

ERASMUS  
PRIZE  
2021  
A E M I U M  
P E R A S M I A N

# Annual Report Erasmus Prize

## Grayson Perry





# Annual Report Erasmus Prize 2021

The power of the image  
in the digital era



Colophon  
Annual Report Erasmus Prize  
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TRUE POTTERY IS NOT THE MOST GLAMOUROUS MEDIA THROUGH WHICH TO BECOME A SUPERSTAR, BUT THAT'S THE BEAUTIFUL IRONY OF IT.

# Preface

The Erasmus Prize in 2021 was awarded to the British artist Grayson Perry. The theme of the prize this year was ‘the power of the image in the digital era’. It was an appropriate theme for the time, because the global outbreak of Covid-19 meant that the award ceremony, and much of the programme of activities, had to take place online. The theme suited not only this extraordinary period but also the exceptional artist Grayson Perry: his idiosyncratic work and engaging public persona could effortlessly hold their own amid the digital noise.

Perry has developed a visual language all of his own in an era when we are swamped by visual images. He combines traditional techniques such as pottery and weaving with contemporary technologies. In the process, he creates uneasy encounters between old and new, between the acceptable and the indecent. He believes that art belongs to everybody, and he converses with people from all strata of society about what art, good taste and beauty mean for them. Perry calls himself ‘a transvestite potter’ and is critical of a political climate in which people retreat into their own sense of righteousness. He received the prize for the convincing way he links questions about beauty and traditional crafts with present-day social and civic themes. Grayson Perry was awarded the Erasmus Prize back in 2020, but owing to the measures taken to combat Covid-19 at home and abroad, the board of the Foundation was forced to postpone the award ceremony and accompanying events from 2020 until 2021.

His Majesty the King, Patron of the Foundation, presented the Erasmus Prize to Grayson Perry on 16 December via video link. Before the award ceremony, the King was guided around the Grayson Perry exhibition at the Kunstmuseum Den Haag by director Benno Tempel. This was followed by a round-table discussion about the work of Perry with Stijn Huijts, director of the Bonnefanten Maastricht, Benno Tempel, Andreas Bluhm, director of the Groninger Museum, artist Erwin Olaf and Jet de Ranitz.

The sheer breadth of Grayson Perry’s work was reflected by the varied programme of activities. In November, art historian and Grayson Perry expert Krzysztof Dobrowolski-Onclin delivered two online lectures about

his work. Two exhibitions about Grayson Perry were also held, one at the Bonnefanten in Maastricht and the other at the Kunstmuseum in The Hague. The documentary series *All Man*, in which Perry explores what it means to be a man in today’s world, was screened at the Louis Hartlooper Complex in Utrecht as part of Movies That Matter. The screening was introduced by the researcher Miriam Wickham of Utrecht University. Two days before the Erasmus Prize award ceremony, an online meeting took place between Grayson Perry and pupils from four secondary schools in the Netherlands and four in the United Kingdom, co-organized by The British Council. On the basis of digital teaching material about art and identity supplied by Grayson Perry, the pupils worked on a self-portrait, which they discussed with him during the meeting. In the series of extended interviews on the VPRO programme *Wintergasten*, Perry spoke to Janine Abbring. They took viewers on a “safari through Perry’s ideas and memories” with the help of film clips chosen by the artist. By turns humorous and emotional, the interview touched on Perry’s fear-filled youth as a source of his work. This interview aired on 30 December, and Dutch viewers responded enthusiastically. Many fascinating articles about him appeared online and in the national dailies.

In addition to the Erasmus Prize, the Foundation in 2021 also presented its annual Research Prizes to five young doctoral candidates who, according to the jury, completed excellent dissertations. Measures to combat Covid-19 meant that this award ceremony also took place digitally. The online award ceremony – in which the members of the jury delivered a laudation and the doctoral candidates made short presentations about the next steps in their work – was watched with keen interest from the universities and research institutes. This annual report contains a short overview of all these activities. We thank all our collaboration partners who contributed so enthusiastically: The British Council, the Bonnefanten Maastricht, het Kunstmuseum Den Haag, the Louis Hartlooper Complex, Movies That Matter and the VPRO.

Jet de Ranitz, chair  
Shanti van Dam, director



His Majesty the King (right) and Benno Tempel (left) in front of Grayson Perry's woodcut *Selfie with Political Causes* in the Kunstmuseum in The Hague.



# Citation

Article 2 of the Constitution of the Praemium Erasmianum Foundation reads as follows: 'Within the context of the cultural traditions of Europe in general and the ideas of Erasmus in particular, the aim of the Foundation is to enhance the position of the humanities, the social sciences and the arts. The emphasis lies on tolerance, cultural diversity and non-dogmatic, critical thinking. The Foundation tries to achieve this aim by awarding prizes and by other means. A financial prize is awarded under the name of 'Erasmus Prize'.'

In accordance with this article, the Board of the Foundation has decided to award the Erasmus Prize 2021 to the British artist Grayson Perry. He receives this prize on the following grounds:

- Grayson Perry has a visual language all of his own and has developed a nonconformist way of using media in a world where visual media are ubiquitous. He chooses techniques that the art establishment had for a long time pushed down the hierarchy, such as ceramics and textile, and he combines them with contemporary technologies. His use of traditional crafts is a way to escape the fleeting nature of digital imagery: the digital world with its endless links and rapid movements comes to a halt in a rug or a vase.
- As an artist and public figure, he champions democratic, inclusive art. Perry breaks through barriers of class, background and status in order to speak to people directly about creativity and the role of art in life and society.
- In his playful treatment of classical role patterns, the artist not only appeals for tolerance but also enforces it. In his art, and also in his texts and public appearances, he reflects critically yet light-heartedly on the social roles of men and women.

