

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**2 November 2018**

# Grayson Perry comes to Cumbria

## **Julie Cope's Grand Tour: The Story of a Life by Grayson Perry**

Turner Prize winner Grayson Perry's amazing tapestries come to Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Cumbria.

**Julie Cope's Grand Tour: The Story of a Life by Grayson Perry**, a Crafts Council touring exhibition supported by Art Fund, will be on display at Abbot Hall from Friday 9 November 2018 until Saturday 16 February 2019.

At the same time three ceramics by Perry have gone on show at Blackwell, The Arts & Crafts House. One of these works is on display for the first time ever.

Helen Watson, Lakeland Arts, Director of Programming said: "We are thrilled to bring Grayson Perry's colourful and vibrant tapestries to Cumbria. He is a Turner Prize winner, Royal Academician and one of the most exciting talents in contemporary art.

"We are also excited to show three of Perry's ceramics at Blackwell. He established his career in the field of ceramics, taking classical pots and portraying human subjects on their surface. This is a fantastic opportunity to see three pieces in the context of an Arts & Crafts home."

Born in Chelmsford, Essex, in 1960, Perry is a chronicler of contemporary life, drawing us in with affecting sentiment and nostalgia as well as, at times, fear and anger. His work tackles subjects that are universally human: gender, social status, sexuality and religion.

**Julie Cope's Grand Tour: The Story of a Life by Grayson Perry** will see his two giant tapestries on display at Abbot Hall. This will be the first time that works by the Turner Prize winning artist have been exhibited in Cumbria.

Crafts Council acquired the tapestries with Art Fund support (with a contribution from The Wolfson Foundation).

Julie Cope is a fictional character created by Perry – an Essex everywoman whose story he has told through the two tapestries and extended ballad presented in the exhibition.

The tapestries are shown alongside a graphic installation, and specially commissioned audio recording *The Ballad of Julie Cope*, a 3,000 word narrative written and read by Perry himself that illuminates Julie's hopes and fears as she journeys through life.

*The Essex House Tapestries: The Life of Julie Cope* (2015) illustrate the key events in the heroine's journey from her birth during the Canvey Island floods of 1953 to her untimely death in a tragic accident on a Colchester street.

To write Julie's biography, Perry looked to the English ballad and folktale tradition, narrating a life that conveys the beauty, vibrancy and contradictions of the ordinary individual.

Rich in cultural and architectural details, the tapestries contain a social history of Essex and modern Britain that everyone can relate to. These artworks represent, in Perry's words, 'the trials, tribulations, celebrations and mistakes of an average life'.

Although tapestries were used historically in grand domestic interiors, Perry contrasts the associations of status, wealth and heritage with current concerns about class, social aspiration and taste.

More details: <https://www.abbothall.org.uk/graysonperry>

**Grayson Perry In-Focus Display** at Blackwell (until 6 January 2019) features three spotlight loans displayed in the unique Arts & Crafts setting.

Included are *Melanie* (2014) on loan from York Museums Trust (York Art Gallery), *Mad Kid's Bedroom Wall Pot* (1996) on loan from the Crafts Council, and *Christening Pot*, on loan from a private collection.

*Christening Pot* was an early private commission for Perry and is on show in Blackwell's dining room. This is the first time this piece has ever been on public display.

Lakeland Arts is delighted that Rathbones is corporate sponsor of the exhibition **Julie Cope's Grand Tour: The Story of a Life by Grayson Perry**.

Richard Dawson, Director Rathbones Kendal said: "We're pleased to support Lakeland Arts and help them bring this exciting exhibition to Abbott Hall. Bringing the work of internationally recognised artists like Grayson Perry to the county is hugely important for our arts and cultural scene and we are proud to invest in our community in this way."

Abbot Hall will be open extra days around Christmas enabling visitors to see the Perry tapestries during the festive season. The extra opportunities to see the tapestries are 27-29 December and when the gallery re-opens two weeks earlier on 2 January 2019.

#### **Grayson Perry activities:**

In the run-up to Christmas (12 November to 21 December) Abbot Hall will stage: 'A Very Perry Christmas'. A chance for adults and children to make wacky, colourful garlands and decorations inspired by the work of Perry to decorate our tree at Abbot Hall or take home. The activity is self-guided in the Art Studio and free with Gallery admission.

Ends.

