# THEATRE AND THEATRICALITY
# IN THE WORK OF DAVID HOCKNEY, 1961-1978

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## Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the involvement of artist David Hockney (b. 1937) with theatre and theatricality. Interspersed with his studio artwork, Hockney's designs for opera, dance and drama have comprised a significant aspect of his illustrious career. They have stimulated change and exchange in his personal creativity; formed a bridge between fine art and the performing arts; and afforded interaction with music, text and theatre technology. Focusing on the period 1961 to 1978, this investigation assesses the nature and extent of these relationships and Hockney's broader engagement with 'the theatrical'. It is the first sustained critical study to address these precise areas of interdisciplinary research.

Using textual, pictorial and audio-visual sources, including performance recordings and personal interviews, this analysis explores the dialogue between Hockney's stage designs and his work in other media; his theatrical engagement with the ventures of other artists and creators; and his response to the specific challenges of designing for the performing arts. Whilst often marginalised by curators and historians, Hockney's theatre involvement is shown to be an integral and motivational facet of his oeuvre and an expression of his wider commitment to 'theatricality' as an artistic ideal.

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## 1. Introduction

Few major visual artists have been as ardently involved in creating for the stage as David Hockney. His designs - for sets, costumes, and extending to lighting concepts - have been central to repeated productions of eleven different theatrical works (five operas, two ballets, two plays and two opera/ballet triple bills), and these have been staged by leading companies around the globe.[1] These theatre ventures have been a pivotal force within the artist's creative endeavour, allowing him to work three-dimensionally and explore spatial illusion, spurring new artistic directions, and serving as a tool to overcome barriers in his struggle to free his art from naturalistic representation. They have both informed and *been* informed by his work in the studio, and afforded dialogue and interaction with other art forms and creators. The aim of this thesis is thus to establish and investigate what can be learned about Hockney's creativity through selective focus on his stage designs and, specifically, through the lens of creative exchange.

This area has not been the subject of previous scholarly exploration or sustained critical assessment. Moreover, those texts which have considered Hockney's engagement with the theatre - notably, Martin Friedman's *Hockney Paints the Stage* (1983) and Kenneth E. Silver's chapter in *David Hockney: A Retrospective* (1988) - have almost all approached it from a conventionally art-historical perspective.[2] Of the few allusions made from a theatrical angle, none have afforded an in-depth analysis; and no literature, scholarly or otherwise, has assessed the subject from an interdisciplinary standpoint. In contrast, my investigation will straddle the realms of both art history and theatre, applying analytical frameworks developed within the study of both disciplines. It will thus effect a more rounded understanding of this significant, yet relatively unexplored, area of Hockney's creativity, which could benefit

[1] 'Appendix: chronology of Hockney's theatre projects' (p. 282) provides factual information pertaining to the history, premieres and revivals of all stage productions designed by the artist

[2] Martin Friedman, *Hockney Paints the Stage* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1983); Kenneth E. Silver, 'Hockney on Stage', in *David Hockney: A Retrospective,* ed. by Mitch Tuchman (London: Thames & Hudson, 1988), pp. 67-75

theatre historians and stage professionals as well as interpreters and exponents of the visual arts.

Hockney is not, of course, the first painter to have engaged with performance and it is important to situate him within the wider context of visual artists working in the theatre. His design for *Ubu Roi* (1966) linked him to The Nabis who contributed to the original of 1896, whilst his costumes for *Parade* (1981) drew directly on those of Pablo Picasso (1917). *The Magic Flute*, on which he worked in 1978, had been interpreted by Marc Chagall in 1967; and *Le Rossignol* (1981) by Henri Matisse in 1920. More latterly, Bill Viola has reconceived *Tristan und Isolde* (2004) and Jun Kaneko, *The Magic Flute* (2012), both using video-projected imagery rather than conventional scenery. Yet the theatre presents a greater diversity of challenges for the visual artist than the autonomous space of his or her studio. The degree to which Hockney's stage creativity has been shaped by its more collaborative circumstances and whether it was positively or negatively affected by his primary identity as a painter are factors that this thesis will seek to assess. His use of theatre technology, and his dialogue with other performance elements (music, movement and narrative) will be considered in this respect.

I will argue that Hockney was strongly drawn to 'the theatrical' before his actual performance involvement and that his work for the stage reflects a wider commitment to 'theatricality' as an artistic ideal. The cultivation of his persona, the social milieu to which he gravitated and his use of theatrical 'devices' in his artwork will be measured in this regard. His knowledge of art history and his wide-ranging interest in other art forms have likewise shaped his creativity - both within the studio and the theatre - to include identifiable allusions to literary texts and the works of other artists. Hence, this thesis will consider how his theatre engagement has manifested his wider allusiveness and eclecticism in relation to past and present artistic and stage cultures.

Moreover, strong threads of correlation can be seen to permeate his work for performance and his studio endeavours. On occasion, his stage designs have spurred new trajectories in his personal projects, as seen by the play with

illusional space and the fresh approaches to non-realism which crossed into his art from *The Rake's Progress* (1975); or the saturated colours of his 'Paper Pools' series (1978) which naturally succeeded those of *The Magic Flute* (1978). Sometimes, his art explorations have fed into his theatre involvement, the precision and symmetry of his design for *Septentrion* (1975) continuing the stylistic approach and selected themes of his preceding canvases. At other times, the two are almost indistinguishable, as demonstrated by the set for his ultimate opera *Die Frau Ohne Schatten* (1992) and his 'Very New Paintings' of the same period. A final aim of this thesis is thus to pinpoint specific areas of cross-fertilisation between his work for the gallery and that for the stage.

