Sunderland band The Futureheads]. I met the boys' mother at the club. I sing on a Saturday night between the bingo and the meat raffle. Now I work in a call centre, the boss says I am management material. The money's good, I could buy my council house, sell it and get out. I voted Tory last time.'

Historical art references

This is Bellini's painting from which Perry took his inspiration. Brother-in-law to Mantegna, Giovanni Bellini was also an Italian artist who worked in Venice from around 1459 onwards and who continued painting until not long before he died in 1516. One of the most important Venetian artists, Bellini came from a family of artists and was admired for his sensitive paintings of the Virgin. He and Mantegna both painted versions of *The Agony in the Garden*, and it has been suggested that they both worked from a drawing by Bellini's father Jacopo, who was also an artist.

Giovanni Bellini (1430–1516)
The Agony in the Garden, c..1465
Tempera on panel
National Gallery, London UK /
The Bridgman Art Library

The painting portrays Christ kneeling in prayer on the Mount of Olives, knowing of his impending arrest and crucifixion, while Judas and the soldiers approach across the distant landscape. An angel appears in the sky, holding a cup, as a symbol of strength and comfort. Although the central focus of the painting is Christ on the rock, the white Italian city at the left of the picture is also a focus, perhaps suggesting the heavenly city. Meanwhile beneath this heavenly scene, the more earthly disciples Peter, James and John sleep close by with all their human flaws, too tired to stay awake. Bellini was particularly skilled at depicting the effect of light, and the dawn light creates an unearthly atmosphere, which creates a more hopeful effect that in Mantegna's harsher version.

Expulsion from Number 8 Eden Close

Grayson Perry
Expulsion from Number 8 Eden Close, 2012
Wool, cotton, acrylic, polyester and silk tapestry
200 × 400cm
One from edition of six plus two artist's proofs

'Tim is at university studying computer science, and is going steady with a nice girl from Tunbridge Wells. To the left, we see Tim's mother and stepfather, who now live on a private development and own a luxury car. She hoovers the AstroTurf lawn, he returns from a game of golf. There has been an argument and Tim and his girlfriend are leaving. They pass through a rainbow, while Jamie Oliver, the god of social mobility, looks down. They are guilty of a sin, just like Adam and Eve in Masaccio's *The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden* (c.1425). To the right, a dinner party is just starting. Tim's girlfriend's parents and fellow guests toast the new arrival.'

Text (in the voice of Tim's girlfriend): 'I met Tim at College, he was Such a Geek. He took me back to meet his mother and Stepfather. Their house was so clean and Tidy, not a speck of dust… or a book, apart from her god, Jamie. She Says I have turned Tim into a Snob. His parents don't appreciate how bright he is. My father laughed at Tim's accent but welcomed him onto the sunlit uplands of the middle classes. I hope Tim loses his obsession with money.'

Historical art references

In the figures of Tim and his girlfriend, Perry make's direct reference to Masaccio's painting *The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden*. Masaccio was another early Renaissance artist who only lived to the age of 27. Masaccio is a nickname based on the Italian name Tommaso, and means 'hulking Tom'.

During his short life, Masaccio's particular interest was in the mastery of the human figure, creating the effect of solidity through the use of light and shade.

Tommaso Masaccio (1401–28)
The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden, c.1425
Fresco (post restoration)
Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence /
The Bridgeman Art Library

These frescoes of the Brancacci Chapel in Florence, painted with Masolino in the mid 1420s, are considered to be Masaccio's masterpiece. In this fresco, Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden, having tasted the fruit they were forbidden to eat. Above them hovers an angel pointing to the outside world. Eve clearly experiences grief as well as shame at her nudity, while Adam covers his face in remorse. Masaccio's work typified a new movement in art at the time, from rather static depictions of human figures to a greater emphasis on emotion, expression and muscularity.

The Annunciation of the Virgin Deal

Grayson Perry
The Annunciation of the Virgin Deal, 2012
Wool, cotton, acrylic, polyester and silk tapestry
200 × 400cm
One from edition of six plus two artist's proofs

'Tim is relaxing with his family in the kitchen of his large, rural (second) home. His business partner has just told him that he is now an extremely wealthy man, as they have sold their software business to Richard Branson. On the table is a still life demonstrating the cultural bounty of his affluent lifestyle. To the left, his parents-in-law read, and his elder child plays on the rug. To the right, Tim dandles his baby while his wife tweets. This image includes references to three different paintings of the Annunciation by Carlo Crivelli (the vegetables), Matthias Grünewald (his colleague's expression) and Robert Campin (the jug of lilies). The convex mirror and discarded shoes are reminders of that great pictorial display of wealth and status, *The Arnolfini Portrait* (1434) by Jan van Eyck.'

Text (in the voice of Tim's business partner): 'I have worked with Tim for a decade, a genius, yet so down to earth. Tim's incredibly driven, he never feels successful. He's calmer since his mother died. He's had a lot of therapy. He wants to be good.'

Text (on copy of *The Guardian* used to wrap organic vegetables):
'A GEEK'S PROGRESS, TIM RAKEWELL: RISEN WITHOUT TRACE'
Text (on iPad): 'RAKEWELL SELLS TO VIRGIN FOR £270m'

Historical art references

In this tapestry, Perry makes reference to the famous *Arnolfini Portrait* by Jan van Eyck, which makes a conscious display of wealth. The mirror and the chandelier are centrally placed, and attention is given to the rich fabrics in which the couple are dressed. Oranges (under the window) were a very expensive and prized fruit at the time. The small dog is a symbol of loyalty, and its rare breed (an Affenpinscher) also suggests wealth. The text above the mirror literally translates from Latin as 'Jan Van Eyck was here', which also links to Grayson Perry's use of text in the tapestries.

Jan van Eyck (c.1390–1441)
Portrait of Giovanni Arnolfini and his Wife, 1434
Oil on panel
National Gallery, London, UK / The Bridgeman Art Library

In this tapestry Perry also makes reference to three different paintings of the Annunication. His inclusion of fruit and vegetables references this detail from Carlo Crivelli's painting on this theme.

