

David Hockney Drawing from Life 27 February – 28 June 2020



Image: David Hockney "No. 1201", 14th March 2012, iPad Drawing
© David Hockney

Teachers' Notes

Information and Activities for Teachers

These notes focus on Hockney's drawing practice and on a small number of interconnecting themes developed over the artist's career. They are intended to help students look critically at Hockney's work, and enable group discussion. They can be used to assist teaching in the Gallery as well as in the classroom. The questions, discussion points and activities are aimed at Key Stage 3-5 Secondary Art, but can be adapted for younger age groups and your students' needs. The suggestions for activities are designed for students and teachers to explore and further research the work of David Hockney, and create their own work in response.

Teachers' guidelines

David Hockney: Drawing from Life

The first major exhibition devoted to David Hockney's drawings in over twenty years, *David Hockney: Drawing from Life*, explores Hockney as a draughtsman from the 1950s to the present by focusing on depictions of himself and a small group of sitters close to him: his muse, Celia Birtwell; his mother, Laura Hockney; and friends, the curator, Gregory Evans, and master printer, Maurice Payne.

Featuring around 150 works from public and private collections across the world, as well as from the David Hockney Foundation and the artist, the exhibition will trace the trajectory of his practice by revisiting these five subjects over a period of six decades. Highlights include a series of new portraits; coloured pencil drawings created in Paris in the early 1970s; composite Polaroid portraits from the 1980s; and 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.

Visiting David Hockney: Drawing from Life

A special exhibition entry price of £5 per student is available to pre-booked school groups of 10+ (accompanying adults enter free) between 10.00 and 14.00 Monday to Friday. Call **020 7312 2483** to book school group tickets. A limited number of introductory talks are available, enquire when booking.

For more information visit npg.org.uk/learning/schools-and-colleges/exhibitions-and-introductory-talks

Teachers Practical Drawing Workshop 16 May 2020 10.00-15.30

Inspired by the exhibition, this practical CPD session aims to energise teachers' practice of drawing and portraiture and inspire confidence in drawing techniques. Artist Robin Lee Hall will work with the group to improve technical skills, experiment with drawing approaches and develop ideas to take back to the classroom. The session is aimed at Primary and Secondary teachers and costs £75 per place. All materials are provided and the workshop includes a visit to the exhibition.

To book your place visit
npg.org.uk/learning/schools-and-colleges/cpd

David Hockney - Early Biography

David Hockney is one of Britain's most distinguished living artists and this exhibition brings together portraits created over the past six decades. Throughout his life Hockney has maintained his practice of drawing, employing a wide range of techniques and working with a small circle of sitters with whom he has captured changing appearances and relationships.

Hockney grew up in an unconventional working-class family in Bradford, West Yorkshire. He was the fourth of five children and his parents were an important early influence. He remained close to them throughout their lives and they were recurring subjects in his work. Hockney's parents supported him in his decision to become an artist, and when he was sixteen allowed him to give up his scholarship place at Bradford Grammar School to attend Bradford School of Art.

At Bradford School of Art his training began with an emphasis on anatomy and perspective. During this period Hockney began to produce intimate portraits of the people closest to him, including his parents, pictured in their home.

Hockney went to the Royal College of Art in 1959, where drawing was still compulsory and his natural aptitude was noted by staff. In the same year he created two 'long' detailed drawings of a human skeleton, the pencil drawing was purchased by his mentor and fellow student, R.B. Kitaj.

Kitaj later reflected:

I thought it was the most skilled, most beautiful drawing I'd ever seen; I'd been to art school in New York, and in Vienna, and had quite a lot of experience, and I'd never seen such a beautiful drawing. (1)

Although not strictly portraiture, the work he produced was autobiographical and for the most part based around the figure. His experiences as a young gay man visiting New York City for the first time are told in his own version of Hogarth's *The Rake's Progress* created in 1961-63.

Hockney's first visit to Los Angeles in 1964 had a profound effect on his work. Attracted to the light, colour, space and sexual freedom of the city, he began to capture the places and the people he encountered there.