**Notes to editors:**

For further information contact Dickie Felton [dfelton@lakelandarts.org.uk](mailto:dfelton@lakelandarts.org.uk) or [kcllegg@lakelandarts.org.uk](mailto:kcllegg@lakelandarts.org.uk)

**Image downloads:**

Julie Cope's Grand Tour: The Story of a Life by Grayson Perry:

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6ptr9gnzur64un4/AABI\\_5eOussEuCL9WShLt09Pa?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6ptr9gnzur64un4/AABI_5eOussEuCL9WShLt09Pa?dl=0)

Grayson Perry In Focus Display at Blackwell, The Arts & Crafts House:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yvpeb6k0z45ks3u/AAAjrczY9WubGbt5LUnZFE78a?dl=0>

**Grayson Perry:**

Grayson Perry is known for his ceramic art, in which traditional decorative forms reveal more complex narratives and irreverent political statements. A Turner Prize winner (2003), more recently he has reached a wider audience through a series of socio-cultural television programmes. *The Essex House Tapestries: The Life of Julie Cope* is the second work by Perry to be acquired by the Crafts Council. They follow the 1997 acquisition of his *Mad Kid's Bedroom Wall Pot* (1996). Presented publicly outside House for Essex for the first time, the tapestries mark a significant development in Perry's practice and add to an emerging group of contemporary social portraiture and co-produced digital textile works in the Crafts Council Collection.

**Lakeland Arts:**

Lakeland Arts has a portfolio of galleries and museums in the Lake District. It opened Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, in 1962 and since then has built up an outstanding collection and a strong reputation for showing exhibitions of national and international artists of the highest quality.

Abbot Hall also houses the Museum of Lakeland Life & Industry in the former coach house and stables. The gallery and surrounding estate will undergo a major redevelopment planned to start in 2020.

Blackwell, The Arts & Crafts House in Bowness-on-Windermere is architect MH Baillie Scott's greatest house and retains most of its original decorative features. It is a perfect setting for exhibitions of historical and contemporary craft.

Lakeland Arts is nearing completion of Windermere Jetty Museum of Boats, Steam and Stories. Designed by Carmody Groarke architects, this will be a new world-class museum in a stunning setting on Windermere and will display an internationally important collection of boats which are all associated with lake Windermere.

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is the major funder for the Museum. HLF grants are made possible by National Lottery players. The project is also supported by Regional Growth Fund and Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund.

**About the Crafts Council:**

Founded in 1971 and incorporated by Royal Charter, the Crafts Council national agency for contemporary craft. Through exhibitions, publications, education programmes, and present contemporary craft in new ways, challenging perceptions of what craft is and can

be. The Crafts Council is a charity. Its work is made possible by the support of trusts and foundations, individual patrons, and corporate sponsors, and through public funding by Arts Council England.

### **About Art Fund:**

Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art. In the past five years alone Art Fund has given £34 million to help museums and galleries acquire works of art for their collections. It also helps museums share their collections with wider audiences by supporting a range of tours and exhibitions, and makes additional grants to support the training and professional development of curators. Art Fund is independently funded, with the core of its income provided by 139,000 members who receive the National Art Pass and enjoy free entry to over 240 museums, galleries and historic places across the UK, as well as 50% off entry to major exhibitions and subscription to Art Quarterly magazine. In addition to grant-giving, Art Fund's support for museums includes Art Fund Museum of the Year (won by Tate St Ives in 2018) and a range of digital platforms. Find out more about Art Fund and the National Art Pass at [www.artfund.org](http://www.artfund.org)

### **Rathbones:**

Rathbones Kendal is a prestigious wealth management firm renowned for offering its clients high quality financial services while still retaining a truly local feel. Rathbones Kendal regularly sponsors exhibitions at Abbot Hall: Julian Cooper (2017), Graham Sutherland (2013), Francis Bacon to Paula Rego (2012), Sheila Fell (2011). The firm routinely invests in supporting Cumbria's cultural scene and in developing local talent and leadership. Previous initiatives have included sponsorship of the Brathay Trust's Aspiring Leaders Programme, the Lake District Summer Music Festival, Lancashire's Haffner Orchestra and providing free investment advice to charity trustees. Rathbones Kendal is part of Rathbone Brothers PLC - one of the UK's largest and longest established wealth management firms, established in 1742.

### **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR):**

New General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) came into effect in May 2018. We want to ensure that your data is handled correctly. One of the main requirements is to make sure we have your consent to receiving certain types of communication – and I would be grateful if you could confirm that you are happy to receive communications from Lakeland Arts about programmes and events by emailing [kclegg@lakelandarts.org.uk](mailto:kclegg@lakelandarts.org.uk)