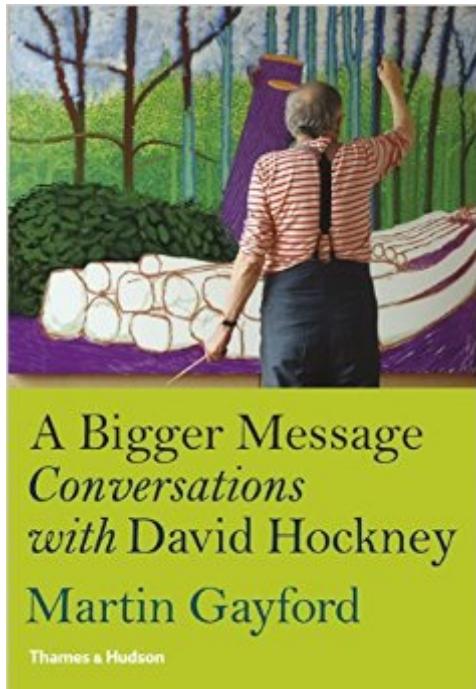


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A Bigger Message: Conversations With David Hockney



Synopsis

A self-portrait of this major artist, told through a wide-ranging series of interviews and conversations with Martin Gayford. David Hockney's exuberant work is widely loved and widely praised, but he is also an incisive and original thinker on art. Based on a series of conversations between Hockney and the art critic Martin Gayford, this book distills the essence of the artist's lifelong meditations on the problems and paradoxes of representing a three-dimensional world on a flat surface. How does drawing make one see things clearer and clearer and clearer still? What significance do differing media, from a Lascaux cave wall to an iPad, have for the images we see? What is the relationship between the images we make and the reality around us? And how can we fully enjoy the pleasures of just looking at trees, or faces, or sunrises? These conversations are punctuated by wise and witty observations by both artist and interviewer on many other artists—Vermeer, Tiepolo, Caravaggio, Van Gogh, and Monet among them—and enlivened by shrewd insights into the contrasting social and physical landscapes of California, where Hockney spent so many years, and East Yorkshire, his birthplace, to which he has now returned. 100+ full-color illustrations

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Customer Reviews

What a delightfully written book about an artist who is willing to share so much about himself with the reader. The dialogue is easy and enjoyable to read with the right balance of conversations along with informative facts and illustrations. It is easy to see why Hockney's personna is bigger than his art, no other contemporary artist has studied the science and art of making two dimensional art from

the three dimensional world as much as Hockney and then been willing to answer questions about his philosophy and art and also be filmed numerous times while painting makes him perhaps the most revealed and beloved artist of our time. Any book on Hockney becomes dated quickly as he is constantly reinventing his art, this book adds some of his latest endeavors into technology and photography using 9 cameras at the same time to record a scene that earlier would have just used one camera. Wow, what a genius, let's hope he lives and produces for another 20 years! The reproductions of his work are numerous, but many are too small to be enjoyed to their fullest, also the quality of the paper is below most standards for art reproductions but fine for the text and perhaps it is part of the balancing act between the text and images. The dialogue and author's note make for easy and enjoyable reading, the chapters are short making it easy to read several during a break. If you are a Hockney fan and want to see examples of his latest works and thoughts then buy this soon before it sells out like many of his other recent art books.

Martin Gayford's new book about David Hockney is not a biography, but rather a series of on-going conversations Gayford had with Hockney over a ten or so year period in many locations. Most were at Hockney's house in a secluded area in East Yorkshire, where he moved after having lived in Los Angeles for many years. The conversations, which make up the basis of the book, give full rein to Hockney's endless interest in almost every kind of creative endeavor. David Hockney is 74 years old and has been immersed in creativity of one sort or another since childhood. He's dabbled in photography, computer graphics, stage design, and many other forms in addition to his well-known paintings. He seems to be constantly asking questions about how and why both living things and art - in all its forms - come to life. The influences of past artists and designers on his work is readily acknowledged by Hockney. He's had a prodigious creative output in the past 55 years and until I read Gayford's book, I never realised how pervasive Hockney's influence has been on current artists. He seems to be an on-going link from past creativity to current and future creativity. Author Martin Gayford knows what questions to ask David Hockney to get the best and most interesting answers. He's a long-time art critic in London and knows artists and their foibles and seems to work with those foibles to make fascinating articles and books. I've read his recent book on Lucien Freud, which was every bit as well-written as this one on David Hockney. For anyone wanting to know more about David Hockney, his genius and the work that flows from that genius, this is a good book to read. Gayford includes examples of most of the artwork being discussed - that work by Hockney as well as other artists - as well as a good timeline of Hockney's life. Reading this book is a wonderful experience.

David Hockney has been making art since the early 1960s - a fact that is difficult to believe as he is still as fresh and creative as ever. Hockney has always enjoyed a romance with the public: his art, ever changing in nature, has always been accessible and representational while pushing the boundaries of the current art traditions. Remember the period of the multilayered Polaroid cascades forming scenes of famous people chatting in a room as well as other topics? Those are in museums now, only to be nudged aside by his many other fascinating experiments with the visual arts - such as computer art, magnificent sets for the BIG operas such as 'Tristan und Isolde', 'Turandot', and 'The Magic Flute', simple landscapes of his homes in Los Angeles and in England, brilliant portraits of his parents, famous people, his dachshund, still lifes etc. Author (or rather co-author as much of the written text is Hockney's own brilliant writing) Martin Gayford has mastered the art of interview and draws from Hockney some profound musings on the 'infinite variety of nature'. The book abounds in Hockney's trademark gracious style as well as in written passages that produce food for thought. All of this is accompanied by an abundance of images from every stage in the long artistic life of this continuing genius. This is more than an art monograph. This is a demonstration of the intellect and drive of an artist who despite being a heavy smoker and being almost deaf, continues to be creatively inexhaustible. The bridge between the eye and the mind is a journey he has mastered and continues to challenge himself and us to look more closely at the world around us.

Highly Recommended. Grady Harp, December 11

An exceptional and compelling read. For me this brought back that wonderful feeling of "a good book", largely, I think, because I'm so caught up with reading electronically etc, it was just great to have a real book in my hands again. Part of this also is the excellent pictures throughout. The publishers show a lot of care in not leaving the reader short changed in any way. Fundamentally, Hockney is a superb communicator verbally, a genuine intellectual, who can put into words what his art, and others, is all about. On top of that Gayford is nicely restrained and lets the material do its talking in simple question and answer format. What also becomes clear is that Hockney is an innovator, always exploring, never lazy, and one of the 20th Century's most important artists.

Great to get into the mind of a wonderful artist. Written over a long period it really covers, almost incidentally a lot of issues about seeing, drawing and using technology as a new art tool. Also inspirational that an eighty year old can keep up and learn and master new things.

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