### 1.1. Thesis Structure

Hockney's theatre engagement lends itself to a tri-partitioned, chronological mode of delineation, which loosely correlates with the interpretative and stylistic development of his stage creativity. The earliest period concerns his designs for the play *Ubu Roi* at London's Royal Court theatre (July 1966, *fig. 1*); the ballet *Septentrion* for Roland Petit's Ballets de Marseille (May 1975, *fig. 2*); and the operas *The Rake's Progress* and *Die Zauberflöte* (referenced in this thesis as *The Magic Flute)* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera (June 1975 and May 1978 respectively, *figs. 3-4*).[3] His middle period encompasses two triple bills, both for New York Metropolitan Opera: 'Parade', featuring the ballet *Parade* and the operas *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* and *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* (February 1981, *figs. 5-7*); and the 'Stravinsky' triple bill, featuring the ballet *Le Sacre du Printemps*, and the operas *Le Rossignol* and *Oedipus Rex* (December 1981, *figs. 8-10*). His later period comprises the three giant operas *Tristan und Isolde* for Los Angeles Opera (December 1987, *fig. 13*); *Turandot* for Lyric Opera of Chicago and San Francisco Opera in a co-production (January 1992, *fig. 14*); and *Die Frau Ohne Schatten* (November

[3] When premiered at Glyndebourne in 1978, this production of Mozart's opera was sung in German and billed as *Die Zauberflöte*. To maintain consistency, however, with most English-language sources of reference and texts concerning Hockney (including Friedman's book of 1983), this thesis will employ the titular translation of *The Magic Flute*

1992, *fig. 15*) for London's Royal Opera and Los Angeles Opera in a further co-production. Beyond these logical divisions, the ballet *Varii Capricci* for The Royal Ballet (April 1983, *fig. 11*) and the play *Paid On Both Sides* for Eye and Ear Theater (May 1983, *fig. 12*) were both relatively minor projects, produced as part of the 'Britain Salutes New York' festival of 1983, which connect - stylistically and thematically - with his earlier ballet and play respectively.

Such an extensive repertoire presents the dilemma of finding a suitable means of approach and the potential pitfall of too broad and shallow an investigation. My research for this thesis will consequently focus on the earliest period of Hockney's theatre activity (1966-78), to include the play *Ubu Roi*, the ballet *Septentrion*, and the two operas that he designed for Glyndebourne (*The Rake's Progress* and *The Magic Flute*). This period is a rich source for comparative study with his studio endeavours, and particularly with his works of the immediately preceding years, when the artist made considerable use of 'theatrical devices' in his struggle to find a means of representation beyond naturalism. This early phase of his stage involvement also saw Hockney forge strong associations with text and narrative, and reveal the first indications of a visual - possibly synaesthetic - connection with music that would strengthen as his creativity for opera and ballet progressed. The artist's personal identification with the originators of the works was arguably a more potent motivating force within his early stage engagement than later in his career. Moreover, specific collaborative and technical issues which arose during the creation of these productions serve to highlight the broader challenges confronting visual artists working in the theatre.

This period of engagement further affords the scope to study Hockney's ingenuity - to include his designs for costumes as well as stage scenery - across the three performance genres (drama, ballet and opera) for which he created, and thus to evaluate his dialogue with text, music and movement respectively. Such opportunity does not exist within the two subsequent delineated phases of his stage involvement, neither of which include drama, and with opera as the sole genre of the third phase. Of these later periods, the two triple bills of 1981 are nonetheless rich sources for the consideration of

the breaching of creative barriers within Hockney's oeuvre, and his dialogue with the work of other visual artists (notably Picasso, Matisse and Dufy); whilst the ultimate trio of operas (1987-92) lends itself to further study of collaborative issues, the artist's use of technology, creative exchange with his studio work and his strengthened engagement with music. Hence, beyond this thesis, scope will remain for continuing investigation into Hockney's later theatre engagement and the specific issues pertaining to it.

My decision to structure this study chronologically, with a chapter devoted to each of the selected productions in turn, is twofold. Firstly, concurrent events, technological advancements and stylistic and interpretative developments within Hockney's creativity are integral to my research and these evolved diachronically. Secondly, this structure faciltates clear, detailed focus on the earliest period of his theatre engagement, albeit to include selected facets of later creativity which naturally feed into the analysis (notably elements of *Varii Capricci* in relation to *Septentrion*). A more thematic approach, sectioned according to key research questions, would have been less conducive to the desired containment of study within the parameters of the selected works and would have lent greater potential for obfuscation, due to the repeated navigation of disparate time frames.

It must be stressed, however, that whilst chapters of this thesis are each concerned with a different production within Hockney's early stage creativity (1966-78), they should not be considered as isolated entities. A number of questions and concepts recur, demonstrating the threads which underpin this research: namely, the correlation between his studio work and his stage designs (to include his treatment of space and use of colour); his creative response to the challenges of designing for the performed arts (incorporating issues of collaboration and theatre technology); his engagement with text and music; and his dialogue with the works' originators and other visual artists and designers.

### 1.2. Approaches, methods and resources

The angle of my research, straddling the realms of art history and theatre, requires analysis from the viewpoint of both disciplines; and this, as previously mentioned, is a very different slant to that adopted by art historians, critics or curators, who have broached the subject of Hockney's theatre engagement from a primarily-art historical perspective.

My approach has necessitated intensive study of all areas of Hockney's stage involvement and his work in the studio, with particular focus on his creativity from 1961 to 1978. His dialogue with and allusion to the works of other artists has warranted further, broader, enquiry within the realm of art history, to include masterpieces of the Renaissance, those by twentieth-century luminaries and, specifically, the life and works of William Hogarth (1697-1764). The philosophies of art theorists, notably Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried, have also been a foundation to my analysis of Hockney's engagement, as a visual artist, with theatricality.

