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**REITH LECTURES 2013: PLAYING TO THE GALLERY**

**Presenter: Grayson Perry**

**Lecture 3: Nice Rebellion: Welcome in**

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**SUE LAWLEY:** Hello and welcome to the third of this year's BBC Reith Lectures. This time we're in Northern Ireland, in Londonderry's Guildhall, a beautifully refurbished building in the heart of this old walled city. Almost destroyed by fire in 1908 and badly bombed during the Troubles, it's now risen again - a symbol of Derry's position as the UK's City of Culture for 2013. Its clock tower is original, in fact, and you'll no doubt hear its bells as we go along.

The lectures are called *Playing to the Gallery* and I hope you'll agree that they're turning out to be a thoughtful and witty exploration of the modern relationship between society and art.

So far we've tried to assess the nature of what art is. Today we're tackling the meaty issue of its role - if, of course, it can be said to have such a thing. How much does it need to be, in that well-worn phrase, cutting edge? Should it try to shock us? Can it? Or have we seen it all before?

With his answer to these questions, and no doubt quite a few more besides, please welcome this year's BBC Reith Lecturer: Grayson Perry.

(APPLAUSE)

**GRAYSON PERRY:** I want to start by talking about a film I saw recently. It's by Werner Herzog. It's called *The Cave of Forgotten Dreams*. It's a marvellous film if anybody wants to see it. It's all about a cave in the South of France that was discovered fairly recently. It's a time capsule of Ice Age art. It hadn't been opened for more than twenty thousand years!

And in the film, one of the archaeologists is looking at one of the walls and it has these two overlapping drawings of - in charcoal - of horses. And she says, "You know these look like they could have been done by a person on the same day. They're in the same style." She says, "But when we carbon dated these drawings, they were five thousand years apart." And yet they looked almost identical.

And of course for us now in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when we think of art as this kind of crucible of innovation and new things and we're ... You know artworks nowadays, they go out of date quicker than a celebrity tattoo. (LAUGHTER) So it is astounding that these two drawings that looked so similar and the style hadn't changed in five millennia.

I mean art in many ways, contemporary art, is almost synonymous with the idea of novelty; and whenever it crops up in the mainstream media, you know art is always avant-garde, the work is always cutting edge, the artists are radical, the shows are game changing. You know the work again is revolutionary, and a new paradigm is always being set by the show because this is the kind of way that art is talked about.

And of course all artists, they nurture a tender dream that they too are original, you know. And the worst thing you can ever say - if any of you ever go to an art exhibition and you meet the artist at the opening or the private view or something like that - the worst thing you could ever say to them is, "Oh your work, yeah it reminds me of ..." (LAUGHTER) Uuurrgh, do not do this. This is a bad, bad thing to do.

We are now in the end state of art. Now this is ... You know I don't mean that it's all over. What I mean is art has reached its final state. Anything can be art now. We're kind of agreed. By about the mid-60s, early 70s, you know most things have been at

least sort of tried or suggested, and now we're in a state where anything can be. So formally art is in its end state. I can just see it going off into the horizon and you know people will say, "I'm doing this. Isn't it new?" and I go, "Well it comes under the bracket of *anything*." So, no, it's not that new. But that doesn't mean there won't be new, exciting art that's made. It's just that the idea of it being outside the boundaries of what art can be is not going to happen anymore now because you know freshness and newness is part of the recipe if you like of beauty. We like to see fresh, new things; it's just that art in a way is sort of jaded. It says yeah, kind of had that idea, but that's a great version of it.

And if you ask an artist about the idea of the cutting edge nowadays, they might kind of slightly giggle and go "Hoo-hoo-hoo" because innovation is seen as mere tweaking nowadays. Because most ideas, they're all chugging along. You can do anything now in the art world, and if you do it in the right way and you're good at it, you will find a place for yourself.

But revolution and rebellion and this idea of upheaval is no longer what I would think of as a defining idea. You know if you'd have gone back a hundred years, art was almost synonymous with this idea of rev... You know it was the same thing. It was you know you'd go to the exhibition of the Fauves and people would be shocked and offended, you know, and they're called the beasts.

