



DAVID HOCKNEY

A Rake's Progress

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PORTLAND ART MUSEUM, OREGON



David Hockney, *The Arrival*, plate 1 from *A Rake's Progress*, 1961–63

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A Rake's Progress

David Hockney emerged as one of England's daring new artists in 1961 after exhibiting in the annual *Young Contemporaries* exhibition held at Whitechapel Art Gallery, London. This exhibition launched Hockney, as well as the first generation of British Pop artists, onto the public stage.

Hockney quickly rose to international prominence as a leading artistic voice of his generation. He is as prolific as he is versatile; in the course of his six-decade career, the artist has explored drawing, printmaking, photography, digital art, movies, and set designs for the opera. This exhibition focuses

on a small but highly revealing aspect of Hockney's oeuvre: his engagement with William Hogarth's engravings of 1735, *A Rake's Progress*. Hogarth's rake informed Hockney's own groundbreaking set of prints, and later led to his first commission for the opera—*The Rake's Progress*, which Igor Stravinsky composed in 1951, himself inspired by Hogarth's visual tale. *David Hockney: A Rake's Progress* offers a rare glimpse into the artistic dialogue between Hockney and Hogarth as seen through his prints and his designs for the opera, generously lent by the David Hockney Foundation. The Portland Art Museum is pleased to partner with the Foundation and the Portland Opera to present this formative work of one of the most significant artists of our time.

Born in 1937 in Bradford, England, Hockney discovered the joys of etching early in his career as a student at the Royal College of Art in London. He showed an immediate gift for the medium and found great pleasure in working with the copper and acid to create his witty, elegant images. The sixteen plates of *A Rake's Progress* are among his first etchings, and were inspired by William Hogarth's set of eight engravings of the same name, published in 1735. Hogarth's version chronicles the rise and fall of the fictional Tom Rakewell, the son and heir of a rich merchant, who squanders his money on luxurious living, prostitution, and gambling in London. When his funds run out, Rakewell marries an old maid to finance his libertine



William Hogarth, *A Rake's Progress*, plate 1, 1735 (plate); ca. 1760 (print)

lifestyle, but soon succumbs to madness and dies in the notorious Bethlam Hospital for the insane, more commonly known as Bedlam. Hogarth's engravings were a remarkable success; his highly detailed scenes spelled out a narrative that was eagerly followed by his contemporaries. They were praised as "novels in paint" and held all the drama and complexity of a stage play—as Stravinsky would bear out in 1951 with *The Rake's Progress*, his operatic interpretation of the work.

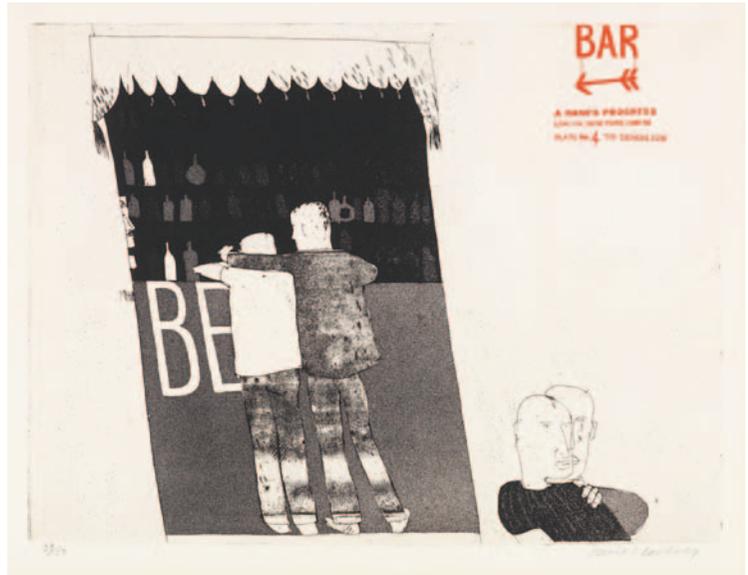
It is not surprising that Hockney, a perspicacious student of art history, paraphrased Hogarth to tell his own coming-of-age narrative in *A Rake's Progress*. Hockney transposed the setting to New York, drawing on his experiences of his 1961 summer sojourn to the city, and plays the role of the protagonist, as a young gay man navigating the wonders and snares of New York for the first time. Hockney executed his suite in etching and aquatint, in a charming, lively style that, in the words of critic Marco Livingstone, "simultaneously paid tribute to one of the greatest printmakers England had produced, while announcing his own intentions as an artist with a rare gift both for narrative and for condensing imagery into memorably concise graphic inventions."¹



