

Grayson Perry: The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman

The marketing challenge

Grayson Perry: The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman was a charging temporary exhibition held at the British Museum, London from October 2011 to February 2012. Turner Prize-winning artist Grayson Perry curated an installation of his work alongside objects made by unknown men and women throughout history from the British Museum's collection. In mounting the exhibition the British Museum sought to attract a new audience to the Museum, and to change perceptions of the British Museum as a place for contemporary artworks.

The Marketing Department at the British Museum quickly identified that *Grayson Perry: The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman* required a significant departure from their usual approach. The British Museum recognised that the organisation's traditional marketing strategies, successful as they are, were simply not going to work for the target audience.

A new approach to marketing was required if the exhibition was to meet its visitor targets.

The British Museum and Morris Hargreaves McIntyre worked together at an early stage of planning to carry out research to inform the development of the British Museum's marketing campaign aimed at attracting a new audience for contemporary art to the Museum.

Using Culture Segments, an innovative sector-specific segmentation system for arts and culture organisations devised by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre in consultation with key sector organisations, including the British Museum, three target segments for the exhibition were identified. Formative research was carried out by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre to test the exhibition with each of the three target segments.

Using the findings, the British Museum developed and ran a differentiated campaign aimed at attracting visitors from the target segments.

The results surpassed all expectations.

Cover photo: Grayson Perry, The Rosetta Vase, 2011. Courtesy the Artist and Victoria Miro Gallery, London. © Grayson Perry.

Marketing objectives

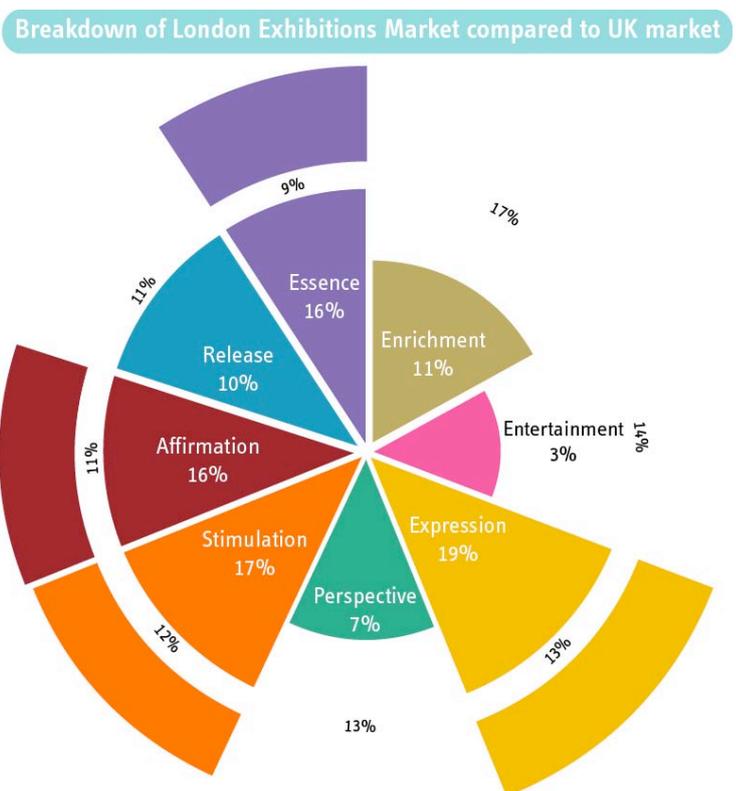
- Drive maximum exhibition ticket sales (target 60,000) and engagement with related events from audiences in London and the South East
- Drive secondary spend (membership, merchandise sales and catering opportunities)
- Entice visitors to visit the British Museum's permanent galleries and collection online
- Position the British Museum as a venue for contemporary art and as an on-going source of inspiration
- Grow the British Museum's social media profile

Researching the market

Morris Hargreaves McIntyre undertook analysis of their Audience Atlas UK dataset, a nationally representative survey of adults in the market for art, culture and leisure activities and events, to map the London temporary exhibitions market.