The interdisciplinary nature of the thesis has equally compelled research within the fields of theatre history, stagecraft, performance technology, and set and costume design. The contextualisation of Hockney's role within these spheres has demanded an exploration of selected interpretations by the works' creators (particularly Alfred Jarry in relation to *Ubu Roi*) and other visual artists, designers and scenographers; whilst his engagement with music has led to an introductory study of synaesthesia. The conceptual differences between stage design and scenography, and the ideologies of theorists and practitioners from Adolphe Appia and Edward Gordon Craig to Josef Svoboda and Robert Wilson, have likewise been subject to review.

Moreover, the need to consider the societal background to Hockney's stage engagement has provoked an exploration of his childhood exposure to the performed arts, and the milieu in which he situated himself immediately prior to and at the outset of his theatre involvement. Aspects of the British and American creative cultures of the 1960s and 70s, and connections between assertions of a distinctive homosexual aesthetic sensibility and notions of

theatricality and camp have been areas of scrutiny. Finally, an examination of the texts, narratives and libretti, the music and choreography of the works for which he has designed, has been fundamental to my research.

The nature of the project has, however, raised some methodological challenges. Firstly, a stage designer's creativity can only be fully assessed in the context of the performance, and this is ephemeral unless recorded. Moreover, stage designs are interconnected with other variable elements: the performance space and its facilities, the sound and lighting, the actions of performers and collaborators, and the nature of the audience. Each of these factors contributes to how the designs are *perceived*; meaning that no two performances are exactly the same. Secondly, the tangible aspects of the designer's work - the sets and costumes, working models and drawings - rarely endure beyond the life of the production. Wear and tear and the limitations of storage routinely contribute to their demise. Of the creations which culminated from Hockney's designs, little has survived beyond photographs and illustrations; and these simply cannot replicate the *experience* of viewing the sets and costumes integrated within the enacted work.

Commercially-released video recordings have, however, been made of five performances of three Hockney-designed operas: *The Rake's Progress* (1975 and 2010), *The Magic Flute* (1978 and 1991) and *Turandot* (1994), and these have been valuable research resources.[4] Hockney's other stage collaborations were not recorded for distribution, but I have accessed working videos of a non-costumed rehearsal of *Le Rossignol* (1981) and a dress rehearsal of *Die Frau Ohne Schatten* (1992) through the archives of London's Royal Opera House (Royal Opera House Collections).[5] These archives also

[4] *The Rake's Progress*, dir. Dave Heather, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Arthaus Musik, 1975, DVD; *The Rake's Progress*, dir. François Roussillon, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Opus Arte, 2010, DVD; *Die Zauberflöte,* dir. Dave Heather, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Arthaus Musik, 1978, DVD; *Die Zauberflöte*, dir. Brian Large, New York Metropolitan Opera, Deutsche Grammophon, 1991, DVD; *Turandot*, dir. Brian Large, San Francisco Opera, Arthaus Musik, 1994, DVD

[5] *Die Frau Ohne Schatten* was unfortunately so dimly-lit that merely the final scene is visually discernable on the Royal Opera video recording (it is noteworthy that the

enabled the access of photographs, a playbill and press cuttings pertaining to *Varii Capricci*, including colour photographs of designs for the drops and of the actual set (minus performers) taken from the theatre stalls. These are significant as they are the sole images that I have been able to locate of Hockney's design for this particular ballet.

Two other archives have likewise been pivotal to my research. The V&A Museum's English Stage Company archive afforded access to photographs, letters, production notes and press cuttings pertaining to the Hockney-designed production of *Ubu Roi* at the Royal Court in 1966. The archive of Glyndebourne presented equivalent items relating to *The Rake's Progress* (1975) and *The Magic Flute* (1978), and to previous interpretations of those works by other designers. Of particular interest from a comparative viewpoint were the images and photographs of Osbert Lancaster's 'Rake' (staged 1953-63) and the respective 'Magic Flutes' of Oliver Messel (1956-60) and Emanuele Luzzati (1963-73).

Insights into Hockney's productions have been gleaned from many far-reaching sources. These include programmes, playbills and supporting literature; texts concerning venues and production companies; and biographies of collaborators. Hockney himself has been the subject of numerous documentaries and televised interviews. Of these, Randall Wright's biopic *Hockney* (2014) touches on the artist's creative processes for the stage; but, with the notable exception of (the undistributed and currently unavailable) *David Hockney: The Colors of Music* (2005), no known recording has devoted itself exclusively to his theatre engagement.[6]

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lighting of this opera was also a source of complaint amongst critics and reviewers of the live performances)

[6] *Hockney,* dir. Randall Wright, Blakeway Productions/Fly Film Company, 2014, DVD; *David Hockney: the Colors of Music*, dir. Maryte Kavaliauskas and Seth Schneidman, 2005. The latter was broadcast in *American Masters* (series for television), PBS, 18 July 2007. A trailer only, ed. by Christopher Cavanagh, may be viewed on its editor's website: 'Chris Kavanagh - Motion Picture Editor', *Chris Kavanagh* <http://www.chriscavanagh.net/the-colors-of-music> [accessed 2 March 2018]

Wherever possible, and in order to make comparative assessment, I have accessed photographs and video footage of other designers' interpretations of stage works for which Hockney has designed. Of these, Jean-Christophe Averty's television version of *Ubu Roi* (1965) shares parallels with Hockney's staged rendition of the following year in its juxtaposition of animation and real actors; and the respective re-creations of *Parade* by the Joffrey Ballet (1976) and Europa Danse (2012) allow the viewer to grasp the music and choreography of this classic work, and to visualise how Picasso's original designs - to which Hockney purposely referred - might have looked in performance.[7] Unfortunately, no known film or video footage exists of the two self-standing ballets for which Hockney designed (*Septentrion* and *Varii Capricci*); and, beyond a single revival of the former (in 1978), they have not been re-staged since their premiere performances. The music has survived in the sole recording (available in vinyl format only) of *Septentrion* and an orchestral recording of *Varii Capricci* (which has a shorter finale than the amended ballet score).[8] The cohesion, however, between the music, the design and the respective choreography of Roland Petit and Frederick Ashton can only be surmised through witness accounts, production photographs and consideration of the creators' other works.

