

# ENGLAND

David Hockney has often been regarded as a playboy of the art world. He has had lascivious relationships, and he has run among strange and crazy artistic circles. Yet he has always retained a sense of stability in his life through his constant and tireless devotion to his work. Hockney is an artist that has always enjoyed success and praise, facing little to no hardship in his career. What is interesting about his life is not the problems he has encountered, but the strides he has taken to bypass much human suffering and malaise.

David Hockney was born on July 9, 1937, in Bradford, England, to Laura and Kenneth Hockney. The Hockneys were, as David said, a "radical working-class family." Laura and Kenneth were solid parents who only wanted their children to have the best education possible. Laura raised her children as strict Methodists and resolutely shunned smoking and drinking in the home. Kenneth was a passionate radical and a conscientious objector during World War I. David Hockney was always considered an eccentric in Bradford. He never really cared what people thought of him and always did as he pleased. He spent afternoons at Sunday School drawing cartoons of Jesus, much to his teachers' dismay. As a young child, Hockney

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developed an obsession with opera when he first saw the Carl Rosa opera company's production of La Bohème.

In 1948, David Hockney won a scholarship to the Bradford Grammar School, one of the best schools in the country. Here he enjoyed his art classes most and thus decided that he wanted to become an artist. Furthermore, he disliked the other subjects he was required to study. In 1950, he asked to be transferred to the Regional College of Art in Bradford so that he could more seriously pursue his interest. However, the headmaster recommended that he first finish his general education before transferring anywhere. Hockney responded with misfit behavior towards his teachers and poor grades, even though he had found much success in school before this. He spent his class time doodling in notebooks. Nonetheless, his artistic leanings also won him prizes and recognition, and he drew comics for the school newspaper. Overall, he was a likeable and intelligent student with many friends. In 1953, Hockney finally enrolled in the College of Art and began painting with oils, his medium of choice for most of his life. Hockney learned that painting was a process of

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seeing and thinking, rather than one of imitation. His artwork was abstract and quite personal and allowed him to deal with human sexuality and love in a public, yet still inhibited manner. He developed a penchant for painting mirrors and loved the artwork of painters such as Francis Bacon and other contemporaries. Socially, he made a lot of friends, but never really expressed any sexual interests. His group of acquaintances would often travel into London to catch various art shows. In the summer of 1957, Hockney took the National Diploma in Design Examination. He graduated with honors and then enrolled in the Painting School of the Royal College in London two years later, where and when he would gain national attention as an artist.

Hockney immediately felt at home at the Royal College. There were no steadfast rules or regulations. Not only did he find much success and pride in his work, but he also thrived in the many friendships he made there. He and his friends spent much of their time in the studio, but they explored the pubs and coffee bars around town as much as possible. Hockney was a serious student, however, and dedicated much effort to painting. During his first term, he experimented with more abstract styles, but he felt unsatisfied with that work, and he still sought his own style. His professors were good and receptive to his artwork, but Hockney seemed to learn the most from his fellow students who shared similar artistic interests and insights. Furthermore, he was quite a self-motivated sort of person and began to feel

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