The exhibition proposition, themes, title, creative, ticket pricing and events were then tested through an online panel and focus groups using Culture Segments, the innovative segmentation system that Morris Hargreaves McIntyre and the British Museum had worked in collaboration to develop. Three primary segments were identified for the exhibition, each responding to different key messages.

This was followed by a cross-departmental workshop with Morris Hargreaves McIntyre and the British Museum to ensure that every element of the campaign was informed by the findings and targeted the segments.

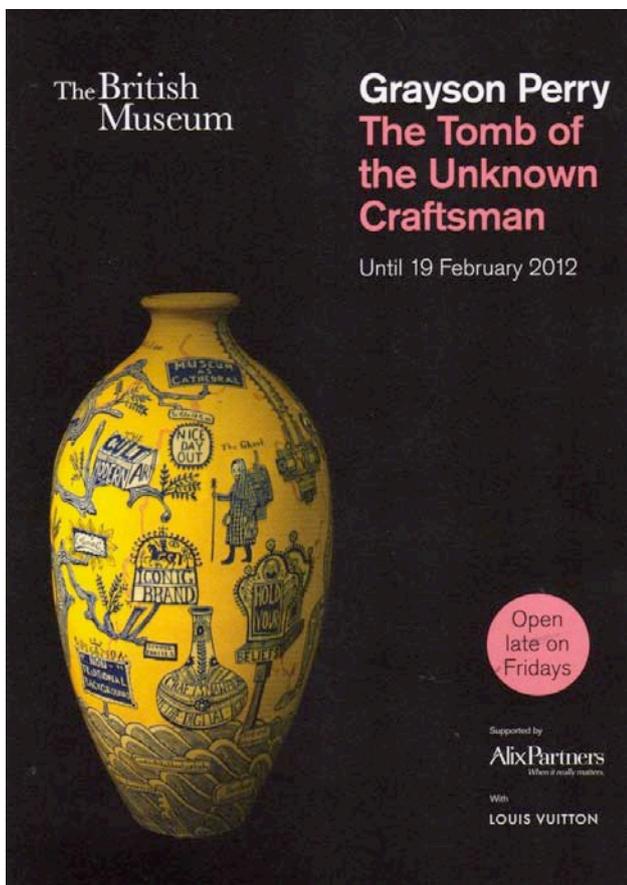


Developing the campaign

Jessica Hunt, Marketing Manager at the British Museum summarises the approach the British Museum team took to developing and promoting the exhibition using the findings of the research – and the results that the campaign delivered.

The early-stage research showed that the main audiences for this exhibition were not primarily traditional ‘British Museum’ audiences. This meant that the campaign had to be creative to attract new audiences through new channels, positioning the British Museum in a different way than usual.

To achieve this, Grayson Perry was involved from the start of the marketing campaign. The British Museum consulted with him as both curator and artist, and this informed the overall marketing strategy.



The British Museum’s team used the research findings as the basis for the marketing strategy. The research also influenced the exhibition interpretation (panels, labels etc) and accompanying events programme.

A number of alternative lead images were tested with the target segments. The findings were used by the British Museum to develop the creative in collaboration with Grayson. Selecting Grayson’s bright yellow ‘Rosetta Vase’ (a reference to the iconic Rosetta Stone), along with pink, modern typeface – an unexpected colour contrast for a British Museum exhibition.

Grayson was also commissioned to design an exclusive free poster for marketing, which was printed as part of the fold out events programme, and featured in the exhibition as an object. The British Museum then worked with a specialist digital agency to create a digital marketing strategy.

Differentiating the campaign

Essence



Discerning, Spontaneous, Independent, Sophisticated

The Essence segment tends to be well-educated professionals who are highly active cultural consumers and creators, they are leaders rather than followers. Confident in their own tastes, they will act spontaneously according to their mood and pay little attention to what others think.