- Social and political themes are explicitly present in the work of Grayson Perry. Thanks to his open, non-judgemental attitude, he succeeds in uniting opposites, without that prejudicing the complexity of his work. All the values that the Foundation upholds surface in his art practice.

*In his playful treatment of classical role patterns, the artist not only appeals for tolerance but also enforces it*



Video conference between His Majesty the King, Shanti van Dam and Grayson Perry.



His Majesty the King and Benno Tempel walk through the Grayson Perry exhibition in Kunstmuseum The Hague.

# Laudatio

Your Majesties, Your Royal Highness, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear Grayson Perry,

The theme of the Erasmus Prize 2020 is: 'The power of the image in the digital age.' We could have made it a little easier for ourselves by borrowing an adage from Erasmus of Rotterdam: "Difficilia quae pulchra." Beauty is difficult to attain.

Digital culture affects all of us, almost drowning us in a torrent of images. One advantage of digital image culture is that it has made creativity more democratic. Yet it severely tests our concentration and judgement. Sensitive artists respond to the deluge of images by reflecting through patient contemplation and by reviving traditional techniques. Grayson Perry's compatriot David Hockney recently claimed that Vincent van Gogh would have used an iPad instead of a paintbrush today. It is an audacious assertion, which of course is difficult to verify. That we have now selected an artist who likes to use ceramics, cast iron and textiles might at first seem somewhat illogical. But it is not. For the Praemium Erasmianum Foundation, modern image culture is the very reason to award the prize to an artist whose work critically reflects on today's world and the art business. That, too, reflects the power of the image in the digital age.

One of the most important qualities of Grayson Perry is precisely the fact that he does not meet expectations. That is true both of his art and of how he approaches life. His play with changing identities makes him one of the most authentic personalities in an art world often dominated by vanity and superficiality. With ceramics, his favourite medium, Grayson Perry creates an 'area of discomfort' within that world. Or, as Perry's biographer Jacky Klein has aptly expressed it: "His work, filled with text and narrative, contemporary storytelling and snippets of popular culture, runs counter to the more allusive and coolly conceptual vein of much contemporary art."

Contemporary art. What exactly is 'contemporary'? And how long does something remain contemporary? Every artist is the product of their time, and we ourselves are contemporary witnesses to the present and tradition.

Good artists realize that they are part of a long tradition and see their predecessors, though they lived centuries ago, as colleagues. Grayson Perry is no different. "I've always compared my own work to historical art..." he once said.

It is an incontrovertible truth that history extends into the present. History is tangible in this very building, where it is tradition for the head of state to present the prize to the artist. This building is the biggest symbol of a time once referred to as the 'Golden Age'. Inaugurated in 1655, this was the city hall of one of the most powerful cities of the day. Amsterdam gifted itself not only an administrative building but also a monument to showcase its status and glory. The sculptor Artus Quellinus from Antwerp was commissioned in 1650 to design the decorative scheme for the city hall. It is his work you see around you here. The architecture of the building followed the rules of Dutch classicism, while the interior is dominated by Italian baroque. The decorative programme was designed to present Amsterdam as a paragon of peace and prosperity. A city governed in exemplary fashion, a city where justice prevailed. And that is what we – together with Grayson Perry – see around

*What exactly is  
'contemporary'? And how  
long does something  
remain contemporary?*

us. Baroque and the contemporary view. Let us examine what they have in common.

You are looking at the entrance to the Hall of the Magistrates, where judgement was once pronounced. Above the entrance we see Lady Justice, the personification of justice, with her symbolic sword and scales. Those we can still recognize. But people now have a lot more difficulty identifying the other figures.



High relief by Artus Quellinus in the Hall of the Magistrates, with from left to right: Strict Law, Greed, Justice, Envy, and Punishment.

Justice crushes the mortal sins of Greed and Envy underfoot. Greed is represented by King Midas, while Envy is the old woman with snakes for hair. Standing to the left and right of Justice are her escorts: Strict Law (left) and Punishment (right), with a whole arsenal of torture devices. The clock strikes eleven, a warning to all who enter that hall. Putti with rods and lightning bolts and two harpies emphasize yet again the symbolism of administering punishment.

The prize is today awarded to an Englishman. A man from the country that left the European Union – a fact for which he of course is not personally to blame. Yet the relationship with England has certainly had its ups and downs. While Artus Quellinus elaborated his decorative scheme, the first Anglo-Dutch War gathered momentum. Joost van den Vondel referred to that war in his poem written to celebrate the opening of the city hall when he compared Amsterdam and London to Carthage and

Rome, who eye “each other angrily” like “A lion and tiger”.

Not surprisingly, the war between the Dutch and the English was triggered by trading interests and control of the seas and colonies elsewhere in the world. All this is graphically expressed on the floor, visible for those sitting in the front row. Here we see a map of North and South America. And up above, Atlas carries the globe by holding up the southern hemisphere. And so this city hall is a symbol of the wealth accumulated – and fiercely defended – through colonialism and slavery.





*The Walthamstow Tapestry, 2009. Collection Bonnefanten. Photo credit: Peter Cox.*

But how do I come back to Grayson Perry?

Let us take a look at Perry's monumental masterpiece, The Walthamstow Tapestry.

