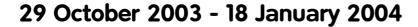
# **Turner Prize 2003**





# Notes for Key Stage 5 students and their teachers

by Miquette Roberts

Teachers, please photocopy these notes for your students to use in the exhibition. Large print versions are available on request.



Willie Doherty, Re-run, 2002. Tate. Purchased 2003. Copyright: the artist. Photocredit: John Riddy

Essential information for schools before planning your visit to The Turner Prize, 2003
Please be aware that the sections in the Turner Prize exhibition devoted to Jake and Dinos
Chapman (section 3) and to Grayson Perry (section 4) contain some challenging material of a
sexually explicit nature and are not recommended for children under 16. You cannot avoid
seeing these works if you visit the show. We therefore urge teachers to make a preliminary
visit to the exhibition before bringing their students, to decide whether or not it would be
suitable for those over 16.

# Introduction

2003 marks the 20th year of the Turner Prize, widely considered to be one of the most important and prestigious awards for the visual arts in Europe. The £20,000 Prize was established by the Tate Patrons of New Art to promote public discussion of new developments in contemporary British art. It will be presented during a live broadcast on Channel 4 on December 7. There is an important section about the Prize for you to look at on the Tate website. You will be able to join in the online discussion about this year's short-listed artists at www.tate.org.uk/judgeforyourself You will be able to vote online for your favourite of all the artists short-listed since the Prize began in 1984 at www.tate.org.uk/peoplespoll

### This year's contestants

All of this year's contenders are artist philosophers who want us to face up honestly to subjects we might prefer to avoid thinking about.

**Anya Gallaccio** asks us to think about life and death in nature and the way we consider and behave towards the natural world

**Willie Doherty** asks us to think about the political divide in Northern Ireland and fear and conflict everywhere **Jake and Dinos Chapman** ask us to think about mutilation, death and decay and some less publicly discussed sexual practices

Grayson Perry asks us to think about society and how it classifies people by gender and by class

# Before you visit: a word of warning

Throughout its history the Prize has attracted public attention and media controversy. This year will be no exception. All the work in this year's Turner Prize is thought provoking; two displays will be considered shocking by some. If you want to think but not to be shocked you should concentrate on the first two sections devoted to Anya Gallaccio and Willie Doherty. It is a good idea to read the sections in this pack devoted to Jake and Dinos Chapman and Grayson Perry before looking at their work. You will then have an idea of what it consists and can decide whether you want to see it or not. There is no shame in deciding that you do not want to see it. If you choose to proceed remember that you are going to be challenged and the main challenge is not to react too quickly. Be ready to think beyond your first instinctive reaction.

# Taboo breaking is frequently part of the Turner Prize

The exhibits by the Chapman Brothers and by Grayson Perry could shock you because their choice of subject matter breaks commonly held taboos. **The taboos this year concern gender definition, sexual practices, mutilation and death.** For instance one of the Chapman Brothers' sculptures consists of a body with a clown's head covered in fake maggots and flies, and skewered against a tree. Previous taboo breakers shortlisted for the Turner Prize have included Damien Hirst who showed a cow and her calf sliced in two, preserved in formaldehyde, and Tracey Emin who displayed her very messy unmade bed with condoms and drink next to it.

All of these subjects: violent death followed by the decay of the body, transvestism, the slaughtering of animals for food and the messy lives we lead, are ones that society - and that means you and me – often shies away from, pretending that they do not exist. Because they are uncomfortable issues for us to think about, we avoid considering our eventual death and the fate of our physical body when buying the meat we eat from butchers or supermarkets, where it is attractively displayed as meat, not as fragments of the bodies of dead animals. Most people keep their sexual and drinking escapades to themselves.

# Artists are philosophers who consider every aspect of life, not just the nice bits

Many artists today, according to Turner Prize curator, Katharine Stout, are predominantly philosophers. Philosophers think about the nature of life. They cannot choose to investigate only the 'nice' aspects of life; they concern themselves as much with its unpleasant aspects. So, for instance, consider the following:

#### Questions to think about in relation to the exhibition as a whole

- Why do we have violent instincts?
- Why are we so interested in reading and hearing about crime?
- Why do we kill animals to feed ourselves?
- What does sexuality encompass? Is it for pleasure, pain or to create children? Can it also involve inflicting violence on others?
- These artists feel that art is not a soft option: it means thinking seriously about all aspects of life. Do you agree with them?
- Are there some of the topics listed above that you would rather not think about?