David Hockney, *Receiving the Inheritance*, plate 1a from *A Rake's Progress*, 1961–63

Hockney populates the series with telling details about his adventures in New York wittily filtered through Hogarth's template. After disembarking in America (*The Arrival*, plate 1), young Hockney is seen *Receiving the Inheritance* (plate 1a).² Unlike Hogarth's rake, who is bequeathed his fortune from his miserly father, Hockney earns his "inheritance" when curator William S. Lieberman of the Museum of Modern Art purchases two prints from the artist. In the following sheets, Hockney explores the delights of New York, dyes his hair blonde (*The Start of the Spending Spree and the Door Opening for a Blonde*, plate 3), and, like Hogarth's rake, seeks libations (*The Drinking Scene*, plate 4), in which Hockney transforms Hogarth's riotous and salacious tavern into a subdued gay bar. Like Tom Rakewell, Hockney (fictionally) *Marries an Old Maid* (plate 4a), watches desperately as *The Wallet Begins to Empty* (plate 6a), and eventually lands in *Bedlam* (plate 8a). Hockney's confident mark making, economical line, and gift for wry observation launched his career as one of the most diverse and talented modern printmakers of the second half of the twentieth century.

Hockney returned to the subject of the rake a decade later, at the request of opera director John Cox, for



David Hockney, *The Drinking Scene*, plate 4 from *A Rake's Progress*, 1961–63

the Glyndebourne Festival Opera's production of Igor Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*. Hockney was enchanted by the libretto, written by poets W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman. After first struggling with the music, the artist warmed to Stravinsky's score, describing it as "linear and spiky" and marked by "an element...of eighteenth-century pastiche, while it was totally Stravinsky."³ Hockney became

convinced that the sets and costumes must pay homage to Hogarth and his time and soon struck upon the idea of exploiting Hogarth's technique of crosshatching (using tightly spaced parallel lines to create tone and shading) to render the sets. Moreover, he restricted himself to a limited palette of red, blue, and green—the ink colors that would have been available to the printers of Hogarth's era. By exploiting crosshatching as the dominant visual motif, Hockney endowed the opera set designs and costumes with a linearity that speaks to not only the language of prints but also the modern angularity of Stravinsky's score. Cox immediately recognized this as the right path. He recalls, "When he came back with the crosshatching idea...I was delighted because the idea was so musically correct.



David Hockney, *The Start of the Spending Spree and the Door Opening for a Blonde*, plate 3 from *A Rake's Progress*, 1961–63

Being a 20th-century utilization of an 18th-century technique, it coincided exactly with the sources of Stravinsky's own musical inspiration."⁴

Once he had settled on this visual vocabulary, Hockney immersed himself in the project. He began creating watercolor and ink studies of the costumes and stage curtain, and models of the set done to scale. He felt it was imperative that the crosshatching motif succeed, so he traveled from Hollywood, where he did much of the design, to Glyndebourne to evaluate his concept. "We made up lots of samples of crosshatching in different sizes, and hung them up on the stage. I sat in the back of the theater with binoculars, deciding what the scale should be. If it was done too small, it would look like a solid colour. If it was too big, it would look like a chequerboard—and that would be ridiculous. So I made some calculations and came up with the exact size."⁵

The artist clearly reveled in the challenges the opera posed, and his designs exhibit a childlike delight as well as a sophisticated understanding of theater production and staging. Although his studies for costumes had merely to outline the color and shape, the artist animated the figures with a sense of movement, as seen in *Tom, Town Clothes* and *Baba's Wedding Dress*. The crazy assortment of stage props also intrigued the artist, who lavished equal attention on a prosaic *Painting of a Pike*, the exotic *Lustometer*, and the magical *Bread Machine*, which turns stones into sustenance.