Here you see one of the three originals held at the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht. One thing we can say about the work of Perry is that the baroque is certainly alive and well. Perry is indebted to the baroque not only in the vivid imagination, the pleasure of invention and the tremendous wealth of figures, forms and colours, but also in the visual imagery. The minimalist aesthetics of 'less is more' were always a thorn in his side. As he puts it: "When in doubt, bung it on!"

Quellinus emphasized the pursuit of a life free of sin, lived according to the rules of the Bible and the Classics. In the case of Perry, humankind in the age of mass consumption is at fault. Quellinus and Perry employ all sorts of

symbols that their contemporaries could recognize, and that is still the case. "Museum curators love objects that tell a story about the time and place in which they were made," Grayson Perry once said, and I can confirm that. The Walthamstow Tapestry can be read from left to right as a story from birth to death, frequently interrupted by small scenes filled with humour and horror. Each mini-scene features a brand name.

This tapestry no doubt presents future art historians with a daunting task. For nobody quite knows how long names like Louis Vuitton, Tiffany and IKEA will remain part of our collective consciousness. Yet that is precisely the point. Forms of expression may change, but in principle people remain the same. Perry's theme is 'the journey of life', a uniquely baroque motif.

And what certainly does not change are the mortal sins. In the case of Quellinus, Greed was one of the key

themes; in the case of Perry, Greed is the key theme. Here in the city hall, Greed is personified by the Phrygian King Midas, recognizable by his ass's ears. Midas had rashly chosen the wrong side when Pan and Apollo held a musical contest between pan flute and lyre. Everything Midas touched turned to gold – unfortunately for him, his food also transformed into gold, which is why he died of hunger. In other words: Greed is its own punishment. Perhaps we can also interpret the tapestry as a depiction of the 'hedonist treadmill': It is through consuming that we buy a moment of elation. But that fleeting happiness brings us no step further. For all that awaits us in the end is death. A reference to mortality could not be more baroque.

We do not know if all sinners who passed through these doors really understood what they saw. For how versed in the Bible and in mythology were the people of the time? No matter how interesting the artworks are in and of themselves, the way people receive them is every bit as exciting. Who makes what? And for whom? Fortunately for us, Grayson Perry is an eloquent interpreter of his own work. He wants to share not only his art but also art in general with as many people as possible. We see how he conveys his enthusiasm with audiences in theatre performances, films and television programs. It is fantastic to see how he does that, often with his wife Philippa. He succeeds in passing on the spark because he takes his audience seriously and, in that disarming manner of his, he unearths something positive in every form of creative accomplishment that comes from the heart.

Grayson Perry makes art that is beautiful yet awkward. Through his art and public performances, he connects with many people, often succeeding far off the paths well-trodden by insiders. For him, the process of creating and explaining coincide. Perry creates something that we once called 'social sculpture' with humour, provocation and passion.

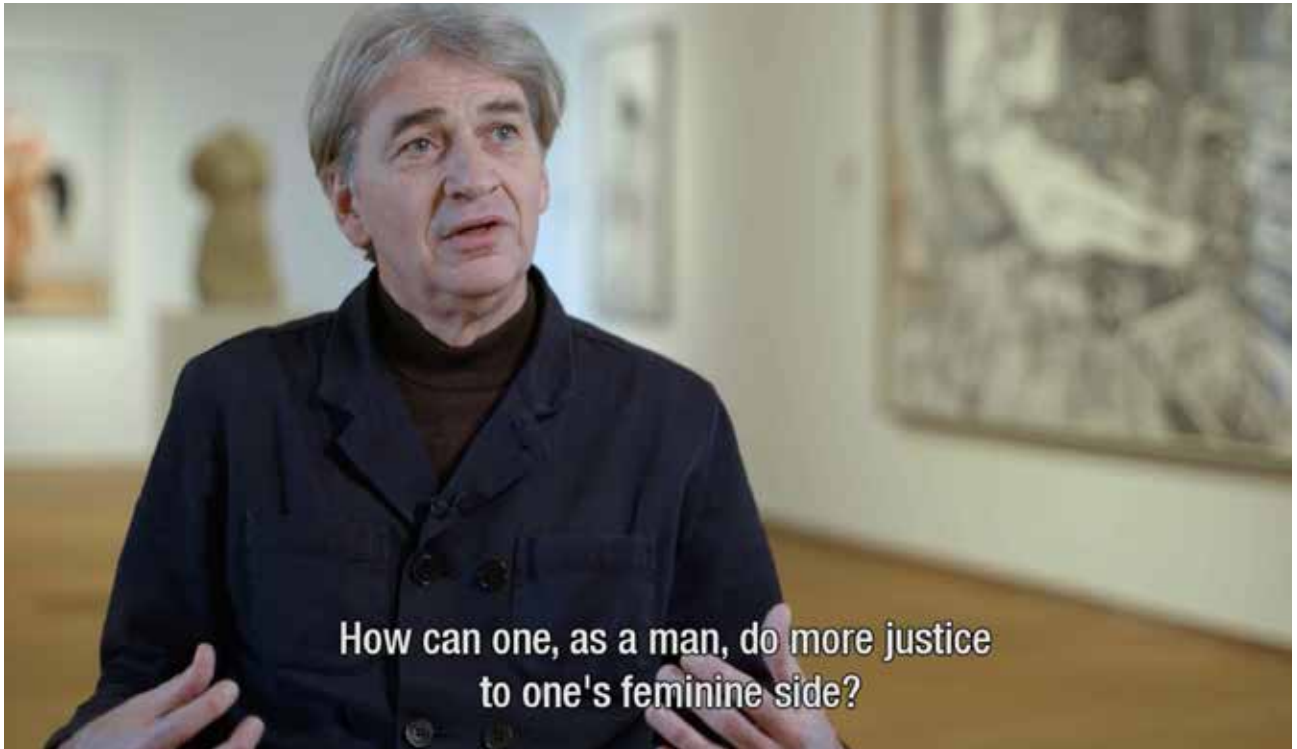
Grayson Perry's predecessor as Erasmus Prize laureate is the American composer John Adams. I would like to quote from Adams' acceptance speech of 2019 because it contains something that applies here too: "For some artists the abstract ideal and the perfection of the



