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David Hockney finds new perspective in exhibition

James Pickford



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David Hockney

An exhibition of new works by [David Hockney](#) exploring the boundaries of digital photography and painting was unveiled at a London gallery on Thursday. Smoking cigarettes and wearing a grey suit and red tie, the 77-year-old British artist appeared at the show's opening at Annely Juda Fine Art, which features 35 pictures produced in his Los Angeles studio during the past two years.

Mr Hockney said his experiments with digital photography and perspective allowed him to create a new form of image. "I'm finding out now you can do a lot more with perspective than we thought because of digital," he said. "I know I'm altering photography now and that's quite something to do."

Some are self-referential, depicting people looking at images in the studio or containing images of other paintings in the show or previous works. They are of two types: painted portraits of the artist's friends, often reversing perspective; and collages of hundreds of photographs of a subject, digitally combined to produce a single, highly detailed image with multiple points of perspective.

One picture shows three people seated in Hockney's LA studio, looking out towards the viewer, their impact sharpened by Mr Hockney's collage technique. "It's like 3D without the glasses," he said.

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The artist produced the works during a highly prolific period following his return to Los Angeles from his native east Yorkshire, where he had painted a series of [monumental, vivid landscapes](#) of woods and fields near Bridlington. Using his friends as subjects, he "immersed" himself in his studio for two years, barely leaving his house and studio, said Peter Goulds, director of LA Louver gallery, which will host the show from July.

Mr Hockney said he planned shortly to return to his studio for another burst of creativity. "That's all I want to do now — work in the studio. What else is there?"

At the launch was Brad Boutems, 61, a landscape gardener who met the artist in 1975 and features in several of the works, including *The Card Players*, a nod to the painting of the same name by Paul Cézanne. He said Mr Hockney worked with a "quiet intensity" during the painting, without talking to his subjects. "He looks and paints, looks and paints. It's compelling."

The show opens on Friday, in the same week that a Picasso painting broke the world record for an auction sale, selling at Christie's in New York for \$179m. Such sums did "not really" make sense to him, Mr Hockney said. "But I suppose if you then ask how much we spend on films, a film can cost \$100m and it just disappears."