

Humphrey Ocean

Audio Guide transcript

Humphrey Ocean had been artist-on-tour to the United States with McCartney's group Wings in 1976, won the 1982 Portrait Award and was subsequently commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery to paint the celebrated ex-Beatle. Ocean takes up the story:

'I was faced with painting somebody that, you know, everybody knew, you know, they knew about him here, they knew about him in Karachi, you know, I mean and everybody's got an idea. So I thought ninety-five percent of people, probably slightly more are going to hate this and I thought I can't think about that, or else I'll go mad. I did it down at his house and he wanted to sit outdoors, it was May, and that was very nice. We sat under a cherry blossom and he has ..he's intelligent, he's very reflective man, you know, and I think less so now but in those days he used to grin a lot for the camera, and put on a show for the camera, but when you are with someone for a bit longer than five minutes they relax that and that's what I got.'