The artists are listed in the order that you will view their work. A sentence from the Jury's nomination for each one is included so that you can decide for yourself whether the reasons they were nominated contribute to making them special.

# **Anya Gallaccio**



Anya Gallacio. Copyright: Gautier Deblonde

**Anya Gallaccio** has been nominated by the Jury for further(ing) her innovative explorations of the **tension between organic and traditional sculptural materials**, such as sugar, wax and bronze, to create poetic works which encapsulate the **passing of time**.

### The objects in the show

All four exhibits relate to the theme of time and the changes it effects. Two of them (*Because I could not stop*, 2002 and *Preserve (Beauty)*, 1990-2003) involve actual rotting and decay and one (*Eau de vie*, 2001) is about preserving apples as eau de vie or brandy. *Eau de vie*, *Because I could not stop*, a bronze apple tree hung with real apples, and *I'm Nobody! Who are you?* 2003, bronze twigs with glass beads on them, are all sequels to work made by the artist in Switzerland in 1999. Her first bronze tree was situated on a Swiss mountain site of great beauty where a community of reformers had lived in the first decade of the twentieth century. Gallaccio hoped that the real apples she hung on her bronze tree would seed new trees but she also planted seven species of endangered apple trees there which a local farmer promised to tend. The eau de vie is made from the fruit of these trees. Another exhibit, *Preserve 'beauty'*, consists of rows of red gerberas secured to the gallery wall by panes of glass.

# Themes to explore:

# Time as an integral part of the representation of nature

Anya Gallaccio reacts against the tradition of landscapes painted for landowners as records of property or else bought by travellers as substitutes for ownership. (I can't buy the Alps but I can own a painting of them). In opposition to this idea of nature as property, Gallaccio uses materials which cannot be possessed, usually because they wither, rot or melt away and eventually even disappear altogether. She makes work that is in one respect truer to nature than the paintings of Constable, for example, since they, unlike nature, remain fixed at one moment in time. Gallaccio surmounts this obstacle to realism by using time, change and decay as an integral part of the work, being willing to sacrifice the art work's durability and commercial viability to this end.

# Decaying nature: from attraction to repulsion

At the beginning of the exhibition *Because I could not stop* and *Preserve 'beauty'* will appear as objects of beauty but gradually as the fruit and flowers rot and wither our response may change from admiration to repulsion. (Ideally you would visit this display several times in the course of the exhibition to discover how you react each time). The apples will be fresh and attractive when the exhibition opens in October but when it closes three months later in January, there will be nothing left but a rotten, smelly, squelchy mess on the gallery floor. By that time, the pretty red gerbera flowers pinned to the wall by a pane of glass will be decomposed ghosts of their former selves and may remind you of the dead flowers found on tombs in a graveyard.

#### Gallaccio's use of bronze

Bronze is a fine art material used to cast less durable materials like plaster or clay so that a piece of sculpture can be preserved for ever. The choice of such a material for the tree in *Because I could not stop* and for the twig in *I'm Nobody! Who are you?* makes poignant contrast with real perishable fruit.

#### Links with other artists in the show

Links can be made between Gallaccio's use of bronze and the way the Chapmans use it to make casts of joke shop flies and maggots. Gallaccio is making a similar point to them about the themes of life and death/disposable and eternal. In a different way from them she focuses our attention on the notion of beauty. The apples, like the flowers, are beautiful when they are new and fresh but repulsive as they decay, attract flies (not joke shop ones) and die. Flowers are almost a cliché for beauty. They can also be seen as feminine (my love is like a red, red rose) as well as a symbol of the restrictions placed on women by society – in the nineteenth century flowers were one of the few subjects which women were allowed to paint. The dead gerberas in *Preserve 'beauty'*, are likely to be associated in our minds with death in humans; even the way they are ordered may remind you of rows of white crosses in the World War 1 cemeteries along the Normandy beaches. Like the Chapmans, Gallaccio will not allow us to bury our heads in the sand: she forces us to confront death as well as life.

