News release
Wednesday 2 August 2023

New portrait of Harry Styles unveiled as tickets go on sale for major David Hockney exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery

Over 30 new portraits, painted at the artist’s Normandy studio between 2021 and 2022, will be displayed for the first time when the Gallery opens David Hockney: Drawing from Life on 2 November 2023.

The updated exhibition – last staged at the Gallery for 20 days, prior to its closure due to Covid – will include examples of Hockney’s most recent portraits, seen for the first time, including a painting of singer Harry Styles.

From today, tickets go on sale for the National Portrait Gallery’s major autumn exhibition, David Hockney: Drawing from Life (2 November 2023 – 21 January 2024). Displayed for just 20 days prior to the Gallery’s closure due to Covid in March 2020, the critically acclaimed exhibition – now restaged – has been expanded to include 33 of the artist’s most recent portraits, painted in acrylic between 2021 and 2022. One of these new works depicts singer, Harry Styles, and is unveiled for the first time today. Hockney’s new paintings will be displayed alongside portraits originally exhibited as part of 2020’s presentation, rendered in pencil, pastel, ink and watercolour, using both traditional and non-traditional drawing equipment, including coloured pencil, pen, the 35mm camera and apps found on the iPhone and iPad.
Featuring around 160 works from public and private collections across the world, as well as from the David Hockney Foundation and the artist himself, *David Hockney: Drawing from Life* traces the trajectory of Hockney’s practice, predominantly through his intimate portraits of five sitters: his friend, Celia Birtwell; his mother, Laura Hockney; his former partner and curator, Gregory Evans; his master printer, Maurice Payne; and the artist himself. Supported by White & Case, the exhibition will explore the artist’s work over the last six decades, with the addition of new portraits – depicting friends and visitors to Hockney’s Normandy studio.

Bringing the exhibition right up to date, new single and double portraits include depictions of the artist’s partner, Jean-Pierre Gonçalves de Lima, and people from the local Normandy community. The portraits mark a return to painting after a period spent capturing the Normandy landscape around his home through the seasons on his iPad. Each portrait was painted from life directly onto the canvas without any under drawing and completed in 2-3 sittings.

David 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 sixty 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 created photocollages 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.

In addition to the 33 new works, highlights of the exhibition include coloured pencil drawings created in Paris in the early 1970s; a selection of drawings from an intense period of self-scrutiny during the 1980s, when the artist created a self-portrait every day over a period of two months; and rarely seen works, including his pivotal *A Rake’s Progress* etching suite (1961-63), inspired by William Hogarth’s engraving series with the same title (1697-64), ephemera documenting his relationships with the sitters, and the painting *My Parents and Myself* – an earlier version of *My Parents in Tate’s collection.*

“Following our reopening and the success of a brilliant first summer, I am delighted to be restaging this major exhibition for David Hockney at the new National Portrait Gallery, which makes good on a pledge I made to David in March 2020 that we would return to his wonderful exhibition in better days. Hockney is one of the most internationally respected and renowned artists today, and to see his new portraits, made over the last couple of years and which demonstrate his constant and continuing ingenuity and
creative force, is life affirming."

Dr Nicholas Cullinan
Director, National Portrait Gallery

“Closing this five-star exhibition after just 20 days in 2020 was incredibly disappointing for the Gallery and its many visitors, making this restaging of ‘David Hockney: Drawing from Life’ all the more significant. Now revitalised with over thirty new energetic and insightful painted portraits of friends and visitors to the artist’s Normandy studio, it is a real privilege to have the opportunity to collaborate with David Hockney again.”

Sarah Howgate
Senior Curator of Contemporary Collections, National Portrait Gallery

“The David Hockney: Drawing from Life exhibition brings together six decades of the artist’s work through intimate portraits of his mother, close friends, eclectic visitors and Hockney himself, celebrating one of the greatest draughtsmen of our times. White & Case is delighted to be supporting the National Portrait Gallery in the exhibition of such a remarkable body of work as part of our global cultural programme.”

Dipen Sabharwal, White & Case
London Office Executive Partner, White & Case

David Hockney: Drawing from Life will be accompanied by a fully illustrated hardback catalogue (£35), featuring around 160 beautifully reproduced portraits, an essay from curator Sarah Howgate, and an interview with David Hockney. The new portraits painted by Hockney at his Normandy studio – depicting his friends and visitors, including singer Harry Styles, his partner, Jean-Pierre Gonçalves de Lima, and the artist himself – will be included as part of an exclusive image-led book, David Hockney: Normandy Portraits (£18.95). Both will be available via the Gallery shops and online.

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: Drawing from Life (2020), 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).

The Gallery’s reopening is supported by reopening partner Herbert Smith Freehills, longstanding supporter of the National Portrait Gallery.

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For further press information, images and interview requests please contact:
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Notes to editors

David Hockney: Drawing from Life
2 November 2023 – 21 January 2024
National Portrait Gallery
Tickets can be purchased via: npg.org.uk/whatson/exhibitions/2023/hockney-drawing-from-life

Tickets £21 (Concessions from £10.50)
Members go free
npg.org.uk
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David Hockney
David Hockney, OM, CH, RA (born 9 July 1937) is an English painter, draughtsman, printmaker, stage designer, and photographer. He is considered one of the most influential and celebrated British artists of the late twentieth and early twenty first century.

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