(detail)
Carlo Crivelli (1430/5—c.1494)
The Annunciation, with Saint Emidius, 1486
Tempera and oil on canvas
The National Gallery, London / The Bridgeman Art Library

The expression on the face of Tim's colleague is influenced by Matthias Grünewald's *Painting of the Annunciation*. The painting is one panel of twelve making up an alterpiece that hung in the monastery of St Anthony in Isenheim. The outer wings of the altarpiece were opened for important festivals, and the Annunciation is on the left wing. In it, the virgin is shown in a chapel, reflecting the sacred nature of the event.

(Detail)
Matthias Grünewald (1475–1528)
The Annunciation
Detail from the Isenheim Altarpiece, c.1515
Oil on panel
De Agostini Picture Library / The Bridgeman Art Library

The jug of lilies makes reference to Robert Campin's version of the Annunciation. Many of the objects in his painting were chosen for their symbolism. Here, the lilies in the ceramic jug represent Mary's virginity.

(Detail)
Master of Flémalle, identified as Robert Campin (1375–1444)
Central panel of *Annunciation Triptych* (Merode Altarpiece), 1425
Oil on panel
De Agostini Picture Library / The Bridgeman Art Library

The Upper Class at Bay

Grayson Perry
The Upper Class at Bay, 2012
Wool, cotton, acrylic, polyester and silk tapestry
200 × 400cm
One from edition of six plus two artist's proofs

'Tim Rakewell and his wife are now in their late forties and their children are grown. They stroll, like Mr and Mrs Andrews in Thomas Gainsborough's famous portrait of the landed gentry (c. 1750), in the grounds of their mansion in the Cotswolds. They are new money; they can never become upper-class in their lifetime. In the light of the sunset, they watch the old aristocratic stag with its tattered tweed hide being hunted down by the dogs of tax, social change, upkeep and fuel bills. The old land-owning breed is dying out. Tim has his own problems; as a "fat cat" he has attracted the ire of an "Occupy"-style protest movement, who camp outside his house. The protester silhouetted between the stag's antlers refers to paintings of the vision of Saint Hubert, who converted on seeing a vision of a crucifix above the head of a stag.'

Historical art references

In *The Upper Class at Bay*, Tim Rakewell and his wife stroll like the subjects of Gainsborough's famous painting *Mr and Mrs Andrews*, c.1750. Painted soon after the Andrews' marriage, Gainsborough shows the couple at Auberies, their estate on the Suffolk-Essex boarder, near Gainsborough's native Sudbury. It is a conversation piece, a genre fashionable in the eighteenth century, showing groups of people in a rural or domestic setting. The large area of meadows and rolling hills on the right allowed Gainsborough to demonstrate his skill as a landscape painter, which was unusual at the time. Mrs Andrews sits on an elaborate bench and it has been suggested that the unfinished section of her lap might have been intended for a child. Behind the couple stands an oak tree, a symbol of stability and continuity, and, to their left, sheaves of corn, a symbol of fertility. Gainsborough was, with Reynolds, the leading portrait painter in eighteenth-century England. This is an early work, executed before he developed his later more feathery brushwork.

Thomas Gainsborough (1727–88)
Mr and Mrs Andrews, c.1750
Oil on canvas
National Gallery, London, UK / The Bridgeman Art Library

Lamentation

Grayson Perry
Lamentation, 2012
Wool, cotton, acrylic, polyester and silk tapestry
200 × 400cm
One from edition of six plus two artist's proofs

'The scene is the aftermath of a car accident at an intersection near a retail park. Tim lies dead in the arms of a stranger. His glamorous second wife stands stunned and bloodstained amidst the wreckage of his Ferrari. To the right, paramedics prepare to remove his body. To the left, police and firemen record and clear the crash scene. Onlookers take photos on their camera phones to upload to the internet. His dog lays dead. The contents of his wife's expensive handbag spill out over a copy of *Hello* magazine that features her and Tim on the cover. At the bottom of Rogier van der Weyden's *Lamentation* (c.1441), the painting that inspired this image, is a skull; I have substituted it with a smashed smartphone. This scene also echoes the final painting of Hogarth's *A Rake's Progress*, where Tom Rakewell dies naked in The Madhouse.'

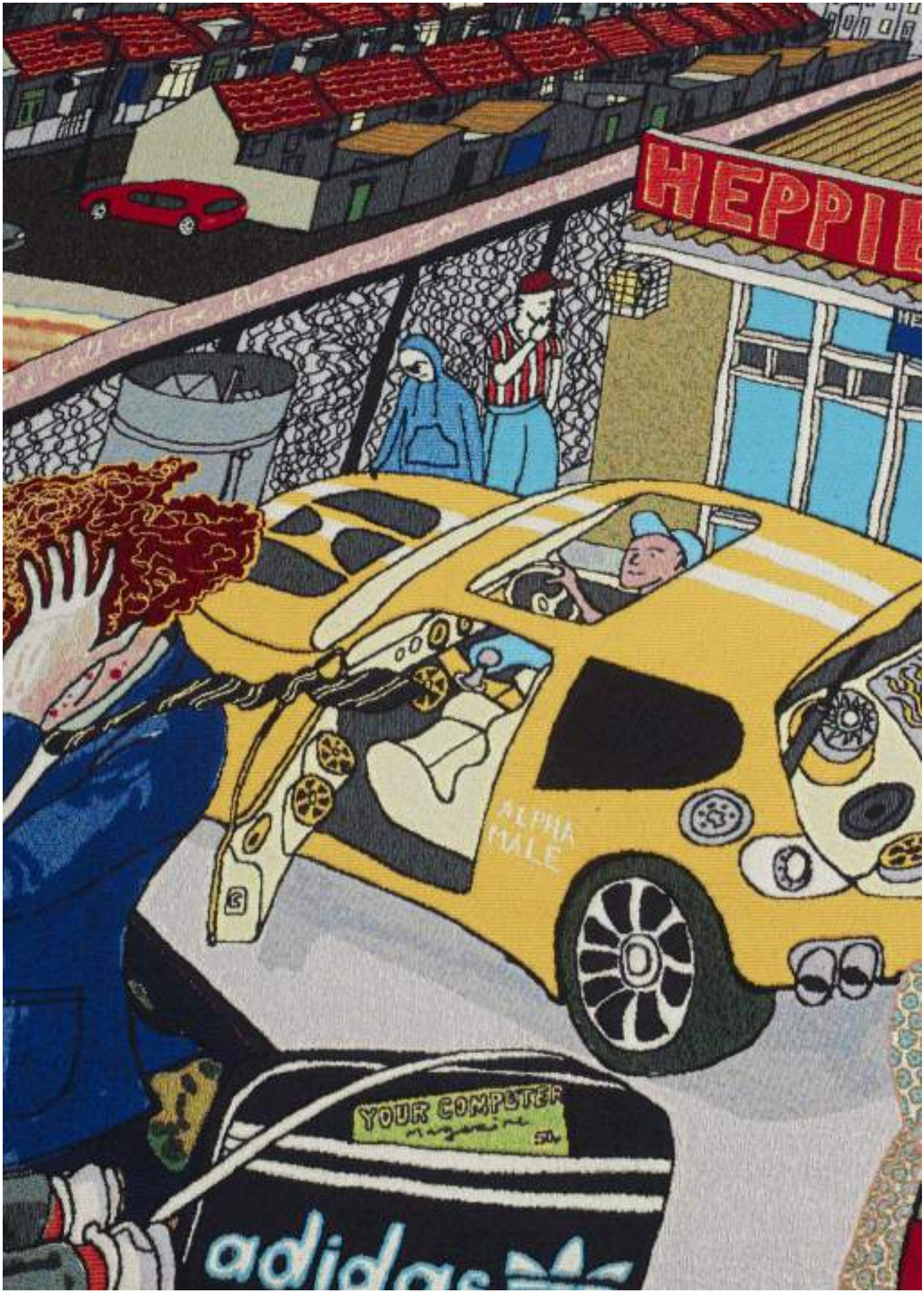
Text (in the voice of a female passer-by): 'We were walking home from a night out, these two cars, racing each other speed past. Middle aged men showing off, the red one lost control. The driver wasn't wearing a seatbelt. He didn't stand a chance. The female passenger was okay but catatonic with shock. I'm a nurse. I tried to save the man but he died in my arms. It was only afterwards I found out that he was that famous computer guy, Rakewell. All he said to me was "Mother". All that money and he dies in the gutter.'