But now we're a century on from that idea and Robert Hughes, the much lamented art critic who died fairly recently, in 1980, at the end of his landmark television series *The Shock of the New*, he said, "The avant-garde is now a period style."

So I want to talk about really what's happened to that idea and where it still sits in our culture - that idea of the leading edge, the avant-garde, what's happened to it - because I think it still hovers in our mind. And I think that though art isn't necessarily the crucible of all the cutting edge of our culture anymore, it still is inventive, and maybe it does still need to progress or maybe it's just dotted about around the world? And what sort of art world are we headed into? And the thing that we might have to adjust is what a cutting edge artist looks like. (LAUGHTER)

But when I started at art college, that idea of revolution and change and rebellion was almost the DNA of art. Picasso, one of his favourite expressions was, “We must *kill* modern art.” That was how sort of central it was to the idea of being an artist. And that’s one of the delightful traits of the art world really - is that after a century, or 150 years now, that idea of revolution and challenge, we encourage it. We kind of say you know along comes the young artist - talented, little bit angry. Comes along and he goes, “You establishment!” and shakes his fist at the establishment and goes, “I am going to show you what fantastic innovation I have here!” (LAUGHTER) And the art world sort of looks down and sort of goes oh yeah, nice rebellion! Welcome in! (LAUGHTER) That’s why I’ve called my lecture that. That’s why I’ve called it *Nice Rebellion: Welcome in*.

And there’s even a kind of acronym which kind of suggests the sort of art that that young man - or woman - might be making, and it’s Maya - M.A.Y.A. Most Advanced, Yet Acceptable. (LAUGHTER)

Now despite the sort of laissez-faire attitude of the art world that anything goes, there are limits. There was a Chinese artist called Zhu Yu, who I think didn’t quite get it, but you know he thought shock was the real point of art and so he had himself photographed eating a stillborn baby. (SHOCK FROM AUDIENCE) And I think people looked at it and thought ooh, I think he’s gone a bit far. (LAUGHTER) But maybe he was kind of calling the avant-garde’s bluff and saying I’ll show you what shocking is! But maybe the photographs he took weren’t very good.

But my own personal experience of challenging the art world, I suppose was that pottery, which was the kind of form that I was using when I first came to its attention, was a bit naff. You know it was a milder rebellion if you like because pottery was seen as something that was kind of earnest, done by kind of folkies with dangly earrings, and I suppose they thought that craft people were like the kind of slightly pretentious next door neighbours of the art world.

So now here I stand, a fully paid up member of the establishment, giving the Reith Lectures.

But when I entered the art world, the word that was constantly coming up on people's lips was "post-modernism" because at that point in the early 80s, it was sort of established by that point that modernism with its succession of art movements had come to an end and we were now in a period where anything could go. And I felt cheated. I wanted to plant my revolutionary flag and sign up to a definite art movement that I knew you know we could go, "Wooh, yeah, you're the old people who made rusty metal sculptures. We're the new people who are making this sort of work." But it didn't really happen. I felt a bit cheated. I wanted to feel like Alan Jones did in the early 60s when he first saw a work by Lichtenstein, the American artist, and he saw this piece that was just a leg opening a pedal bin - it was in a show at the Tate Modern very recently - and he said it was like culture shock. He said it was amazingly liberating that this could be contemporary art. And I wanted that experience, I wanted that shock. I've never really had it.

So when I emerged into the art world, I felt a bit like one of those Japanese soldiers, you know, who'd been holed up in an island for sort of ten years and sort of stumbled out the jungle with my rifle you know ready for the fight, and it was all over and I had to be sort of talked down from it a bit really. (LAUGHTER)

But in many ways, I was labouring under a sort of misapprehension because art history never was this smooth succession of isms. If you think about Picasso, he started his career in the 1890s and he was still working up to his death in 1973. He practically outlived modernism and he probably had a little bit of a go at most of them as well. That's just one artist - I mean a massive, huge figure of course.