Like his witty etchings of 1961–63, Hockney's designs for the opera are both playful and rigorous; moreover, the opera designs perfectly blend the aural world of Stravinsky with the visual landscape of Hogarth. By deftly mixing the eighteenth-century sources into a twentieth-century idiom, the artist effectively acknowledged his antecedents while creating something unmistakably his own. The Cox/Hockney production of *The Rake's Progress* was first performed on June 21, 1975, at the Glyndebourne Festival Opera. The production was an immediate success, and the experience of designing for the stage proved to be very liberating for the artist; many critics—as well as the artist himself—see this moment as a critical breakthrough for Hockney, one that suggested new directions and growth for his work as a painter.⁶ He subsequently went on to create acclaimed costume and set designs for a host of operas performed in Europe and North America. The *Rake's Progress* débuts in Oregon at the Portland Opera on June 11, 12, and 14, 2015.



William Hogarth, *A Rake's Progress*, plate 3, 1735 (plate); ca 1760 (print)

David Hockney: A Rake's Progress offers an intimate glimpse into the inspiration and working process of one of England's most accomplished and versatile artists.

—Mary Weaver Chapin, Ph.D.
Curator of Graphic Arts

The Museum wishes to thank David Hockney and Gregory Evans, curator for the artist, for their support of this project, as well as Shannan Kelly and Julie Green of the David Hockney Foundation, Los Angeles, California.

¹ Marco Livingstone, "Three Hockney Prints Rediscovered," *Print Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 4 (December 2006), p. 417.

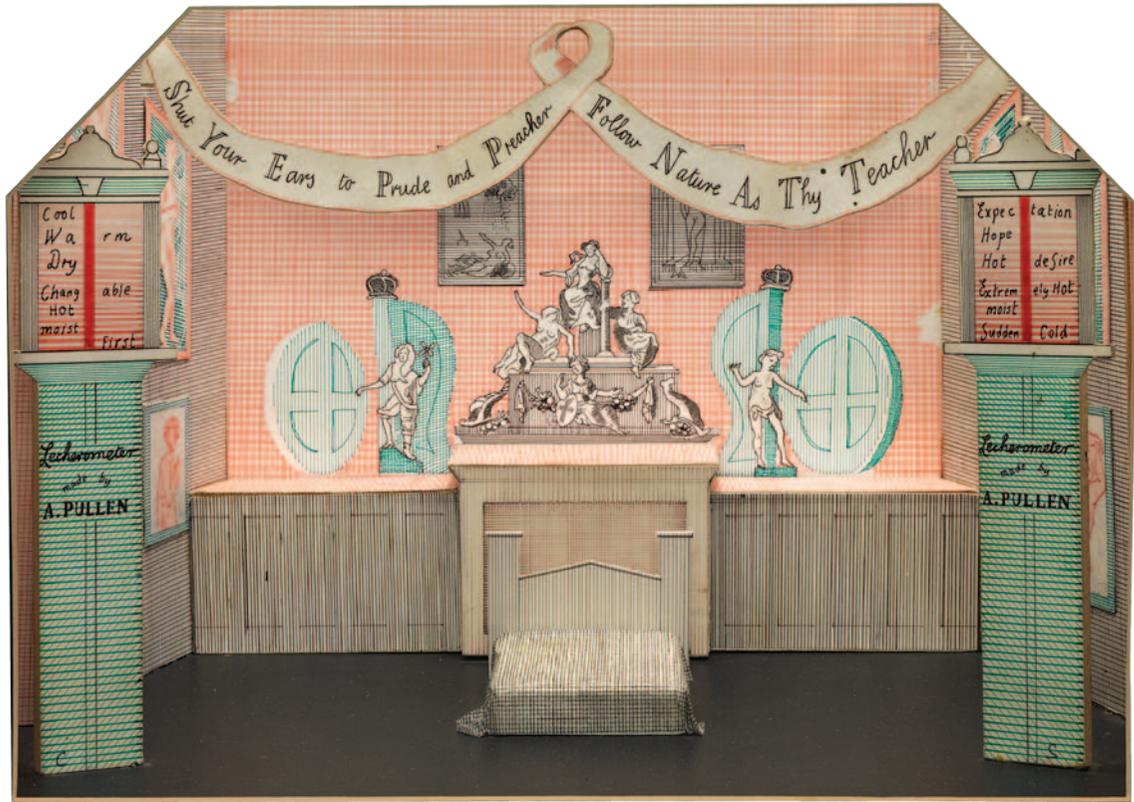
² Hockney's suite contains twice the number of plates as Hogarth's; to maintain the correspondence to the original, each plate is given a number and then a letter, i.e., 1 is followed by 1a; 2 is followed by 2a, etc.

