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**FIRST-EVER DAVID HOCKNEY PORTRAITS EXHIBITION
IMAGES OF FRIENDS, FAMILY, LOVERS, AND SELF-PORTRAITS AT LACMA**

David Hockney Portraits

June 11–September 4, 2006



David Hockney (England, b. 1937)
Beverly Hills Housewife, 1966
Acrylic on two canvases
72 x 144 in.
Private collection
© David Hockney. All rights reserved.



David Hockney (England, b. 1937)
Peter Getting Out of Nick's Pool, 1966
Acrylic on canvas
84 x 84 in.
Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool
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What an artist is trying to do for people is bring them closer to something, because of course art is about sharing: you wouldn't be an artist unless you wanted to share an experience, a thought.

--David Hockney¹

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents *David Hockney Portraits*, the first exhibition devoted solely to Hockney's portraiture, one of the most significant facets of his work. Organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the National Portrait Gallery, London, in collaboration with LACMA and Senior Curator of Modern Art Stephanie Barron, the groundbreaking exhibition surveys half a century of the artist's career, revealing some of his most profound compositions, new and old.

For decades, Hockney has revisited the same intimate subjects—friends, family, lovers, and even himself—unveiling the often circular nature of his artistic preoccupation and also underscoring the range of his creative practice. In part because of his pioneering portraits, Hockney rapidly became the best-

known British artist of his generation. It is through the lens of Los Angeles, however, that much of his work is viewed. Fittingly then, *David Hockney Portraits* comes to L.A.—the city the artist has long called home—and to LACMA, which has already presented two previous exhibitions devoted to the artist.

“With this exhibition, we are able to experience half a century of Hockney portraits that are both immediate and intimate depictions of his sitters,” said Stephanie Barron. “In these sustained investigations of faces of the individuals he loves and appreciates, the artist explores his own relationships; the joys and sorrows of his inner circle; and even the looming realities of illness and death. Whether in small-scale, delicate line drawings, large-scale paintings, or bold, over size watercolors, time and again, these portraits reveal the close relationship that Hockney has had with many of the subjects.”

Approximately 160 examples of Hockney’s most personal—and powerful—works are included in the exhibition, starting with the artist’s first forays into portraiture. It is these seminal, small-scale pen and ink drawings, created during Hockney’s years as a student at Bradford School of Art and then at the Royal College of Art in London, that open the exhibition. Opposing in size, but at least equal in significance, are the portraits that Hockney began producing nearly a decade later. The works, just under life size and often featuring two people, include such major canvases as *Henry Geldzahler and Christopher Scott* (1969), *Mr. and Mrs. Clark and Percy* (1970 – 71), *Self Portrait with Blue Guitar* (1977), *Beverly Hills Housewife* (1966) and *My Parents* (1977). Though Hockney is perhaps best known for these iconic portraits, he continued to innovate through his “studio visitor” series, which is characterized by a intense body of work over a relatively short period of time: the small scale Malibu portraits of 1989, the digital photo collages of 1990 – 91, and the *camera lucida* drawings of 1999, all of which capture visitors to Hockney’s studio or home.

David Hockney Portraits concludes with the artist’s most recent work, marking his return to large-scale portraits. As with his earlier paintings, Hockney focuses on couples, eagerly examining their relationships, and also the link between the artist and the sitters. This latest group also includes heroic, single-standing figures and seated conversation-style arrangements. Painted in both watercolors and oils, these pieces hearken back to his grand portraits of the 1960s and 70s, and are among Hockney’s most expressive, majestic, and remarkable works.

The exhibition offers visitors the unique opportunity to view many portraits never before seen together, as well as Hockney’s own sketchbooks and preparatory photographs from the 1960s. Together, these works provide unprecedented insight into the artist’s intense observations of the people he chronicled repeatedly.

Along with a variety of media—painting, drawing, etching, watercolor, and photography—and an impressive cache of half a century's work, *David Hockney Portraits* is the most comprehensive assembly of Hockney's portraiture ever shown publicly, and offers a visual diary of the artist's life, friendships, and loves spanning his celebrated forty-year career.

Credit: This exhibition was curated by Sarah Howgate and Barbara Stern Shapiro and organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the National Portrait Gallery, London, in collaboration with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

The Los Angeles presentation was made possible in part by LACMA's Wallis Annenberg Director's Endowment Fund. Additional support was provided by the Frederick R. Weisman Philanthropic Foundation.

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LACMA Coordinating Curator: Stephanie Barron

About LACMA: In April 2006, Michael Govan became CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). He is the seventh person to hold the position of Director in the museum's 41-year history. Established as an independent institution in 1965, LACMA has assembled a permanent collection that includes approximately 100,000 works of art spanning the history of art from ancient times to the present, making it the premier encyclopedic visual arts museum in the western United States. Located in the heart of one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world, the museum uses its collection and resources to provide a variety of educational and cultural experiences for the people who live in, work in, and visit Los Angeles. LACMA offers an outstanding schedule of special exhibitions, as well as lectures, classes, family activities, film programs and world-class musical events.

LACMA is located at 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles CA, 90036. For more information about LACMA and its programming, log on to www.lacma.org.

Museum Hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, noon–8 pm; Friday, noon–9 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 11 am–8 pm; closed Wednesday, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Call 323 857-6000, or www.lacma.org for more information.

General LACMA Admission: Adults \$9; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+ \$5. Admission (except to specially ticketed exhibitions) is free every evening after 5 pm, the second Tuesday of every month, and for children 17 and under.

This is a specially ticketed exhibition: Adults \$15; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 65+ \$12; children under 17 free – tickets are required; Groups (10 +) \$10. For membership and ticketing information, please call 323 857-6151.

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¹ *David Hockney Portraits*, 2006, p12, preface, Sarah Howgate