# Topics for discussion - try to view the exhibition in pairs or in small groups so that you can discuss these points together

- In what state were the natural elements in the display when you saw them? If they were rotten can you imagine what they would have looked like when they were fresh? If they were fresh can you imagine how the piece will alter when they decay?
- How do you react to the work?
- What associations are there in your mind when you look at the gerberas?
- Do you think beauty is always short-lived?
- Can a bronze tree ever possess the beauty of a real tree? Why/why not?

# **Willie Doherty**



Willie Doherty, Courtesy of the artist, Alexander and Bonin, New York, and Matt's Gallery, London.

**Willie Doherty** has been nominated by the Jury for the continuing strength and relevance of his film installations and photographic works in addressing the **complexities of living in divided societies**.

# The objects in the show

The two screen video *Re-Run*, 2002 has recently been acquired by Tate. It shows a man running over Craigavon bridge which crosses the river Foyle. This bridge is seen by local people as the symbol of the Protestant and Catholic divide. On one screen the man appears to be running towards you; on the other he is running away from you. He never reaches a destination and the film is (fairly unusually for the artist) silent. The video explores emotions which we have all experienced such as the overwhelming nature of fear and the impulse to escape.

# Themes to explore:

# The artist's context of a divided society

Willie Doherty comes from Londonderry in Northern Ireland. The very place name is expressive of the divided society in which he lives since the name Londonderry is used only by the Protestant community; Catholics talk of it as Derry. On Sunday 30 January, when he was 12 years old, Doherty witnessed thirteen people involved in a peaceful demonstration in the Bogside, being shot dead by soldiers from the British army's first parachute regiment. Later, the Widgery Enquiry set up by the British Government, exonerated the soldiers involved in the Bloody Sunday shootings. Added to Doherty's shock at seeing the actual event was the confusion of being told that something he had

observed with his own eyes had effectively never happened. Not surprisingly, this was a defining moment in the artist's life as well as his art. It made him decide to use the place where he lived as the source and subject of his art. Conflict became the subject matter of his work.

### The universal context

The disadvantage of this strategy was that those who were unfamiliar with the situation in Northern Ireland might not respond to his art. Recently, however, the universal relevance which has always been present in his work has become much clearer. Like other art works its meaning shifts and changes depending on what the viewer brings to it. Since September 11 we can all understand the concept of fear caused by terrorism. His subject matter can no longer be seen as limited to a particular geographic location; it speaks for its time.

#### The medium of video

Doherty's use of video makes us question the notion of truthfulness just as he had to question his assumption that the British Government would defend its people and support the truth. Until recently many people did not question the authority of a photograph as a true record, believing that the camera never lies. That perhaps naïve assumption has been overturned by the advent of computer generated images where the original film can be manipulated. In front of Doherty's photographs and videos we wonder: is this a record of a real situation or is it 'just' art? Are they people in real situations or are they merely actors with a role to play?

#### Links with other artists in the show

Doherty's interest in conflict and its consequences is shared by the Chapman brothers but whereas Doherty's work is inspired by a specific situation, the Chapmans are inspired by the general concept of war. You would perhaps expect to be more shocked by a concrete situation (as in Northern Ireland) than in generalised notions of suffering and death – but are you? Are you surprised at your reply to this question? You may have to consider which tactic you think works best after some time has elapsed. The shocking qualities of the Chapman's work may have more immediate effect but which work stays with you longest? Which makes you think more deeply?

# Topics for discussion - try to view the exhibition in pairs or in small groups so that you can discuss these points together

- Where do you think the man is going? Why is he running?
- Is there anything about the video which suggests a Northern Ireland context?
- Do you think it matters if you don't know much about that context?
- How does the video make you feel?
- How uncomfortable is it to watch?
- What is there about being alone in some public places that provokes a sense of danger?

# **Jake and Dinos Chapman**



Jake and Dinos Chapman. Photocredit: Anna Schori

**Jake and Dinos Chapman** have been nominated for "their striking sculptural installations and graphic works (which) investigate society's **taboos** with **humour** and **provocation**".

# The objects in the show

There are three exhibits in this display; *Insult to Injury, Death* and *Sex*. All of them are meant to shock us. The artists would be disappointed if they didn't succeed. Remember this as you consider them, it may lessen the work's ability to upset you. Think about what the artists are doing and what their intentions may be.