Historical art references

Perry's final tapestry *Lamentation* draws on Rogier van der Weyden's painting of the same name, painted around 1441. The Virgin Mary and John the Evangelist hold the body of the crucified Christ. Mary Magdalene looks on, also mourning. The skull in the foreground reminds us that we are at Golgotha (which translates as 'place of the skull').

Rogier van der Weyden (c.1399—1464)
The Lamentation, c.1441
Oil on panel
Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels

Van der Weyden was apprenticed to Robert Campin and came to be renowned for the pathos and naturalism he used in his portraits and religious subjects. Late medieval religious art often depicted the humanity of Jesus in a way that was intended to evoke empathy and understanding in the viewer, leading them to a greater sense of devotion.


HEPPIE
ALPHA MALE
YOUR COMPUTER
adidas

Section 5
Looking at the tapestries (on site or virtual)

When looking at the tapestries in the gallery, you may find these suggestions for general discussion points and activities useful.

Discussion points

- Use the sentence stem 'I can see…' to invite pupils to look really carefully into the detail of each of the tapestries. Challenge pupils to keep finding more and more detail. (This starting point is good for developing the powers of careful observation.)
- Use the sentence stem 'I feel…' to invite pupils to share their emotional reactions to one or more of the tapestries. (This starting point is good for encouraging pupils to acknowledge their felt response and express their own responses.)
- Use the sentence stem 'I think…' to invite pupils to share their ideas about the tapestries. (This starting point is good for encouraging pupils to express their opinions and ideas about art works and how and why they were made.)
- Use the sentence stem 'I wonder…' to invite pupils to pose questions about the tapestries. Support pupils by suggesting question words they could use such as 'where…', 'how…', 'who…', 'why…', etc. (This starting point is good for encouraging curiosity and further research.)
- Talk about the different classes represented in the six tapestries. Find out what pupils themselves understand about class and discuss their own thoughts about the tastes of each class. What understanding do they have of different social classes? What associations or prejudices do they have about the three classes Perry deals with in the tapestries?

Activity ideas

If your visit is in person:

- Use the resource by artist Jimmy Rogers as a guide to explore the space. Pupils can interpret the gallery visually and make decisions on how they feel.
- Try the drawing games resource called 'Ways of Seeing' in this pack to build relationships and study the artwork closely.
- Ask pupils to go and stand beside the tapestry they like the best. Ask them to respond to the objects and environment in the tapestry in terms of what interests or appeals to them. Pupils could make drawings in sketchbooks of the objects they are drawn to. Observe how pupils group themselves. Invite each group to talk about and note down what they like in the tapestry they've chosen. Do their choices link them in some way? What words would they use to describe the world depicted in the tapestry they've chosen?

If your visit is in person or online:

- Ask pupils to find and sketch all the different facial expressions that can be found in the tapestries. Pupils could be asked to annotate these drawings with words describing the emotions and/or personalities of the people they've sketched. Ask them to make speech bubbles and thought bubbles telling more of what they think is going on in the minds of the people represented in the tapestries.
- Ask pupils to choose one of the tapestries and create their own story idea from it. As them to identify what style of story the tapestry might suggest. Get them to think about title, characters and plot. They could be challenged to tell an improvised story on the spot, or they could tell a story by going round the group and adding a sentence each.
- Pupils could be provided with postcards or printouts of the historical art works that Grayson Perry made reference to when designing the tapestries, including the paintings from Hogarth's *A Rake's Progress*. Ask pupils to see if they can work out which elements of each of these paintings Perry makes reference to in the tapestries.

If accessing the gallery digitally:

- Zoom in and out on hi-resolution images to find small details and stories in the artworks. Pupils can screenshot their favourite parts and compile them to make a new tapestry. Annotate with words or emojis to show emotion or build a new story.

Resource One — 'Ways of Seeing'

'Ways of Seeing' uses drawing games to connect your learners with the art. The class should select one figure in a tapestry as a focus to draw. Use the same figure for each experiment — the more you draw them, the more you'll see and feel.