In Paris Hockney produced portraits of artists as part of a series of highly finished crayon drawings between 1973 and 1975. Each drawing was made over two to three days. In this period Hockney's drawings became artworks in their own right rather than preparatory drawings. Hockney was able to include Andy Warhol in this series of drawings when the Pop artist visited Paris. Their first meeting had taken place ten years earlier when Hockney visited Warhol's New York studio, 'The Factory'. Hockney's drawings of his friend Celia Birtwell are among his most accomplished and celebrated from this period.

David Hockney - Portraits

Friends – that’s the only thread running through my life.

Hockney’s portraits provide insights into the artist’s intense observations of the people he has encountered over many years, starting with his early self-portraits and studies of his father created during his student years at Bradford School of Art.

This exhibition brings together portraits of people close to him whom Hockney has drawn numerous times over several decades; his mother, Laura Hockney; his friend and muse Celia Birtwell, the curator, Gregory Evans, and master printer, Maurice Payne.

The Camera

I’m quite convinced painting can’t disappear because there’s nothing to replace it. The photograph isn’t good enough. It’s not real enough.

Throughout his career Hockney has enjoyed a love-hate relationship with the camera. He began using photography in 1967 when he purchased his first 35mm camera and used it as an aide-mémoire for his painting. In the 1970s, he began assembling individual photographs into small compositions.

While working on photo collages in the early 80s, Hockney was also painting and drawing. He created a group of playfully neo-Cubist portraits, which explore multiple viewpoints and distortion as a direct consequence of his renewed enthusiasm for the work of Picasso.

Techniques

Hockney has always had an insatiable curiosity about artistic technique. New ideas, new discoveries and new exhibitions have led him to explore different creative paths. In 1999 he was intrigued by an exhibition at the National Gallery of exquisitely detailed and life-like small portrait drawings by the nineteenth-century French artist, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres and was determined to find out how the artist made them. He became convinced that Ingres had used a camera lucida, a tool developed in the early years of the nineteenth century that consists of a small prism suspended at the end of a flexible metal rod. The lens projects an image onto a flat surface, allowing the artist to quickly map out facial proportions. The exhibition includes a selection of portraits that Hockney has made using this drawing tool.

1. The Artist as Subject

When asked why he didn't do more self-portraits, Hockney expressed a reluctance to look at himself too closely – although he felt sure he would return to the subject at a later date. And in 1983, when he was in his mid-forties, he turned to an intense period of self-examination, a response in part to approaching middle age, increasing isolation due to his deafness, and the untimely deaths of many friends, some to AIDS-related illnesses. Every day for six weeks he set himself the challenge of producing a candid self-portrait, just as he found himself on that particular day. These drawings reveal a vulnerable and private side to the artist, a far cry from the bleached hair and owl glasses image of his youth.

One of the most interesting areas in portraiture is self-representation. Artists can show themselves in the context that they choose, whether this is their home, their studio or another location. Props and other figures can be added to this environment. Next is the choice of media. What is exciting about Hockney is the way he favours different media. He is not afraid of pushing the boundaries of his art and discovering new processes that reflect his evolving moods, interests and skills. He has remarked: *Whatever the medium is, you have to respond to it. I have always enjoyed swapping mediums about. I usually follow it, don't go against it. I like using different techniques.* (2)

In 2012, Hockney created a series of brightly coloured self-portraits using his iPad like a sketchbook. Over a period of twenty days Hockney made a digital self-portrait each day, as he had done with the charcoal portraits of 1983. These self-portraits with varied facial expressions, are based on character types after Rembrandt's early self-portrait prints.

