

DAVID HOCKNEY AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

A Bigger Picture 2012 & 82 Portraits and One Still Life 2016

DIRECTOR **PHIL GRABSKY** | PRESENTED BY **TIM MARLOW**

From the Director:

When I was a teenager studying English at school I remember staring at a poster on the classroom wall. It was of a young couple with a cat. I remember clearly wondering to myself why, of all the posters and paintings a school teacher could have chosen, had my English teacher chosen that one? The picture was *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy* by David Hockney. The more I looked at it, the more interested I became. The very title and subject matter seemed so casual compared to the Renaissance paintings I had been studying. This was no religious scene or depiction of a great duke and duchess. This couple looked like my parents.

Now, a few decades and dozens of art films later, I have had the opportunity to work with the painter of that work, namely David Hockney. It has always been the intention of Exhibition on Screen to cover old masters through to contemporary artists. So while, on the one hand, we were making a film about Hieronymus Bosch – who died more than 500 years ago – we were also making this film on Hockney, arguably Britain's most popular living artist. Indeed, judging by the success of his travelling exhibitions, I think it is fair to say he is held in equal esteem throughout the globe.

Over the past five years he has staged two blockbuster exhibitions at the Royal Academy of Arts in London which drew in excess of 750,000 visitors. We filmed both as part of an attempt to explore the later work of this undoubtedly great artist. This is not a retrospective film – trying to cover (as we do in so many of our films) his entire biography. I decided to just focus on the creativity and output on these two most recent exhibitions, to show what this artist – now in his 80s – has produced and why. The first exhibition at the RA in 2012 is called 'A Bigger Picture' and focussed on the landscape of Hockney's native Yorkshire and the second, '82 Portraits and One Still-Life' shows an artist, back where he now lives in LA, creating works full of energy, curiosity and a desire to see the world - his own intimate world - afresh.

The Royal Academy itself is one of my favourite galleries anywhere in the world and constantly puts on some of the best exhibitions you could hope to see. I have filmed there many times and I love it. Many of the staff – not least the curator of both shows Edith Devaney - went to great lengths to help us with this film and I want to publically thank them here. Even if you only visit its café or its lovely basement bar do make sure you visit! Finally a big thanks to our presenter for this film: the excellent Tim Marlow, with whom we'd earlier made over 100 TV art shows.

Phil Grabsky

"Privileged access to Hockney's creativity"

GQ Magazine



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