



ARTS COUNCIL COLLECTION AT

**SOUTHBANK
CENTRE**

Longside Gallery
West Bretton, Wakefield
WF4 4LG
Open daily 11am-4pm
Admission free

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UNPOPULAR CULTURE NOSTALGIA FOR THE BAD TIMES

GRAYSON PERRY SELECTS FROM THE ARTS COUNCIL COLLECTION AND THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE NATIONAL ARCHIVE

An Arts Council Collection Exhibition from Southbank Centre
18 July – 25 October 2009 | Longside Gallery

Provocative as ever, Turner prize winner Grayson Perry hopes for gloomy summer weather to enhance the subject matter in his upcoming exhibition **Unpopular Culture**, which will open at Longside Gallery, Yorkshire Sculpture Park from 18 July 2009. To complement this, Perry has selected a new programme of rarely seen films from the British Film Institute (BFI) National Archive that will screen alongside the exhibition, for the first and only time. The selection, called **Nostalgia for the Bad Times**, references a bygone age of good manners, afternoon tea, seaside holidays and coal fires.

Unpopular Culture is an exhibition of work which resists the rose tinted nostalgia that seeks to hail the past as the 'glory age'. Grayson Perry will be present for the installation of the show at Longside Gallery. He commented:

"One of the main themes of this show is Englishness and a big contributor to the idea of Englishness is the brooding atmosphere of the North. There's a serious thoughtful side to the North, a touch darker, a drier wit, proudly unsouthern. I hope it comes to my show, I hope the weather's not too good."

Grayson Perry was catapulted into the public consciousness in 2003 when he won the Turner Prize for his delicate coil pots adorned with drawings and text suggesting a range of subject matter. Perhaps less well-known is Perry's work as a curator. **Unpopular Culture** highlights this aspect of Perry's practice and offers his personal view of the Arts Council Collection: one of the foremost national collections of British post-war art, with over 7,500 works. The show includes works by; Kenneth Armitage; Frank Auerbach; Ian Berry; Anthony Caro; Lynn Chadwick; Barbara Hepworth; L.S. Lowry; Henry Moore, Paul Nash; Eduardo Paolozzi; Martin Parr; Tony Ray-Jones and Homer Sykes as well as two striking new works by Perry himself.

Unpopular Culture examines a period in history which Perry argues was 'before British Art became fashionable.' The exhibition of more than 70 works by 50 artists encompasses a variety of media, figurative painting, bronze sculpture and documentary photography. Spanning the era from the 1940s to Thatcherite Britain of the 1980s, the selection epitomises a time when we as a nation had a different sense of self, one less defined by interventions of television, mass media and digital communications.

Grayson Perry said:

"The first time I trawled through the catalogues of the Collection I was drawn to these three distinct categories of art, which are bound together both by the period of their inception and their ineffable sense of mood; subtle, sensitive, lyrical and quiet in contrast to today when much art can seem like shouty advertisements for concepts or personalities. I also felt a need to confront the hackneyed version of the recent past that is the default mode of the nostalgia industry. Take the swinging sixties - this psychedelic, mini-driving, mini-skirt wearing, Beatles-loving supposed glory age which I suspect was really only enjoyed by a minority. This exhibition shows another side."

Caroline Douglas, Head of Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre said; "We are delighted Grayson Perry agreed to select works from the Arts Council Collection to create this fascinating touring show. **Unpopular Culture** is the next chapter in a long history of working with artists in this capacity, whose unique vantage point as both practitioner and curator ensure critical and insightful selections. Grayson's choices are not anchored to a period in art history, rather they span the time in which he and his parents grew up. The works on show reflect this personal narrative."

Perry's selection for **Nostalgia for the Bad Times** adds a new layer to the concept of national identity and personal narrative evident throughout the exhibition. Themes explored include war time propaganda in *Springtime in an English Village*(1944);

a 1920s funfair called Margate Dreamland in an experimental documentary made by British film, theatre and documentary director Lindsay Anderson in *O Dreamland* (1953); and an advert for Maypole Tea emphasising that noble English past time of afternoon tea, *By the Fireside* (1945).

Unsurprisingly for an artist who has always positioned himself at the margins of the art world, Perry has found himself drawn to art that embodies a quiet nostalgia and restraint. **Unpopular Culture** and **Nostalgia for the Bad Times** present an alternative view of British art, bringing a fresh, new perspective on this period.

– ENDS –

For more information, images, interviews or to attend the private view, please contact Jo Franks or Anys Scoular at Anita Morris Associates jo@anitamorrisassociates.co.uk or anys@anitamorrisassociates.co.uk on 01943 603311.

Unpopular Culture is accompanied by a catalogue that includes commissioned essays by Grayson Perry and Blake Morrison. ISBN: 978-1-85332-267-9

For the exhibition, Grayson Perry has designed a limited edition silk scarf which will be available to buy from tour venues.

NOTE TO EDITORS

Exhibiting Artists: Michael Andrews; Kenneth Armitage; Frank Auerbach; Gerry Badger; Clive Barker; Elinor Bellingham-Smith; John Benton-Harris; Ian Berry; John Bratby; Edward Burra; Anthony Caro; Lynn Chadwick; Robert Colquhoun; Elisabeth Frink; Duncan Grant; Bert Hardy; Anthony Hatwell; David Hepher; Barbara Hepworth; Thurston Hopkins; David Hurn; Bryan Kneale; Margaret Lovell; Alan Lowndes; L.S. Lowry; Henry Moore; Francis Morland; Tish Murtha; John Myers; Paul Nash; Eduardo Paolozzi; Martin Parr; Victor Pasmore; Christine Pearcey; Edwin Pickett; John Piper; Tony Ray-Jones; Alan Reynolds; Brian Robb; William Roberts; George Rodger; Leonard Rosoman; Meg Rutherford; William Scott; Jack Smith; Ruskin Spear; Homer Sykes; William Turnbull; Patrick Ward; Carel Weight; John Wragg; Bryan Wynter.

The Arts Council Collection was formed in 1946 by the Arts Council of Great Britain and has been managed by The Hayward, Southbank Centre since 1987. From the outset, the intention was to support artists living and working in Britain through the purchase and display of their work, and to tour exhibitions across the country thereby encouraging public appreciation of modern and contemporary art, making it the widest circulated collection of its kind.

Biography - Grayson Perry

Grayson Perry was born in Chelmsford in 1960. He studied at Braintree College of Further Education and received a BA in Fine Art from the Portsmouth Polytechnic. In the early 1980s Perry was a member of the Neo-Naturist group, and took part in performance and film works. He has continued to create work in a variety of media that includes embroidery and photography and is best known for his ceramic works. Grayson Perry won the Turner Prize in 2003. His exhibitions include solo presentations at the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, USA, 2006; and Galeria Il Capricorno, Venice 2004. His group exhibitions include *A Secret History of Clay from Gauguin to Gormley*, Tate Liverpool, 2004; *Collection Intervention*, Tate St. Ives, St. Ives, 2004; *Guerilla Tactics*, Barbican Art Gallery, London, and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 2002. In 2006, Grayson Perry curated *The Charms of Lincolnshire* a critically acclaimed exhibition of historical artefacts selected by the artist from the Museums of Lincolnshire. After opening at The Collection in Lincoln in February 2006, the show then toured to the Victoria Miro Gallery in London in July 2006.

Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying a 21-acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and the Hayward Gallery as well as The Saison Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection.

Longside Gallery is closed between exhibitions. www.ysp.co.uk

Tour continues: For more information about upcoming venues for this exhibition please check: www.southbankcentre.co.uk/visual-arts/hayward-touring/current