Finally, my research has been greatly assisted by interviews and correspondence with the artist himself and those who have collaborated with him on his projects for the stage.[9] Whilst some key associates - notably

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[7] 'Ubu Roi', dir. by Jean-Christophe Averty (1965), *ubu.com* <http://www.ubu.com/film/jarry_ubu-averty.html> [accessed 28 June 2018]; 'Parade and the Joffrey Ballet (excerpt) | American Masters', *YouTube*, publ. by PBS, 27 December 2012 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mpwR8jx3lQ> [accessed 30 November 2015]; 'Picasso and Dance. Parade 1917', *YouTube*, publ. by Arti Choke, 8 October 2012 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Chq1Ty0nyE> [accessed 30 November 2015]

[8] Marius Constant, *Septentrion,* Ensemble Ars Nova, cond. by Marius Constant, 1977, Erato, LP STU 70917; William Walton, *Walton: Symphony no.1*; *Varii Capricci,* London Philharmonic Orchestra, cond. by Bryden Thomson, 1991, Chandos, CD

[9] My interview and other conversations with Hockney were conducted mostly at his home and studio in Los Angeles on 20 and 21 July 2018. Previous academic researchers to have interviewed the artist include Gray F. Watson ('A Consideration of David Hockney's Early Painting (1960-65) and its Relationship with British and American Art at That Time', unpublished MA dissertation, Courtauld Institute of Art, 1972); Charles Ingham ('Words in Pictures: the Manifestation of Verbal Elements in

choreographer Roland Petit and directors John Dexter and Iain Cuthbertson - are now deceased, I have been fortunate to have interviewed John Cox, who directed three of Hockney's major opera projects (*The Rake's Progress*, *The Magic Flute*, and *Die Frau Ohne Schatten*); and actor Jack Shepherd, who played the role of Mère Ubu opposite the late Max Wall in Hockney's preliminary theatre venture *Ubu Roi*. I have also engaged with Bob Bryan (former head of lighting/designer), Keith Benson (former head of lighting), Tony Ledell (former head of wardrobe) and Nick Murray (former stage crew member), all of whom collaborated on the original Hockney-designed productions of *The Rake's Progress* and *The Magic Flute* at Glyndebourne. Bob Holman (director of the play *Paid on Both Sides*) and Jean Michel Désiré (former lighting designer for Roland Petit) have likewise responded to my questions on specific issues. Moreover, personal insights have been shared by Lawrence Weschler and Marco Livingstone (writers), Phil Grabsky (documentary producer), fellow artist Derek Boshier, Chris Stephens (co-curator of the 2017 Hockney retrospective at Tate Britain), Liz Hillman (owner of Gallery 49, Bridlington), Robin Silver (managing director of Salts Mill, Saltaire) and Jill Iredale (Curator of Fine Arts, Cartwright Hall, Bradford). My engagement - however fleeting - with all these individuals has contributed to those impressions of Hockney and his practices that have shaped my analysis of his theatre creativity.

### 1.3. Review of previous scholarship

A profusion of books, articles and reviews have been written about Hockney and his work; yet from an academic perspective, his diverse artistry, whilst often replicated has been sparsely assessed, the emphasis tending towards the anecdotal rather than the analytical.

The texts of Peter Webb (1988), Peter Adam (1997) and, more recently - and lengthily - Christopher Simon Sykes (2011 and 2014) are biographical and

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the Works of Kurt Schwitters and David Hockney', unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Essex, 1986); and Emily Porter-Salmon ('Textual Clues, Visual Fictions: Representations of Homosexualities in the Works of David Hockney', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2011)

cover the artist's creativity only in the broader context of his personal life and career; likewise Hockney's own (Nikos Stangos-edited) publication of 1976.[10] Its sequel (*That's the way I see it*, 1993) does, however, lend insights into his methods of working and the continuum of his creative development, to include his opera projects (but not his play or ballet designs).[11]

The aptly-titled *Paintings* by Paul Melia and Ulrich Luckhardt (2007) provides an authorative overview of Hockney's gallery innovations, from his student endeavours to *Still Life in Landscape* of 1993.[12] Yet his theatre involvement is marginalised, not only by the book's understandably narrow focus, but by its general lack of acknowledgement of his engagement with the medium. According to its authors:

> [Hockney] abandoned painting for a time in the mid-seventies to concentrate on drawing and print-making. Neither were many paintings produced during the early eighties, the artist prefering to spend his time constructing collages from photographs.[13]

Hence, no mention is made of the seven theatre productions to which Hockney devoted considerable time during the stipulated period, including the two triple bills for the New York Metropolitan Opera, which occupied him throughout the winter of 1980 and much of 1981.