³ David Hockney and Nikos Stangos, *That's the Way I See It* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1993), p. 21.

⁴ Martin Friedman, *Hockney Paints the Stage* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1983), p. 78.

⁵ *Hockney Paints the Stage*, p. 102.

⁶ Hockney relates that, thanks to his work on *The Rake's Progress*, "suddenly, I realized I'd found a way to move into another area. In a sense I'd broken my previous attitudes about space and naturalism, which had been bogging me down." *That's the Way I See It*, p. 29.



David Hockney, *Mother Goose's Brothel*, 1975

CHECKLIST

Dimensions are given in inches; height precedes width precedes depth.

William Hogarth

(English, 1697–1764)

A Rake's Progress, 1735 (plate); ca. 1760 (print)

8 engravings on paper

plates: 14 x 16 ¹/₁₆

sheets: 17 ¹⁵/₁₆ x 23

Portland Art Museum: Amanda Snyder Fund

2013.126.1–.8

All of the following work is by David Hockney (English, born 1937) and is on loan courtesy of the David Hockney Foundation, Los Angeles, California.

A Rake's Progress, 1961–63

16 etchings with aquatint on paper

The Arrival, plate 1

plate: 11 ⁷/₈ x 15 ³/₄

sheet: 15 ¹/₂ x 22 ¹/₂

Receiving the Inheritance, plate 1a

plate: 11 ⁷/₈ x 15 ³/₄

sheet: 15 ¹/₄ x 22 ¹/₂

Meeting the Good People (Washington), plate 2

plate: 11 ⁷/₈ x 15 ³/₄

sheet: 15 ³/₄ x 22 ¹/₄

The Gospel Singing (Good People) Madison Square Garden, plate 2a

