



# David Hockney: Words & Pictures

30 June – 17 September 2017

Teacher Notes

# David Hockney: Words & Pictures

Friday 30 June – Sunday 17 September 2017

The Tweed Regional Gallery is proud to present an international exhibition to our visitors. With the generous financial assistance of the Tweed Regional Gallery Foundation Ltd., this landmark presentation is a first for the Gallery.

Drawn from the British Council Collection, the exhibition presents four major suites of artists' prints produced by David Hockney from 1961–1977.

United by their reference to historical works of literature and art, these prints were produced during the first two decades of Hockney's career when he established his international reputation as a Pop artist.

Cover image:

**David Hockney** *Serenade from The Blue Guitar* 1976 – 1977  
etching, Edition of 200, 20½ x 18", © David Hockney

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## ABOUT THE ARTIST

David Hockney was born in Bradford, UK. He studied at the local art college and at the Royal College of Art in London, where he was awarded the Gold Medal.

His career was launched on the crest of the Pop Art wave and his work and personality attracted a degree of attention from the outset which has never diminished.

In 1963 a visit to Egypt laid the foundations of a recurrent interest in Egyptian art. During the next decade Hockney travelled extensively and his work reflected his appetite for new environments and his capacity for exploring what he discovered.

He lived in Paris in the early 1970s but has made California his home since then.

Hockney's work has moved through a wide range of styles and he has throughout his career been fascinated by techniques and materials. He has explored the potential of acrylic, oil, crayon, pastel, pen, photography, stage design, moulded paper pulp, computer imaging and every kind of graphic medium. He has however always held a brief for the 'subject' in his work, contrary to the fashion for 'abstraction' and 'expressionism' with which he grew up.

Prints have been a major preoccupation through most his working life and he has won a number of international graphic prizes. In the 1980s Hockney built up a new reputation for himself in the field of stage design.

## FURTHER ARTIST RESEARCH

David Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, Thames & Hudson, London 1976

David Hockney, *That's the way I see it*, Thames & Hudson, London 1993

[www.hockneypictures.com](http://www.hockneypictures.com)

## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

This exhibition, drawn from the British Council Collection, focuses on the four major suites of prints produced by David Hockney over a sixteen year period from 1961–1977:

- *A Rake's Progress*
- *Illustrations for Fourteen Poems from C.P. Cavafy*
- *Illustrations for Six Fairytales from the Brothers Grimm*
- *The Blue Guitar*

## BRITISH COUNCIL WEB RESOURCE

<http://visualarts.britishcouncil.org/exhibitions/touring/david-hockney-words-and-pictures>

## READ

Richard Riley essay first published in *David Hockney: Prints from the British Council Collection*, The British Council / Editions Jannink, Paris, 2002

[https://www.britishcouncil.org.il/sites/default/files/david\\_hockney\\_essay\\_final.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org.il/sites/default/files/david_hockney_essay_final.pdf)

## A RAKE'S PROGRESS, 1961–63

In his first suite of prints, *A Rake's Progress*, Hockney transposed the moral tale of a squandered life based on William Hogarth's late 18th century series of the same name onto his own semi-autobiographical tales of a summer spent in New York.

Hockney began work on the *Rake's Progress* prints on his return from New York in 1961. This was his first suite of prints and was based on William Hogarth's moral tale of a squandered life told in eight copper-plate engravings published in 1735.

Hockney's intention had been to make eight etchings for his own series following Hogarth's original titles, but it was suggested he should extend the number of prints and publish it as a book. The intention had been to make 25 etchings but this was finally reduced to 16 which he was to work on over the next two years. The book did not materialise but after Hockney had finished and proofed the plates, *A Rake's Progress* was eventually published as a limited edition portfolio by Editions Alecto in 1965. Each plate in the series is inscribed with a title and the 16 plates are numbered from plate 1 and plate 1a through to plate 8 and plate 8a, rather than from 1-16, to remain more faithful to Hogarth's story told in eight plates.