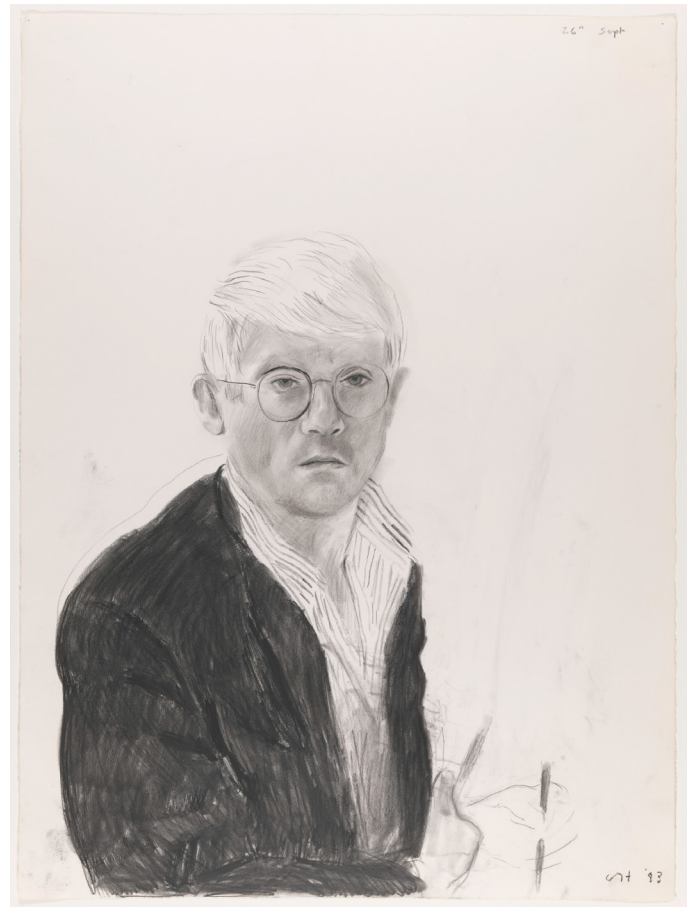


Image: "Self Portrait 26th Sept." 1983. Charcoal on paper © David Hockney

Activity: Authorship and Style

- Looking at Hockney's portraits make a list of five points that you feel define Hockney's "style".
- Do you think that you have your own "style" of drawing?
- Make a portrait of someone exaggerating this "style" – imagine that the way you do the drawing can be identified as your own.
- Look at Hockney's work and see if you can identify recurring imagery. Make a note of what these are. What purpose do they serve?
- Taking Hockney's lead, create a self-portrait a day for one week and use different materials to create these. How does the daily drawing practice impact your art? Which media do you prefer to use? What time of day works best for your portraits?
- Vary the speed of your drawings. Create some fast drawings using pencil or charcoal, then use coloured pencils to create portraits over the period of a few hours. Which method works best for you?

2. The Artist and Relationships

Hockney has an intimate circle of friends with whom he has remained close. They are among his frequent subjects and portraits of them span several decades. Hockney almost uses portraiture as a kind of diary, varying the technique and drawing materials, but returning to his close circle again and again to depict on paper their evolving appearance and relationship.

Hockney has been resistant to taking on portrait commissions, perhaps because he understands that portraiture is the result of collaboration between artist and sitter; often the best portraits come about with sitters known to the artist. Hockney's relationships with those most involved with his art are documented in the portraits. These include his master printer Maurice Payne and curator Gregory Evans. They have been both the material for his work as an artist and have been crucial in the development of his career.

Hockney's mother Laura often sat for Hockney for her portrait. She was a strict vegetarian, teetotaler and committed Methodist and lived for 98 years. Hockney commented on his habit of portraying the same sitters over time, *I think that the way I draw, the more I know and react to people, the more interesting the drawings will be.* (2)



Image: "Mother, Bradford. 19 Feb 1979". Sepia ink on paper © David Hockney

Activity: Drawing another generation

- Either find a photograph of an elderly relative or find someone much older than you who is prepared to sit for you.
- Discuss with them the type of objects you could include in your portrait that would give a viewer an idea of their likes and dislikes. Do drawings of these objects e.g. books, a TV, a plant, a meal, a holiday, a dog. Analyse photographs and paintings that show family groups. Notice the positioning of the figures.
- Position your sitter so that they reflect their relationship to you
- Use your preparatory drawings to organise a composition, look at Hockney's portrait of his parents for clues. Decide if you will make your portrait square or rectangular.
- Create a mix media drawing using the tools Hockney uses including charcoal, crayon, coloured pencil, pen and ink. How does the media effect the way the sitter is portrayed?

2. The Artist and Relationships

Hockney met Celia Birtwell in the late 1960's when they were both living in Notting Hill, London, and since then she has been a life-long friend, muse and companion. Birtwell, born in 1941, studied textile design and was married to Ossie Clark; they both appear in Hockney's portrait, "Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy", 1970–1, Tate.

