

Press release

**DAVID HOCKNEY. WORKS FROM THE TATE COLLECTION
1 FEBRUARY TO 10 MAY 2020**

Press conference: Thursday, 30 January 2020, 11 am

With *David Hockney. Works from the Tate Collection*, the Bucerius Kunst Forum is devoting a large-scale show to one of the premier artists of our day. The retrospective was compiled in cooperation with Tate and comprises around 100 works, most of which come from the Tate's own collection. The focus is on David Hockney's wide-ranging career as a painter, draughtsman and graphic artist. Some of his major works are being exhibited together in one exhibition for the first time in Germany, including *The First Marriage (A Marriage of Styles I)*, *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy*, and *My Parents*.

In early 2020, the Bucerius Kunst Forum will devote an exhibition to David Hockney (b. 1937), one of the foremost artists of our day. The show will feature works from over sixty years of Hockney's artistic career – from his early works as an art student to the large-format panorama *In the Studio* from 2017. This presents a unique opportunity to explore Hockney's multifaceted paintings, drawings and graphic art. *David Hockney. Works from the Tate Collection* is a journey through the many techniques Hockney has worked with since his days as a student at London's Royal College of Art in his investigation of the nature of seeing and visual representation. The show traces the artist's constant search for new forms of expression as well as his experiments with perspective and with how we perceive images versus reality. Hockney's many portraits and nudes furthermore demonstrate his keen eye for interpersonal relationships and his interest in the male body.

The chronologically arranged exhibition begins with *Woman with a Sewing Machine* from 1954, one of Hockney's earliest prints. The model here is the artist's mother, Laura Hockney, whom he would go on to portray in numerous works. Based on this early piece, along with self-referential works such as *Doll Boy* (1960-1961, Hamburger Kunsthalle), the first aspect of his career to be examined is Hockney's development during his studies at the Bradford School of Art and the Royal College of Art in London. Inspired by Picasso, he already broke away during this period from the conventional notion of an artist having one singular style.

Hockney made his first trip to the USA in 1961. Back in London, he processed his impressions of New York in a series of etchings, which he called *A Rake's Progress* in tribute to William Hogarth. The exhibition dedicates a separate section to this series, as well as to Hockney's early Los Angeles phase and his Kavafi etchings. Hockney moved to the US west coast for the first time in 1964 and proceeded to produce intimate domestic scenes such as

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Man in Shower, Beverly Hills (1964). This is also where Hockney's lifelong fascination with the difficulties of depicting transparent surfaces such as water began. Extensive travels and long stays abroad would from then on have an effect on his choice of techniques as well as his themes, which often stem from literary sources. In 1966 Hockney travelled to Beirut to gather ideas and make sketches for etchings based on poems by the Egyptian-Greek poet Konstantinos Kavafis. The resulting etchings mirror with their fine lines Kavafis's subdued language. And the homoerotic relationships Kavafis addresses in his poems are depicted by Hockney with similar openness.

In the early 1970s, Hockney turned his attention to naturalistic double portraits, finishing in 1971, after several overpaintings, what is in Great Britain his most popular work: *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy*. In the exhibition, numerous portraits from this period illustrate the artist's increasingly naturalistic rendering of human figures, light and shadow.

In the 1980s, Hockney studied Chinese scroll paintings in depth. The knowledge he gained contributed to his engagement with perspective. He began producing horizontal compositions influenced by Cubism, showing panoramic indoor and outdoor views. A prime example featured in the show is the lithograph series *Hotel Acatlan*. The interest in Cubist and Deconstructivist methods of depiction that had been sparked by Hockney's photographic experiments is also evident in his portraits and still lifes, to which another section of the exhibition is dedicated.

While Hockney still resisted abstraction in his student days, he went on to express feelings and states of mind in abstract form in the early 1990s rather than illustrating them figuratively. In the late 1990s, Hockney devoted himself to depicting not only the landscapes of his Yorkshire homeland but also the Grand Canyon, a favourite motif since the 1980s. He spent a week there making oil pastel studies, leading to the large-format *A Closer Grand Canyon* (1998, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebæk), which marks the end of the exhibition.

David Hockney. Works from the Tate Collection is a collaboration with the Tate, which contributed most of the works on view. In addition, there are individual works on loan from the Hamburger Kunsthalle, the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebæk and the Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst in Ghent. The show was conceived by the British curator and Hockney expert Helen Little. Overall, the Bucerius Kunst Forum is showing some 100 paintings, drawings, lithographs and etchings, among them major works that are being exhibited for the first time in Germany, including *The First Marriage (A Marriage of Styles I)*, *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy*, and *My Parents*. All of these works testify to Hockney's passion for experimenting with different media and to how much he resists being confined to a particular style.

A catalogue with essays by Kathrin Baumstark, Helen Little, Gregory Salter, Uwe M. Schneede and Lukas Schepers is being published by Hirmer Verlag, Munich (approx. 215 pages with illustrations of the exhibited works, 29,90 euros at the exhibition).

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