If you go to Tate Britain and see their re-hang of the parade of British art, you know very interestingly they hang the work completely chronologically, so that if a work is done in 1890 there's another work done in 1890 next to it, but that doesn't mean it's in the same style. So you have an Alma-Tadema - sort of high Victorian, marbly, nuded historical fantasy hung next to a Sickert, one of the first people to really use photography you know long before the pop artists.

So the only people really who still believe that there's this sort of succession of art

movements that cleanly move one into the other are these people I call certainty freaks. And if this 20<sup>th</sup> century sort of parade of modernism was ... in some ways called the Age of Manifestoes because all these art movements, often they've sort of nailed their manifesto to the door of the gallery and say we now want ... you know this is our art now and this is what it's going to be like. It's going to be all about dreams or it's all going to be about splodgy pliant.

So I was thinking you know what kind of manifesto would I put now for this new age we're in, and I was thinking what is the ism that we're working for now. And I suppose the real ism we're in now is *pluralism*. Anything kind of goes. And then there's another ism that crops up a lot in the art world now, which is *globalism*, because the art world now is a series of artworks all over the world, lots of different countries, lots of emerging world scenes. And of course one of the big, dominant, squatting, toad-like things over the whole art world is commercialism. That's a very powerful art movement that's going on. And of course there's always that good old favourite, that one that always has enormous power: nepotism. (LAUGHTER)

Now in many ways, all these revolutions that went on in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they were a storm in a fur-lined teacup because the art world is a very small village, you know. I mean Tom Wolfe in his book, he reckoned - *The Painted Word*, which he wrote in I think 1970 - he thought there were ten thousand people in the art world. Now there's probably quite a few more than that, but it's still pretty small. And when I joined the art world, it seemed like a little backwater you know that was very rarely visited. A little kayak would occasionally come up with a critic up it, but just by being involved in the art world you felt edgy because the art world itself was this amazingly rarified, difficult, dangerous place to be. And the rebelliousness wasn't just from the work or from the ideas that were floating about. It was about the lifestyle of the artist. (LAUGHTER)

Now Allan Kaprow, here's someone who is a genuine bona fide cutting edge sort of artist. In the 50s, he came up with the idea of 'The Happening', which is the kind of 60s New York version of like performance art. And so he was like a really groovy out there kind of guy in the 50s.

And in 1964, he wrote an essay called *The Artist as a Man in the World*, and he posited this probably quite annoying idea to many people living in cold water lofts in Soho at the time that artists are just like any other middle class skilled occupation: we want to have a house and kids and we go to meetings with our fellow artists just like any other group of specialised workers. We're not this sort of you know unusual thing. And in many ways maybe he was teasing, but it's an interesting thought.

But since the 60s what's happened is, of course, that everybody else has kind of become a bit of an artist themselves. We now have Bobos - bourgeois bohemians - so everybody has got a little bit of that artisty lifestyle in them now. We've accepted a lot of the things that were weird now are normal.

Virginia Nicholson, someone with great bohemian credentials because she's the niece of Virginia Woolf, full-on bohemian, she said recently "We're all bohemians now."

And if you think about it, all the things that were once seen as subversive and dangerous like tattoos and piercings and drugs and interracial sex, fetishism, all these things - they sort of crop up on *X Factor* now on a Saturday night on family viewing. (LAUGHTER) The one thing you won't see though: underarm hair. (LAUGHTER) The last truly dangerous thing.

(APPLAUSE)

And even the art world itself can be quite orthodox in some ways. I think one of the most rebellious acts done by an artist recently was by Tracey Emin. She supported the Tories. (LAUGHTER) And that shows you ... (LAUGHS) that you know it's not that difficult in some ways to be subversive even within art.

And the creative rebel - they like to think they're sticking it to the man, they're sticking it to the capitalist system, and you know they're really show... like one of

them Occupy protestors. But of course what they don't realise - by being all inventive and creative, they're actually playing into the capitalism's hands because the lifeblood of capitalism is new ideas. They need new stuff to sell! You know people are going to get bored of the old stuff. So lovely designers all sitting there and artists. Oh that's good, that'll get a new market.