artwork itself is what matters most [...]. For others the artwork should carry a message, social or political, that [...] hopes to influence as large an audience as possible. Fortunately great art can emerge from either of these two positions." That applies to the period before, during and after the digital age. Art history follows this development with bated breath. Nobody knows how the story continues. But one thing I confidently predict: with his art, Grayson Perry has already secured his place in art history.

Andreas Blühm

*Due to the restrictions around COVID-19, this laudatio was not pronounced at the Royal Palace, as is customary under normal circumstances.*



How can one, as a man, do more justice  
to one's feminine side?

Stijn Huijts, director of Het Bonnefanten, in the film portrait that Shanti van Dam made of Grayson Perry.



The Artist Erwin Olaf talks about his connection to the work of Grayson Perry in the film portrait.

# Biography Grayson Perry

Grayson Perry is one of the best-known contemporary British artists. He won the prestigious Turner Prize in 2003, and he has been a member of the Royal Academy of Arts since 2012. Born in Chelmsford, Essex, in 1960, he now lives and works in London. Grayson Perry's work features a wide variety of techniques and materials: tapestries, ceramics, large woodcuts, cast-iron sculptures, prints, dresses, and even a complete house. With these colourful, lavishly decorated works he evokes a fantasy world that often looks like a caricature of ours, enabling him to engage in humorous dialogue with contemporary society. As an artist, Perry is keenly aware of who gets to see his art, whether they are affluent art collectors or ordinary people for whom the confrontation with contemporary art can prove unsettling. An important theme in the books and programmes that he makes is, therefore, the possibility of art for everybody. Nonetheless, he stresses that he makes things for himself; his criterion is what he would like to have in his home or to see in a museum.

He achieved success with a number of big exhibitions, starting with 'Guerilla Tactics' at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (2002). 'The Most Popular Exhibition Ever!' travelled around the world from 2015 to 2017. In 2020 the Holburne Museum in Bath organized a major retrospective on Perry, called 'The Pre-Therapy Years'. One of his best-known works is the series of tapestries *The Vanity of Small Differences* (2012), first shown at the Victoria Miro Gallery in London. One of the first documentary series by Perry, *All In the Best Possible Taste*, for which he won a BAFTA in 2013, chronicled the making of these works. He also won a BAFTA for the documentary series *Who Are You?* (2014), about identity, which was accompanied by an exhibition at The National Portrait Gallery in London. The documentary series *All Man* (2016) explores masculinity and gender stereotyping, which were also the subject of his book *The Descent of Man*. With the television programme *Grayson's Art Club* (2020-2021), Perry demonstrated in unique fashion the uniting power of art during the lockdowns in the United Kingdom.





# Activities

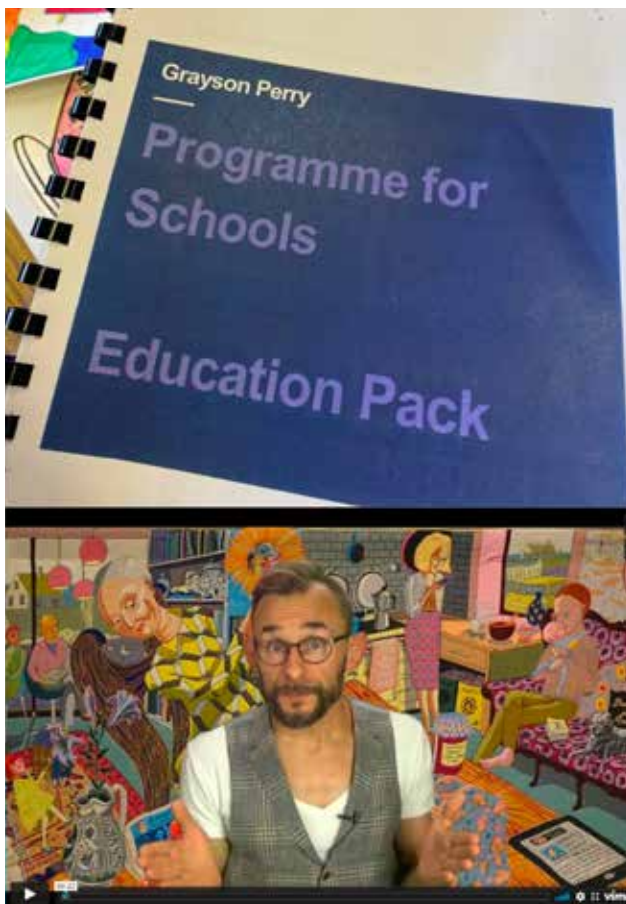
## Online Lecture about Grayson Perry 18 and 28 November 2021

On the evening of Thursday 18 and afternoon of Sunday 28 November, art historian and Grayson Perry expert Krzysztof Dobrowolski-Onclin gave an introduction to the art and personality of Grayson Perry. The lecture was held online, via Zoom, so listeners could learn about the wonderful world of Grayson Perry from the comfort of their own living room. Everything was covered, from pots to dresses, and from books to Perry's celebrated television series.