In Hockney's portraits of Celia Birtwell using coloured pencil he captures their close friendship and affection for each other. In "Celia, Carennac, August 1971" Celia is portrayed wearing a brightly coloured vintage dressing gown. Hockney often captured Birtwell in bold prints, referencing her work as a textile designer. The boldness of the print contrasts with her face, clothes and hands.

Hockney said, *Celia has a beautiful face, a very rare face with lots of things in it which appeal to me. It shows aspects of her, like her intuitive knowledge and her kindness, which I think is the greatest virtue. To me she's such a special person.* (2)

Hockney continued to make portraits of Celia over the next fifty years, most recently in November 2019 when she visited the artist at his home in Normandy, France.



Image: David Hockney "Celia, Carennac, August 1971". Colored pencil on paper
© David Hockney



Image: David Hockney "Celia, 21 Nov 2019". Ink and acrylic on paper
© David Hockney

Activity: The Artist and Relationships

- Choose a drawing of one of Hockney's friends. Describe the relationship that Hockney has or had with the sitter.
- Give three reasons why you chose this artwork.
- Choose someone to sit for you with whom you have a special relationship or friendship.
- Take five digital photographs of your sitter that concentrate on the following: pose, expression, appropriate location, clothing, scale.
- Use the photographs to help you make a drawing that reflects aspects of your favourite Hockney portrait. Try to make your work show the relationship that you have with your special sitter.
- Hockney has recently created new portraits of Celia Birtwell. Compare the portraits over time. How do you think the changing relationship is captured in the portraits? How is their long established friendship evident in the drawings?

3. Art Heroes and Working Methods

Artists often find that they have affinities with other artists, they may have similar artistic concerns or be attracted to the same shapes, colours or subject matter. Hockney is inspired by old masters Rembrandt and Ingres, as well as modern masters including Matisse, Picasso and Van Gogh. He visited Picasso's Tate exhibition in 1960, and after Picasso died in 1973, he produced "The Student – Homage to Picasso", together with other works relating to Picasso.

- In "The Student – Homage to Picasso" Hockney declares his passion and admiration for the artist. Find an artist that you can relate to and think about why you admire their work.
- Think about the most recognisable way that you could suggest your chosen artist in a picture. For example, Henri Matisse with vibrant pattern and colour, Barbara Hepworth with her large scale outdoor sculptures, Yinka Shonibare with brightly coloured Dutch 'African' batik fabric.
- Find examples of Van Gogh's drawn portraits and compare them with Hockney's drawing of "Mother, Bradford. 19 Feb 1979" looking particularly at the patterning and lines. What are the similarities and differences?
- Make a drawing that includes you and your art hero/heroine.