Melia had previously edited *David Hockney* (1995), which comprises a series of scholarly contributions, including a brief study by William Hardie of connections between Hockney's stage and studio creativity, most notably regarding *Die Frau Ohne Schatten* of 1992 and the 'Very New Paintings' series of the same year.[14] This intersects with Hardie's text for the exhibition

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[10] Peter Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1988); Peter Adam, *David Hockney* (Bath: Absolute Press, 1997); Christopher Simon Sykes, *Hockney: The Biography,* vol. 1 (London: Century, 2011); Christopher Simon Sykes, *Hockney: The Biography,* vol. 2 (London: Century, 2014); David Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1976)
[11] David Hockney, *That's the Way I See It* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1993)
[12] Ulrich Luckhardt and Paul Melia, *David Hockney: Paintings* (Munich: Prestel, 2007)
[13] Ibid., p. 8
[14] Paul Melia, ed., *David Hockney* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995)

catalogue *David Hockney: Some Very New Paintings* of 1993.[15] His contributions are of limited length, however, and neither extends to the study of the dialogue between Hockney's theatre and studio engagement prior to the 1990s.

Film-maker Paul Joyce (1999) and art critics Martin Gayford (2011) and Lawrence Weschler (2008) have produced books based on transcripts of conversations with the artist and, whilst affording random insights into Hockney's theories and methodologies (his stage creativity gains brief inclusion), they offer little external analysis.[16] As these works consider a mostly-concurrent time frame (post-1980), there is also some overlap in terms of content: Hockney's choreographed 'Wagner drives' through the Hollywood hills, for example, are described by Gayford and Weschler alike.[17] More broadly, the illustrated overviews of Peter Clothier (1995) and Marco Livingstone (1996) give informed accounts of Hockney's creative development - to include facets of his theatre engagement - from his student years to the 1990s, yet both cover too wide a time frame to delve deeply within any one area.[18] Indeed, Livingstone has conceded that 'still badly needed is a more probing, analytical study of particular aspects of Hockney's work or a more in-depth exploration of his development as a whole'.[19]

The general lack of objective analysis may be due, in part, to the high percentage of literature concerning Hockney that has been written by friends of the artist (as underlined by repeated illustrations of authors photographed with or depicted by him). This is a factor which also extends to exhibition publications, the accompanying literature to many Hockney-related events

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[15] William Hardie, *David Hockney: Some Very New Paintings* (Glasgow: William Hardie, 1993)
[16] David Hockney and Paul Joyce, *Hockney on 'Art': Conversations with Paul Joyce* (London: Little Brown, 1999); Martin Gayford, *A Bigger Message: Conversations with David Hockney* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011); Lawrence Weschler, *True to Life: Twenty-five years of Conversations with David Hockney* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008)
[17] Gayford, pp. 176-8; Weschler, 2008, pp. 86-7
[18] Peter Clothier, *Hockney* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1995); Marco Livingstone, *David Hockney* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996)
[19] Livingstone, p. 274

having likewise been written or edited by his personal friends, notably Livingstone, Stangos, Melia, Joyce, Weschler and Mark Glazebrook. Their accounts, whilst appropriate for their context, adopt an approbatory rather than a scholarly approach that smacks of personal loyalty. Certainly, Hockney's creative shortcomings - where they exist - are little addressed.

Beyond minor items of exhibition literature (such as the Riverside Studios' catalogue of 1981, which comprises a transcript of interviews by Glazebrook with Hockney and *Parade* director John Dexter), a mere two publications have concerned themselves specifically with Hockney's theatre endeavours: *Hockney Paints the Stage* (1983) and *Hockney's Opera* (1992).[20] *Hockney Paints the Stage* is the illustrated volume which accompanied the eponymous exhibition of 1983. Compiled by museum director Martin Friedman, it affords a celebratory overview of Hockney's engagement with performance, to include aspects of themes inherent in this thesis: the exchange between his stage creations and his work in other media, theatricality in his early paintings, his dialogue with text, and his identification with other selected artists. Specific challenges and Hockney's means of overcoming them are loosely discussed, but there is no in-depth account of collaborative issues, and neither is there scope for objective debate. Moreover, the focus rests heavily on his projects for Glyndebourne and the New York Metropolitan Opera, with no investigation into his drama and independent ballet designs. Neither is there mention of his mammoth creations for *Tristan und Isolde*, *Turandot* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, all of which were created after the book's publication. Some of the content of *Hockney Paints the Stage*, notably Stephen Spender's chapter 'Text to Image', fed into the mostly-pictorial *Hockney's Opera*, which accompanied the 1992 touring exhibition of Japan. The explanatory text of this catalogue is solely in Japanese, but a noteworthy inclusion - and source of reference within my research - is a comprehensive bibliography, in English and including newspaper articles, covering the years 1981 to 1991.

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[20] *David Hockney: Paintings and Drawings for 'Parade'* (London: Riverside Studios, 1981); Martin Friedman, *Hockney Paints the Stage* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1983); *Hockney's Opera,* ed. by Toshihiro Asai, Yoshiyuki Takaichi and Kenji Nishimura (Tokyo: Mainichi Newspapers, 1992)

The art historian Kenneth E. Silver had likewise focused on Hockney's theatre engagement in his contribution to *David Hockney: A Retrospective*, which accompanied the exhibitions of 1988 (LA, New York) and 1989 (London). His chapter 'Hockney on Stage' makes pertinent analogies concerning the dialogue with different media in Hockney's work: 'If his production of *The Rake's Progress* is about printmaking (and therefore about line) and *The Magic Flute* about painting (color and volume), then the French triple bill is about collage'.[21] The range of the chapter itself, however, does not allow more than a cursory explanation of these concepts, which my study will consider further.

