

## New works by Grayson Perry, a Caravaggio 'first' and a major Winston Churchill retrospective

### The Wallace Collection announces its 2025/26 programme

#### Grayson Perry: Delusions of Grandeur

28 March - 26 October 2025



Sir Grayson Perry (b.1960) marks his 65th birthday by creating and curating a new exhibition at the Wallace Collection, a museum that has inspired him throughout his life.

The Collection's famous *Portrait of Madame de Pompadour* (1759) by François Boucher (1703-1770) has long fascinated Perry, as have a great many other pieces in the London museum including its superb group of English miniatures and an early 18th-century bronze of Mezzetin, soulfully strumming his guitar.

For this exhibition, Perry has created a fictional persona, Shirley Smith, who wakes up in Hertford House after a mental health crisis and believes herself to be the rightful heir to such treasures – and indeed, the entire Wallace Collection.

Through this persona, a series of new artworks have been made – inspired and influenced by those in the Collection – intended to decorate an imagined family home, complete with ancestral portraits, old masters and priceless antiques. As such, *Delusions of Grandeur* presents this new fantasy world alongside existing items Perry has selected from the Collection. The exhibition is redolent with a variety of themes, including the meaning of home and how it creates a sense of

safety, the gendering of decoration, and perceived perfection versus authenticity. Through the backstory of Shirley Smith, covering episodes of mental health and trauma, the exhibition inherently demonstrates the transformative and healing nature of art.

*Delusions of Grandeur* will present Perry's new works in a variety of media; ceramics, sculpture, textile and painting, which themselves complement the diversity and variety of objects found within the Wallace Collection itself.

This landmark birthday exhibition will also be a meditation and introspection for Perry. At 65, is he now at the height of his powers? What does it mean to move from an 'outsider' artist to a national treasure, and how does that influence his work? What is the future of craftsmanship in the age of digital technology, and what will his legacy be?

## Caravaggio's Cupid

26 November 2025 – 12 April 2026



For art lovers the world over, the merest mention of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610) is enough to quicken the pulse. So, news that one of the Baroque master's greatest paintings is coming to London next year will surely create much excitement.

Forming the central piece in a free display, Caravaggio's celebrated *Victorious Cupid* (1601-02) is a major loan from the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin. It is the first time the work has ever been publicly seen in the UK.

Suggesting the theme of the *paragone*, or comparison, a popular debate during the Italian Renaissance in which painting and sculpture were each championed as a superior art form over the other, the Caravaggio will be shown with the Wallace Collection's own statue on the same theme, *Love Triumphant* after an 18th century original by Jean-Pierre Tassaert.

Caravaggio's painting, also known as *Amor Vincit Omnia*, shows Cupid, the Roman god of desire, in an animated pose while wearing dark eagle wings and holding two arrows. On the ground are several objects, such as musical instruments, pieces of armour and geometrical tools, which refer to a phrase in one of Virgil's *Eclogues*: *Omnia Vincit Amor et nos cedamus amori* ('Love conquers all; let us all yield to love').

The music manuscript on the floor shows a large V in the margin of the right-hand page. Scholars believe this acknowledges Marchese Vincenzo Giustiniani (1564-1537), who commissioned the painting. Giustiniani was a scion of a Genoese banking family and the embodiment of a Renaissance Man; he had trained as an architect and was well-travelled, alongside being an elegant essayist and an accomplished musician.

Giustiniani is said to have prized *Victorious Cupid* above all other works in his collection, of which there were twelve other paintings by Caravaggio. At the time, this was the largest collection of the artist's work ever assembled and for this reason, a section of the show looks at the relationship between artist and patron.



## Winston Churchill: The Painter

29 May - 29 November 2026



Universally renowned as an inspirational statesman, writer, orator and the man who led Britain to victory in the Second World War (1939-45), what may be less well known about Winston Churchill (1874-1965), was that he was also an enthusiastic amateur painter.

In this major retrospective and first exhibition of Churchill's creative oeuvre here in the UK since his death, the Wallace Collection will bring together more than 50 paintings that represent the very best of the former Prime Minister's output. Half of the loans are coming from private collections and have rarely, if ever, been seen before in public. The exhibition will also showcase a large group of works on loan from Chartwell, Churchill's family home for over forty years of his life and now managed by the National Trust, a major lender to the exhibition.

The relationship between the Wallace Collection and Churchill dates back to the Second World War when, in 1942 the museum hosted the *Artists Aid Russia* exhibition, which was staged to raise funds for his wife, Clementine Churchill's *Aid to Russia* Fund.

Following a chronological approach, *Winston Churchill: The Painter* will span his activity as an artist from his first attempts during the First World War (1914-18) through to the 1960s, shortly before his death.

Churchill's own paintings will be complemented by a small group of loans of works by his artistic mentors and friends, such as Sir John Lavery (1856-1941) and Sir William Nicholson (1872-1949), which will help visitors to explore his artistic development.

Throughout the show, Churchill's paintings will be interspersed with photographs and quotes taken from his own correspondence and writing on art, *Painting as a Pastime* (1921/2).

The Wallace Collection is grateful for the support of the Churchill family and Churchill Heritage Ltd in the development of this exhibition.

Dr Xavier Bray, Director of the Wallace Collection says: “Our exhibition programme over the next two years spans more than 400 years of art history – from Caravaggio’s provocative portrait of Cupid to Winston Churchill’s impressionistic landscapes and Grayson Perry’s highly original creations – but all of the works on show open new windows on the world, which give us new perspectives and challenge us to think more deeply about our capacity for creativity.”

## **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

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Grayson Perry, Detail from a new work for *Grayson Perry: Delusions of Grandeur*, 2025 © Grayson Perry, Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro

Caravaggio (Michelangelo Merisi), *Cupid as Victor*, 1601/02. Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin / Image by Google; Public Domain Mark 1.0.

Sir Winston Churchill painting in Belgium, September 1946 © Churchill Archives Centre, CSCT 5-6-160 (colourised).

### **About the Wallace Collection**

As one of Britain’s preeminent cultural institutions, the **Wallace Collection** is home to one of the most significant ensembles of fine and decorative arts in the world. Highlights include oil paintings from the 14th to the late 19th centuries by artists such as Titian, Velázquez, Rubens and Van Dyck; princely arms and armour; and one of the finest collections of 18th-century French paintings and decorative arts. Visitors can also enjoy superb medieval and Renaissance objects, including Limoges enamel, maiolica, glass and bronzes. Displayed at Hertford House, former home to Sir Richard and Lady Wallace, this outstanding collection is displayed in a manner designed to evoke the lives and tastes of its founders, creating a special ambiance that remains an essential part of its charm.

[www.wallacecollection.org](http://www.wallacecollection.org)

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### **FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES**

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