plate: 11 ⁷/₈ x 15 ³/₄

sheet: 15 ¹/₂ x 22 ¹/₂

The Start of the Spending Spree and the Door Opening for a Blonde, plate 3

plate: 11 ⁷/₈ x 15 ³/₄

sheet: 18 x 23

The Seven Stone Weaking, plate 3a

plate: 11 ⁷/₈ x 15 ³/₄

sheet: 16 ³/₄ x 20 ¹/₂

The Drinking Scene, plate 4

plate: 11 ⁷/₈ x 15 ³/₄

sheet: 19 ¹/₂ x 24 ¹/₂

Marries an Old Maid, plate 4a

plate: 11 ⁷/₈ x 15 ³/₄

sheet: 17 ¹/₄ x 24 ¹/₂

The Election Campaign (with Dark Message),

plate 5

plate: 11 ⁷/₈ x 15 ³/₄

sheet: 19 ¹/₂ x 24 ¹/₂

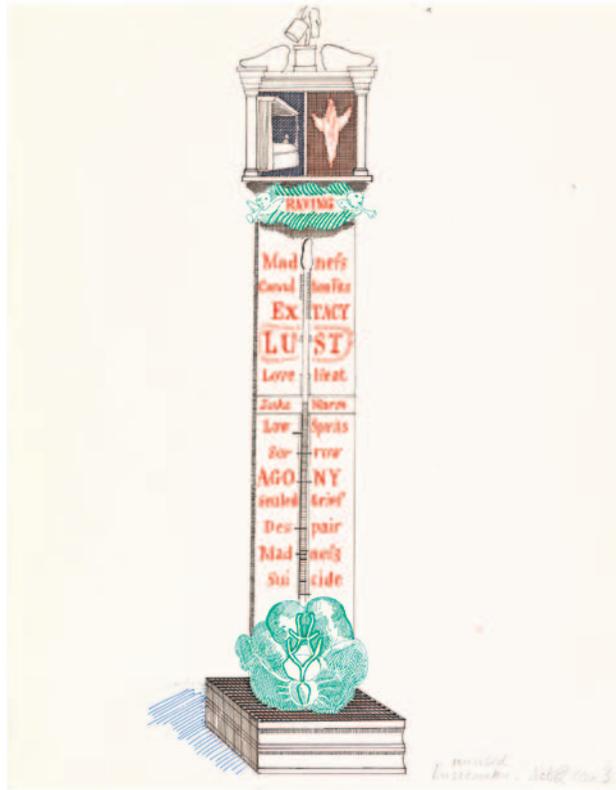
Viewing a Prison Scene, plate 5a

plate: 11 ⁷/₈ x 15 ³/₄

sheet: 16 ¹/₂ x 20



David Hockney, *Tom, Town Clothes*, 1975



David Hockney, *Unused Lustometer*, 1975

Death in Harlem, plate 6

plate: $11 \frac{7}{8} \times 15 \frac{3}{4}$
sheet: $19 \frac{1}{2} \times 24 \frac{1}{2}$

The Wallet Begins to Empty, plate 6a

plate: $11 \frac{7}{8} \times 15 \frac{3}{4}$
sheet: $19 \frac{1}{2} \times 24 \frac{1}{2}$

Disintegration, plate 7

plate: $11 \frac{7}{8} \times 15 \frac{3}{4}$
sheet: $19 \frac{1}{2} \times 24 \frac{1}{2}$

Cast Aside, plate 7a

plate: $11 \frac{7}{8} \times 15 \frac{3}{4}$
sheet: $19 \frac{1}{2} \times 24 \frac{1}{2}$

Meeting the Other People, plate 8

plate: $11 \frac{7}{8} \times 15 \frac{3}{4}$
sheet: $19 \frac{1}{2} \times 24 \frac{1}{2}$

Bedlam, plate 8a

plate: $11 \frac{7}{8} \times 15 \frac{3}{4}$
sheet: $17 \frac{3}{4} \times 11 \frac{1}{2}$

