

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

*We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's the turn of artist Grayson Perry*

**The prized possession you value above all others...** My teddy bear Alan Measles. He was named after a boy who lived next door and because I got measles when I was three.

**The biggest regret you wish you could amend...** Giving up sport in my teens. I won a 400m race when I was 16 and my stepdad just said, 'It's time you did something with your body and not your mind.' I immediately gave up to kick against him. These days I love cycling.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** The jokes I make after my fifth drink! I can be abrasive and I regret it in the morning.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day...** I'd eavesdrop on politicians in Downing Street to hear what they really say when they're with people they trust.

**The person who has influenced you most...** My wife Philippa. We've been together for 30 years and married for 25. She's a psychotherapist and has influenced my art and helped me understand myself.

Right: Grayson's wife Philippa. Above right: his old teddy bear Alan Measles. Far right: the Basilica of St Francis of Assisi in Assisi, Italy



**The film you can watch time and time again...** The Great Beauty is an Italian drama from 2013 about an ageing male. It's poetic, beautiful and clever.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** Philip Larkin: Collected Poems. Larkin was curmudgeonly and quite unpalatable, but also extremely funny.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** Drivers who are addicted to their sat-navs and never look properly or indicate.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** I was obsessed with World War II pilots when I was young, so Robert Stanford Tuck, a Spitfire ace, would be a fascinating study in stiff-upper-lip masculinity.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** To make meaning – in my work and relationships. It's the job of humans to give the meaninglessness of existence some kind of definition.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** Human happiness is based on good relationships, so learn how to have them.



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**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** Customising motorbikes is my biggest fascination beyond art. I've ridden them since I was a teenager and I'm currently having my old Harley-Davidson customised. I love watching the Biker Build-Off TV show.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** My cartoon sketch books from my early teens – a time when my subconscious first started leaking out in art. They went missing during a house move.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** It jars with me that people think Claire is my 'alter ego' when I wear women's clothing. I only came up with that name when I joined a transvestite club in 1979 because they insisted on an identity. I like wearing dresses but I'm not pretending to be anyone else. It's just me in a dress.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I'd wipe out some irredeemably bad men, starting with a few dictators.

**The poem that touches your soul...** The Whitsun Weddings by Larkin is a beautiful metaphor for life.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** My dad leaving home when I was four because my mum had an affair with the milkman set in course who I became.

**The song that means most to you...** I'd Rather Ride Around With You by Reba McEntire sums up me and Phil and the way we prioritise our relationship.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...** I'd start with breakfast with Phil and our daughter Florence, 25, on a terrace in the south of France looking over the Mediterranean. Then I'd go cycling with my best buddies Eric and Johnny. We'd do 30 miles and climb 4,000ft in the Moab region of Utah. Lunch would be in a beautiful hilltop town in Tuscany. I'd have a cold beer, salad and a large bowl of pasta. Afterwards I'd slip on a sexy minidress and a straw hat and visit Assisi in Umbria. I'd stroll around the streets then

look at the Giotto frescoes in the Basilica of St Francis of Assisi. Dinner would be in Kanazawa, Japan, with Phil and friends. We'd have tempura starters in a bar, then go to a top restaurant for a 12-course meal. I'd end the night cycling around central London while tipsy. You see a different side to the city.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** When I won the Turner Prize in 2003 I was overwhelmed and shocked by the media interest, but winning my first BAFTA in 2013 for my documentary series All In The Best Possible Taste was delightful. I thought, 'People will have to take me seriously now!'

**The saddest time that shook your world...** Having therapy in my late 30s was tough. Decades of pent-up stuff came out, so there was a lot of crying.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** I'd like to take part in the Venice Biennale art exhibition.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** You've got to give life meaning.

**The order of service at your funeral...** It doesn't worry me, I won't be there. Whatever my family want is OK.

**The way you want to be remembered...** Funny and wise, that'll do.

**The Plug...** Grayson Perry presents The Most Popular Art Exhibition Ever! at the Serpentine Gallery, 8 June-10 September. Visit [serpentinegalleries.org](http://serpentinegalleries.org). Grayson Perry: Divided Britain begins on Tuesday at 9pm on Channel 4. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PS...

*Gal Gadot is Wonder Woman, in cinemas Thursday. Ruby Wax's show Frazzled opens at the Leicester Square Theatre on Tuesday. And Pink Floyd's Roger Waters is releasing a new album, Is This The Life We Really Want? on Friday*



**NEXT WEEK**

● Girls Aloud's Kimberley Walsh on her TV debut in Disney's hit teen drama The Lodge ● Gino D'Acampo's healthy Italian meals that won't break the bank ● Plus Britain's best TV listings