Introduction — 'In art, portraits can look "real"' or like they do in person, or they can look completely different to reality. When they look different and are inspired by the artist's imagination, we call that ABSTRACT. As you try each experiment, ask yourself — does my drawing look "real" or "abstract"?'

Experiment number one — Change drawing hands! You have two minutes on the clock. You can draw the figure any way you like — however, you have to change drawing hands. If you're right-handed use your left hand, if you're left-handed use your right. When you're done, share your work with others — what does it look like?

Experiment number two — Drawing with your eyes closed! You have two minutes on the clock. You can draw the figure any way you like, you can use your regular drawing hand, however… it has to be from memory, with your eyes closed. Take one final look, then shut your eyes and draw — no looking or your time is up! When you're done, share with others — what does it look like?

Experiment number three — OK, you can look again! And you can use your regular drawing hand. Much easier, right? However… this time, you only have ten seconds on the clock! When you're done, share with others — what does it look like?

Experiment number four — You can have the two minutes back, what a relief! You can look and use your regular drawing hand and draw any way you like. Seems easier? However, this time you have to draw without lifting the pencil off the paper — it has to be one continuous line. How will you do this? When you're done, share with others — what does it look like?

Experient number five — The full two minutes is still on the clock, you can look again, and you can use your regular drawing hand. However, this time you can only draw using shading with no outlines. Show us how you draw using light and dark, soft and hard drawing. When you're done, share with others — what does it look like?

Resource Two — Jimmy Rogers Map and associated text below as a separate document

Use this digitally or consider printing A4 or A3.

Key to the artwork

- Enter a gallery space. Welcome!
- Take in the space — shapes, colours, words, people and sounds.
- Art spaces makes us think. They make us feel through our senses. Our thoughts and senses combine here.
- There is so much to see and feel! Where to start?
  - A Does the room follow or a path, or can you go anywhere you like? If there is a path choose where you want to stop. Is this room telling a story? What do you think that is? Can you use the room to tell your own story?
  - B If the room doesn't follow a path, where would you like to go first? It's up to you. What gets your attention first? Go with your adult and find out why! Is it how it looks, how it feels, how it sounds, what it's made of, or what it looks like? Each artwork you find can be used on its own and is special to you.

- How we feel matters and is important. Do you like what you find here? Liking and not liking the art are equally important and there is no right answer — trust what you are thinking in your head and feeling in your heart.
  - A *I like the art!* Brilliant — why is that?
  - B *I don't like it!* Also brilliant — why is that?

- You've found an artwork that makes you think and feel — how can you share this with others?
  - A Talking — tell someone what you think and ask them what they think in return. There is no right or wrong. Sharing our feelings with kindness and respect is a great way to learn from others.
  - B Our faces and sounds — what expressions or noises can you make to show how you feel? Use your face to share you thought and see how others do the same.
  - C Drawing — be inspired! Draw or sketch what you see and share this with someone else. How is your sketch similar and different to the original? Perhaps draw your own face to show how you feel. Who are you with? Draw others to capture the moment as a portrait.
  - D Writing — see what happens when your thoughts turn into words. Can you share how you feel using words that describe? Describing can be what you see, how you feel, or what it makes you think of.
  - E Movement — use your energy to share how you are feeling. How does your body react?
  - F Photography (iPhone/tablet camera) — can you take a picture here? Check the signs. If so, why not take a picture and share it with someone who hasn't seen it. Tell this person why you have shared the picture and what you think.

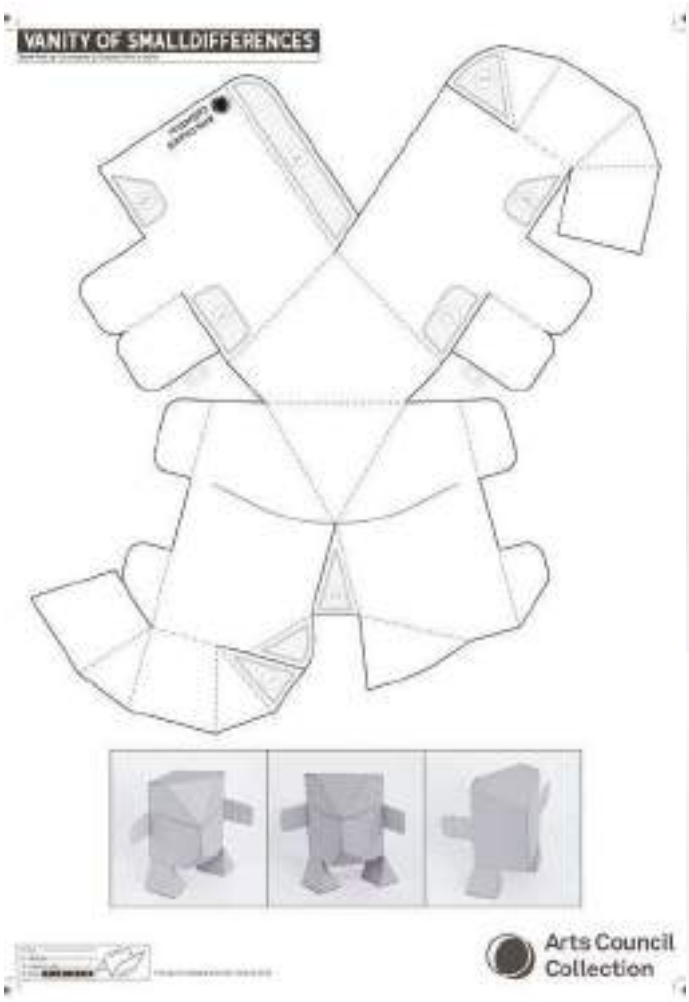
- Time to go! *Goodbye*.
- After you've been, time to reflect. What do you remember? Can you use your sharing to help you remember?

Ideas for how to be in a gallery that makes your visit better:

- Try not to run — it could hurt you or others.
- Are there any signs saying 'Do not touch'? They are there to keep the art and you safe. Please be kind and follow the sign.
- Can you take pictures here? Check for the sign and see.
- Always express how you feel and be proud of who you are. Do so with kindness and consider others in the space, asking yourself 'Am I making their trip better or worse?'
- Be respectful to what you see and others — art galleries are spaces to be kind, to share and to help others.
- Don't eat or drink unless you find out it's okay. We could get the art messy and spoil the chance for others to see it.
- Have fun! Galleries are spaces to think, feel and share. Your ideas and feelings are important, as are the words you use. Make good choices when doing this and see how it makes you and others happy

Resource Three — Build your own sculptures

Use the blank template to remake yourself, or the templates to build key figures from each tapestry. We suggest printing these on white printer card paper, A4 or A3 160 gsm.