# Themes to explore:

# The Taboos of Death and Sex

A taboo is a consensus within society of what areas we should consider to be out of bounds. Taboos are about fear of the uncontrollable. We know that for the Victorians sex was taboo whereas death was accepted much more readily by them than it is today. Big funerals and lengthy periods of mourning amounted to a celebration of death in Victorian times. The Victorians were frightened of sex, however, probably in part because they had no effective family planning. Today that situation has reversed. We have much more control than they did over whether to have

babies but scientific progress has not enabled us to prevent ourselves from dying. We can put it off more effectively than the Victorians could but we still have to face death in the end.

# **Provocative 3D sculptures**

The Chapmans' *Death* and *Sex* take these two taboos as their subject matter, testing our shockability to its limits. If the artists succeed in shocking us we may feel that we are reacting like prudish Victorians, very upsetting for enlightened viewers like you and me. Moreover we will be playing into their hands and they will be delighted. This is the element of provocation mentioned in the artists' nomination. To prevent them rubbing their hands in glee at our predictably crass reaction we must think very seriously about their intentions and try to push beyond any initial feelings of revulsion.

#### **Links with Surrealism**

The Chapmans appear to confuse the taboos by giving the 'wrong' title to each piece. Shouldn't *Death* be *Sex* and vice versa? Is there any similarity between dying and having sex? Many people think that there is. To the Surrealist writer Georges Bataille, for example, the act of sex was an act of extremity, a violent reaction against the ugliness of the sexual organs and the limitations exerted on human activity by death. To Bataille, excess was an essential ingredient of life and it is certainly a hallmark of all the Chapmans' work.

Bataille is not the only link the Chapman brothers have with Surrealism – the way the artists have altered and collaged Goya's prints follows on from similar activities by Max Ernst. The Chapmans also adopt the Surrealist practice of highlighting cruelty and absurdity in war and violence.

#### Shock tactics

*Death*, 2003, comprises two blow-up sex dolls in the act of fellatio (look up your dictionary!) lying on a lilo. There is no pretence of their being like 'real' humans. They are not realistic; it is only our vivid imaginations that allow us to think of them as such. How do you feel about these figures performing an unusual sex act? Are you Victorian – are you shocked?

We never see the human body decaying; our dead are removed for burial before they decompose. As a result it is easy to forget that our bodies are just another kind of meat and that after they have decayed they enter the food chain to be feasted on by maggots. You may feel that the sting has been taken out of death in *Sex*, 2003, because the figure is clearly a shop mannequin and not a human being made up of flesh, blood and strong emotions. Unlike the real flies used by Damien Hirst in one of his works, the maggots are not real; they come from a joke shop. They have been cast in bronze like many of the valuable sculptural objects displayed in galleries. They may make us question our values since the humans are like cheap porno blow-up dolls and the maggots are made of precious bronze.

# **Admirers of Goya**

Since the early 1990s, Jake and Dinos have been reworking the art of Francisco Goya which had revealed the corruption rampant in nineteenth century Spain. Two years ago they bought a set of his etchings, the *Disasters of War* first published posthumously in 1863 (Goya died in 1828) in which the sheer horror and outrage of war was revealed. After cutting out all the victims' heads in the Goyas, The Chapmans replaced them with the heads of clowns and puppies, meticulously painted in gouache, and called the 'new' work *Insult to Injury*, 2003.

They see a parallel between war and corruption in Goya's time and today. (Think about Iraq). They read a pleasure in violence lurking behind Goya's work and say they are making fun of the artist <u>because</u> they admire him. They want to offend the gallery-going chattering classes among whom they rank themselves. They don't like humanist criticism which looks for moral fervour and emotional meaning. "The clown heads and puppy faces are astonishingly horrible" says one art critic. They "have released something nasty, psychotic and value-free."

# What do you really think about the work?

Before you express your opinion, be aware that Dinos Chapman says that *It's not very interesting to hear what people think because very rarely do they say what they really do think*. Prove him wrong! This is not as easy as it may seem. First you have to be honest with yourself and say what you really, really feel. Secondly you must not allow yourself to be influenced by your friends. It is what you yourself honestly think that matters. You must try to say what that is and not express the opinion you think others will agree with or approve of.