## Exhibition: 'Grayson Perry: We Shall Catch it on the Beaches'

28 November 2021 to 20 March 2022, Bonnefanten, Maastricht

The Bonnefanten in Maastricht paid homage to Grayson Perry on the occasion of the Erasmus Prize 2021 award ceremony. Artworks from the Bonnefanten collection were exhibited alongside works created during the pandemic and as part of the television programme Grayson's Art Club. In this television series, which kept the United Kingdom glued to their screens during the lockdowns, Perry shows his talent for connecting people with art. On 19 December 2021 the Bonnefanten was unfortunately forced to close its doors owing to the Covid-19 restrictions, but the exhibition resumed in 2022.





Documentary series *All Man* at Movies that Matter  
12 december 2021, Louis Hartlooper Complex, Utrecht

Two episodes of the three-part documentary series *All Man* were screened at the Louis Hartlooper Complex within the framework of Movies that Matter. In this series Grayson Perry explores, in an original and personal manner, what masculinity means in the 21st century. As an artist, transvestite, motorcyclist and father, he has a unique take on his own gender. PhD candidate Miriam Wickham gave a stimulating introduction prior to the screening of the two episodes. Wickham is carrying out research at Utrecht University into the binary gender system in our society and the ways in which that is currently changing.

Grayson Perry in conversation with  
secondary school pupils  
in collaboration with The British Council  
14 December 2021, online

At the start of the 2021-2022 school year, pupils from four Dutch and four British secondary schools began working on a project about Grayson Perry, art and identity. They watched an online lecture about the work of Grayson Perry, delivered by the art historian Krzysztof Dobrowolski-Onclin. After a video message from Grayson Perry himself, they got to work on making self-portraits. On 14 December, Grayson met the pupils during an online meeting in which they discussed the self-portraits they made and reflected on their identity.





His Majesty the King and Benno Tempel in the Kunstmuseum The Hague.

**Exhibition 'Grayson Perry. Erasmus Prize Winner 2021'**  
 17 December 2021 to 15 May 2022,  
 Kunstmuseum Den Haag

Visitors entered the colourful and wonderful world of Grayson Perry in the heart of the Kunstmuseum. This exhibition explored the identity and personal mythology of the artist. Texts accompanying the various objects – from clothes and pots to Perry's motorbike with built-in shrine for his teddy bear – discussed Perry's own vision of art, how he depicts art and the creative process as religion, and how myths and shared history connect people.

**Grayson Perry on *Wintergasten***  
 30 December 2021, 22.10 on NPO 2

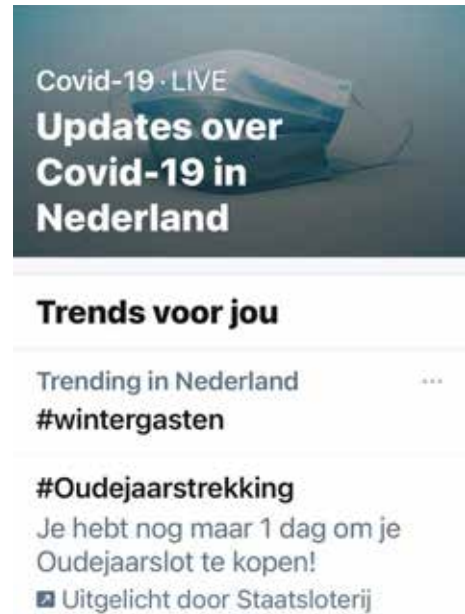
Janine Abbring interviewed Grayson Perry for the television programme *Wintergasten*. The extended interview aired on NPO 2 on 30 December. During the interview they discussed clips from documentaries, films and series chosen by Perry. On the basis of these clips they delved into Perry's youth, his sources of inspiration and motives for making art, and his own documentaries. They also touched on the private conversation in which His Majesty the King congratulated him while presenting the Erasmus Prize 2021, for which Grayson made a special orange dress.



# Media

## Articles about Perry in newspapers and online

Laureate Grayson Perry was the subject of much favourable media coverage. Around the time of the award ceremony in December 2021, De Groene Amsterdammer published an article by Roos van der Lint, and De Volkskrant published an article by Anna van Leeuwen. Two interviews with Grayson Perry also appeared, one by Vrouwkje Tuinman in Trouw and one by Annemarie Kas in the NRC. Trouw also published a review of the exhibition 'Grayson Perry: We Shall Catch it on the Beaches', written by Joke de Wolf. In addition to the major newspapers, smaller media platforms covered the Erasmus Prize award to Grayson Perry. Perry received many congratulations on social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram.



#Wintergasten is trending on Twitter after the episode with Grayson Perry







Kunst & Cultuur Grayson Perry

## Stille getuigen van het dagelijks leven

De potten, borden en vazen van Grayson Perry zijn hoogst verleidelijk en daardoor de ideale dragers van een subversieve boodschap. De Britse kunstenaar is de laureaat van de Erasmusprijs 2021.

Roos van der Lint

1 december 2021 - verschenen in nr. 48



Grayson Perry bij de onthulling van zijn Leave and Remain Brexit-vazen met de titel *Matching Pair* aangekocht door het Victoria and Albert museum in Londen, Maart 2019  
© Tobias Frentrup / Getty Images

### de Volkskrant

Cultuur & Opinie | Uitgeleide | Wetenschap | Nieuws | Jeroen Linnert | Cultuur & Media

NIEUW LEVEN VAN GRAYSON PERRY

## Schilder, pottenbakker, travestiet, tv-presentator, schrijver: Grayson Perry is het allemaal

En passant leert hij zijn gigantische publiek dat kunst van iedereen is. Volgende week krijgt hij van koning Willem-Alexander de Erasmusprijs. Wie is de geliefde Britse kunstenaar? Zijn leven in negen delen.