Now transposed to New York, Hockney's semi-autobiographical 'rake'\* is seen discovering the good life found in a more liberated

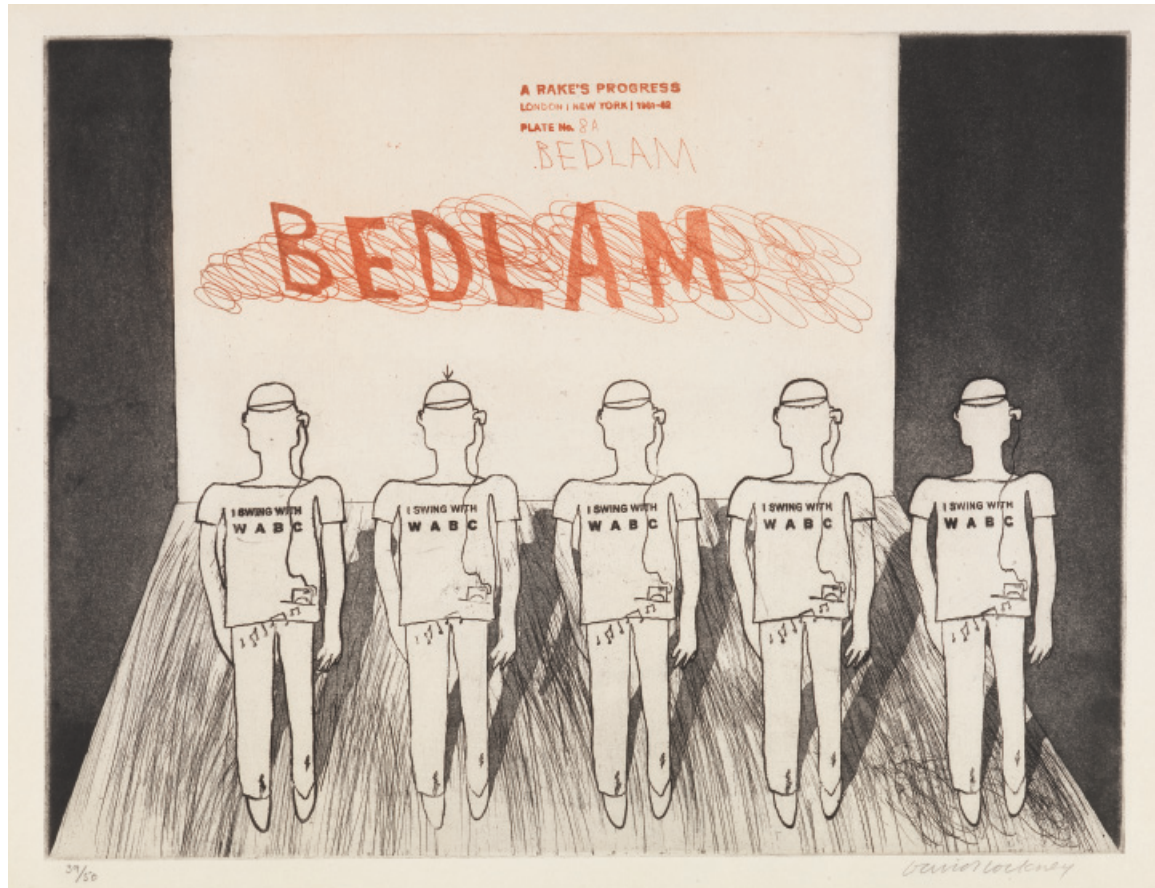
society. At first all goes well for the young man: he sells prints, is accepted by the 'good people', bleaches his hair for the first time, frequents bars and marries. Misfortune is to befall him as he runs out of money and is shunned by the 'good people'.

His ultimate fate, depicted in the final two plates, is not descent into madness as in Hogarth's tale, but into joining the mindless masses, the 'other people'. In his *Bedlam*, depicted in plate 8a, the only way of distinguishing the 'rake' from the other robotic figures is by a small arrow above his head, he has finally been subsumed into the uniform crowd where personal identity has disappeared.

\* In a historical context, a rake (short for rakehell, analogous to 'hellraiser'), was a man who was habituated to immoral conduct, particularly womanising. Often, a rake was also prodigal, wasting his (usually inherited) fortune on gambling, wine, women and song, and incurring lavish debts in the process.