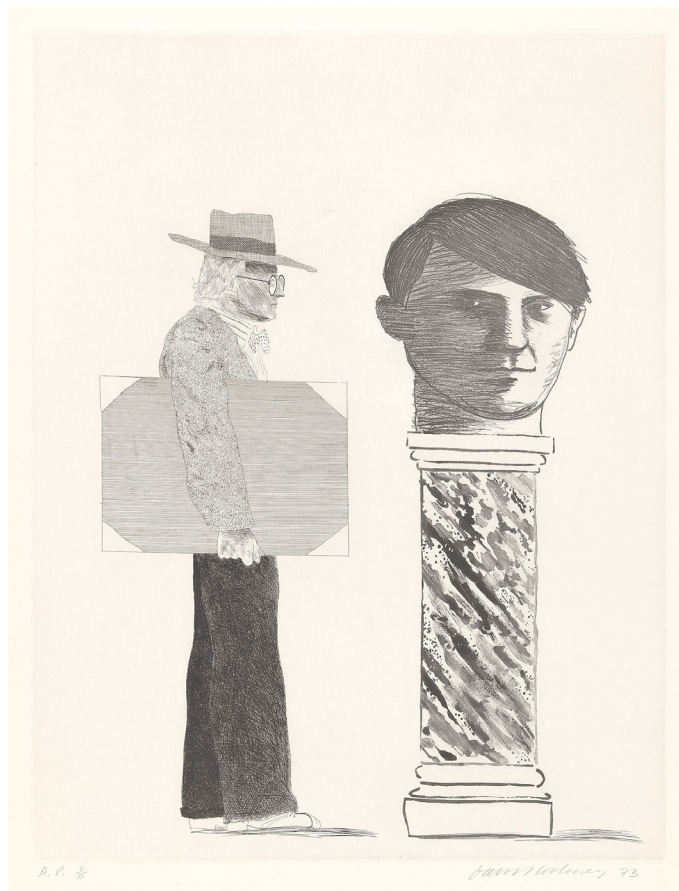


Image: David Hockney "The Student: Homage to Picasso" 1973.
Etching, soft ground etching, lift ground etching © David Hockney

Activity: Art Heroes

Look at the portrait of Gregory Evans “Gregory. Palatine, Roma. Dec. 1974” made early in their relationship. There are no shadows and the emphasis is on the graphic quality of the detailing including individually drawn hairs and creases in the clothes. This specific drawing style recalls the lines used in Hockney’s Rakes Progress etchings. Unlike painting, the inked and etched line cannot be modified and this lends a special quality to the work.

During 2019 Hockney created portraits of his friends Gregory and Maurice in Los Angeles depicting the men forty years on from the early portraits he made.

- Inspired by Hockney’s line drawings, create your own portrait of a friend or relative seated using a single line with a fine liner or rotary pen. Pay attention to details of the face and clothes. Create a series of these portraits from different angles getting used to the technique of drawing with an unbroken line.



Image: David Hockney “Gregory. Palatine, Roma. Dec. 1974”. Ink on paper
© David Hockney

Activity: Perspective

- Look at Hockney's photographic collages. What does this do for the picture?
- Choose an outside space near your home that has a long view. Either make drawings or take photographs of how things seem to look smaller when they are further away from you.
- Pay special attention to how lines appear, either as part of the pavement, in the road, benches in the park, railings – their direction, width and function.
- Use your research to underpin a portrait picture created in any medium you like, but the main impact of the work must be its perspective.

Quotes in this resource are reproduced from the exhibition catalogues *David Hockney Portraits*, 2006 and *David Hockney: Drawing from Life*, 2020.

(1) *David Hockney: Drawing from Life*, 2020 p.11
(2) *David Hockney Portraits* catalogue p.70
(2) *David Hockney Portraits* catalogue, p.43
(2) *David Hockney Portraits* catalogue p.222

Teachers' guidelines

There is a wealth of additional information about David Hockney's life and career and some suggestions of useful links and books are listed below.

There are fourteen portraits by Hockney in the National Portrait Gallery Collection as well as forty-nine portraits of the artist. These can be viewed online at:
npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp02210/david-hockney

The David Hockney Foundation:
thedavidhockneyfoundation.org

David Hockney official studio website
hockney.com/home

Annelly Juda Fine Art, London
Annellyjudafineart.co.uk/artists/david-hockney

Metropolitan Museum, New York
metmuseum.org/

Tate, London
tate.org.uk/

Further Reading

David Hockney: Drawing from Life
Sarah Howgate, National Portrait Gallery, 2020

Ways of Drawing: Artists' Perspectives and Practices
Julian Bell, Thames and Hudson, 2019

David Hockney Portraits
Sarah Howgate and Barbara Stern Shapiro, National Portrait Gallery, 2006

Hockney's Portraits and People
Marco Livingstone and Kay Hemer, Thames & Hudson, 2003

Portraiture. Facing the Subject
Joanna Woodall ed., Manchester University Press, Manchester & New York, 1997

Secret Knowledge. Rediscovering the lost technique of the Old Masters David Hockney, Thames & Hudson, 2001

Prints and Visual Communication
Jr. William M. Ivins, MIT Press, 1969.

The Portrait Now Sarah Howgate and Sandy Nairne, National Portrait Gallery, 2006

Self-portrait. Renaissance to Contemporary
Anthony Bond and Joanna Woodall, National Portrait Gallery, 2005.

Picturing the Self. Changing Views of the Subject in Visual Culture
Gen Doy, I.B.Tauris, 2005.

Portraiture
Richard Brilliant, Reaktion Books, 1991.

David Hockney (World of Art)
Marco Livingstone, Thames & Hudson, 1996.

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