Anna van Leeuwen 9 december 2021, 17:22



Grayson Perry als Claire in september dit jaar. © Anne Jansz

Menu



## Koning reikt Erasmusprijs virtueel uit



Delen



Door: OrjesDatjes

16-12-2021

Koning Willem-Alexander heeft donderdagmiddag op aangepaste wijze de Britse beeldend kunstenaar en schrijver Grayson Perry de Erasmusprijs uitgereikt. Dat deed hij via een videoverbinding vanuit Kunstmuseum Den Haag, waar hij ook een kleine expositie met werk van Perry bekeek. "Dit zijn de versierselen die ik normaal gesproken zou omhangen", vertelde de koning.



# The Guardian

Interview

## Grayson Perry on art, cats - and the meaning of life: 'If you don't have self doubt, you're not trying hard enough'

Emine Saner

The Turner winning artist takes a break from his live tour to answer readers' questions on everything from class and gender identity to whether he can still make controversial art



Grayson Perry with his bike Patience in his East Sussex studio. Photograph: Eamonn McCabe/The Guardian

Grayson Perry hasn't, he reports apologetically, dressed up specifically for our Zoom call, but for an event he will be attending afterwards. "I wanted to look like a lady who lunched," says Perry, who is wearing mauve silk, bright red lipstick, giant specs and Thatcherite hair. Since winning the Turner prize in 2003, Perry - with his alter ego Claire - has become one of the UK's most recognisable and admired artists. He is known primarily for his ceramics, but his other work



S!L @Sylvia... · 50 m ...

| Prachtige tv  
#Wintergasten en  
@JanineAbbring ook  
helemaal in d'r element.  
Boeiende gasten, zoals  
vandaag artist Grayson  
Perry 💖



2 10



Koning reikt prijs uit aan pottenbakkende travestiet

16 december 2021

# Research Prizes 2021

The Praemium Erasmianum Foundation awarded its Research Prizes this year for the thirty-third time. Five prizes are presented each year to young researchers in the humanities and the social sciences who have written a PhD dissertation of outstanding quality at a Dutch university. The prize consists of a sum of € 3,000.

The jury assessed the nominations according to criteria such as originality, international significance, case-transcending character, style and legibility.

The jury consisted of:

Dr. mr. Maarten Asscher  
Dr. Barnita Bagchi  
Prof. dr. Antoine Buyse  
Dr. Shanti van Dam  
Prof. dr. Bas ter Haar Romeny  
Prof. dr. Judi Mesman  
Prof. dr. Jos de Mul  
Prof. dr. Marlou Schrover

These are the winning dissertations of 2021:

**Kholoud Al-Ajarma**

Mecca in Morocco. Articulations of the Muslim pilgrimage (Hajj) in Moroccan everyday life.

**Mattias Brand**

The Manichaeans of Kellis. Religion, Community and Everyday life.

**Sander Govaerts**

Mosasaurs. Interactions between armies and Ecosystems in the Meuse Region 1250-1850.

**Sjoerd Griffioen**

Contested Modernity. Karl Löwith, Hans Blumenberg and Carl Schmitt and the German Secularization Debate.

**Dion Kramer**

Earning Social Citizenship. Free Movement, National Welfare and the European Court of Justice.

# *Kholoud Al-Ajarma*

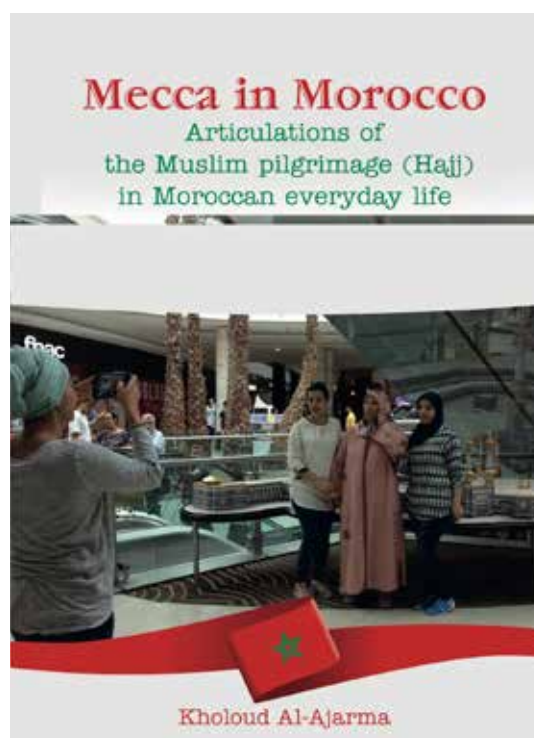
## *Mecca in Morocco. Articulations of the Muslim pilgrimage (Hajj) in Moroccan everyday life.*



**Supervisor** Prof. dr. M.W. Buitelaar  
**Co-supervisor** Dr. C. Wilde  
**Nomination:** University of Groningen, Faculty of  
Theology and Religious Studies

### Report by the selection committee

This dissertation adopts a '360 degrees' analysis of contemporary pilgrimages to Mecca from Morocco, researching it in various stages, from preparation, to the actual pilgrimage, to the aftermath. The dissertation is outstandingly well-written and very readable for non-specialists. It is also highly lucidly conceptualized. The thesis uses a convincing and rich combination of approaches within its anthropological grounding, with notions such as the sensory and the everyday particularly skilfully employed. The interview-based method is also beautifully explicated and used. The author has a fascinating vantage point in relation to her subject, and the study is also well delineated methodologically. The book offers acute observations about different forms of identity (national, religious, and gender-related, notably) and their interaction, which also contributes to its cross-case and international significance. The jury was deeply impressed with this dissertation and is eager to see which topic this author will explore next.