Section 6
Themes and project ideas

This section of the pack outlines some of the themes explored in the tapestries that might be investigated further through classroom projects. Each section provides background information and offers ideas for discussion points and activities. Activity ideas are geared primarily at Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils.

The themes are as follows:

- The tapestry-making tradition — Ideal for Art and Design
- Objects, choices, tribes and belonging — Ideal for Art and Design plus PHSE
- The human figure: character and emotion — Ideal for Art and Design plus Relationship Education
- Places, local traditions and culture — Ideal for Art and Design and PHSE plus Relationship Education and Geography
- Imaginary worlds and stories — Ideal for Art and Design plus literacy

The tapestry-making tradition

Curriculum links: Art, design and technology, Geography, History
Keywords: Ancient Greece, castles, textiles, The Tudors, weaving

Ideas to explore

Tapestry is a form of weaving. In a woven piece of cloth, warp threads run top to bottom and weft threads run horizontally. In many woven cloths, the weft threads continue from one side of the piece right across to the other edge, creating stripes or checks. In a tapestry the threads fill blocks of colour to create shapes and images. Tapestry usually refers to a woven piece cloth in which this method is used to create a picture.

Traditionally, tapestries were hand-woven on a loom. However, fabric pieces made by embroidery have also, confusingly, been described as tapestries. For example, the famous Bayeux Tapestry was stitched onto a background fabric. Needlepoint is also often described as tapestry. This is a technique where coloured yarns are used to stitch through a stiff open weave fabric. There are clear similarities, in that the 'under and over' process of sewing is very similar to the 'under and over' process of weaving. In needlepoint, the two are perhaps at their most closely related.

The tradition of making tapestries can be traced back in time and across cultures. Tapestries exist that date back hundreds of years, fragments having been found during the excavation of Ancient Greek sites.

In Homer's *Odyssey*, Penelope whiles away three years waiting for her husband Odysseus' return by weaving a burial shroud for her father-in-law Laertes. She agrees that she will accept another suitor's hand in marriage when her weaving is finished. To keep these other suitors at bay, she undoes a little of the weaving each night.

Tapestries were particularly popular in Tudor times. By the sixteenth century, Flanders had become the centre of European tapestry production and it was here that tapestries were woven for Henry VIII. It was also Flemish weavers who had come to Norfolk in the twelfth century and established the woollen industry there. The name 'tapestry' comes from the French word *tapisser* which means to cover or carpet. Many French tapestries followed the *millefleur* tradition (literally meaning 'a thousand flowers'), a stylistic convention in which the background was carpeted in flowers.)

One of the reasons that tapestries have been popular is that they can be taken down, rolled up and carried around. Tapestries have been associated with castles and stately homes, where they fulfilled a role both as decoration and insulation. In churches, tapestries were brought out for special religious occasions. Traditionally, tapestries have been associated with wealth. The tapestries that hung in Henry VII's apartments at Hampton Court would have cost about the same amount as a battleship to produce!

In the early nineteenth century, the French weaver Joseph Marie Jacquard first demonstrated his mechanical loom, now known as a Jacquard loom. Grayson Perry's tapestries were woven on Jacquard looms by the company Flanders Tapestries. Traditionally, this loom operated by a series of punched cards, each of which corresponded to a row of weaving. The holes in the card would determine where hooks could penetrate to pick up the harness carrying the weft thread. In this way blocks of colour could be created. The use of punched cards for the Jacquard loom was instrumental in the early evolution of the computer!

Modern Jacquard looms are operated by computers. Compared to the laborious process of hand- weaving, these work at incredible speed.

Discussion points

- What modern day tapestries do we have access to now? Consider school, community and faith centres, home, shopping or the woven clothes we wear.
- What do tapestries mean to pupils? Discuss where they've seen tapestries and what they know about their history and how they're made.

Millefleur tapestry
Woven in wool and silk
Flanders region, c.1500
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Activity ideas

- Pupils could research the history of tapestry (for example tapestries in Tudor times) or the wool and weaving industry in the UK. They could create a presentation, for example using PowerPoint. Alternatively pupils could undertake geographical research into different tapestry traditions across the world and in different cultural traditions.
- Pupils could be invited to try different weaving techniques. Get them to time themselves completing a given size, or measure how much weaving they're able to produce in a given time (e.g. 15 minutes). Invite them to use their maths skills to calculate roughly how long it would take them to produce a tapestry the size of Grayson Perry's.
- Pupils could be invited to design a tapestry to hang on a wall in their home, school or faith centre. They could use felt-tips for their design (as Grayson Perry does) or collage to experiment with bold blocks of colour. They could take inspiration from the millefleur tradition. Invite them to look at their designs from a distance as well as close up to assess their visual impact.
- Pupils could explore how different coloured warp and weft threads can combine to create new colours, in the style of a Jacquard weaving. This is a useful way to explore colour mixing. Using for example coloured pencil, felt-tip pen or watercolour paint, pupils could make sketchbook experiments combining warp and weft threads. They could start with the same colour for the weft and then experiment with adding different colours for the warp.
- Pupils could be invited to create their own needlepoint designs by drawing with coloured felt-tip pen on binca fabric, then use tapestry wools or embroidery silks to fill in their design.
- Pupils could use recycled or upcycled materials to create large-scale tapestry designs by weaving into plastic mesh (such as the sturdy plastic pond mesh available from hardware stores) using recycled materials such as cut-up strips of coloured plastic bags. They could create a bold coloured painted design first on paper using large brushes, then use this as a guide for filling areas of their weaving.

Useful resources

Examples of different tapestries can be found in the V&A's online collection at http://collections.vam.ac.uk/

Objects, choices, tribes and belonging

Curriculum links: Art, Literacy, PSHE, Relationship education
Key words: Class, fashion, portraits, taste, tribes

Ideas to explore

In his tapestries, Grayson Perry examines the different tribes to which we may belong and how our choices in dress and possessions give us a sense of allegiance or kinship.