# Topics for discussion - try to view the exhibition in pairs or in small groups so that you can discuss these points together

- Are humans as precious as bronze or as dispensable as joke shop flies?
- If humans are dispensable, does it matter what happens to them? (We will all die one day; does it matter how and when?)
- Are the artists indulging their love of black humour too far or do they make you rethink the world you live in?
- Are you shocked by Sex? If so, why? Is it realistic enough to make you think of real-life mutilation in war fare?
- Why do you think this is called **Sex**, not Death?
- Are you shocked by *Death*? Why do you think it has been given this title?
- Why do you think *Insult to Injury* is so called?
- How important are the titles in general?
- The jury picked out humour as an important element in the Chapman's work. Can you find humour in these pieces?
- Critics also admire the artists' skill in making the works. Do you agree?
- Can you understand why the critics think their work is best among the short-listed artists?

# **Grayson Perry**



Grayson Perry. Photocredit: copyright John Napier. Courtesy of the artist and Victoria Miro Gallery, London.

**Grayson Perry** has been nominated by the Jury for unique work which combined the traditions of fine and decorative arts, including drawing, embroidery and ceramics, to explore **compelling personal and social themes**.

# Themes to explore:

# Re-inventing and assessing traditional attitudes to class, media and techniques

Grayson Perry invites us to re-assess all the categories and compartments in our lives and to consider how our lives are determined by the pigeonholes into which we are slotted. He also invites the art world to rethink the hierarchy of their categories. Why are you less likely to find pottery than paintings in an art gallery, for example?

Here are some of the things he has said about his art and the questions relating to them for you to discuss in pairs.

I want to make something that lives with the eye as a beautiful piece of art, but on closer inspection, a polemic or an ideology will come out of it.

At first sight you will wonder what the fuss is about this artist's work as you look at an array of traditional pots. The pots are inoffensive objects which seduce us into thinking that what we are looking at is merely a pretty object. Go closer and look carefully at the imagery, this is where the shock comes in. The fact that the shapes are traditional may have a bearing on the subject matter: subjects like sexual exploitation go back through history with some ancient Greek pots, for instance, depicting scenes of orgies.

# Craft as a Fine Art

We all grow with the friendship of pots in our homes. A pot has no pretensions of becoming a great public work, we know where we stand with a plate or a vase.

Grayson Perry wants us to critically consider the hierarchies in British society. Just as there is a strong sense of middle and working class in Britain, fine art is usually distinguished from craft. Usually fine art is displayed in an art gallery while pottery is sold in a shop. Someone who paints is called an artist; someone who makes pottery is only a potter. By getting his craft work shown in a gallery setting, Perry is attempting to break down that hierarchy.

# Topics for discussion - try to view the exhibition in pairs or in small groups so that you can discuss these points together

- Choose a pot and look carefully at the imagery. What do you see? Is it shocking? (If not, find another one that is!)
- Is the subject matter easy to understand?
- What do you see as the polemic/argument contained within the imagery?
- Imagine the same imagery painted on canvas. Do you think it is more or less shocking because it is on a pot? Why?

# Working with taboos:

#### Sexual attitudes

I use penises because I've got one and it crops up in many subjects I'm interested in. I'm not trying to do art to shock. It's all serious, and not cynical.

Society dictates that if I am born male, I must dress as a man and behave as a man. Grayson Perry flouts this taboo by cross dressing. He has an alter ego called Claire. He dresses up to assume her identity and has begun making outfits for her to wear which he embroiders. Behaving as a man to some people can carry with it ideas of acceptable violence. Grayson Perry experienced this through the man who became his stepfather when he was five. "There are aspects of yourself you sense as a child that are not welcome," he points out, "say, if you're a man, the desire to be sweet, vulnerable – the things you'd associate with someone wearing a dress."

### **Attitudes to class**

I chose pottery because of the place it occupies in all our lives and my style emanates from the prim housewife whom I worked alongside at evening classes.

One of Perry's pots is entitled *I was an Angry Working Class Man*. His upbringing in a working class home in Chelmsford in Essex alerted him to the class divisions in society. (As with Willie Doherty his background is the source material for his art). He believes that people have very different attitudes about how to decorate their homes and that the middle classes criticise working class ideas of ornamentation as kitsch.

