



# Grayson Perry: Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Girl

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## **Grayson Perry: Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Girl** Grayson Perry , Wendy Jones

Every inch of Grayson's childhood bedroom was covered with pictures of aeroplanes, and every surface with models. Fantasy took over his life, in a world of battles ruled by his teddy bear, Alan Measles. He grew up. And in 2003, an acclaimed ceramic artist, he accepted the Turner Prize as his alter-ego Clare, wearing his best dress, with a bow in his hair.

Now he tells his own story, his voice beautifully caught by his friend, the writer Wendy Jones. Early childhood in Chelmsford, Essex is a rural Eden that ends abruptly with the arrival of his stepfather, leading to constant swerving between his parents' houses, and between boys' and women's clothes. But as Grayson enters art college and discovers the world of London squats and New Romanticism, he starts to find himself. At last he steps out as a potter and transvestite.

## **Grayson Perry: Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Girl Details**

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# From Reader Review Grayson Perry: Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Girl for online ebook

## Hugh Donald says

fantastic read! a book that I will read over and over again.

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## Isabella Vecchi says

The book is a good read for anyone who's likes artists biographies, but it was as interesting as it was unsatisfactory. Grayson Perry is an incredible man with a fascinating story and "Portrait of the artist as a young girl" is a good overview of his life, but such a good story could have been presented better if written differently. Throughout the whole book it's really easy to see how it was structured based on a series of interviews; some sentences sound like a literal transcription of voice-narrated story, and on paper, they're just plain bad.

Another disappointing factor was how one of the focal points of Grayson's personal life and practice, transvestitism, was explained through the artist's words up till a certain point, and then completely left out. I was curious to find how Claire, the artist's feminine side, was first born and then turned into a definite alter ego. After introducing the story in the first few chapters; talking about how Grayson started to cross-dress and the reasoning behind it, it was kind of just left aside. In these chapter the artist keeps referencing to Claire, leaving you impatient to know more about it, as he talks about how, at first, her identity wasn't set into a specific persona as he was just generically dressing as a woman. When did Greyson's feminine side incarnate in Claire? When, how did she get a name? What is the rest of the story? The book doesn't answer these questions, as it ends abruptly before the formal birth of Claire.

My first thought as I turned the last page was, is this it? The story ends in a strage, unstable timeframe in the artist life, as he was living in London, after graduating from University; he had just started working on pottery but wasn't successful yet, still living in a squalid squat with no money. The book feels incomplete, and as much as I enjoyed reading Grayson's story, I can't help but think that it's a shame that it was translated onto paper in this way.

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## Grace says

I read this a couple of years ago, but I remember really enjoying it. It's easy to read, Perry's writing voice is clear and simple, and the book is full of insightful looks into his world as an artist and a transvestite. I do plan to read this again when I have time :)

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## Peter Jones says

Informative, gently funny and an easy read....

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### **Christine Busuttil says**

I was a bit disappointed with this really, but then maybe getting to form an opinion of someone by their TV persona was part of my problem.

However this is a lesson for me ,everyone likes different aspects of people's personalities for different reasons

I like the way he can draw out the essence of people in interview and through his art.

This book however was more about how important dressing up is to Grayson and how he really experimented with his art when younger.

Much prefer him now!

I also think I missed out on the lovely pics of his earlier art work by getting the kindle version.

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### **Peter says**

I really enjoyed this book. The tale of Grayson Perry - artist and cross-dressing potter - growing up in suburban Essex. His childhood and teenage story is pretty interesting and I often wished that the book had gone into more detail about parts of that, especially the feel of the places, but it gave great detail to the family characters. The book ended soon after his graduation from art school and I wish it had carried on a bit longer, taking us through the early years of his career as a working artist. I thought he was a character of quirky and opposing interests, dressing up, cross-dressing, mechanical repairs, pottery, imaginary worlds, S&M. It was interesting also to see connections with Boy George and Marilyn - he lived in some of the same squats as them in London. All in all it was a quick, easy read and I got through it in a day. It reminded me a little of Toast by Nigel Slater and he even used the same metaphor at one point - how love is making warm buttered toast for someone.

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### **Liselott says**

I am not gonna go into details here, five stars means I liked it alot, and that I will read more of his.

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### **Steve Roberts says**

I'm a big fan of Grayson Perry so was interested to read about his early life and influences. This autobiography is a searingly honest account of his troubled upbringing and struggle with becoming both an artist and transvestite. I think most people will identify with his teenage angst and finding an outlet through student excess. Of course not many of us end up as Turner prize winning artists later!

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## **Sarah says**

There is oodles of humanity in this book (and a mention of a Crispy Ambulance).