I mean Karl Marx actually said ... "The restless nature of capitalism," he said. And the art world is a perfect sort of R&D department for capitalism. It's the perfect model for neo-liberalism when you think about the way it operates. Pioneers will come along to buy art and they're hoping that you know their investment will pay off because their taste will become a wider trend in society. It's just like any other investor. And there's no fixed measure of quality, so it's amazingly fluid. Just by them investing in it in many ways, they're already making it more likely to happen. So they're sort of gambling on the posterity of the object.

And the outrageous gestures of the past quite often become merchandise quite quickly. In 1960 Yves Klein, the French conceptual artist, did one of his most famous performances - which was outrageous at the time - called *Anthropometries*, where he had these nude models and he painted them with blue, his famous blue paint, and he printed them onto canvasses to make artworks. And this was quite a thing at the time. Now, if you go onto the interweb and you look up [loveisartkit.com](http://loveisartkit.com) (LAUGHTER), you can buy a kit which includes body paint and canvas and you, according to the strapline on the website, you can make art while you make love. (LAUGHTER) So radical art of the 60s has become a kind of messy play lifestyle accessory for the *Fifty Shades of Grey* generation. (LAUGHTER)

And some sort of die hard avant-gardists are quite upset about the way that these throwaway gestures that were so radical have become commoditised and precious. I mean serial sort of boundary trampler, Brian Eno, the musician, he was a bit upset with the way these radical works become sort of normalised, I suppose. So when he saw Duchamp's famous fountain, the urinal, which sort of kicked off the whole idea of anything can be art really - he saw it was on display in the Museum of Modern Art in New York - he rigged himself up this thing. He got a little bag of urine in his suit

and some plastic tubes coming out the bottom like that, and he sneaked up to the case that had a little slit in the side of it, he said. This was the last chance he thought to do this and he fed this tube through and he let the urine flow into the urinal. And when afterwards he was interviewed about it, he said, “Well a buzzword at the time,” he said, was “decommodification of art”, so he thought ... what he called his action was “re-commode-ification”. (LAUGHTER)

And whenever I hear artists moaning about the commodification of the art world and the way that art has just become this money generating thing, I always think of this great sketch by the comedian Bill Hicks where he talks about marketing and he says, “Anybody here from marketing or advertising?” And when they put their hands up, he goes, “You die! Kill yourself now! Suck on a tailpipe! You are the devil’s spawn! You spread evil in the world!” And then he voices out what their reaction might be and he goes, “Oh yeah, there’s that Bill. He’s going for that anti-marketing market. That’s a great market, that is.” And then he goes, “No, no, it’s not what I mean!” And then they go, “Oh now he’s going for the righteous indignation dollar. That’s a good dollar. They’re young, they’re hip. They’ve got a lot of free income.” (LAUGHTER)

So outrage - and it’s a perfect illustration of what happens - outrage has become domesticated. And of course many of these old avant-garde people, they sort of bemoan this because you know they remember the chilly old days when they were running around in the nude covered in offal in some freezing warehouse, and now the Tate Modern has a special place to do performance art. They call it “the tanks”. And someone, rather cuttingly I thought, described it as a petting zoo for performance artists. (LAUGHTER)

Keith Haring, the New York artist - sadly dead - he called this state of kind of giving in but gently, “subversive compliance.” And you think about the fact that you know Jackson Pollock famously urinated in the fireplace of one of his main collectors, Peggy Guggenheim, but he didn’t wee on the carpet. (LAUGHTER) And I often feel that I’m being wheeled out in many ways as a kind of you know bit of bohemian danger. I always feel like that dirty teddy you see sort of tied to the front of the radiator of a refuse truck, you know - the little mascot. (LAUGHTER/APPLAUSE)

I mean the BBC in asking me to give these lectures, they're probably hoping that I'll go off on one and swear a lot. But of course I know that the Radio Four audience is pretty un-shockable - just like the art world, you know. In fact the worst that you'll get out of me today probably is a bit of hyperbole and a lot of cynicism because detached irony - this is a sad moment - detached irony has become the kind of default mode of our time in the art world. And you know I think it can be problematic.