The first two tapestries denote working-class taste. Female-presenting figures dress up for a night out, while male-presenting figures display their cars. People collect objects for their homes that have a sentimental attachment for them. They enjoy making a statement and putting on a display.

The second two tapestries depict middle-class taste. This class is divided in their cultural choices. On the one hand there are those who enjoy buying smart houses and belongings, belonging to the golf club and wearing designer clothes. For this group, there is an element of conformity, of neatness and perfection. Then there's another group: those who seek individuality in the home-made, the vintage and the organic.

The fifth and sixth tapestries in the series depict the taste of the upper classes. Often, it would seem, upper-class taste is based on what is old and has been in the family for years. Age-old traditions and understated wealth count more than shows of ostentation. Among all three classes, the objects people choose to have around them give them a sense of belonging to a particular group or tribe. It seems that whether we choose to wear the colours of a particular football team, drive a particular car or fill our kitchens with a particular style of utensil, more often than not we are consciously or unconsciously influenced by the particular tribe to which we feel we belong.

There are many examples in art history of portraits where the sitter is painted either in an environment or surrounded by objects intended to tell the viewer something about the subject's wealth, status or interests.

There are also similarities in how different tribes around the world denote their allegiances. There are traditions in many countries where tribal belonging is denoted by particular forms of dress, jewellery, tattooing or scarring.

Discussion points

- Pupils could be invited to discuss the choices they make in terms of the clothes, décor and objects they surround themselves with. What objects do they cherish that say something about who they are? Who influences their choices? Their friends? Their family? How can kindness be shown to others in supporting and respecting their choices?
- Pupils could explore their thoughts about what they consider fashionable and desirable, or bad taste or undesirable. How do pupils think they have come to hold these views? What influences their choices? Do they, for example, prefer old things or new things? How can this be communicated in caring friendships and relationships?
- For Key Stage 3: When considering socialising and social media in the artworks, how can we use these pieces to inspire safe relationships and online exchanges?
- Pupils could discuss their own experiences of feeling they belong to a group or of being an outsider. Discuss how groups and gangs at school form their own sense of belonging, perhaps through dress, language or behaviours. Learners could discuss here how we form healthy relationships — how is friendship depicted in these works? How could they represent their own friendships?
- Discuss with pupils the ethics of tribal marking. In Nigeria, for example, children are scarred at an early age to denote the tribe to which they belong. The Nigerian government has made moves to outlaw the practice. What do pupils think about outlawing ancient traditions? What views do pupils have about tattooing in our own country?

Activity ideas

- Pupils could be asked to paint a self-portrait wearing clothes and surrounded by belongings that say something about them. They could look at Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* as a starting point and find out about the objects in the picture that denote wealth and status.
- Pupils could be asked to look at the still life tradition and put together a still life arrangement of objects that mean something to them. They could work in groups to agree on a selection of objects that says something about their life today. As a sketchbook or as homework, pupils could be asked to draw objects in their home or bedroom that they consider particularly special to them.
- Pupils could be asked to bring in an object that has a particular value for them (such as an old teddy bear or a special birthday present). Can this be curated as a mini exhibition together? They could draw the objects and write about the stories and associations that give this object value for them.
- Pupils could research the tribal traditions of a particular country, including contemporary and ancient practices. How do people across the world denote their sense of belonging? They could work in groups focusing on different themes such as dress, shoes, jewellery, body markings or make-up.

Useful resources

Images of objects from different cultures can be found in the collection database of the British Museum at https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection

Depicting the human figure — character and emotion

Curriculum links: Art, Drama, Literacy, PSHE, RE, Relationship education
Key words: Emotion, life drawing, human figure, narrative painting

Ideas to explore

In his tapestries Grayson Perry uses both posture and facial expression to capture the mood, feelings and personality of the characters he depicts. An example is the club singer depicted in *The Agony in the Car Park*, pouring out emotion in his song. To capture these moments of feeling and drama, Perry worked from photographs of the people he met as they went about their lives.

There is long history in art of artists attempting to capture emotion in their work. Perry depicts a whole range of emotions — from love, affection and pride to nostalgia, anxiety, horror and sorrow.

Some artists have focused on capturing human suffering. Many paintings in the Christian tradition (including some of those that Perry was inspired by in designing the tapestries) sought to help ordinary people get in touch with the concept of suffering. There are also many artists in more recent times who have attempted to capture feelings of sadness and suffering. Think of Frida Kahlo's self-portraits which capture the physical pain she endured, Edvard Munch's famous *Scream*, or Picasso's *Weeping Woman*. Other artists have sought to draw people's attention to the suffering inflicted on humans by each other. Examples are Goya's depictions of war or the powerful drawings and woodcuts made by German artist Käthe Kollwitz.

(Detail)
Tommaso Masaccio (1401–28)
The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden, c.1425
Fresco Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence / The Bridgeman Art Library

There are also many artists who have sought to capture the emotions of peace, love, affection and joy. Good examples are Marc Chagall and Gustav Klimt, who often depicted lovers. In the Christian tradition, there are many examples of art depicting religious feelings such as saintliness, ecstasy and serenity. In the tradition of Russian socialist art, expressions of contentment, happiness and pride were used as propaganda, in an attempt to persuade people of the glories of living in the Soviet regime. We can think too about how positive emotions are often depicted in advertising.

Discussion points

- Discuss with pupils how good they think they are at judging and respecting people's emotions. Can they describe the facial changes that create different expressions and moods?
- What emotions do pupils think they can identify in Perry's tapestries? Discuss with pupils the emotional stories and dynamics depicted in the tapestries. What details of posture and facial expression create the impression of different emotional states?
- Discuss with pupils the ethical issues that are raised when the depiction of emotions is used to persuade people of a particular viewpoint, for example in propaganda art or in advertising. How do these examples compare to the kind of religious paintings from which Perry has taken inspiration in his tapestries?