# Mattias Brand

## *The Manichaeans of Kellis. Religion, Community and Everyday life.*

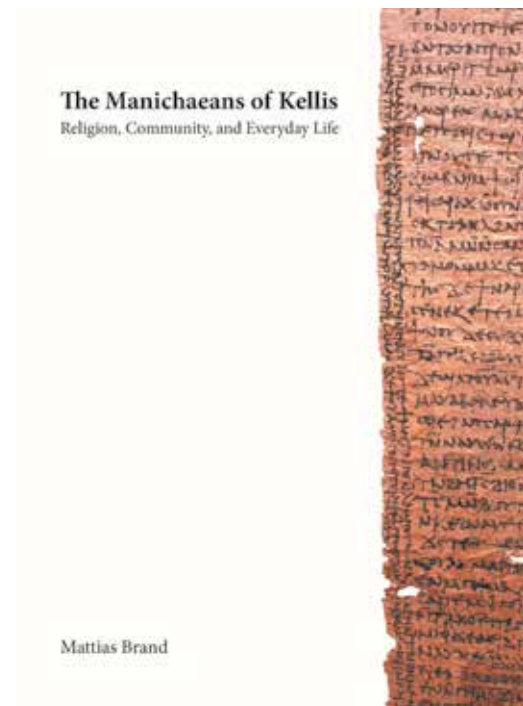


**Supervisors** Prof. dr.A.F. de Jong &  
Prof. dr.J. van der Vliet

**Nomination** Leiden University,  
Faculty of Humanities

### Report by the selection committee

In the late 1990s a large number of Coptic and Greek texts were found in the village of Kellis in the western desert of Egypt. In addition to prayers and psalms of the then very important Manichaean religion, there were many letters and other documents from ordinary people among these texts. Initially, they were mainly interpreted in the light of what we think we know about Manichaeism as a religious community. This author, however, shows that these texts offer a unique insight into the everyday life of Manichaeans in the Roman Empire. The jury appreciates the precisely documented insight into the daily life of a small religious group, based on a particularly clever combination of papyrology, archaeology, religious studies, and history. It even speaks of a 'Montaillou of Antiquity'. The painstaking detail of the research leads to a broader vision: the micro-level data investigated are used to shed light on the large and important question of religious transformations in Late Antiquity. This book offers an innovative contribution to major debates in Ancient History and Religious Studies. And it is a very enjoyable read at that.



# *Sander Govaerts*

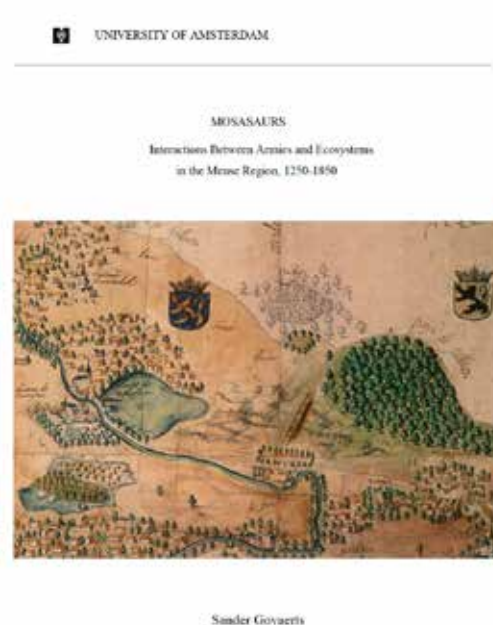
## *Mosasaurs. Interactions between armies and Ecosystems in the Meuse Region 1250-1850*

**Supervisors** Prof. dr. W.D.E. Aerts &  
Prof. dr. G. Geltner  
**Co-supervisor** Dr. M.J.M. Damen  
**Nomination:** University of Amsterdam,  
Faculty of Humanities

### Report by the selection committee

Can one research and write a rich and multidisciplinary book on 600 years of military and ecological history about a river region stretching almost 1.000 kilometers, from the middle of France all the way to Rotterdam, and can one do so in not more than 350 pages, while strictly adhering to the academic norms of definition, documentation and methodology? The answer is: yes, that is possible, and the author proved it, with this thoroughly researched, well-crafted and beautifully written study.

The jury considered this study more than a PhD-thesis alone, it is also a mature book, original in subject and treatment, and surprising in its conclusions, in that it shows how the involvement of armies with the landscapes, the flora and the fauna of the Meuse region in the given period was not – as you would have expected – destructive, but rather conservationist, in a manner that predates modern-day environmentalism by several centuries. A beautiful and highly original book that deserves a wide audience.