And here's a quote from the musician Tracey Thorn of *Everything but the Girl*. I think it's great. It really describes the problem of irony. She says, "It is difficult for people in the arts to be entirely sincere about things without looking like they have not thought about it properly."

The problem with irony is that it assumes the position of being the end result, from having looked at it from both sides and have a very sophisticated take on everything. So the danger of eschewing irony is that you look as though you've not thought hard enough about it and that you're being a bit simplistic. You see what I mean? That is the kind of double bind you get yourself in when you know everything is ironic ... anymore.

Me, I have to sort of protect myself against this because when I'm out in the evening and I'm with my mates and I'm being terribly cynical and ironic; but when I want to look at art, I want to have a sincere one to one experience with it because I am a serious artist. I've dedicated my life to it. So I go to exhibitions in the morning on my own when I can go, hm, and you know maybe have a little bit of a moment.

(LAUGHTER) I have to protect my tender parts from that wicked irony.

And perhaps the most shocking tactic that's left to artists these days is sincerity.

(LAUGHTER) I mean that's why a lot of artists I think like politics - because you know it is real, it's serious, and they want to borrow that power because you know that's something that we're not going to laugh at because these are big, serious issues. And the arguments that you see now in bars between artists, they're not going to be abstract expressionist versus surrealists or they're not going to be video installationists versus kind of giant photo peddlers. No, no, no. They're going to be

between worthy activists and ironic market sell-outs. (LAUGHTER)

And this idea of being sincere, real, being realness, having integrity, sincerity, authenticity - these are qualities that artists need, you know, to make their work; and they should protect them.

But these qualities, they are very, very valuable in the marketplace. I mean just on the plane here ... I have this crisp packet. On the plane here, they handed out this packet of crisps. *Real* crisps. TM. (LAUGHTER) I'd like to see what unreal crisps are like.

But realness is a thing, you know that has a high currency. And this idea, you know the currency of bohemian-ness, lefty, arty-fartiness - that has a high currency, especially in the urban ecology. And if you think of artists, they're like the shock troops of gentrification. We march in. We're the first people to go we like this old warehouse, yeah we need a cheap studio. You know so that's what happens - artists move into the cheap housing and the cheap spaces and they make them ... you know they do their work and they're quite cool and a little bit of a buzz starts up. And then maybe a little café opens up and people start saying, "Ooh, that's kind of interesting, that area where those artists hang out. I think I'm going to go down there."

(LAUGHTER) And people start noticing, you know, and maybe some designers open up and a little boutique. You know and suddenly, before you know it, the dead hand of the developer is noticing it. And before you know it, the designers move in and that's it. - bang goes the area. (LAUGHTER)

And I've watched you know this fairy dust of cool, marketised bohemia drift down over various boroughs of London. I should think there's a couple of dozen of them I've seen it happen to over the thirty years. And of course now, it's happening to Derry. (LAUGHTER) Be careful what you wish for.

I think developers should pay artists to live somewhere for ten years, free - pay them - because we are these amazing ... (APPLAUSE/GRAYSON PERRY LAUGHS) ... because we have this very precious commodity. I mean I'm just moving studios from Walthamstow in East London, and now Walthamstow is becoming Awesomestow!

(LAUGHTER) And you always know when the gentrification process is going into its death spiral when flats with wood on the outside start cropping up (LAUGHTER) because wood is one of the symbols of authenticity. And men have beards. That's the other one. Beards are authentic. (LAUGHTER)

Now this process of kind of gentrification can have some interesting versions. There's a guy in Brazil called Bernardo Paz - very, very wealthy mining magnate, zillions of pounds and dollars and whatever they have over there - and he set up this amazing sculpture park called Inhotim - In the Jungle. Five thousand acres and he's asked artists to put big works that wouldn't necessarily fit in other sorts of institutions in this amazing park in the jungle. And he's now building hotels, so rich tourists and guests can come and see this thing. And I thought this is gentrification on steroids, this is. He's avoided that awkward urban decay hipster part of the cycle. He's gone straight from jungle to gentrification. (LAUGHTER) I thought that's smart.