It is, of course, important to site Hockney within the lineage of visual artists who have chosen to engage with the theatre. Picasso, Bakst, Munch, Léger, Miró, Malevich and Dalí are among the art luminaries who have turned their attentions to the stage. These artists, when approached for the task, were well-established in their careers; they did not need the work. Indeed, the hours expended on their stage commitments were a likely sacrifice, both financially and in terms of studio time. Hockney himself has claimed that he has made little in royalties and was paid a mere £500 for his designs for *The Rake's Progress*: a figure which barely covered his expenses.[22]

This prompts the question: Why would a painter accept the element of risk and renunciation of autonomy demanded by a performance collaboration? Conversely, why would a director choose a visual artist, possibly with no stage experience, over an established professional theatre designer? Henning Rischbieter refers to the 'happenings' of the 1960s to illustrate his argument that 'radical solutions, doubts, and questionings take root and germinate at precisely those points where the arts border one another, pass over one another, one might even say: clash with one another'.[23] It is thus the

[21] Silver, in *David Hockney: A Retrospective,* Tuchman, p. 69
[22] Author's interview with David Hockney, 21 July 2018
[23] Henning Rischbieter, 'Introduction', in *Art and the Stage in the Twentieth Century: Painters and Sculptors Works for the Theater*, ed. by Henning Rischbieter,

uncharted water, the new creative direction, the potential for the sublime as well as for disaster that entices the creator; and for the director, the premise that the visual artist will bring to the stage something novel, daring and distinctively different. As Hockney responded when invited to design the afore-mentioned 'Rake', 'I suppose, if you're asking me, you're wanting something a bit out of the ordinary'.[24] Rischbieter's tome - embracing Futurists, Constructivists, Dadaists, those of the Ballets Russes and the Bauhaus - affords broad, yet shallow, coverage of the stage ventures of many visual artists. Its publication date excludes, however, all creativity post-1968. The subsequent void has been partially filled by Denise Wendel-Poray's *Painting the Stage: Artists as Stage Designers* (2018).[25] More current yet narrower in scope than that of Rischbieter, this overview focuses solely on opera design, and with limited inclusion of the work of Hockney.

The theatre ingenuity of Pablo Picasso, and his realisation of the original *Parade* (1917) which directly inspired Hockney's interpretation of the same, is specifically considered by Douglas Cooper (1987, first publ. 1968); and the works of Osbert Lancaster - who, like Hockney, engaged with drama, opera and ballet, including an earlier version of *The Rake's Progress* at Glyndebourne (1953) - are assessed, albeit cursorily, in James Knox's study of 2008.[26] Of less direct pertinence, but of comparative relevance, the ballet designs of the painter Howard Hodgkin are the subject of a mostly-illustrative book by John-Paul Stonard (2002).[27] My investigation of Hockney's involvement with performance naturally prompts contrast with the theatre endeavours of these and other visual artists.

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documented by Wolfgang Storch, trans. by Michael Bullock (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1968), p. 7

[24] Hockney quoted by Friedman, p. 77

[25] Denise Wendel-Poray, *Painting the Stage: Artists as Stage Designers* (Milan: Skira Editore, 2018)

[26] Douglas Cooper, *Picasso Theatre*, first publ. 1968 (New York; Harry N Abrams, 1987); James Knox, *Cartoons and Coronets: The Genius of Osbert Lancaster* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2008)

[27] John-Paul Stonard, *Howard Hodgkin Stage Designs* (London: Anthony d'Offay, 2002)

The more general creativity of those on whose works he has drawn likewise demands consideration. In this regard, the French text of *David Hockney: Dialogue avec Picasso* (1999) is notable in its interpretation of Picasso's role in Hockney's development, including his work for the stage; and Mark Hallett and Christine Riding's study of Hogarth (2006) lends a brief, yet pertinent, insight into Hockney's designs for *The Rake's Progress* in relation to Hogarth's eighteenth-century etchings.[28] Yet neither offers more than an overview of the respective connections, and questions concerning the choices made by Hockney as to which aspects he developed (or rejected) and his precise treatment of the 'borrowed' elements remain unanswered. Some of these will be considered by this thesis.

At this point it should be noted that all previously-mentioned texts have been compiled from the viewpoint of the visual arts, rather than the theatre; and issues vital to this study pertaining to scenography, the practicalities of performance and the role of the designer have been largely unaddressed by them. These, of course, are weighty and multi-faceted subjects, with a reach far beyond the scope of this thesis; but a cluster of recently-published works presents a pertinent background.

In *The Art of Light on Stage* (2015), Yaron Abulafia gives a scholarly examination of the evolution of lighting design and its role in contemporary theatre, to include semiotics and phenomenology, and the role of light as a performer.[29] Scott Palmer's *Light: Readings in Theatre Practice* (2013) likewise explores the creative potential of lighting, including its facility to define and manipulate space.[30] More broadly, Christopher Baugh's *Theatre, Performance & Technology* (first publ. 2005) focuses on the architectural and

[28] Dagmar Rolf, ed., *David Hockney: Dialogue avec Picasso* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1999); Mark Hallett and Christine Riding, *Hogarth* (London: Tate Publishing, 2006), pp. 48-9
[29] Yaron Abulafia, *The Art of Light on Stage: Lighting in Contemporary Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2015)
[30] Scott Palmer, *Light: Readings in Theatre Practice* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)

kinetic potential of both scenery and lighting, inviting comparison between Hockney and creators such as Svoboda (to whom a chapter is devoted).[31]

Donatella Barbieri's *Costume in Performance* (2017) explores niche design areas of relevance to Hockney's stage creativity (notably, her chapter on 'Costuming Choruses' and 'The Grotesque Costume' with regard to *The Rite of Spring* and *Ubu Roi* respectively).[32] Costume, as I will argue, was not as central to the artist's vision as the scenery, and the design of the costumes of *Turandot* and *Die Frau Ohne Schatten* he entrusted to the young Ian Falconer. In view of the transformative and kinetic potential of dance costumes - those of Oskar Schlemmer for *Triadisches Ballett* (1922) being notable in this regard - it is also pertinent that Hockney did not contribute costume designs for either *Septentrion* or *Varii Capricci*. This omission, as will be discussed, served to detach his work from the dancers' action and added to the disunity of the latter production.

