

# Grayson Perry: Identity Vases

THE  
HOLBURNE  
MUSEUM

## Learning points:

- Learn about the contemporary artist **Grayson Perry** and his artistic practice
- Learn about the techniques he uses to create his vases
- Translate learning into personal responses to Perry's work

Possible themes to explore are self-portraiture, identity, politics, self-discovery, protest, humour and rebellion.

Watch this film about his exhibition 'The Pre-therapy Years' at the Holburne Museum for more ideas  
[youtu.be/i14nL5PQOhY](https://youtu.be/i14nL5PQOhY)

## Who is Grayson Perry?



Grayson Perry enjoys a reputation bordering on National Treasure! He is sometimes known as 'the transvestite potter' because he has a female alter-ego called Claire (see left). During lockdown his TV show 'Grayson's Art Club' became very popular. He has worked with different materials creating enormous tapestries and prints but he is most famous for his ceramic vases.



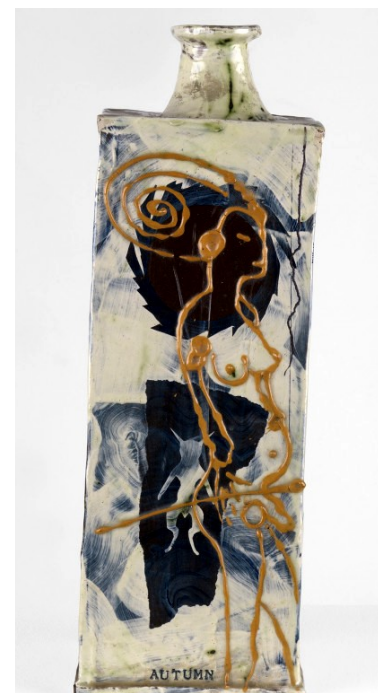
**What is he interested in?** He explores gender (What does it mean to be 'male' or 'female') identity (Who am I? Who do I want to be?) social class and taste (What is 'good taste'? What is 'great art' and who decides?) He likes to take ordinary everyday objects such as vases or traditional items such as maps and change them so that they become provocative and personal. His work has been described as 'witty' and 'shocking' because he explores issues which are challenging, emotionally charged and sometimes taboo.

We're only here once and I want to get as much out of it as possible.  
And as an artist, my job is to be as much "me" as possible. *Grayson Perry*

Grayson Perry  
*Four Seasons* 1988  
Glazed ceramic vase

This 4 sided vase imagines the seasons as people (look carefully and you'll see a word stamped at the bottom of each side). Perhaps these are different sides of the same person?

Perry has used different techniques layered on top of each other—loose abstract painting, careful line drawing, collaged patterns, text and simple stencils. He has treated the 3-D surface like a blank canvas to decorate.



# Inspiration board



Vases created by GCSE and A level students inspired by Grayson Perry



Grayson Perry

*Meaningless Symbols* 1993

Glazed ceramic vase

Photograph: Stephen White

The surface of this vase is covered in striking symbols and collage images from magazines and comics. Taken from different cultures and times they are all jumbled together. Do they mean anything or are they simply images that Grayson Perry likes. What do you think?

## Activity

Start by folding an A4 piece of paper (landscape) into 4 equal sections to make a 4 sided vase.

(see next page)

**Do NOT assemble until you have decorated sides.**

Work flat noticing where the paper folds are.

**You could:**

- Use collage, tissue paper or paint to create background colour
- Draw/ collage images over background
- Add words—using cut up newspapers

Now fold along the creases to create a tall square vase (like Grayson's) You can glue tabs inside the vase to hold it together.

Make a square base (with tabs) and push inside.

## You need:

A4 plain paper/ card for vase

Coloured pencils or pens/  
paints

Scissors and Pritt stick/ glue

Collage materials - wallpaper/  
wrapping paper/ old magazines/  
newspapers

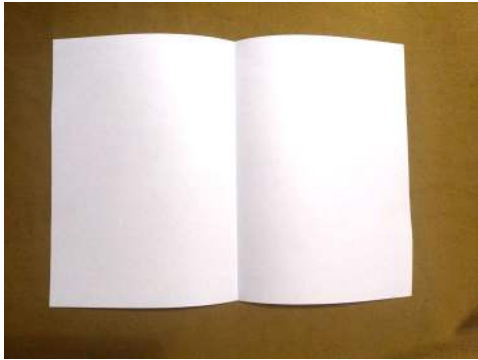
Gold wrappers from sweets

When I start something I usually don't have much of a clue where I am heading. I grasp at the thinnest, most indulgent or silly of motivations. These starting points might be ....

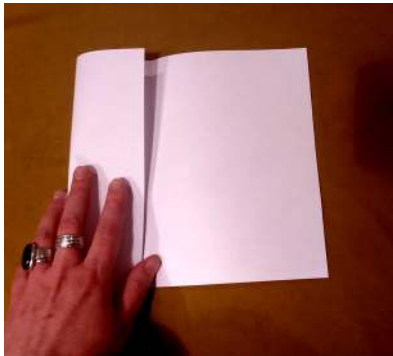
'Oh I fancy doing doing red today, or a landscape or something angry..'

The important thing is I make a start, I make a first mark, lay down a blob of clay, google a glimmer of a thought. *Grayson Perry*

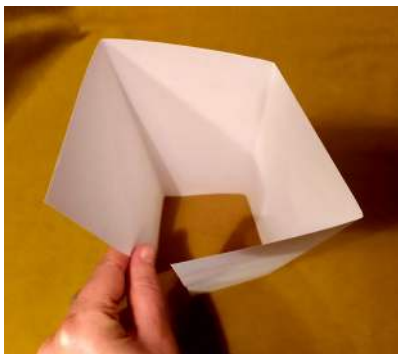
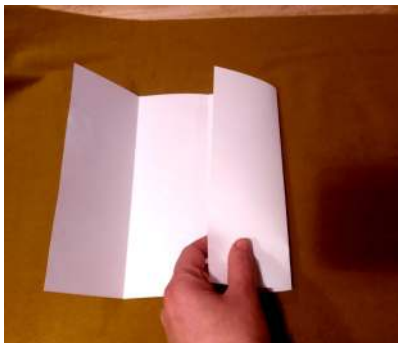
# THE HOLBURNE MUSEUM



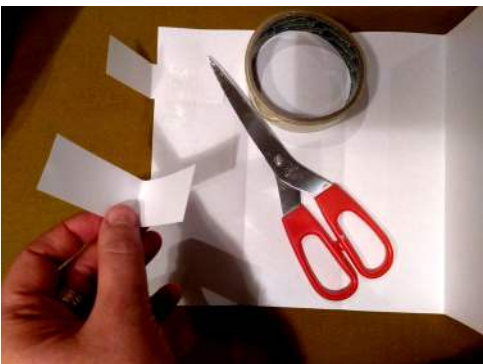
A4 plain paper  
or card  
Landscape format  
Fold in two



Fold in two again (to middle)  
There are now 4 equal sections



Stand up your vase  
Check all sides are equal  
**DO NOT GLUE TOGETHER—**  
decorate first while it is flat!



You can add tabs inside the vase so  
that you can make an invisible join  
between the inside edges.

Good Luck!