

**My Civilisation  
Grayson Perry**

21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

1-2-1 Hirosaka, Kanazawa, Ishikawa, 920-8509 Japan  
Tel: 076-220-2801 / Fax: 076-220-2806 / <http://www.kanazawa21.jp>

# 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

## Exhibition Concept

### My Civilisation: Grayson Perry

*My work is like poisoned treasure. It is treasure but could be cursed. They are things that have been brought up from the deep subconscious. "Excavations." It is like archaeology and psychology.*

The full picture of Grayson Perry is introduced in this solo exhibition of his to be held for the first time in Japan. Grayson Perry (1960-), the Turner Prize winner of 2003, is one of the most valued and notable contemporary artists in U.K. mainly through his provocative pots.

The scale of this exhibition will be larger than that of any other exhibition of his works held thus far. It looks back on Perry's diverse activities, and shows the world of his earnest, powerful expressions ranging from his early valuable films and sketchbooks to his works from the mid-1980s up to the recent years (ceramics, sculpture, quilts, tapestries, dresses, photos, prints, etc.). What is more, he will make a large number of new works especially for this exhibition, almost one third of the whole show. In particular, his work of huge pot through which he tries to communicate messages concerning the reality of social disparities or popular culture, and a new installation based on the theme "shrine" should be viewed as a group of works indicating his new development.

Grayson Perry was born in Chelmsford (U.K.) in 1960, and currently lives in London. After graduating from Portsmouth Polytechnic, Perry was mostly engaged in film production and performance activities in the first half of the 1980s as a member of a group called "Neo-Naturalist." He began to make ceramic works after attending a course on ceramics in the middle of the 1980s. The special feature of Perry's ceramic works is its visual multi-layered quality, which is made possible by copying images from the photos that he took or magazines as well as decorative patterns commonly used for the mass-produced earthenware on the surface of a pot to make them look lying on top of one another, in addition to depicting various contemporary subjects, such as violence, prejudice, sexual suppression, popular culture, and religious faith, on the forms borrowed from Greek, Chinese, or Japanese classic pots.

While creating many ceramic works with elaborate workmanship, he engages in a wide range of media such as embroideries, photographs, prints and sculpture. He often refers to the influences of the peculiar, wild fantasies of outsider artist Henry Darger<sup>1</sup> (1892-1973) on his works. He has always been consistent, however, in that he sends messages, without fear of being misunderstood and with fantasy and humorous flavor, regarding such serious topics as violence both domestic and social, prejudices, sexual suppressions, conventional practices and beliefs that people rely on, and further, self-identification. Many of his works contain autobiographical elements as well. Perry is a transvestite, and his female image as 'Claire' often appears, and plays an important role, in his works. He does not give a single answer concerning his identity, nor moral standards of society, but questions them. Today, his works provide viewers with a lot of food for thought, because they reveal universal problems latent in any society, through showing more than one viewpoint and different value judgments.

---

<sup>1</sup> Henry Darger was born and died in Chicago. Though he received no education of painting, he left an enormous volume of paintings and a novel "In The Realms of the Unreal."

# 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

## Exhibition Overview

### ■ Title

“My Civilisation: Grayson Perry:”

### ■ Period

April 28 - August 31, 2007

### ■ Organized by

21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

### ■ Co-organized by

The Yomiuri Shimbun, The Japan Association of Art Museums

### ■ Grants from

British Council, Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation

### ■ Supported by

Lion Corporation, SHIMIZU CORPORATION, Dai Nippon Printing Co., Ltd.

### ■ In cooperation with

Japan Airlines

### ■ Venue

21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (7 rooms, approx. 800 m<sup>2</sup>)

### ■ Exhibits (about 70 pieces including 25 new works)

- Ceramics
- Sculptures
- Prints and photographs
- Embroideries (costumes, quilts)
- Films
- Reference materials

### ■ Related events

\*Please check our Web-site for updated information (<http://www.kanazawa21.jp>)

- Artist Talk by Grayson Perry: 28 April, 14:00- (with English-Japanese interpretation)
- Lecture by Tatsuro Ishii “Transgender and corporal expression”: 23 June, 14:00- (Japanese only)
- Film-show related to Henry Darger “In the Realms of the Unreal, The Mystery of Henry Darger” (directed by Jessica Yu, 2004): 20 May, 24 June, 22 July, 26 August, 14:00- (English only)
- Gallery tour for children “Find Grayson!”: 3 June, 10:30-&14:00- (Japanese only)
- Workshop for children: 10 August, 10:30-15:00 (Japanese only)
- Gallery talks by curators: 6 May, 19 May, 2 June, 7 July, 25 August, 14:00- (Japanese only)

### ■ Catalogue

To be published in April 2007 (Japanese / English)

### ■ Inquiries

Yuko Eto (Public Relations)

21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

E-mail: [press@kanazawa21.jp](mailto:press@kanazawa21.jp) Tel: 076-220-2801 Fax: 076-220-2806

# 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

Some of the works in the show (images available upon request)

\*Photo credit for the works with ◆: Courtesy: Artist / Victoria Miro Gallery



*What's not to like?*  
2006  
Glazed ceramic



*What's not to like? (detail)*  
2006  
Glazed ceramic



*Shrine to Alan Measles*  
2007  
Glazed ceramic



*Wise Alan*  
2007  
Glazed ceramic



*I Promise Nothing*  
2007  
Glazed ceramic



*Prehistoric Gold Pubic Alan*  
2007  
Glazed ceramic



*Claire and Florence Visit Shrine to Essex Man*  
1998  
Photographic print



*Model Jet Plane X92*  
1999  
Glazed ceramic



*Claire as the Mother of All Battles*  
1996  
Photographic print

# 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa



*Right to Life*  
1998  
Cotton, rayon, computer controlled embroidery



*Right to Life (detail)*  
1998



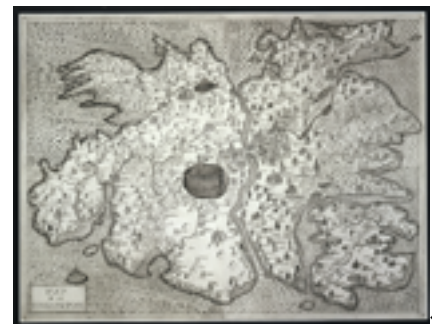
*Plight of the Sensitive Child*  
2003  
Glazed ceramic  
Collection of 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa



*Plight of the Sensitive Child (detail)*  
2003  
Glazed ceramic



*Precious Boys*  
2004  
Glazed ceramic  
Collection of Victoria and Warren Miro



*Map of an Englishman*  
2004  
Etching



*Angel of the South*  
2005  
Cast iron



Portraits of Grayson Perry (both)