“Seeing it in this context and the whole idea... the way he takes something that is very traditional like ceramics and makes social commentary art out of something that is essentially very staid. That might relate to collections in the British Museum which are iconographic and ceramics as well, so immediately it has that kind of conversation and intrigue”

Positioning: The most interested in Grayson as curator, they wanted a new and unexpected insight into his work and the British Museum’s collection.

Key message: ‘This is an installation curated by Grayson Perry and shows his works alongside British Museum objects’.

Targeting: This segment was targeted with a short video showing a different side to Grayson, using his voice and communicating the reasoning behind the show. The video achieved around 56,000 views and was shared across blogs and news sites. This was many more views than previous exhibition videos produced by the British Museum.

This was supported by editorial in the quality press and arts publications.



Expression



Receptive, Confident, Community, Expressive

The Expression segment is in-tune with their creative and spiritual side. They are confident, fun-loving, self-aware people who accommodate a wide range of interests, from culture and learning, to community and nature.

“You are in such danger if you have things at celebrity level because you are automatically going to divide people into those who like or don’t like that particular celebrity... I wouldn’t run because it is Grayson Perry. It wouldn’t particularly put me off but I wouldn’t come running because it is curated by him. I’d wonder, well why is he curating it?”

Positioning: Interested in community and voicing their opinion; however many were not fans of Grayson, but were interested in the ‘unknown craftsmen’ angle and were converted when they discovered his non-‘celebrity’, serious ‘art and craft’ side.

Key message: ‘This exhibition celebrates unknown craftsmen throughout history’.

Targeting: This segments was targeted with #Craftdebate – a series of blogs and live debates on Twitter, with the Crafts Council, the Craftivist Collective, and finally Grayson himself. Over 1,450 tweets were generated in total and both ‘British Museum’ and ‘#Craftdebate’ became trending topics in the UK. The exhibition blog posts were also extremely successful for this audience with views totalling over 8,000 and 80 comments – the most engagement the British Museum’s blog has ever had.

3. Stimulation



Active, Experimental, Discovery, Contemporary

The Stimulation segment is an active group who live their lives to the full, looking for new experiences and challenges to break away from the crowd. They are open to a wide range of experiences, from culture to sports and music, but they like to be at the cutting edge in everything they do.

“If you did an audience with Grayson Perry that would be something for the diary, you could get tickets and come along and see the exhibition and have the chance of a question and answer session and if there is an evening afterwards and the bar was open. Yeah I think that would be a great event”

Positioning: Early adopters, interested in contemporary art and the ‘celebrity’ aspect of Grayson; however the prospect of a ‘museum’ exhibition gave rise to negative impressions of a traditional, ‘glass case’ approach.

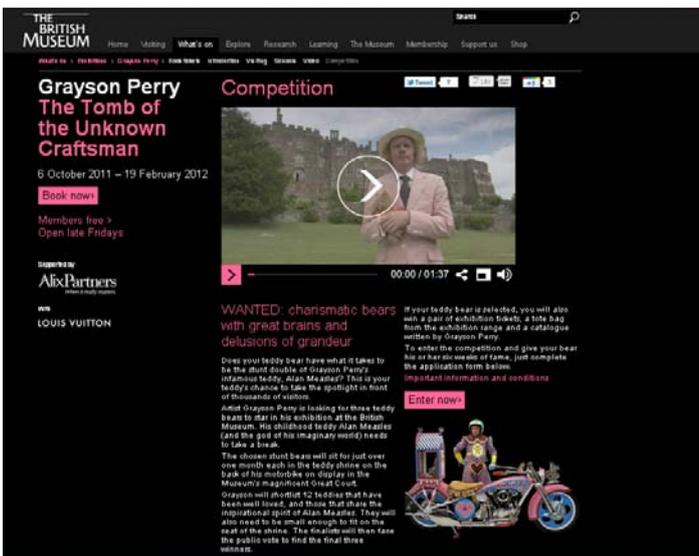
Key message: ‘This is an installation including new works by Grayson Perry’.