Activity ideas

- Use the sculpture-making resources in this pack to design a mini version of yourself interacting with figures in Grayson Perry's series. How can the depiction of yourself and the figures from Perry's art interact? In turn, can you make a new piece of art with them together?
- Use the drawing games activity 'Ways of Seeing' to explore a character in more depth. Following this, you could ask pupils to use their imagination to write a description of this person, aided by the clues given in the tapestry.
- Using sketchbooks, pupils could be asked to make drawings of all the different facial expressions in Perry's tapestries and to annotate these with notes about the feelings represented. Ask them to use their process of drawing to try to work out how Perry has created a particular expression.
- Pupils could search the internet for examples of art works in which people are depicted in a way that captures mood or personality. Pupils could also be invited to collect examples of faces showing different emotions from newspapers and magazines (the sports sections are great for this.) Using sketchbooks, pupils could make drawings of each other or of themselves (using a mirror) to practice drawing faces that show different emotions.

- You could invite pupils to dress up as different characters and strike a pose that captures something of the mood or personality of that character. Using a timer, invite pupils to make quick, expressive drawings of each other that attempt to capture this.
- Local faith centres may contain all sorts of art works depicting different emotions (for example pain, love, horror and adulation). You could use the idea of moods and emotions as the focus for a visit to a local place of worship.

Useful resources

The National Portrait Gallery's online collection is a good starting point for looking at and comparing portraits:
http://www.npg.org.uk/collections.php

Among the thousands of examples of paintings on the Art UK website there are many portraits:
https://artuk.org/

You can gauge your ability to judge emotions from looking at facial expression and body posture on a number of free online tests including:
http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/ei_quiz/
http://www.dnalc.org/view/867-Reading-Faces.html

In 1980 psychologist Robert Plutchik invented a wheel illustrating all the different emotions and their variations:
http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Plutchiks-Wheel-of-Emotions

Places, local traditions and culture

Curriculum links: Art, Citizenship, Geography, History
Key words: Class, community, industry, locality, place

Ideas to explore

Each of the tapestries depicts and celebrates a locality and its history. The first two tapestries (*The Adoration of the Cage Fighters* and *The Agony in the Car Park*) were based on Perry's visit to Sunderland. The town is famous for its football team, which unites the town in their loathing for rival team Newcastle United (also known as 'The Mags'). Sunderland is populated by large working class communities.

Sunderland's industrial heritage includes a strong history of shipbuilding, with records of shipbuilding companies going back to the fourteenth century. The town is also known for its history of glassmaking, with records going back to the fifteenth century — hence being the location for the National Glass Centre.

Perry's second two tapestries (*The Expulsion from Number 8 Eden Close* and *The Annunciation of the Virgin Deal*) are based on his visit to Tunbridge Wells in Kent. Here, he was particularly interested to visit Kings Hill, a new development of housing that began in 1989. Kings Hill was identified by *The Guardian* newspaper in 2004 as one of the wealthiest places in Britain in terms of average household income.

Unlike many more established communities, Kings Hill has no dedicated parish church, though many other amenities were integrated into the development, including a pub, supermarkets, two primary schools, a doctor's surgery, restaurants, a health club, a cricket club and a golf club. Public art works were also commissioned as part of the development. On his visit, Perry heard how homeowners in Kings Hill are generally expected to keep their houses and gardens tidy and well-maintained.

For the fifth of his tapestries (*The Upper Class at Bay*), Perry travelled to the Cotswolds. Here he met the occupants of several stately homes including Hilles House, Chavenage House and Frampton Court, all in Gloucestershire. He also visited Longleat in Wiltshire, home of the Marquess of Bath. Here he met families living a much more isolated existence. With each estate occupying large swathes of countryside, miles from its neighbours, their occupants rely on cars to travel to the nearby towns for food and services.

Discussion points

- Discuss with pupils what kind of economy and income each of the tapestries depicts.
- Discuss with pupils some the issues that characterise each area that Perry visited. Talk about the changes that have taken place and why. For Sunderland this might focus on the loss of industry. For Tunbridge Wells this might focus on the building of new towns from which people can travel to London for work. For the Cotswolds this might focus on issues around funding the preservation of the UK's stately homes.
- Discuss with pupils what their local area is famous for. What are its particular associations? What major changes have taken place in the area's history? What people or groups is their area known for? What might be included in a tapestry depicting the pupils' own local area? Consider extending this wider, globally, to reflect diverse heritage and representation.

Activity ideas

- Pupils could be provided with access to maps and/or aerial photographs of their own area or a chosen location. Ask them to turn this into a map of their memories and experiences, showing places that mean something to them and why. Examples could be friends/families' houses, locations of schools and faith centres, areas they play sports in, building that carry special memories or shops they go to.
- Pupils could look at promotional websites for the places that Perry visited. What gets emphasised, and what may have been left out? What features and stories would pupils focus on if they were asked to create a brochure or website promoting their local area? How would they describe their town or area to maximise its appeal?
- Pupils could research and make a collaborative textile piece depicting and celebrating their local area. This could depict notable buildings, people, attractions or something of the local history of the area. They could experiment with compositions first using drawing or collage. They could include themselves within the piece.
- Pupils could be asked to find historical maps that don't adhere to today's geography and compare them. These might include maps from across different times and cultures, or maps by artists mapping localities in more imaginative ways. They could be set the challenge of making an unusual map of their own area.
- Pupils could work collaboratively to invent and draw a map of a new fantasy locality that would be ideal to them, including the amenities that are important to them. They could use their knowledge of mapping symbols to create their map or invent their own and provide a key. Be fantastical — could buildings be made of sweets? Could water slides be roads?

Useful resources

There are many examples of contemporary artists making artworks based on maps on the Axis database of contemporary art (search for 'map' in 'artworks'): http://www.axisweb.org/

The Agile Rabbit Book of Historical and Curious Maps (Amsterdam: Pepin Press, 2005) is a collection of unusual maps from across times and cultures, and includes a CD of images.

Imaginary worlds and identities

Curriculum links: Art, PHSE, Relationship education, Geography, History, ICT, Literacy
Key words: Imagination, island, narrative, story, superheroes

Ideas to explore

Tapestries have long been associated with the telling of stories, whether real or imaginary. Famously, the Bayeux Tapestry shows a cartoon-like version of the Norman invasion of Britain and the Battle of Hastings in 1066. As in Grayson Perry's tapestries, words are used to add detail and explanation to the scenes depicted. The Flemish series of six tapestries known as *The Lady and the Unicorn* (*La Dame à la licorne*) the senses. The Devonshire Hunting Tapestries are a series of four huge fifteenth century tapestries depicting hunting scenes. And a series of tapestries that hang in Zamora cathedral in Spain tells the story of the military deeds of General Hannibal.

