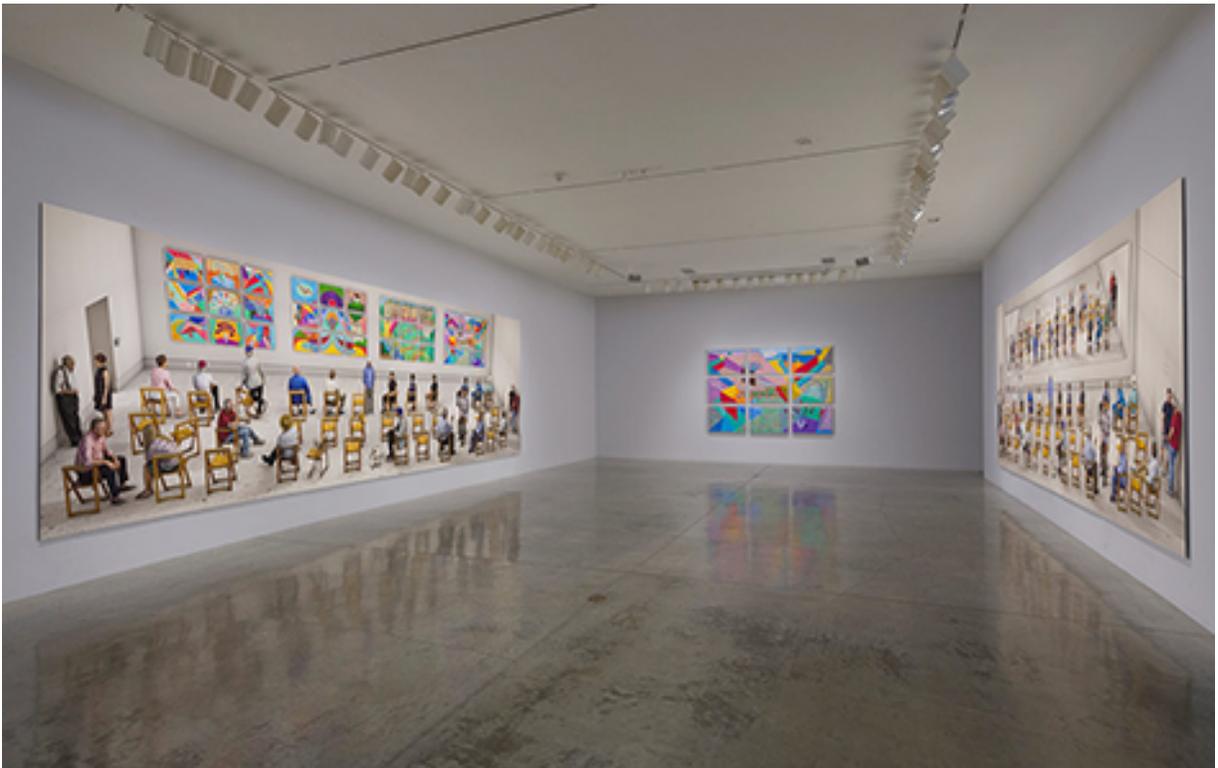


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*David Hockney: 'Something New in Painting (and Photography) [and even Printing] . . .
Continued
Studying and Observing the Diversity of Mankind ...*

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by Jody Zellen



One of the most compelling and fascinating things about **David Hockney's** career, is his embrace of technology and his desire to make new works outside of a traditional frame of reference. He was one of the first to break apart space to create collages with **Polaroids**, draw with an **iPad** and to build a rig so as to be able to film multiple perspectives in the landscape simultaneously. While he continues to both draw and paint landscapes and portraits, he also utilizes digital technologies to explore the passage of time. In ***Something New in Painting (and Photography) [and even Printing]... Continued***, Hockney has produced mural scale images (over 24 feet long), that are composited from his sessions photographing people who visit his studio. The photographs, sometimes taken on multiple days depict the sitters from many different vantage points. Hockney refers to them as “photographic drawings.”

Pictured Gathering with Mirror and ***Pictures at an Exhibition***, (2018), are installed on opposite walls. Both look into an imagined studio space from above. In ***Pictures at an Exhibition***, three rows of folding wooden chairs, occupy the foreground, facing a wall of Hockney's recent paintings. Numerous figures are seated in these chairs gazing at four nine-

part works. Some are engaged in conversation, a few are casually standing, either against the walls at either end or amongst the seated. In *Pictured Gathering with Mirror*, while the position of the chairs and figures remains the same, the wall with the paintings now contains a large mirror reflecting the seated and standing viewers. Because these works face each other, gallery viewers become analogous to the audience in the images. To further complicate the illusion, the actual paintings are also dispersed through the space so visitors can bounce back and forth between looking at the paintings and their photographic reproductions. To create these images, Hockney photographed people from multiple perspectives— shooting them from the front, back and sides. He then digitally composited the various elements to create the final compositions. The result is works with disorienting perspectives that depict imagined spaces that cannot really exist.

Viewers Looking at a Ready-made with Skull and Mirrors, 2018, is another illusionistic work in a smaller room. A tall, rectangular room with a tiled-floor is constructed from the same elements. The three visible walls are almost entirely covered by framed mirrors over twenty feet high. Six seated and one standing figure encircle a 'ready-made' sculpture— a stack of metal carts with three shelves that are painted either red, blue, or yellow. In actuality, Hockney photographed a single cart from varying perspectives and digitally created the sculpture by changing its size, angle and orientation. The figures, many who appear in the other photographic murals, look at the sculpture. The mirrors reflect their varying orientations. Again, we as the audience join the figures as we regard the work.

The mixed media portraits on view in the upper gallery and the four acrylic paintings made of nine canvases each, read as familiar. Hockney has a deft hand and can capture the essence of his subjects with ease. Most of the portraits are made with charcoal and crayon on canvas, and have a light, sketch-like quality. Each portrait depicts a seated figure in a nondescript space. The pieces display a familiarity and comfort that pervades many of Hockney's portraits. While the people depicted in the portraits do not appear in the larger photographic drawings, the paintings presented on the fabricated wall are included in the exhibition.

These four acrylic paintings are brightly colored presentations of real and imagined interior and exterior spaces. Hockney creates abstracted landscapes and still lives, fragmenting the compositions across nine canvases. The segments cohere in the mind's eye although they are framed individually and spaced a few inches apart. Grids are a constant in Hockney's work and he has mastered dividing a composition across multiple panels. This fragmentation allows for individual narratives that connect to create a whole. For example, in ***The Walk to the Studio***, 2018, it is possible to imagine Hockney ambling up the blue stairs with a yellow railing across the sloped landscape that is filled with grass and trees toward his studio, a sky-lit building surrounded by potted plants and cacti.

Hockney is a rare artist who moves seamlessly between abstraction and representation. He chooses to paint people as a way to study and observe the diversity of mankind. That he can faithfully render anything is a given. Yet many of his landscapes reduce the world to a gesture and graphic colors. Rather than continually reproduce what he sees, Hockney explores film and photography to take advantage of what new technologies can offer. He looks for expansive ways to picture the world and continually surprises with these creations.

<https://artnowla.com/2019/03/01/david-hockney-something-new-in-painting-and-photography-and-even-printing-continued/>