And I thought another place where we find the cutting edge, and innovation of course, is technology. You know we're obsessed with it nowadays and it often ushers in revolution. If you go back to 1841, John G Rand working for Winsor and Newton, he invented the paint tube. Now it's revolutionary because until then you had to laboriously grind your paints with oil in your studio. Suddenly you were mobile - you could put your paint tubes in your bag and go off and paint anywhere. Dada! You know painting plan air, you know, and the whole thing - that was a revolution.

Of course photography as well at that time, that also kickstarted the whole modernist self-consciousness of art. What is art now that photography can do it?

And me as a poster boy of craft, you know who somehow I've got a reputation that I sit there all day making these works of art. You know I use digital. It's now the default option of many artists. We live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I use Photoshop. My tapestries are woven on a computer controlled loom and I'm not alone in this now.

But in the past artists were the real innovators of technology. You know they often had quite prophetic interventions. If you go back to 1980 - that's a long time ago in

computer land - there were two artists called Kit Galloway and Sherrie Rabinowitz and they set up a work called *Hole in Space* in 1980. And what they did, they set up a video screen in Lincoln Centre in New York and they set up another video screen in Century City in Los Angeles with two cameras, and they linked them by satellite so that people could go wow! And when you saw the crowd ... If you put 'hole in space' into YouTube, you'll see the people there going "Oh wow, where are you? Oh my god, talking to someone on ..." and they're incredibly enthusiastic about it, but what they were witnessing was the grandmother of Skype. (LAUGHTER)

Technology as well now, it has an opposite effect in a way because technology is so amazingly quick and brilliant that it changes the way we look at art, certain sorts of art. Like if I go to a Gilbert and George exhibition now and I see their amazingly sort of handcrafted, very complicated photo pieces, I think ooh, we've got Photoshop now.

Even somebody like Dan Flavin, the American artist who made works using light and fluorescent tubes that he just bought from the hardware store, they have to hand-make some of those tubes now. Probably got Murano glassblowers carefully blowing them. (LAUGHTER)

So art now really follows, chases technology rather than leads it - you know the innovation. So technology in many ways is more cutting edge than art. I mean there are artists that work digitally in a very interesting way. Two artists, British artists - John Thomson and Alison Craighead - very interesting. They do thought-provoking, lyrical, hilarious often interventions with the kind of flow of information that is pouring around the web, but they can't compete in many ways with the kind of majesty of Google Earth or the kind of buzz and huge, humungous gossip of Twitter.

But one thing the web might do for art, which is maybe a slightly frightening prospect, is that it might fulfil the artist Joseph Beuys' prophecy that anybody could be an artist. That's quite a frightening, horrific thought really because we could drown in a sea of mediocrity.

But in some ways, this idea that anybody can be an artist now is an endorsement of

the whole approach of an artist. You know we live in an age now of creative capital and artists are perhaps the people best qualified almost to use that. You know art has exploded and the skills that a person learns at art school, they're incredibly useful in the modern creative economy. And art will change, but there will always be artists, but perhaps the culture that changes our lives and shocks us will not necessarily be self-contained within the contemporary art world.

Probably the really revolutionary cutting edge culture that's happening now is probably in some South Korean teenager's bedroom on YouTube or is in a brainstorming session in some games company in California. Because if Michelangelo was around today, he wouldn't be painting ceilings. He'd be making CGI movies or 3D printing.

So you know I'm coming to an end now and I'm thinking there is no avant-garde anymore. There's just multiple sites all over the world in different levels, different places, different media of experimentation; and we live in a kind of globalised, pluralistic art world with a lot of money sloshing around it and it's as varied as we are. Most of it is rubbish, but that was ever thus, but some of it is absolutely amazing.