Targeting: This segment was initially targeted with a ‘stunt teddy bear’ competition to generate word of mouth. 300 bears entered to be part of the exhibition as the stunt double for Alan Measles, Grayson’s childhood teddy and god of his imaginary world. Grayson selected his top 12 and 2,500 people voted to find the three winning bears.



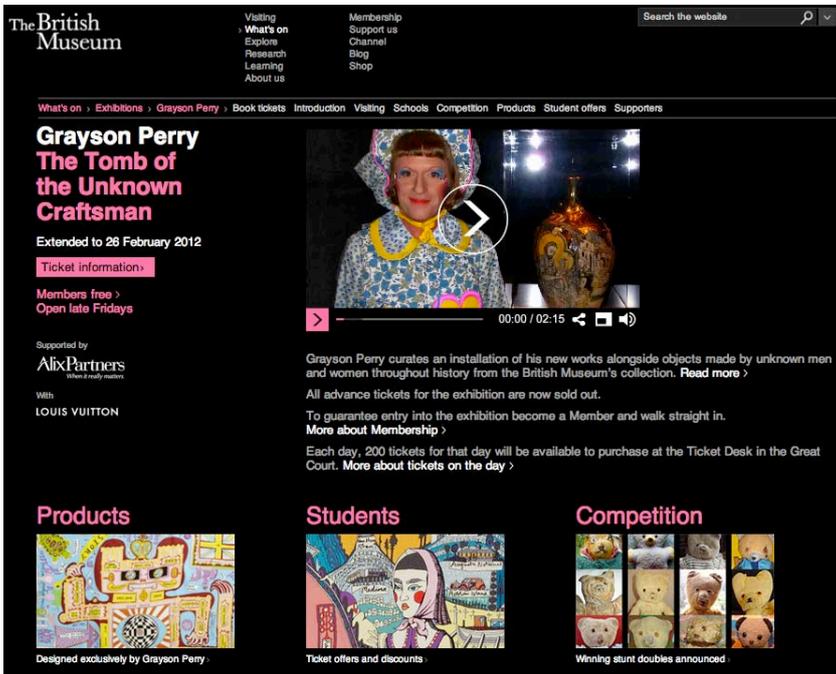
The competition web page had 1,000 Facebook Likes and generated 1,500 tweets, Grayson’s video plea for teddy entries had around 4,000 views and the competition web pages had 43,000 views by the end of 2011.

Following this, the segment was also targeted through distribution of the events programme/poster and badges at selected stations in East London, craft fairs and contemporary art locations such as Tate, the V&A and the Hayward Gallery.



Implementation

British Museum used Culture Segments to work with its marketing communications agencies, including Blue State Digital on the digital marketing strategy, Total Media on the media plan and Artshead and Impact on distribution.



Strategic partnerships with organisations that would help to reach new audiences were developed, including with Time Out, Frieze Arts Fair, the Crafts Council and University of the Arts London.

The British Museum carried out an 'escalating' campaign from April 2011 teasing interest and excitement with influencers using digital tools, building momentum to a high impact outdoors, press and digital advertising at the exhibition opening to support press and generate mass awareness. In the final weeks messaging was pushed through all channels to create a sense of urgency.



Impacts

The **ticket sales** target of 60,000 was exceeded after just 3 months, with final ticket sales of 112,194. Advance tickets sold out and the run of the exhibition was extended by a week to deal with the high level of demand. (Adult tickets to the exhibition were priced at £10).

All **events** reached capacity. The late event was especially popular, and a talk by Grayson had to be streamed live into another theatre due to 200% bookings.

Secondary spend through merchandise sales were 500% above target. In addition to successful take-up of the Grayson Perry afternoon tea (created with Marketing, Grayson and the catering team), the restaurant took over 800 bookings for the exhibition ticket and themed dinner package.

A **membership** event raised double the normal takings in the shops. A special offer of a free Grayson Perry-designed bag for new members and renewals was also very popular.