In terms of scenography, the Arnold Aronson-edited 'Routledge Companion' (2018) is arguably its most defining work, encompassing all facets and with contributions by academics and exponents, many of whom have written widely on this subject.[33] The respective publications of Pamela Howard (2001), and Philip Butterworth and Joslin McKinney (2009) offer more concise introductions.[34] Howard focuses on the collaborative nature of stagecraft ('the seamless synthesis of space, text, research, art, actors, directors and spectators that contributes to an original creation').[35] McKinney and Butterworth consider scenography in terms of the interdependency of text and image, the recognition and realisation of space, and the integration of technology; whilst a lengthy chapter on pioneering scenographers of the

[31] Christopher Baugh, *Theatre, Performance & Technology*, first publ. 2005 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)
[32] Donatella Barbieri, *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture, and the Body* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017)
[33] Arnold Aronson, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Scenography* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017)
[34] Pamela Howard, *What is Scenography?* (London: Routledge, 2001); Philip Butterworth and Joslin McKinney, *The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)
[35] Howard, p. 130

twentieth century naturally invites some comparative reflection. The works of Aronson (2005), Bruce A. Bergner (2013), and editors Dorita Hannah and Olav Harsløf (2008), and Jane Collins and Andrew Nisbet (2010) further debate many aspects of the realisation of performance, with particular emphasis on the creation and utilisation of space.[36] As an indication of the enormity of its significance to contemporary scenographers, space (examined through the lens of both technology and architecture) likewise constitutes a major part of McKinney's editorial collaboration with Scott Palmer (2017).[37]

A common thread of these books is the aim to define scenography and differentiate it from stage design, the consensus being that the latter is concerned with the sets, costumes and lighting in *relation* to the performance, whereas scenography considers them *integral* to the performance. McKinney and Butterworth identify scenography as 'the manipulation and orchestration of the performance environment', and Aronson similarly argues that:

> [Scenography] implies something more than creating scenery or costumes or lights. It carries a connotation of an all-encompassing visual-spatial construct as well as the process of change and transformation that is an inherent part of the physical vocabulary of the stage.[38]

Beyond these texts, a particularly concise, yet telling, definition of the scenographer's role over that of designer was volunteered by the pioneering creator, Joseph Svoboda: 'The scenographer must be in command of the theatre, its master. The average designer is simply not that concerned with theatre'.[39] His assertions prompt the question: Is David Hockney, in his work for the stage, a designer or a scenographer? I will argue that he is first and foremost a designer; yet a designer who *is* concerned with theatre. His pictorial approach - particularly prior to the 'Stravinsky' triple bill of 1981 -

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[36] Arnold Aronson, *Looking into the Abyss : Essays on Scenography* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005); Bruce A. Bergner, *The Poetics of Stage Space: the theory and process of theatre scene design* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2013); Dorita Hannah and Olav Harsløf, eds., *Performance Design* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2008); Jane Collins and Andrew Nisbet, *Theatre and Performance Design: A Reader in Scenography* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010)
[37] Joslin McKinney and Scott Palmer, eds., *Scenography Expanded: an introduction to contemporary performance design* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017)
[38] Butterworth and McKinney, p. 4; Aronson, 2005, p. 7
[39] Svoboda quoted by Jarka Burian, *The Scenography of Josef Svoboda* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), p. 20

situates him firmly within the boundaries of 'design'; yet his connection to other production elements, and their degree of impact on his creativity, suggest an engagement which clearly extends beyond this realm.

The necessary comparative analysis of my research draws in texts directly concerning other designers and scenographers, to include Jarka Burian's illuminating volume on the afore-mentioned Josef Svoboda (1971); the Sylvia Backemeyer-edited profile of Ralph Koltai (1997); Margery Arent Safir's compilation regarding Robert Wilson (2011); and the volumes of Donald Oenslager (1975) and Brockett, Hardberger and Mitchell (2010) which broadly consider the milestones of theatre design, from an historical, as opposed to a theoretical perspective.[40]

Consideration of these works has contributed to my recognition that no theatre creation is unique to itself, but rather, is an integrated element within the sequence of ideas which interconnect all forms of the arts. Hockney's later-discussed use of scenic pillars to unify the proscenium and auditorium for *Oedipus Rex* (1981, *fig. 16*) was - whether beknown to him or not - a variant of Svoboda's design for *Don Giovanni* (1969, *fig. 17*), in which the real theatre boxes were extended into the scenery on the stage.[41] Equally, the converging poplars of Wilson's *L'Orfeo* and *Lulu* (2009 and 2011 respectively, *figs. 18-19*) evoked the tree-lined perspectives of Hockney's *Varii Capricci* and *Tristan und Isolde* (*figs. 185, 20*); and these in turn, connected with the tapering rows of his painting *Le Parc des Sources, Vichy* (1970, *fig. 21*). The single ring on Wilson's backdrop for the opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1997, *fig. 22*) similarly echoed that of Hockney's *Rubber Ring Floating in a Swimmming Pool* (1971*, fig. 23*). As a postscript to this notion of creative interconnectivity, the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space (established in

