

News Release

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David Hockney Unveils New Drawings of his Close Friends in National Portrait Gallery Exhibition



L-R: Maurice Payne, Celia Birtwell, David Hockney and Gregory Evans with new drawings in *David Hockney: Drawing from Life*
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David Hockney: Drawing from Life
National Portrait Gallery, London
27 February – 28 June 2020

New portraits of David Hockney's close friends - textile designer, Celia Birtwell; his business manager and curator, Gregory Evans, and master printer, Maurice Payne – have gone on public display for the first time in a major new exhibition, *David Hockney: Drawing from Life*, opening at the National Portrait Gallery, London on Thursday 27 February.



Image Credits L-R: David Hockney "Celia Birtwell, 29 and 30 Aug 2019" Ink on paper 30 1/4 x 22 5/8"; David Hockney "Gregory Evans I, 27th June 2019" Ink on paper, 30 1/4 x 22 5/8"; David Hockney "Maurice Payne, 16th Dec 2019" Ink on paper, 30 1/4 x 22 5/8". All images © David Hockney Photo Credit: Richard Schmidt

Inspired by the National Portrait Gallery exhibition, which explores Hockney as a draughtsman from the 1950s to now by focusing on his depictions of himself and a small group of his closest sitters, Hockney invited his friends to sit for him once more for a new series of drawings – ten of which are on display in the exhibition. Drawn in Los Angeles and Normandy in 2019, the three-quarter length portraits are fond evocations of time spent together and represent the familiar faces and different expressions of his old friends, informed by all the sittings they have done previously. In the works, Hockney uses the walnut-brown coloured ink favoured by Rembrandt, achieving an uninterrupted continuous line.



David Hockney with new drawings in *David Hockney: Drawing from Life*
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Hockney has always communicated through drawing; the sittings allow an intimacy and closeness with the subject that cannot be achieved so readily with the bravura of the painted portrait. Fifty years after Celia Birtwell sat for Hockney for the first time in Paris, the artist invited his lifelong friend to Normandy on two occasions in August and November 2019, to sit for him again. The new works reflect his subject's vitality and engaging personality, characteristics the artist has always been attracted to.

Gregory Evans has been an intimate friend of Hockney's for fifty years, his consistent model, assistant, and now his curator and business manager. Sittings for the new portraits took place in Hockney's Los Angeles studio in June 2019.

Maurice Payne, master printer, and friend of Hockney's since the late 1960s has collaborated with him on several major etching projects, as well as being the subject of many of the artist's portraits. The new portraits were drawn in Los Angeles in December last year.

David Hockney: Drawing from Life is the first major exhibition devoted to David Hockney's drawings in over twenty years, featuring around 150 works from public and private collections across the world, as well as from the David Hockney Foundation and the artist. The intimate portraits of himself, his mother, Laura Hockney; and friends Celia Birtwell, Gregory Evans, and Maurice Payne are rendered in pencil, pastel, ink and watercolour, using both traditional and non-traditional drawing equipment including coloured pencil, pen, the Polaroid camera and apps found on the iPhone and iPad.



L-R: Maurice Payne, Celia Birtwell and Gregory Evans with new drawings in *David Hockney: Drawing from Life*
© David Parry and National Portrait Gallery

Hockney is recognised as one of the master draughtsmen of our times and a champion of the medium. *David Hockney: Drawing from Life* examines not only how drawing is fundamental to the artist's distinctive way of observing the world around him, but also how it has often been a testing ground for ideas and modes of expression later played out in his paintings. Over the past fifty years, the artist's experimentation with drawing has taken many different stylistic turns. The portrait drawings reveal his admiration for both the old masters and modern masters from Holbein to Matisse. The influence of Ingres can be seen in Hockney's neo-Classical style line drawings of the 1970s and the 'camera lucida' drawings of the late 1990s. In the 1980s he used composite Polaroids to 'draw with the camera', as he described it, creating Cubist depictions of form which paid homage to Picasso. In more recent years, Hockney has returned to the distinctive mark making of Rembrandt and van Gogh.

Quotes:

Celia Birtwell said: "David recently moved to France, and wanted to show me his new house and studio. We went over to see him in September, when he drew me several times. We were so impressed that we returned in November. In my opinion he's the best draughtsman we have working now. It's a great honour to be drawn by him."

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director, National Portrait Gallery London said "We are delighted to display David Hockney's new drawings of his close friends for the first time. By focusing on Hockney as a supreme draughtsman, first and foremost, and his intimate and revealing depictions of those closest to him, our major new exhibition *David Hockney: Drawing from Life* allows us to chart the effect of the passing of time – on his sitters and his relationship with them, and on the development of his style over the last six decades."

Sarah Howgate Curator of *David Hockney: Drawing from Life* said: "Drawing not only represents David Hockney's distinctive way of observing the world but is a record of his encounters with those close to him. He has returned to this intimate circle over and over again and, because their faces are so familiar to him, achieving a likeness does not distract from the search for a more nuanced and psychological portrait that also records the passage of time."

Over the past six decades he has never stood still, or rested on a particular approach, medium or technique and this is a great strength. Inquisitive, playful and thought provoking he has generously shared his ideas with his audience. Although his drawing reflects his admiration for both the Old Masters and 'modern Masters' from Rembrandt to Picasso, Hockney undoubtedly has his own unique vision of the world around him and the people who are dear to him."

David Hockney, OM, CH, RA (born 9 July 1937) is an English painter, draughtsman, printmaker, stage designer, and photographer. As an important contributor to the Pop Art movement of the 1960s, he is considered one of the most influential and celebrated British artists of the late twentieth and early twenty first century.

David Hockney: Drawing from life is curated by Sarah Howgate, Senior Curator of Contemporary Collections at the National Portrait Gallery. Her previous exhibitions for the Gallery include *David*

Hockney Portraits (2006), *Lucian Freud Portraits* (2012); *Gillian Wearing and Claude Cahun: Behind the mask, another mask* (2017); *Tacita Dean: PORTRAIT* (2018) and *Friendship Portraits: Chantal Joffe and Ishbel Myerscough* (2015).

David Hockney: Drawing from Life

27 February – 28 June 2020 at the National Portrait Gallery, London

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Tickets with donation from £19 - £22

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Every Friday the Gallery will make 500 £5 tickets available to anyone aged under 25. Under 12s are free and family tickets are also available. Tickets are subject to availability on a first come, first served basis and can be booked online or in person at the Gallery. Proof of age will be required.

Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, featuring around 150 beautifully reproduced portraits. The publication also features essays from exhibition curator Sarah Howgate, Isabel Seligman and an interview with David Hockney. The catalogue is available via the Gallery shops and online at npg.org.uk/shop.

The exhibition will tour to The Morgan Library & Museum, New York from 2 October 2020 – 17 January 2021.

For further press information please contact: Laura McKechnan, Head of Communications (Interim), National Portrait Gallery, Tel. 020 7321 6620, lmckechnan@npg.org.uk (not for publication).

National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place WC2H 0HE, opening hours Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday: 10am – 6pm (Gallery closure commences at 5.50pm) **Late Opening:** Friday: 10am – 9pm (Gallery closure commences at 8.50pm) **Nearest Underground:** Leicester Square/Charing Cross **General information:** 0207 306 0055 **Recorded information:** 020 7312 2463
Website/Tickets: www.npg.org.uk