Designs for the Opera

***The Rake's Progress*, 1975**

Ann, Scene 1, 1975

Ink on paper
14 x 11

Baba—Red Pantaloons, 1975

Ink on paper
17 x 14

Baba the Turk, 1975

Ink on paper
14 x 11

Baba's Hanging Objects, 1975

Ink and collage on paper
 $11 \frac{3}{4} \times 16 \frac{1}{4}$

Baba's Wedding Dress, 1975

Ink on paper
14 x 11

Bedlam, 1975

Ink on cardboard
 $16 \frac{5}{8} \times 21 \frac{5}{8} \times 12 \frac{5}{8}$

Bread Machine, 1975

Ink and wash on paper
14 x 17

Chandelier, Tom's Room, 1975

Pencil and ink on paper
 $10 \frac{1}{2} \times 13 \frac{7}{8}$

Cobweb Drape, Tom's House, 1975

Ink on paper
 $19 \frac{3}{4} \times 24$

Drop Curtain, 1975–79

Ink and collage on cardboard
14 x $20 \frac{1}{2}$

Graveyard, 1975

Ink on cardboard
16 x 21 x 12

Front and Back of Painting of a Pike, 1975

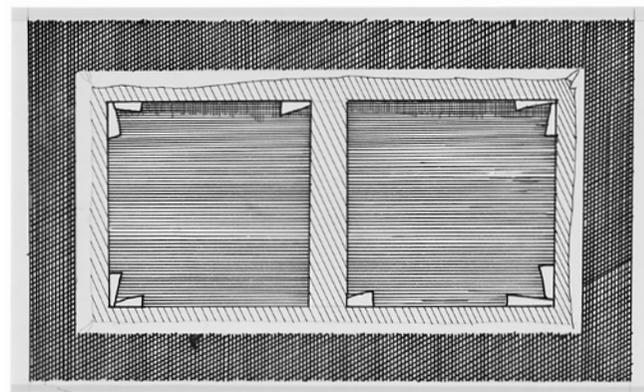
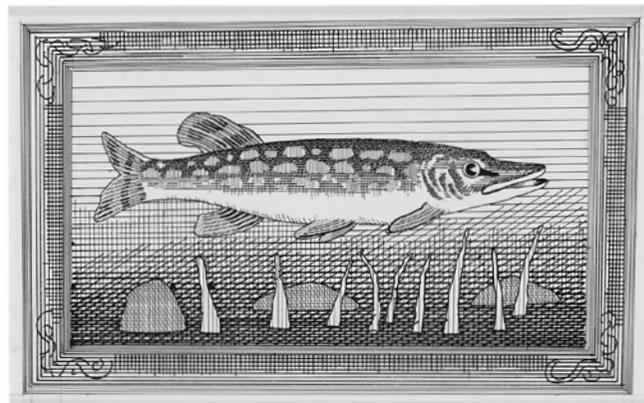
Ink on paper
14 x 11

Lustometer and Bread Machine, 1975

Pencil and ink on paper
14 x 17



David Hockney, *Nick (Shadow)*, 1975



David Hockney, *Front and Back of Painting of a Pike*, 1975

Mother Goose, 1975

Ink on paper
14 x 11

Mother Goose's Brothel, 1975

Ink on cardboard
16 x 21 x 12

Nick (Shadow), 1975

Ink and collage on paper
14 x 11

Sellem, Scene 7, 1975

Ink on paper
14 x 11

Street Scene, 1975

Ink on cardboard
16 x 21 x 12

Study for Mother Goose, 1975

Ink and collage on paper
14 x 17

Tom, Scene 1, 1975

Ink on paper
14 x 11

Tom, Town Clothes, 1975

Ink on paper
14 x 11

Tom's Room with Baba's Hanging Objects, 1975

Ink and photographs on cardboard
16 x 21 x 12

Trulove, Scene 1, 1975

Ink on paper
14 x 11

Trulove's Garden, 1975

Ink on cardboard
16 x 21 x 12

Unused Lustometer, 1975

Ink on paper
13 ⁷/₈ x 11

Photographs

Auction Scene, from the production of *The Rake's Progress*, Mexico City, April 29, 1984
Composite Polaroid
21 ¹/₂ x 50

All photos are by Richard Schmidt, and all work is © David Hockney.

David Hockney: A Rake's Progress was organized by the Portland Art Museum and curated by Mary Weaver Chapin, Ph.D., curator of graphic arts, in cooperation with the David Hockney Foundation. It was developed in conjunction with the Portland Opera's production of *The Rake's Progress*, June 11, 12, and 14, 2015.

The exhibition is supported in part by The Boeing Company, Mary Chomenko Hinckley and Greg Hinckley, and the Vivian and Gordon Gilkey Endowment for Graphic Arts.

Cover: David Hockney, *Drop Curtain*, 1975–79



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