

RA

Royal Academy of Arts

Art Detectives

A guide for young visitors

Art Detectives are supported by the Flow Foundation

David Hockney RA
82 Portraits and 1 Still-life

You will need a pencil to write and draw

Introduction

In this exhibition, you will see a series of portraits that artist David Hockney RA painted of people he knew: from his siblings to his studio assistant, from his housekeeper to gallery owners and the children of his friends. At first he just painted a few portraits, but once he got going he realised he was making a series, and that he could 'go on forever'. He painted each person sat on the same chair. He even used the same size canvas every time and a similar palette of blues and greens for the backgrounds. Despite this, each sitter is an individual and their personalities shine through.

Explore the exhibition and have fun meeting the people Hockney painted!

Clothing

Each person that Hockney painted is wearing clothes they chose to wear for the sittings.

First, Hockney drew the outline of the figure, then painted their clothing, then the background. He constantly looked at the sitter, rechecking every detail.

Whose outfit do you like best and why?

If you were having your portrait done by David Hockney, what would you wear? Draw your outfit here:

1 Still-life

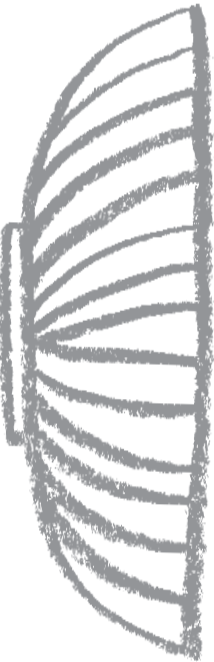


Find the one painting in the gallery that is not a portrait...

Each person came to Hockney's Los Angeles studio for seven hours a day, three days in a row.

They had to sit very still, in the same position, all day. One sitter did not show up!

Because Hockney was all ready to paint, he used the same colours and canvas and painted a still-life of fruit and vegetables instead.

Draw some fruit and vegetables that you can see in the still-life.




Choosing who to paint

Hockney chose to paint people he knows for this series.

Hockney chose the portrait of Hockney's sister, Margaret Hockney.

If you had to paint portraits of three people you know, who would you paint?

Why did you choose these people?



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The youngest sitter

Find number 73, Rufus Hale and number 62, Holden Schmidt.

Do you think Rufus is happy to be painted? Why or why not?

This portrait of 12-year old Rufus Hale draws on Hockney's knowledge of nineteenth-century portraiture. The sitter is dressed and posed formally.

Find the painting of Holden Schmidt, how are the two portraits different? How are they similar? (think about their clothes, their faces, their poses in the chair)

Composition

Look closely at the selection of colours Hockney uses in the different portraits.

Pick any two portraits that are side by side. What is different about the two portraits? What is the same?

Is the blue background behind the sitter always the same? How does it change?

If an artist were to paint your portrait, what chair would you want to sit on? Draw your chair below.

Mood

Have a look at the different expressions of the people in these portraits and at the way they sit...

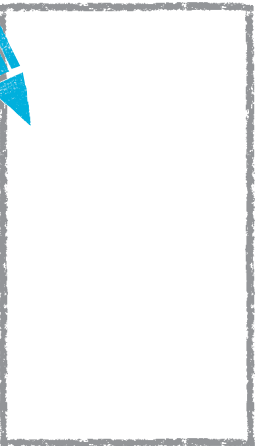

Can you find someone who looks.... (circle the ones you find)

Bored Tired Nervous Proud

Interested in the process of painting* As though they are laughing Like they want to leave

Draw the facial expression you would make if you had your portrait painted:

Clue: where are they looking?



Ask someone you know to sit for you for five minutes while you draw their portrait.

- Think about capturing the things that make them unique.
- Draw their clothes, and the way they position themselves.



*“When I get another person sitting there,
I always think, where do I end
and they begin?”* David Hockney

If you would like to see your portrait on the RA website, please hand in your completed Art Detective at the Reception Desk. Alternatively, if you would like to work on your picture at home and send it to us later, you can post it to:

Learning Department
Royal Academy of Arts
Burlington House
London W1J 0BD

Alternatively, tweet a picture of your portrait to @royalacademy or share it on Instagram using #ArtDetectives

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