# Sjoerd Griffioen

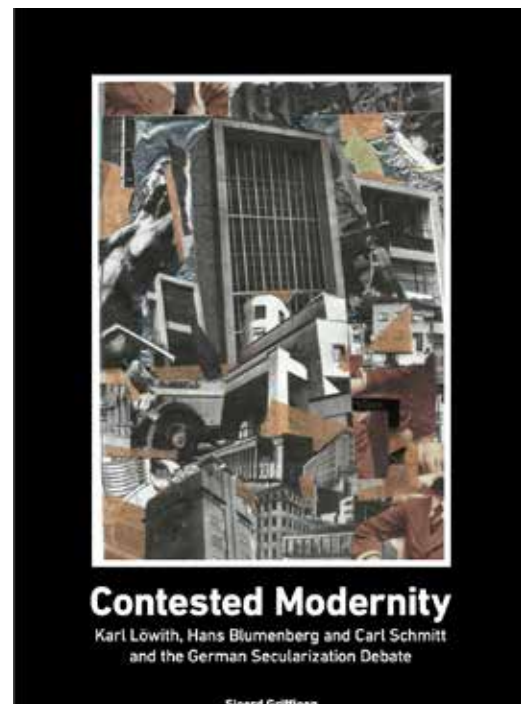
## *Contested Modernity. Karl Löwith, Hans Blumenberg and Carl Schmitt and the German Secularization Debate.*



**Supervisor** Prof. dr. Lodi Nauta  
**Co-supervisor** Dr. Judith Vega  
**Nomination** University of Groningen,  
Faculty of Philosophy

### Report by the selection committee

This impressive dissertation offers a detailed reconstruction of the German secularization debate that took place between the fifties and eighties of the last century. In doing so, the author critically examines earlier, often narrowing interpretations of the debate, and develops an original and fruitful interpretation of his own. Due to its size and detail, the dissertation is not 'a light read', but the style is very clear and compelling. What contributes greatly to the quality of the thesis is that the author places his reconstruction in a broader context of historiography, theology and politics. This interdisciplinary approach makes that the meaning of the thesis extends beyond the philosophical debate between the three protagonists. The author convincingly shows that the debate is a textbook example of the genre 'Geistesgeschichte' that links abstract philosophical theories with a historical representation of the past. The book is highly relevant for the interpretation of the current debate on secularization, (neo) liberalism and European Islam. The jury would eagerly look forward to this author's future research to relate the reconstruction provided to the current manifestation of the contestation of modernity.



# *Dion Kramer*

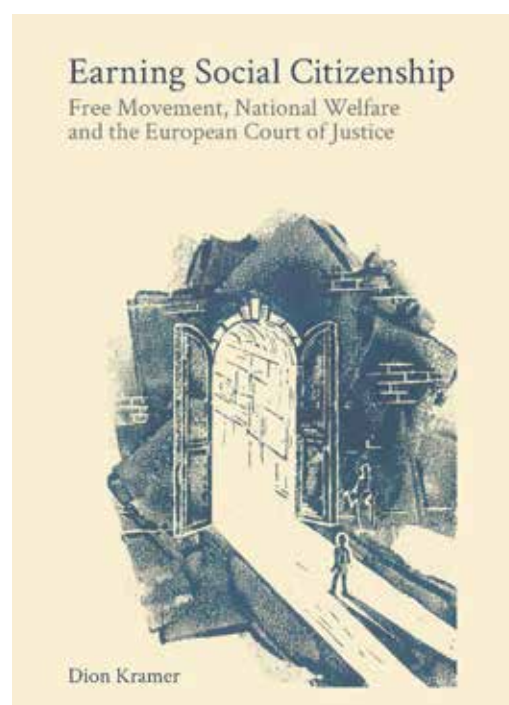
## *Earning Social Citizenship. Free Movement, National Welfare and the European Court of Justice.*



**Supervisor** Prof. dr. G.T. Davies  
**Co-supervisor** Dr. F.J. van Hooren  
**Nomination** VU University Amsterdam, Faculty of Law

### *Report by the selection committee*

This study deftly delves into the role of the European Court of Justice and the effects of its case-law on citizenship on domestic welfare policies. Whereas the push from the Court is for a non-discriminatory approach, the study shows that this has unintended but far-reaching side-effects, reshaping the whole concept of citizenship within states and leading to what the author calls 'earned social citizenship'. While the book focuses on the Netherlands, its insights are relevant for all member states of the European Union. The author combined sharp legal analysis with a detailed study of politics, policies and media. The book is the product of an excellent combination of legal and empirical research. The jury particularly applauds the way in which the author reflects explicitly on his positionality as a researcher. The jury was also impressed by the lucid and impassioned style, which brings a topic to life that at first sight will not immediately appeal to many: the welfare state. This project is undertaken in a way that is both compelling and convincing, also for non-specialists. An impressive book with a very important message.



# Origin and Aim of the Praemium Erasmianum Foundation

On 23 June 1958, His Royal Highness Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands founded the Praemium Erasmianum. The aim of the organisation, as described in article 2 of its constitution, is to enhance the position of the humanities, the social sciences and the arts and to promote appreciation of these fields within society, within the context of the cultural traditions of Europe in general and the ideas of Erasmus in particular. The emphasis is on tolerance, cultural multiformity and undogmatic critical thinking.

The Erasmus Prize consists of €150,000 and adornments. The Board is composed of leading members of the Dutch cultural, scholarly and business communities.



The adornments are designed by Bruno Ninaber van Eyben. The adornments consist of a harmonica folded ribbon with a titanium plate at both ends. In closed form it is a booklet, when opened a ribbon with a text in Erasmus' handwriting. This text, taken from a letter to Jean de Carondelet (Basel 5 January 1523), is characteristic of Erasmus' thinking:

*Diverse are the gifts of men of genius and many are the different kinds of ages. Let each one reveal the scope of his competence and let no one be envious of another who in keeping with his own ability and style tries to make a useful contribution to the education of all.*

Erasmus to Jean de Carondelet  
Basel 5 January 1523



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