



# BOULEVARD

## GRADES 6-12

### Discussion and Activity Ideas

- Ask pupils to begin a sentence with 'I can see...' to encourage close observation of different aspects of the works. Challenge pupils to keep discovering more and more detail.
- Ask pupils to begin a sentence with 'I feel...' to encourage the expression and sharing of their emotional responses to the works.
- Ask pupils to begin a sentence with 'I think...' to encourage the expression and sharing of their opinions and ideas about the works, using their imagination to answer why and how they were made.
- Ask pupils to begin a sentence with 'I wonder...' to encourage pupils to ask questions about the works, be curious, and inspire them to conduct further research. Question words may also be used, such as 'How...', 'Why...', 'When...', 'Where...', 'Who...', and 'What...'
- Ask pupils to respond to the objects and environments in the artworks.
- What interests or appeals to you? Discuss and share thoughts as a group, and find out how different artworks mean different things to different people.
- What words would you use to describe the world depicted in the artwork chosen?
- Which world depicted in the artworks would you like to inhabit and why? What would you enjoy and not enjoy about living there?
- How do artists depict the real world in their work? Does this help us understand the world around us? Discuss where Perry is exaggerating, distorting, or imagining the real world.

### Discussion and Activity Ideas for Your Visit in the VR Experience: Textiles

- What textiles can you see around you? (Boulevard has included 3 in its experience.) Are they woven? What other methods can be used to construct textiles?
- Research the history of tapestry in different periods and cultures. Find out what the function of tapestry was, what images were used, who made them, and what processes they used.

- Using squared paper, design your own tapestry by filling in blocks of color. Take this a step further and cut a piece of embroidery canvas to the same size as your design and cross-stitch the design.
- Using plastic or wire mesh, design and create your own tapestry experimenting with different found materials to weave with, such as plastic bags, paper, or twigs.
- Experiment with combining different colored threads to create new colors like Perry does for his tapestries. Using watercolor, create an image and try to match the colors with different thread combinations.

### Discussion and Activity Ideas for Your Visit in the VR Experience: Ceramics

- Research the history of pottery in different periods and cultures (examples could include the extensive traditions in Greece, China, Japan, and North Africa). What kind of ceramics were used and what are the differences between stoneware, earthenware, and porcelain?
- Can you identify the type of ceramic, type of clay, and decorative technique used to create the pots in the exhibition?
- Using the handbuilding technique like Grayson Perry, create your own pot. Experiment with different sizes and designs of pot, thickness of coil, and shape so it does not fall over.
- Using the Sgraffito method, try scratching a pattern, text, or drawing into a piece of clay.

### Activities

1. Discussion and Activity Ideas for *Walthamstow Tapestry, 2009*

Curriculum Links: art, design, technology, geography, literacy, history

Key Words: culture, community, industry, identity, symbols

In the *Walthamstow Tapestry*, Grayson Perry shows a journey of life seen through shopping.

- Can you describe, draw, or collage your journey to school? How do you get there? What do you see on your way? How do you feel on your journey?
- Can you describe, draw, or collage your perfect journey to school? What mode of transport would you use? Which places would you see on your way?
- Discuss what kind of place you think the tapestry depicts. What issues characterize the area, and what changes have taken place and why. You may want to think about the focus on shops in the area or changes in modes of transport.

- Discuss what your local area is famous for. What are its particular associations? What major changes have taken place in the area's history? What people or groups is this area known for? What might be included in a tapestry depicting your local area?
  - In groups, research and make a collaborative textile piece depicting and celebrating your local area. This could include yourselves, landmarks, buildings, people, attractions, or something of the local history.
  - Perry references 4 elements that inspired him to create the *Walthamstow Tapestry*. Research and identify the similarities and differences between his tapestry and:
    - The Bayeux Tapestry
    - Picasso's *Guernica*
    - William Morris designs
    - Sumatran Batiks
2. Discussion and Activity Ideas for *Ultimate Consumer Durable*, 2005 and *Walthamstow Tapestry*, 2009

Curriculum Links: art, design, technology, geography, literacy, history

Key Words: consumerism, brands, identity, symbols

Grayson Perry has commented that *Ultimate Consumer Durable* might appear at first glance "like a storage jar that would have held spices, the sort of thing that once were traded there [Venice]," but laments, in the same breath, "now international brands that you can buy everywhere are all that's sold in Venice." While conceiving this object, Perry explains that he went through a book of traditional animal motifs from different periods and cultures and assigned each creature an international brand. Accordingly, there's an Aztec Sony and a medieval Chanel. The artist has made his own name through ceramics; they have become his own ultimate consumer durable brand. So in a way, Grayson Perry is acknowledging that he is a brand as well.

- Looking at *Ultimate Consumer Durable*, 2005, and the *Walthamstow Tapestry*, 2009, discuss which shops/brand names featured in the works are familiar and what they mean to you.
- What images are they associated with, and why do you think Perry chose to represent the name with that image? For example, in the *Walthamstow Tapestry* why is the BBC (a TV channel in England known for its serious news reports and cultural programs) depicted as an old woman with a shopping bag and a walking stick? And why is Sony represented as Aztec in *Ultimate Consumer Durable*?

- Can you choose a shop/brand name from the work and design an image to represent it? For example, what would Disney/Nike/McDonalds be like if it was a person? What would it look like? What would it be wearing? What would it be doing?
- An animal? Like the animals found on *Ultimate Consumer Durable*, would it be a real or an imaginary animal?
- A building? What would it look like? What would it be made from? What would be inside it? What would it be for?
- A plate of food? What food would you include? What would it taste like? What would it smell like?
- Research the motifs and symbols of historical/ancient cultures like the Aztecs, and find out why they were used and what they meant. Can you redesign the motifs for our current culture?

\* Optional Exercise: Compare either Grayson Perry's *Ultimate Consumer Durable* or his *Walthamstow Tapestry* to Andy Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Cans*, 1962 (at the Museum of Modern Art, New York)-Consider material, process, format, and respective messages about consumerism in the U.S. and England (during the time periods in which they were made).

### 3. Discussion and Activity Ideas for *Comfort Blanket*, 2014

Curriculum Links: art, design, technology, geography, literacy, history

Key Words: consumerism, brands, identity, symbols

This 3-part tapestry includes symbols of British culture from the historic Magna Carta to more contemporary cultural elements, such as wellies (a particular kind of rain boots), fish and chips, the £10 note with a medallion in the center showing Queen Elizabeth's face, and references to famous people like rockstar David Bowie.

Discuss symbols of contemporary U.S. society, as well as from American history beginning with the time of America's break with England in 1776. Do students share similar ideas about what represents American culture? Discuss what symbols might make us feel comfortable (as in Perry's title "Comfort Blanket"), united, or fierce. Is it hard for America to reflect the many cultures and peoples that make it up?

Have students design their own horizontal tapestry (on paper) in 3 parts-representing aspects of American life from iconic food and clothing to places, institutions, and symbols of culture, history, and politics.

Have students design the front of a new American \$10 dollar bill. What would it look like? What symbols would it include? What figure from history or contemporary culture would be featured on it? Ask students to explain their choices.

Have them research the final four historic women who were considered to replace Andrew Jackson on the American \$20 bill: Harriet Tubman (ultimately selected), Eleanor Roosevelt, Rosa Parks, and Wilma Mankiller. Have students discuss why many people feel this is relevant for today's society. This can take the form of a debate, in which students argue for one of the candidates considered, or propose their own suggestion.

*If students live in/come from a country other than the U.S., they can complete any of the exercises above based upon their own culture and currency.*