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rake\\_\(character\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rake_(character))

## A RAKE'S PROGRESS, 1961–63



David Hockney *Bedlam* from *A Rake's Progress* 1961 – 1963  
etching, aquatint, Edition of 50, 17¼ x 11½", © David Hockney

### ARTWORK IMAGES

View all of the works in this suite here:

<http://visualarts.britishcouncil.org/collection/portfolios/a-rakes-progress>

### RESEARCH

View images of the original *A Rake's Progress*, a series of eight paintings by 18th-century English artist William Hogarth. The canvases were produced in 1732–33, then engraved and published in print form in 1734. The series shows the decline and fall of Tom Rakewell, the spendthrift son and heir of a rich merchant, who moves to London, wastes all his money on luxurious living, prostitution and gambling, and as a consequence is imprisoned in the Fleet Prison and ultimately Bethlem Hospital, or Bedlam. The original paintings are in the collection of Sir John Soane's Museum in London, where they are normally on display.

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A\\_Rake%27s\\_Progress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Rake%27s_Progress)

### DISCUSSION IDEAS

- Reflect on Hockney's interpretation of a 'squandered life' and what a modern re-interpretation might look like in current society.
- Discuss the notion of this series of work as an early 'storybook'.

## **ILLUSTRATIONS FOR FOURTEEN POEMS FROM C.P. CAVAFY, 1966**

Hockney's admiration for the poetry of Greek poet C.P. Cavafy inspired him to illustrate 14 of Cavafy's poems, capturing the sensuality of the original poetry with intimate drawings of his friends in London.

Cavafy (1863–1933) lived in the Egyptian city of Alexandria for much of his life, where he wrote poems inspired by the city's ancient history, and male same-sex relationships. Hockney borrowed an English translation of a Cavafy anthology from Bradford Library in 1960.

Hockney travelled to Egypt in 1963 visiting Cairo, Luxor and Cavafy's home city of Alexandria. It was almost another three years before he began work on the series of illustrations to accompany some of Cavafy's verse.

Hockney visited Beirut in January 1966 to soak up the atmosphere of the city he felt would be more like the cosmopolitan Alexandria of Cavafy's day, which had all but disappeared in the mid-1960s.

He selected 14 poems in a new translation by Nikos Stangos and Stephen Spender and began work on the plates in early 1966. He concentrated more on pure line than in his earlier etchings and drew some 20 line illustrations directly onto copper plates. 13 were finally

published by Editions Alecto in 1967 both as a limited edition book and six loose leaf portfolio editions. Only four of the illustrations are actually set against a Middle Eastern backdrop, for in order to capture the mood and inherent sensuality of the poetry, Hockney decided to use all his own experiences and, for the most part, the illustrations are based on intimate drawings of his friends in London.

The publication of these etchings in 1967 coincided with the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in England and Wales in July of that year. 2017 marks the 50th anniversary of this milestone in the campaign for equality.

## ILLUSTRATIONS FOR FOURTEEN POEMS FROM C.P. CAVAFY, 1966

*Portrait of Cavafy in Alexandria*

*Two Boys Aged 23 or 24*

*He Enquired After the Quality*

*To Remain*

*According to Prescriptions of Ancient Magicians*

*In an Old Book*

*The Shop Window of a Tobacco Store*

*In the Dull Village*

*The Beginning*

*One Night*

*In Despair*

*Beautiful and White Flowers*

### ARTWORK IMAGES

View all of the works in this suite here:

<http://visualarts.britishcouncil.org/collection/portfolios/illustrations-for-fourteen-poems-from-c-p-cavafy/view/portfolio/initial/i>

### RESEARCH

Find historical and current examples of openly gay characters in comic strips.

### DISCUSSION IDEAS

- Discuss similarities between Hockney's intimate drawings in this series and the way contemporary comic strips incorporate subtext and innuendo.
- Speculate about what Hockney's imagery might look like today — 50 years on from the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality or reflecting current issues facing the wider LGBTQIA community.