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## **Grace says**

This was an interesting short read about one of my favourite artists! Grayson is extremely open which is very refreshing. However, I did find the beginning detailing Grayson's childhood a lot more interesting and easier to read than the second half which at times became a bit disjointed and all over the place, making it a bit difficult to follow.

But, other than that it was a good read about a great artist. ?

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## **Esther says**

What a super human being. This is his autobiography from birth until mid 20s. Utterly fascinating, charming, self deprecating. His childhood had some terrible and distant parents and step parents. Forays into transvestism in 70s rural Essex, were at turns funny and touching to read. His escape to art college and London squats brought him out, on many levels. Again I think reading this, here is someone from a poor working class background, shit parents offering no support and his talent gets him into art college and a full grant from the government enables him to go off become independent and develop his talent. What do these kinds of kids do now?

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## **Simon Binning says**

A memoir is a curious thing. Every one is written for a slightly different reason; to cash in on passing fame, to airbrush history, sometimes as a cathartic experience. For the reader, this means they can be a bit of a minefield. Some of my favourite reads have been memoirs; Alec Guinness, Alan Bennett and Alexei Sayle being delights in recent years. But some have been just awful, so I am careful in selecting them. Am I interested in the subject? Have they actually achieved anything worth writing about? Why have they written the book?

Grayson Perry is an interesting subject; an artist whose public profile - both as Grayson and as Claire, his alter ego - is probably better known than his art. A profile that challenges people's perceptions of both the artist and the man. Whether that's what he set out to achieve is another matter, but he seems comfortable with himself. So I wondered how open he would be in recounting parts of his life.

The book is written by Wendy Jones, based on many interviews and discussions with Perry, but written in his voice. In the wrong hands, this is a recipe for disaster, but it works beautifully here. The emotions of a young man struggling with his life, his loves, his art and his transvestism all come through strongly; often poetically. His early life was somewhat difficult; family affairs, difficult divorces; step-parents. Stability was lacking, and he developed a vivid imagination to give him comfort and security. At the centre was Alan Measles; a teddy bear, who became the focus of this realm. He used what he had to hand to build everything needed to populate his world, and lost himself in it. His description of these times is touching; of the hopes and fears of childhood; of learning about friendship and family; of burgeoning sensual feelings, with little or no understanding of what they meant.

His interest in female clothing, and his understanding of what lies behind it for him develop as he grows up, and it is a fascinating read. It is a gradual process, broken up by his own fears and doubts, and also by the intervention of others when he is discovered. He explains his own motivations and rewards; his relief at the acceptance of others. And gives those of us with little knowledge a few lessons in the etiquette of cross-dressing.

The story of his artistic development is fascinating too. Now known to the public primarily as a potter, he was a late developer in this area. Always interested in making things, he went through various stages, first as a creative child, then at art college, and although he had had pottery lessons from an early age, it was only as an adult that he found a teacher who inspired his love for traditional potting and ceramic techniques which he uses today. His stories about his college years will be familiar to most students; particularly those of around his generation. The stories of ventures into performance art, and a brief period of drug use are poignant and sometimes very funny.

He is able to look back now and explain his development in both areas, whilst readily admitting that he didn't understand them at all at the time. He wryly subjects his younger self to some severe criticism, acknowledging that he lost his way several times. But it is these meanderings which produced the artist he is now. Artists don't emerge fully formed; at least, not very often. They need to form, develop, grow. Move from the derivative to the original. And I really got that from this book. He shows us his early need to please; parents; teachers; contemporaries. And then his acceptance of himself; to do what he wants to do, and to be what he wants to be.

The book is one of the best descriptions of what it means to be an artist I've read. In many ways, it's not anything magical; talent yes, but dedication, experimentation and perseverance are just as important. He's not afraid to analyse his talent and creativity; to acknowledge his weaknesses as well as his strengths. The different facets of his character work together to make him the artist and man we see today, and very likeable he is. The story tails off a bit towards the end, with less detail as it approached the present day (it was written in 2007), but this doesn't diminish it. It's definitely worth a read.

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### **Simon Fletcher says**

An interesting and frank biography of one of the UK's leading contemporary artists.

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### **Emily says**

Really loved this and am sad it's over. Particularly interesting having finished Just Kids recently, and the similarities between the struggle of the artist are quite obvious, but the tone of voice between Smith and Perry couldn't be more different. Perry's attitude is so open and unassuming, you fall in love with him. Smith keeps you at a haughty arms's distance. Perry's writing explaining his exhibition at the British Museum was my fave bit and got me onto this book.

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### **Jemima Rose says**

2.75 stars. There's no way on earth I would've read this book except that it is required reading for my course. I had dreaded starting it & then had hope for it & then didn't & then did & then didn't. The ending was abrupt & made me feel like I'd wasted my time reading it. I am glad it wasn't any longer because of this. Disappointing structure & a writing style that I simply could not gel with.