In each of his six tapestries, Perry creates the impression of a world by amalgamating fragments that he has observed and photographed. His drawings are an important part of the process. He works in felt-tip pen, playing with and filling out his compositions with objects, buildings, people and colour; at the same time he experiments with how details of his sketches might be altered or exaggerated.

From when he was young until the age of 15, Perry spent much of his time creating stories around an imaginary world. His teddy bear Alan Measles was a central character who reigned supreme, with Tortoise (a knitted tortoise toy stuffed with cardboard) second in command. Perry projected onto Alan Measles many of his ideals about masculinity, achievement and love. Perry's world consisted of four islands: a cold, fish-shaped island called Shark Island, a round mountainous island called Round Island, an empty desert island called Elfin Island and a forested European Island called Tree Island (Alan Measles' home). This island held the secret valley (Grayson Perry's bedroom) where Alan Measles lived in an underground house with his army camped out around him. One of Perry's key roles was to design and make the instruments of war and rebellion, according to Alan Measles' command. Another part of Perry's role was as reporter and documenter of Alan Measles' exploits and adventures. It was into this illusory land that Perry escaped from the difficulties of his childhood and puberty.

There are many other artists who have based their work on imaginary places. Scottish artist Charles Avery has based all of his art on his explorations of an imaginary island. Paul Noble, another Scottish artist, creates detailed technical pencil drawings of his own fictitious town Nobson. These are intricately rendered, similar in some ways to the disturbing realism of artists Hieronymus Bosch or Richard Dadd. Outsider artist Henry Darger, a major inspiration for Perry, also depicted imagined landscapes.

As he became a teenager, Perry found a new escape in his interest in cross-dressing. Perry is well known for his female alter-ego Claire, who dresses in flamboyant feminine clothes.

Discussion points

- Discuss with pupils which of Perry's tapestries they would like to inhabit and why. What would they enjoy and not enjoy about living in each of the worlds depicted? What adjectives could be used to describe the worlds shown in each of the tapestries?
- Discuss with pupils how artists sometimes depict the real world in their work, while others create imaginary worlds. Sometimes artists choose to distort or exaggerate the real world, playing with our perceptions of reality. Discuss with pupils which elements they consider to be real, imagined or exaggerated in Perry's tapestries.
- Discuss with pupils what imaginary games they play inside their heads or with others, Discuss with pupils how Perry created his own imaginary world as an escape from the things he found difficult as a child. How do pupils find their own escape from the challenges of the real world when they need to? What do they do to relax or reduce their own anxieties? Does art play a role in their wellbeing?
- Discuss with pupils what they feel about Perry's identity as Claire. How can we use this to accompany conversations on equality, diversity and respect for others?

Activity ideas

- Pupils could be invited to write stories based on the Grayson Perry tapestries, or based on other historical tapestry examples. They could create a storyboard that shows the scenes before and after the moment captured in each tapestry.
- Taking inspiration from the way Perry tells the story of Tim Rakewell through his six tapestries, pupils could be given a story (a traditional tale for example) and asked to tell the story in a series of six drawings, paintings or collages. How can they isolate the key dramatic moments to tell their story?
- Pupils could fashion costumes in craft and stage scenarios linking to a theme (a history topic for example). They could photograph these scenes and use art software to create a fictitious background onto which to superimpose their photographs.
- Pupils could work together individually or in groups to create drawings of imaginary islands they would like to inhabit. They could also create these as 3D models. What will the climate and topography of their island be like? What services and amenities will they need or want on their island? How will they defend their island from attack? How does their imaginary island reflect their character and interests? As ruler of their island, what laws will they impose?
- Pupils could be asked to find examples of art works that depict real, imaginary or distorted worlds. Pupils could create their own altered version of the real world using collage or using ICT. This could be a vision of their world in the future, or how they would like to make changes to their environment.

- Inspired by Perry's teddy bear Alan Measles, pupils could be asked to draw or paint a favourite toy, superhero or fantasy sub-personality. They could identify the qualities and achievements they see in this character. Perhaps some of these are qualities they have in themselves or aspire to?
- Pupils could be asked to photograph their face (or hand if permissible) and then combine this with collage or painting to depict themselves as their fantasy character or superhero. (Pupils may also be interested to see the work of artist Cindy Sherman in which she dresses up and photographs herself as many different characters.)

Useful resources

Examples of the work of Henry Darger can be found at:
http://collection.folkartmuseum.org/search/henry%20darger

Section 6
Further reading and sources of information

Exhibition catalogue

The Vanity of Small Differences, Grayson Perry, Hayward Publishing 2013

Exhibition Film

Please see **artscouncilcollection.co.uk**
for a film of Grayson Perry talking about the tapestries

Books

The Descent of Man, Grayson Perry, Penguin, 2017

Playing to the Gallery: Helping Contemporary Art in its Struggle to be Understood, Grayson Perry, Penguin, 2016

Grayson Perry: The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman, Grayson Perry, AVA Publishing SA, 2011

Grayson Perry, Jacky Klein, Thames and Hudson 2009

Grayson Perry – My Life as a Young Girl, Wendy Jones, Vintage 2007

Websites

Please note the below links were active in October 2020,
these may become out of date in time

The Channel 4 programmes *Grayson Perry's Big American Road Trip* which aired in September 2020 can be found here **www.channel4.com/programmes/grayson-perrys-big-american-road-trip/on-demand/69466-001**

Grayson Perry can be heard on Desert Island Discs (2007) at
www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/desert-island-discs/castaway/377f2ab0

Information on the Hogarth series that inspired Perry's tapestries can be found at
www.soane.org/collections_legacy/the_soane_hogarths/rakes_progress

Many interesting articles on Grayson Perry's practise can be found on the Royal Academy website **www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/name/grayson-perry-ra**

Follow Alan Measles on Twitter at **https://twitter.com/Alan_Measles**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A GOOD
PERSON