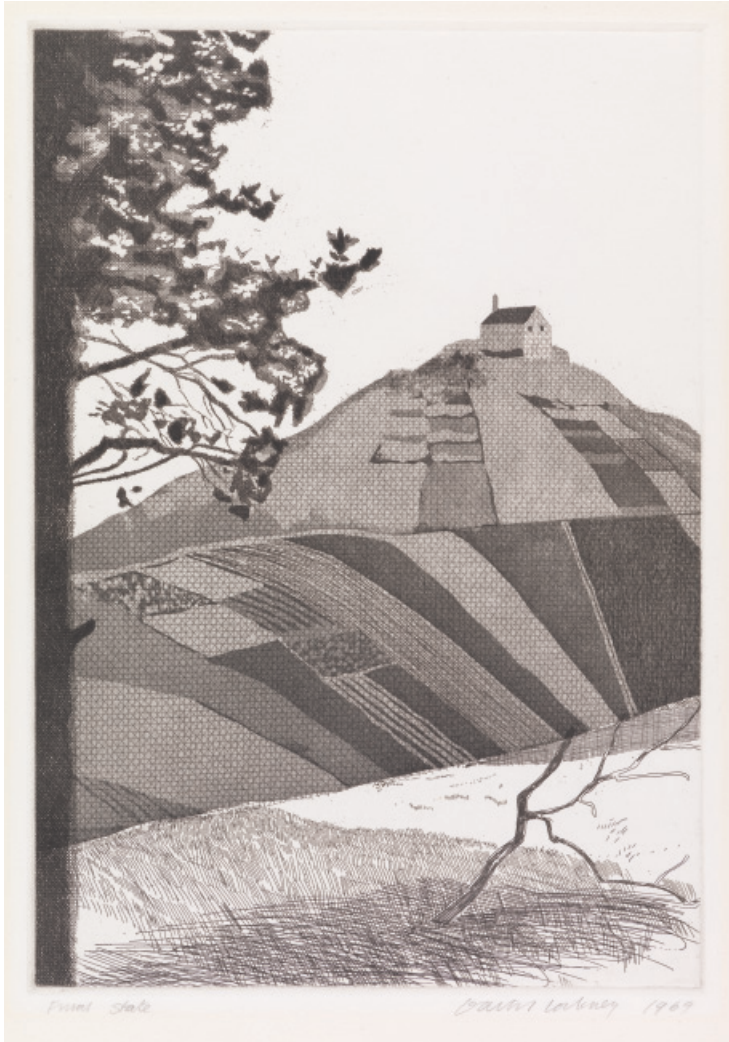
## ILLUSTRATIONS FOR SIX FAIRYTALES FROM THE BROTHERS GRIMM, 1969

His attraction to the simple, direct style of writing in the tales collected by the Brothers Grimm influenced one of Hockney's most ambitious printmaking projects, a series of 80 etchings illustrating six titles.

Working on illustrations of the world-famous tales collected by the German scholars and folklorists, Jakob Ludwig Karl (1778-1865) and Wilhelm Karl (1787-1859) Grimm, enabled Hockney to give full rein to his imagination. He had read all of the stories, some three hundred and fifty in total, and was attracted by the simple direct style of the writing. He planned to illustrate twelve of the tales, but finally settled on just six titles: *The Little Sea Hare*, *Fundevogel*, *Rapunzel*, *The Boy who left Home to learn Fear*, *Old Rink Rank*, and *Rumpelstilzchen*. In all he made over 80 etchings from which 39 were published by Petersburg Press in both book and loose-leaf portfolio editions in 1970.

He largely worked directly on to the copper plates so the drawing had a more spontaneous feel. The etchings were more complex than his earlier prints and most notable was his use of the traditional engraving technique of cross-hatching which, in addition to aquatint, he used for both areas of tone and in creating dense blacks. Though it was the first time he had employed the technique for his own prints, he had been aware of it from having studied the Hogarth etchings for his *A Rake's Progress* almost ten years earlier.

## ILLUSTRATIONS FOR SIX FAIRYTALES FROM THE BROTHERS GRIMM, 1969



**David Hockney**  
*A Wooded Landscape* from  
*Illustrations for Six Fairy Tales from the*  
*Brothers Grimm* 1969  
etching  
Edition of 100 Portfolio and 100 Book-A  
24½ x 17¾”  
© David Hockney  
Photo Credit: Richard Schmidt

### RESEARCH

Identify tales or myths that could provide inspiration for an artwork series.

