

## News

## David Hockney's New Portrait of Harry Styles Unveiled

The painting will join other works by the 86-year-old artist in a forthcoming exhibition at London's National Portrait Gallery.



Rhea Nayyar August 2, 2023



David Hockney Painting Harry Styles, (With Portrait of Clive Davis) Normandy Studio 1st June 2022 (photo by Jean-Pierre Gonçalves de Lima; all images courtesy Pace Gallery)

The names Harry and David conjure up the image of **fancy gift baskets** for many Americans, but when it's Harry Styles and David Hockney in particular, that's certainly the gift that keeps on giving. David Hockney's new brightly colored and previously unseen depiction of the British pop star was released in anticipation of his major exhibition coming up this November at the National Portrait Gallery (NPG) in London, featuring 33 new portraits and over 150 works from public and private collections internationally as well as from the artist's own stores.

The exhibition, *David Hockney: Drawing from Life*, was first on view at the NPG for **less than three weeks** between February and March of 2020 before the COVID-19 pandemic forced a worldwide lockdown. Exploring over six decades of the artist's fixation with portraiture across drawing, painting, and photography, the exhibition originally centered on Hockney's self-portraits and renderings of his mother Laura, his former partner and curator Gregory Evans, and his friends — including designer Celia Birtwell and master printer Maurice Payne. Now, more than three years after its closure, the show will return to the NPG for a three-month

run between November 2 and January 21, 2024, with a series of new works created between 2021 and 2022 including the rendering of Styles.



David Hockney, "Harry Styles, May 31st" (2022), acrylic on canvas, 48 x 36 inches (© David Hockney; photo by Jonathan Wilkinson)

Clad in a yellow and orange striped cardigan, blue jeans, and a pearl necklace as well as a variety of rings, Styles was among several friends and visitors who spent time with the artist in his Normandy home and studio for a live portrait session.

According to *Vogue*, while American record producer Clive Davis was sitting for his own portrait by Hockney, he plugged Harry Styles's latest album to the painter, prompting him to reach out to the singer. The painting of Davis actually makes a cameo in a photo of Hockney and Styles seated together. A **demonstrated Hockney fan**, Styles responded to the portrait request almost immediately.



Harry's custom pair of Bode cords featuring 1957, his father's birth year, 1994, his own birth year, Ruby, his goddaughter's name and a portrait of English painter David Hockney.



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A closer look at the custom-painted Emily Adams Bode corduroys Styles wore for Vogue 2020 featuring a portrait of David Hockney (screenshot Rhea Nayyar/Hyperallergic via [Twitter](#))

In an interview with the [Guardian](#) last month, Hockney, who wasn't initially clued into Styles's celebrity status, admitted that the pop star was a bit of a challenge to portray as he prefers to paint friends. "I think if you know a face — you have to know a face a bit — I don't know his face that well," he explained. "Everybody's face is a bit different." (Though he later told *Vogue* that he's seen all of Styles's music videos now.)

Fans of both artists have shared their excitement over the portrait on social media, even going through the trouble of identifying [the Molly Goddard lambswool cardigan](#) Styles wore for the portrait sitting. Others have not been so receptive to the new painting, criticizing what they perceive as an amateurish aesthetic and lack of resemblance to Styles. On [Instagram](#), one user said it looks like Hockney depicted Irish actor Aidan Turner and another stated that it's nice to know that the wealthiest living artist "also can't do hands very well."

Aside from the portraits of Styles and Davis, Hockney's bevy of new works includes renderings of himself, his partner Jean-Pierre Gonçaves de Lima, and locals who work with him, including his gardener and podiatrist.