But we are at the end state of art - maybe - and I'd like to end on a positive note and to quote Arthur C. Danto, philosopher of art. And he said, "If the age of manifestoes had a political parallel in ethnic cleansing, then in the age of pluralism we have a model of tolerant multi-culturalism." And wouldn't it be wonderful to believe that the pluralistic art world of the historical present was a harbinger for a political situation of things to come? Yeah, I still struggle with sincerity a bit. (LAUGHTER)

And in my final lecture anyway, I want to talk about becoming, growing and ageing as an artist. But thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

**SUE LAWLEY:** Many thanks indeed, Grayson. We shall see you as the dirty teddy bear on the front of the dustman's truck forever more. (GRAYSON PERRY)

LAUGHS) Now let me invite our audience here in Derry, in Northern Ireland, to quiz you on the role of art in society. Do you agree we've reached the final state of art? Let's go to our first questioner over there and we've got one on standby here, haven't we?

**HEENAN:** Thank you for a wonderful lecture. Professor Deirdre Heenan, Provost of University of Ulster, Magee campus. And I want to ask a very straightforward question: in this era of the internet when we are un-shockable, what then is the role of the artist?

**GRAYSON PERRY:** In many ways, the great thing about being an artist is you make your own career and so you choose what you want to be. It might be to make money. It might be to make a political point. It might be to be a challenging philosopher. You know I think there's a myriad of roles for the artist, so to say that there's just one role, I think it would be reductive of me to say that.

**SUE LAWLEY:** What do you think the role of the artist should be?

**DEIRDRE HEENAN:** I suppose the issue is there *is* no single role for the artist anymore in terms of shock factor.

**GRAYSON PERRY:** No, I think it was dangerous when art became synonymous with shock, which it did for a while in the sort of 1990s. There was so much art that was seen as shocking that it became what people looked for when they went to art, when in fact you know art can be lots of different things. It can be ... You know what - between you and me, it can be beautiful. (LAUGHS/APPLAUSE)

**SUE LAWLEY:** I mean you know you said that Michelangelo would be making CGI movies were he around now. Well why wouldn't he just be painting something beautiful or sculpting something beautiful?

**GRAYSON PERRY:** He could make a beautiful CGI movie. (LAUGHTER)

**SUE LAWLEY:** Is that art?

**GRAYSON PERRY:** If he made it as art.

**SUE LAWLEY:** Isn't it a movie?

**GRAYSON PERRY:** It would make more money if he did it as a movie.

(LAUGHTER)

**SUE LAWLEY:** What shocked you back away then when Robert Hughes was talking about the shock of the new? What shocked you?

**GRAYSON PERRY:** I don't know if I've ever been really shocked. I mean I go back to the time I suppose when I first saw the work ... I've talked about this before, but the work of say someone like Jeff Koons or, to a certain extent, Damien Hirst. I was sort of ... I was kind of energised when I saw their work, but I was also quite sort of shocked by the kind of not cynicism but there's a kind of detached irony - really kind of like ooh that's dark.

**McCARTHY:** Hi Grayson, I'm Shona McCarthy, the Chief Executive of the Culture Company delivering the City of Culture project here in the city. And this year, I think most of us would agree, has been an incredible year for Derry - in investment in the arts and in artists. What advice would you give to a city to ensure that it avoids that gentrification process across a whole city in a City of Culture year? What can we do to ensure that hasn't just been a one-off?

**GRAYSON PERRY:** I think there's quite an easy recipe actually and that is to make available cheap places for creative people to live and work. (APPLAUSE/CHEERS)

**SUE LAWLEY:** Okay.

**COLLINS:** My name is Bob Collins. I chair the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

And sometimes it's difficult to avoid the impression that we live in a time where things are appreciated not for their intrinsic worth, but for some instrumental value that they have in achieving some other objective; and when you spoke about creative economy, the danger always is that the focus is on the economics rather than the creativity. Do you have a sense of what it is or how best it is to articulate the real value that art has and the arts have in themselves as expressions of the essential dignity of human beings?

**GRAYSON PERRY:** Yeah, it's quite a bugbear the creative economy as a word, and you know I think that one of the delicious ironies of the whole situation is often the creative people who make the most money are the ones that never really worried about it in the first place. You know because if you focus on making money ... I mean there are some artists - I won't necessarily name them here - who have focused on making money and that's part of their shtick.

