

ART APPRECIATION

The Art Appreciation group met on a mild sunny day in September at Oxenholme station ready to visit two galleries in Edinburgh. In just under two hours we were relaxing in the centre of Edinburgh and fueled by cake and coffee we set off to visit Dovecot studio situated near the Royal Mile. Here we looked at a world-renowned tapestry studio alongside contemporary art, craft and design. The studio was established in 1912 and regularly collaborates with international artists to make some hand-woven tapestries and gun tufted rugs, some of which we saw firsthand.

After lunching at the studio cafe, we were joined by our tour guide, Katie Taylor, who gave a fascinating insight into Scottish women artists. The exhibition explored how the complex artistic identities of over 45 diverse women have shaped and been shaped by influences all over Scotland. More than 70 paintings, textiles, photos, tapestries and sculptures were included in the tour.

After a stroll back towards the new town, we made our way to the National Gallery of Scotland and into the Grayson Perry “Smash Hits” exhibition. Love him or loathe him Grayson did not disappoint. This was Grayson's biggest exhibition of his 40 year career and featured more than 80 of his best works: pots, prints, sculptures, tapestries, including the 15metre Walthamstow tapestry, an iconic epic, telling the story of the seven ages of man and his journey from birth to death. through the lens of shopping. Grayson's work reflected issues of class, self-mockery of the class system with a satirical touch. We learned he had an unhappy childhood, and thus created a private universe around a teddy bear called Alan Measles. The bear becomes a recurring feature within the majority of his work. The final room depicted Englishness and central to this room was a tapestry entitled “Sacred Tribal Artefact” which showed an ageing lion handing over his tattered English flag to a young woman. It was described as a depiction of an ancient country in a time of change.

All too soon we were heading back to the station, with some of the group enjoying an evening meal before departing we all agreed it had been a thoroughly enjoyable day.

Lisa Sharp