Perry is interested in the way shrines have developed at the site of tragedies, following the creation of a large-scale shrine in Westminster at the time of Princess Diana's death. He sees these shrines as a working class phenomenon which the middle classes look down upon as kitsch and uses them as subject matter in photographs and pots.

#### Links to other artists in the show

When he claims that he is serious and not cynical Grayson Perry may be attacking the Chapman Brothers. Like them he uses sexual taboos as a subject matter for in his art but his slant on it is different, being part of a general criticism of pigeonholing.

# More questions to discuss in pairs

- Look at the photographs. Are you shocked at Perry's cross-dressing? Do you feel that our gender imposes false limitations on our behaviour, that there are certain things you can/cannot do as a girl/boy?
- Are you uncomfortable when you see someone whose gender is not immediately clear to you men wearing make-up, for example?
- Do you agree with the artist that attitudes to home decoration are defined by class? (Think about the different interiors you know).
- 'Perry says his art is serious, he isn't out to shock. Do you think it's important that the artist should be serious or is humour and cynicism OK for art?

#### Who will win The Turner Prize 2003?

It is always part of the fun of the exhibition trying to guess the answer to that question but it is notoriously difficult to choose the right winner, so don't let your teachers spend all their savings on a bet! Here are a few facts that may or may not be significant:

Tate owns 2 Grayson Perrys, 24 works by the Chapman Brothers, 2 works by Anya Gallacio and 5 by Willie Doherty. The bookies' favourite is the Chapman Brothers.

Art critics seem to be most enthusiastic about the Chapman Brothers. According to Adrian Searle, the *Guardian*'s art critic, Jake and Dinos Chapman...have all the skills, their works are arresting and photogenic, and they are as good at manipulating art history as they are the mass media.

So is the winner a foregone conclusion? Will the Chapman Brothers win the Prize? If so, it may be the first time that the favourite has won in the twenty year history of the Turner Prize. The contenders who attract the most attention from the Press have not always – or even usually - won it. Remember the year that the media got excited about Tracey Emin's unmade bed, did she win? No, she didn't. Damien Hirst of pickled shark fame had to make two attempts before he won in 1995. This is Willie Doherty's second attempt (he was first included in 1994) so maybe he's the likely winner. According to Nicholas Serota, Chairman of the Jury and Director of Tate, "we had an interesting discussion with twelve hours of deliberation." The twelve hours were spent by the Jury deciding on whom to include on the short list. We don't expect you to spend quite as long choosing your winner but we do expect you to give the matter the serious thought it deserves and not to dismiss it, as Kim Howells the culture minister did last year, when he said that the Prize consisted of "cold, conceptual bullshit."

# And finally, remember

For the first time ever this year you will be able to vote on the Tate website www.tate.org.uk/peoplespoll for your favourite of all the artists shortlisted since the Prize began in 1984. You can also discuss ideas and opinions about this year's short-listed artists at www.tate.org.uk/judgeforyourself This year's winner will be announced on 7 December.

# **Turner Prize 2003**



# Notes for students and teachers

# **A Questionnaire**

We would greatly appreciate it if you would fill in this brief questionnaire to help us develop our student and teachers' resources in the future (please at any time use the back of this questionnaire)

- 1. How helpful did you find the Notes for students and teachers? (Please circle) Excellent Very helpful Helpful Satisfactory Unsatisfactory
- 2. How did you use it?
- a) to support your lesson planning(teachers) / your coursework (students)
- b) to guide you round the exhibition
- c) to follow up your exhibition visit
- d) as additional material to the *Tate Britain Teachers' Kit* (which gives ideas for planning and structuring a group visit to any exhibition or display at the gallery, and is on sale at £12.99 in Tate Britain shops. To order call 020 7887 8869/70)
- e) other (please describe)
- 3. Please describe how you structured your exhibition visit
- 4. On average, how much time are you prepared to spend reading/working with your *Notes for* students and teachers?
- 5. What did you think of the level the notes were pitched at? Too high Just right Too low
- 6. Do you have any suggestions for future developments of Notes for students and teachers? (Please use the back if necessary).

Many thanks for filling in this questionnaire. Please send it to Miquette Roberts, Tate Britain, Millbank, London SW1P 4RG.