**SUE LAWLEY:** Oh do name them.

**GRAYSON PERRY:** Well I mean famously Andy Warhol. You know he said, "You know art is great business, it's the best business of all" or something like that. In a way there's a justice to be had economically in that often the most ... artists who dedicate themselves to the core spirit of their art often are the ones that end up making the load of money. And ...

**SUE LAWLEY:** Banksy is saying exactly that at the moment, isn't he? He's actually saying the way to be a successful artist is simply not to pursue success, just dedicate your life to your art.

**GRAYSON PERRY:** Yeah. And so I think the trouble is sometimes with some of the more tender aspects of culture, it's like you have to look at them out the corner of your eye. Like when I'm talking ... You know I've got a list of banned words, for instance, which are cool, profound, eclectic ...

**SUE LAWLEY:** Passionate?

**GRAYSON PERRY:** Passionate. You know I would never ever talk about myself as being any of those. Of course I am (LAUGHTER) but I would never use them directly because they evaporate under the spotlight of examination so easily. So to say oh you've got to do this. When I hear that brochure speak pouring out of civic leaders, you know like we've got ... you know "We are passionate about creativity in this city" and blah-blah-blah, I sort of want to sometimes go yeah, just let it happen, just let it happen. Give them the money and let it happen.

**SUE LAWLEY:** (LAUGHS) Okay, we're going towards an end now, but I've got a couple of questions here and here. So let's go to this one first. Yeah?

**CORR-McNICHOLL:** My name's Bronagh Corr-McNicholl and I work as an artist in the city. And I also work with Arts Care - we do a lot of work within the health sector - and I'd be interested on your thoughts on the health benefits of art and the process of actually creating art rather than just necessarily being an end product.

**GRAYSON PERRY:** Art does have a very powerful thing that it can offer you and that is you know when you get involved in making something, you kind of forget yourself for a moment as well; and you also, in little ways you are affecting the world. You know if you feel powerless and depressed or something, if you're making something you are in a small way changing the world. You do have that power, you do have that opportunity. And also you know art say in places like prisons and hospitals, you know it gives people a way who can't necessarily talk about their feelings to work out their subconscious processes sometimes without them really realising what they're doing, and to get it out of their system. And if they've got strong emotions sort of flooding about, then I think that you know if they find it hard to talk about, then that's a great way to do that. That's what I do.

**SUE LAWLEY:** Okay, we're coming here.

**ROBERT MARTIN:** Hi, Robert Martin, R-Space Gallery, Lisburn. When you die - as a maker of objects, what objects would you take with you?

**GRAYSON PERRY:** In my coffin?

**ROBERT MARTIN:** In your coffin?

**GRAYSON PERRY:** Oh my teddy bear. (LAUGHTER/APPLAUSE) That would be about it really. I mean you know I'm an atheist pretty much, so you know when I die, I'm not that worried about what happens after that moment. You know I'm not worried about posterity particularly. The people who've bought my work are worried about posterity, *deeply* - but, me, I'm not worried about it. They can put it all in a skip the day after the funeral.

**SUE LAWLEY:** They'd be very pleased when you're in your coffin, the people who own your work, because it'll be worth twice as much because you'll stop making it.

**GRAYSON PERRY:** Yeah, the supply will be finished.

**SUE LAWLEY:** The last lecture is called *I Found Myself in the Art World* - and indeed you did, didn't you, in all kinds of ways, which we shall hear about next week. But we have to finish here in Derry now. We're back in London for that last lecture. But right now, many thanks indeed to a terrific audience in Derry and of course to our Reith Lecturer 2013: Grayson Perry.

(APPLAUSE/CHEERS)

**GRAYSON PERRY:** (LAUGHS) How lovely. Thank you very much.

**SUE LAWLEY:** Well our radio audience should know that you just got a hell of a standing ovation. Fantastic!

**GRAYSON PERRY:** I'm very touched, I'm really touched. I'm quite emotional.

**SUE LAWLEY:** Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Derry.

(APPLAUSE)