### DISCUSSION IDEAS

- Compare the technical approaches Hockney employed in *A Rake's Progress* with the works in the Brothers Grimm series.
- Discuss the art of fantasy and explore the influence of horror films and Surrealist artists, including René Magritte and Francis Bacon, on Hockney's 'fairy tale' imagery in this series.

## THE BLUE GUITAR, 1966–67

The original suite *The Blue Guitar*, 1977 was based on the poem *The Man with the Blue Guitar* by the American poet Wallace Stevens, who had in his time been inspired by Picasso. The series of 20 colour etchings, with their vast array of imagery and styles, are an homage to the Spanish master.

Between 1973 and 1975, Hockney spent most of his time in Paris where he began making etchings at Atelier Crommelynck, founded by the brothers Aldo and Peiro Crommelynck with whom Picasso had made prints during the last twenty years of his life.

In the first three months of working at the studio, Hockney learned many etching techniques he had not known or been able to master before, including a successful way of using the ‘sugar-lift’ process. A variation on the traditional aquatint method, sugar-lift enables the artist to work directly on the plate with a brush using a mixture of sugar and a water-soluble medium. It is a very spontaneous way of working, much favoured by Picasso, and once processed, etched and printed; the plate can hold the tonal range of the original brush marks.

Crommelynck also taught Hockney his own method of making coloured etchings using just one plate rather than having to register separate plates for each colour. It was to prove something of a revelation and was a technique employed in *The Blue Guitar*.

The etchings for this suite were inspired by the poem *The Man with the Blue Guitar* by the American poet Wallace Stevens (1879-1955). Written in 1936, the poem had in turn been inspired by the Picasso Blue Period painting of 1903 *The Old Guitarist* (in the collection of the [Art Institute of Chicago](#)), and is concerned with the complex relationship between art and life, imagination and the interpretation of reality.

Hockney had first read the poem in the summer of 1976 and made a series of drawings which were to lead to the etchings. He had not intended that they should be literal illustrations but rather interpretations of the verse.

The prints are filled with references to Picasso, and in both the vast array of imagery and styles, coupled with the technical virtuosity employed by Hockney; the prints are an homage to the Spanish master.

## THE BLUE GUITAR, 1966–67



**David Hockney**  
*The Old Guitarist* from  
*The Blue Guitar* 1976 – 1977  
Etching  
Edition of 200  
20¾ x 18”  
© David Hockney

### RESEARCH

The Blue Period is a term used to define the works produced by Spanish painter Pablo Picasso between 1901 and 1904 when he painted essentially monochromatic paintings in shades of blue and blue-green, only occasionally warmed by other colours.

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Picasso%27s\\_Blue\\_Period](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Picasso%27s_Blue_Period)

### DISCUSSION IDEAS

- Research artworks from this period and identify the similarities between Hockney’s approach and Picasso’s work with reference to subject matter and style.
- Discuss the ‘directness’ of the techniques of *sugar-lift* and *aquatint* and consider why it suited Hockney’s approach to these works.

## SCHOOL GROUPS VISITS

We are pleased to offer a special ticket price of \$6 per person for school groups visiting the *David Hockney: Words and Pictures* exhibition (on display 30 June – 17 September 2017). These tickets can simply be purchased on the day or we can invoice your school following the visit.

Please contact the Gallery to discuss your school's visit and booking:

Email: [GalleryEducation@tweed.nsw.gov.au](mailto:GalleryEducation@tweed.nsw.gov.au) | Telephone: (02) 6670 2712

You can download a School Booking Form [here](#)

This international exhibition is enhanced by a collection of original artworks by Hockney kindly loaned to the Tweed Regional Gallery by the artist's brother John Hockney, a resident of Australia. The Gallery is thrilled to present these works, which include colourful portraits of the artist's mother and a self-portrait, alongside the British Council Collection.

Teacher Notes compiled by Jodi Ferrari, Education and Audience Development Officer, Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre.

Design by Rick Shearman, Range Creative Studio [rangestudio.com](http://rangestudio.com)

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Exhibition Partner



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Open 10am – 5pm (DST)  
Wed – Sun, Free admission

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