

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## David Hockney Exhibition: 'A Bigger Picture' at The Royal Academy

### **Lead**

As one of Britain's greatest living artists, David Hockney needs little introduction, writes Simon de Burton.

The Bradford-born painter, who will be 75 this year, is known for the diversity of his work which has ranged from his celebrated series of swimming pool pictures created while living in California during the 1960s, to the 'joiners' photo collages formed with Polaroid prints.

He has also worked on stage designs for Glyndebourne and La Scala, created an entire book based on drawings of his Dachshund dogs and embraced computer art programmes such as the Quantel Paintbox of the 1980s and, most recently, the iPad 'Brushes' application.

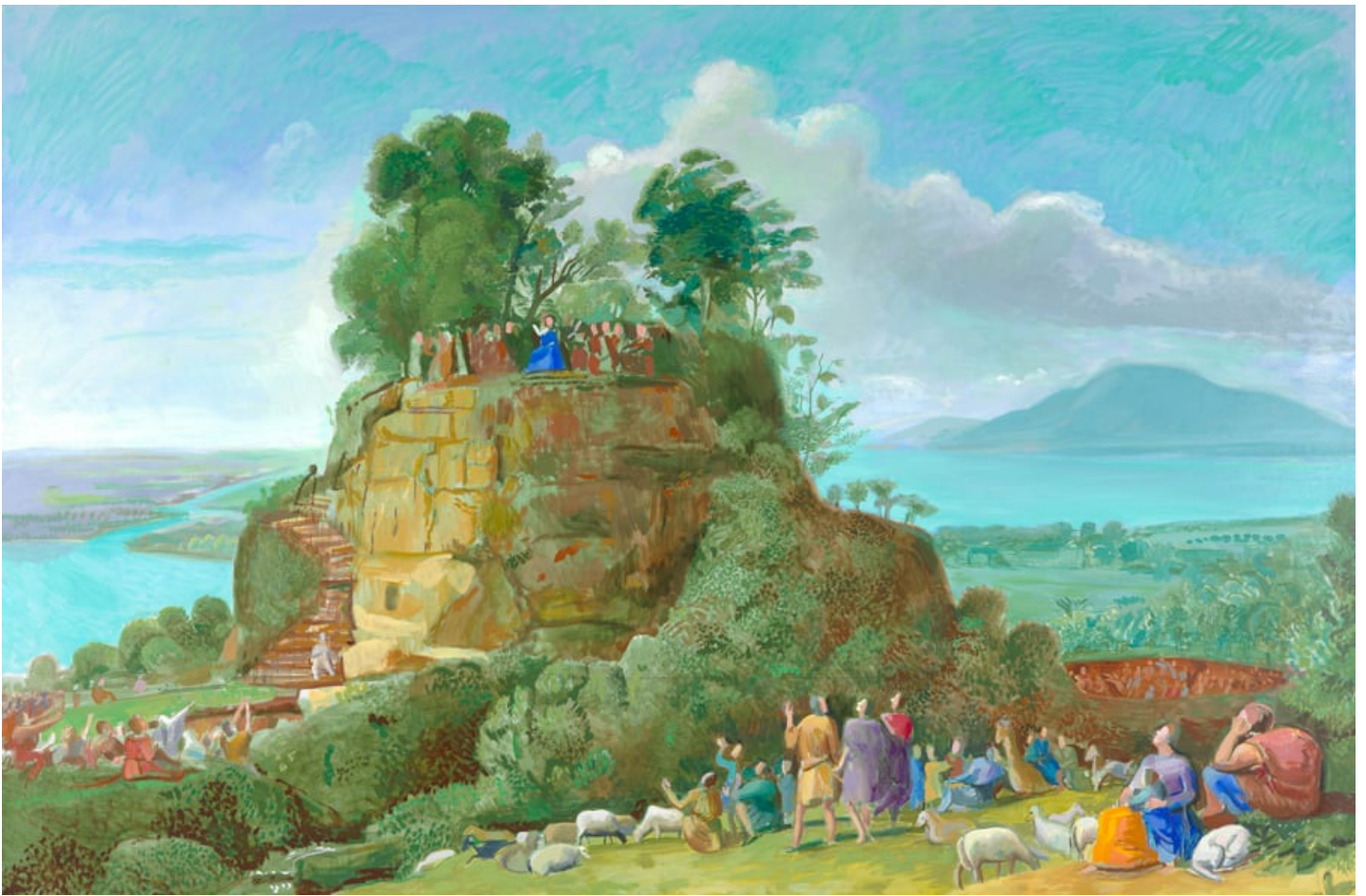
The accessibility of his work has made him hugely popular around the world, a fact evinced by an exhibition of 150 of his creations at London's National Portrait Gallery in 2006 which proved to be one of the most successful shows in the gallery's history. In the same year, Sotheby's sold the iconic pool picture 'The Splash' for a record £2.9 million.



Now the great man – still a vehement smoker – has left California behind and is again based in his native Yorkshire, in the rather less glamorous surroundings of Bridlington. For the last seven years he's been out in all weathers, capturing the vast landscape of the East Yorkshire Wolds in an extensive series of 'en plein air' works.

The exercise has produced hundreds, possibly thousands, of sketches, drawings and paintings, some of which account for a large proportion of 150 Hockney works now on show at the Royal Academy where they are attracting massive crowds from around the globe.

'Massive' also describes many of the canvases and, indeed, the show itself. It occupies no fewer than 13 galleries and the largest work measures more than 15 metres across.



And these images are not only remarkable for their size, but for their use of colour, too. 'Vibrant' isn't the word – some of the hues Hockney has used to capture the changing Yorkshire seasons during his years of observation are positively psychedelic, giving works such as his six-canvas painting of Woldgate Woods run up during November 2006 a remarkable, other-worldly quality.

Some say this show is 'shallow' and overly commercial. More likely, however, it is simply the creation of a blue-chip international artist with a stellar 50-year career behind him who has nothing to prove other than the fact that he loves making art more than ever.

I just hope that I'm still as excited about my work when I enter my eighth decade and that I'm as willing to embrace new technology as Hockney is – he created 51 of the works on show using the Brushes application on his iPad, printing the results on paper and enlarging them to vast proportions.

This is Yorkshire as no one but Hockney has ever seen it. If you're looking to be uplifted, pay a visit.

*David Hockney 'A Bigger Picture' runs at The Royal Academy, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1 until April 9. Open Sunday - Thursday 10am - 6pm; Friday 10pm - 10pm; Saturday 9am - 10pm. Adult tickets £14. Tel: 0844 209 0051. 0844 209 0051.*

Photos: Richard Schmidt

## Gallery



**Source URL:** <https://www.classicdriver.com/en/article/art/david-hockney-exhibition-bigger-picture-royal-academy>  
© Classic Driver. All rights reserved.