The campaign was been extremely successful in **positioning** the British Museum as a venue for contemporary art. For example, the marketing-led 'stunt teddy bear' competition was featured twice in the Evening Standard, including the announcement of the winners, in the Observer, The Independent and The Art Newspaper. Other press coverage reaching new audiences for the British Museum included Another Magazine, Dazed and Confused, Harper's Bazaar, In Style, Grazia and Stylist. It was consistently listed top in Time Out, Guardian Guide, Spoonfed, Urban Junkies and Art Rabbit.

According to official British Museum visitor research conducted by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre with visitors to the British Museum (between October and December 2011), 35% of visitors were **aware** of the Grayson Perry exhibition before making their visit to the Museum that day. London-based visits increased from 16% to 24%, website views increased from 16% to 33%, and word of mouth increased from 19% to 28%, as compared with the same period the previous year.

The British Museum's **digital profile** was also raised. During the campaign, Facebook 'Likes' increased by 85% and Twitter followers by 65%. Further Twitter activity included tweets by influencers such as Alexa Chung, Lauren Laverne and Mary Portas, and brands including Tate, Wallpaper and Louis Vuitton. For the first time, the British Museum used Foursquare, QR codes on print and exhibition panels linking to the video trailer, and ran behaviourally targeted digital advertising.

Most importantly, the exhibition captured the imagination of the public, with visitors inspired to view **the collection** in a new way. *'This exhibition breathes new air into the British Museum. Seen in fresh context the British Museum exhibits come alive... Plus it's fun. So refreshing to hear other visitors laughing and talking animatedly. Isn't that what museums are for?'* – comment from the blog.

Evaluation

Research carried out by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre with visitors to *Grayson Perry: The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman* identified that the three target segments of Essence, Expression and Stimulation were early adopters of the exhibition. Together these three segments made up 70% of the audience during the first half of the exhibition (October – December) – as compared with 34% of the UK cultural market as a whole.

In the second half of the exhibition's run, the three target segments reduced in size to account for 42% of visitors, as three other, more risk averse segments (Affirmation, Enrichment and Release), adopted the proposition.

Using a phased approach to target early adopters with differentiated messaging via PR and digital channels generated a buzz around the exhibition, which worked to attract an innovative contemporary art audience to the British Museum. Having developed popular currency within the market, the offer was then taken up by a wider audience of individuals who are less willing to take risks with the new or unknown. Meaning that *Grayson Perry: The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman* was able to attract a larger, paying audience than was originally anticipated.



Culture Segments is a new, sector-specific segmentation system for culture and heritage organisations that has been devised by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre in consultation with key sector organisations, including the British Museum. The principle objective for Culture Segments is to provide the sector with a shared language for understanding the audience, with a view to targeting them more accurately, engaging them more deeply and building lasting relationships.

Culture Segments is designed to be more subtle, granular and sophisticated than other non-sector specific segmentation systems. This is because it is based on people's cultural values and motivations. These cultural values define the person and frame their attitudes, lifestyle choices and behaviour.

The segments are distinguished from one another by deeply held beliefs about the role that art and culture play in their lives, enabling sector professionals to get to the heart of what motivates them to engage with culture and to develop strategies to engage them more deeply.

An introductory video and pen portraits for each of the eight Culture Segments are freely available at www.lateralthinkers.com/seethesegments.html

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Morris Hargreaves McIntyre is an international strategic research consultancy working within the culture, heritage, leisure, media and charities sectors. Our specialism is in helping organisations develop enhanced consumer focus.

Our company was born out of a desire to help cultural organisations become more creative in the way in which they are managed, more audience focused, more engaging, able to deliver greater impact and, as a result, more successful and sustainable. This founding ethos remains at the core of all our activity today.

Research is a means to an end in our world. We believe that knowledge and insight are the key to sustainable change and a successful sector.

To find out more about Morris Hargreaves McIntyre and the work we do please visit www.lateralthinkers.com