

Grayson Perry: Delusions of Grandeur

28 March – 26 October 2025



In 2025, the Wallace Collection will hold a major exhibition featuring over 40 new works by Sir Grayson Perry (b.1960).

The largest contemporary exhibition ever held at the museum, *Grayson Perry: Delusions of Grandeur* will include ceramics, tapestries, furniture and collage, displayed alongside some of the Wallace Collection's masterpieces which helped inspire and shape Perry's vision for this landmark exhibition.

The new works, each made in direct response to the Collection, incorporate a range of mixed media and styles that Perry has perfected over his long and acclaimed career. Reflecting the breadth and variety of the Wallace Collection, the artist has drawn upon the widest variety of techniques, genres and forms that he has ever employed for a single show.

Perry has a longstanding relationship with the treasures in Hertford House. Intrigued by the contrast of extreme femininity of the 18th century French Rococo with the overt masculinity of the arms and armour, the artist recalls being struck by this dichotomy as a young artist when seeing the Collection's famous portrait of Madame de Pompadour by François Boucher (1703-1770). Historically rigid gender roles have been a recurring subject throughout Perry's decades-long career, and this exhibition will also reflect that theme.

Delusions of Grandeur will interrogate the very nature of craft-making and our drive for perfectionism. Intricate handcrafted objects will be shown alongside works made with digital technology – comparing an object that may have taken thousands of hours to create against one that was possible with the click of a button. Through these contrasting approaches, Perry will ask the viewer to contemplate questions concerning authenticity and the artist's role in the future.

As part of this questioning, *Delusions of Grandeur* will also focus on 'outsider art' with the inclusion of works by Aloïse Corbaz and Madge Gill. Sparked by the discovery that Madge Gill (1882-1961) had exhibited at the Wallace Collection in 1942, the life and work of these outsider artists has helped unlock Perry's own response, which also draws upon his own childhood experiences. While developing the exhibition, the fictional persona of Shirley Smith came into being, a woman who wakes up in Hertford House after a mental health crisis and believes herself to be the rightful heir to the treasures that surround her. Through ancestral portraits and Old Master copies, this imagined life will touch on the real stories, influences and difficult experiences that art can bring to the fore.

Opening on the artist's 65th birthday, *Grayson Perry: Delusions of Grandeur* offers an elaborate commentary on the very nature of making and collecting art. Touching upon a variety of themes, including the creation of domestic space and how it engenders a sense of safety, the gendering of decoration, and perceived perfection versus authenticity, the exhibition will be a major moment for one of the country's most respected artists.

Grayson Perry says: "Creating exhibitions with museums has always been a source of joy for me, formalising my lifelong interest in reinterpreting artefacts through my own lens. Working with the Wallace Collection has offered both excitement and a unique challenge: I was captivated by the craftsmanship seen in the collection but I struggled with the opulent aesthetic which I found cloying at times. Fortunately I worked out a strategy that helped me find a fresh perspective. I am very grateful to Xavier Bray for planting the seed of this exhibition in my head and to the staff and trustees of the Wallace Collection for allowing me to play in their jewel box."

Xavier Bray, Director of The Wallace Collection, says: "Grayson Perry is an artist who engages with the world like no other. His work resonates deeply with the viewer – questioning, provoking, and reflecting contemporary society from the sublime to the absurd. It has been a privilege to work with him on this exhibition. Our time together has provided me with a new perspective on the Collection, and I cannot wait to share the vision with the public."

IMAGES

Photo: Grayson Perry © Richard Ansett, shot exclusively for the Wallace Collection, London

Grayson Perry

Untitled Drawing, 2024

42 x 30 cm

16 1/2 x 11 3/4 in

© Grayson Perry

Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

Press View: Tuesday 25 March 2025

About the Wallace Collection

As one of Britain's preeminent cultural institutions, the **Wallace Collection** is home to one of the most significant ensembles of fine and decorative arts in the world. Highlights include oil paintings from the 14th to the late 19th centuries by artists such as Titian, Velázquez, Rubens and Van Dyck; princely arms and armour; and one of the finest collections of 18th-century French paintings and decorative arts. Visitors can also enjoy superb medieval and Renaissance objects, including Limoges enamel, maiolica, glass and bronzes. Displayed at Hertford House, former home to Sir Richard and Lady Wallace, this outstanding collection is displayed in a manner designed to evoke the lives and tastes of its founders, creating a special ambiance that remains an essential part of its charm.

www.wallacecollection.org

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES

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