[40] Burian, 1971: Sylvia Backemeyer, ed., *Ralph Koltai: Designer for the Stage*, first publ. 1997 (London: Nick Hern Books, 2003); Margery Arent Safir, ed., *Robert Wilson from Within* (*Paris*: Arts Arena/Flammarion, 2011); Donald Oenslager, *Stage Design: Four Centuries of Scenic Invention* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1975); Oscar G. Brockett, Linda Hardberger and Margaret Mitchell, *Making the Scene: a history of stage design and technology in Europe and the United States* (San Antonio: Tobin Theatre Arts Fund, 2010)
[41] Burian, 1971, pp. 139-43

1967) warrants mention in this chapter, 'as a global catalyst of creative progress by encouraging experimentation, networking, innovation, and future collaborations'.[42] Whilst I have found no evidence of Hockney having attended this event, it would have surely been visited by stage professionals with whom he has engaged.

That his ventures have encompassed drama, ballet and opera requires an additional understanding of these particular art forms, their design heritage and specific requirements. Martin Esslin, who coined the moniker 'Theatre of the Absurd', first published his monograph of the same in 1961, five years before the opening of Hockney's *Ubu Roi*; and it gives a pertinent introduction to a genre that, I will argue, possibly informed the artist's vision for the play.[43] More broadly, RoseLee Goldberg's *Performance Art* of 1979 provides an introductory overview of theatrical themes (mechanical movements, painting and performance, the body in space) of direct relevance to Hockney's stage creativity, particularly his play and ballet designs.[44] *The Routledge Companion to Music and Visual Culture* (2014) likewise amalgamates scholarly chapters of overarching significance, on themes including the visual components of opera, and musical and visual interactions within ballet.[45]

Ballet as an art form presents unique design challenges, in its need to facilitate the exaggerated movement of the dancers. Yet few texts consider the staging of this medium beyond Jeromy Hopgood's *Dance Production: Design and Technology* (2016); Cyril Beaumont's *Ballet Design: past and present* (1946); *Design for Ballet* by Mary Clarke and Clement Crisp (1978); and Peter Williams' *Masterpieces of Ballet Design* (1981).[46] The former offers

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[42] 'What is Prague Quadrennial?', *Prague Quadrennial* <https://www.pq.cz/what-is-pq/> [accessed 2 February 2018]
[43] Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd,* first publ. 1961 (London: Bloomsbury, 2001)
[44] RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present,* first publ. 1979 (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011)
[45] Anne Leonard and Tim Shephard, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Music and Visual Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2014)
[46] Jeromy Hopgood, *Dance Production: Design and Technology* (New York: Focal Press, 2016); Cyril W. Beaumont, *Ballet Design: past and present* (London, The Studio, 1946); Mary Clarke and Clement Crisp, *Design for Ballet* (London: Studio

a rudimentary, practical introduction for a student readership; whilst the latter trio - which now appear somewhat dated - are highly pictorial with an historical rather than technical focus, and aimed at the dance spectator rather than the stage professional or scholar. They do, however, allow us to contextualise Hockney's work within the evolution of this art form.

Of the texts specific to opera in performance, Joseph Kerman's *Opera as Drama* (1988) - written from the viewpoint of a musicologist - concerns itself primarily with the dialogue in opera between musical score and dramaturgy.[47] Its coverage of Mozart bears relevance to Hockney's 'Magic Flute' interpretation, yet its emphasis is strictly on text, libretto, action and plot, with the contribution of the visual arts almost totally ignored. David Littlejohn's *The Ultimate Art* (1992) gives a more generally accessible overview of a diversity of opera-related issues and a chapter devoted to the stage design of visual artists, Hockney briefly included.[48] *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Zemlinsky* (2007) and *Opera, Exoticism and Visual Culture* (2015) both provide studies of notable productions and discussion of issues pertinent to, although not specific to, Hockney's theatrical endeavours.[49] The dilemma of 'how to deal with *the other* [...] including others of sex, race and culture', for example, would apply to any staging of *The Magic Flute*.[50]

The most contentious opera-specific literature in relation to this thesis is *Believing in Opera* (1998) by critic Tom Sutcliffe.[51] Whilst hampered in depth by the scope of his text, Sutcliffe nonetheless opens up some key areas for debate, specifically regarding Hockney as a designer for the operatic stage. Firstly, he suggests that, whilst original, Hockney's theatre work is 'seldom

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Vista, 1978); Peter Williams, *Masterpieces of Ballet Design* (London: Phaidon Press, 1981)

[47] Joseph Kerman, *Opera as Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988)

[48] David Littlejohn, *The Ultimate Art: Essays Around and About Opera* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992)

[49] David Levin, *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Zemlinsky* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Hyunseon Lee and Naomi Segal, eds., *Opera, Exoticism and Visual Culture* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2015)

[50] Lee and Segal, p. 3

[51] Tom Sutcliffe, *Believing in Opera* (London: Faber & Faber, 1998)

radical'.[52] From a staging point-of-view, this is a claim with which I concur. Hockney's designs for Glyndebourne and the New York Metropolitan were certainly traditional in their use of painted flats and backdrops, and even his vibrantly-coloured latter trio of operas were conventional in terms of method. I would also agree with his assertion that the artist 'has demonstrated both advantages and limitations, especially as collaborator with a producer'.[53] Hockney was already well-known as a painter when he undertook his first stage commission (*Ubu Roi* in 1966) and, whilst his involvement has drawn much attention to those productions for which he designed, it was clear that his creative role would never be subsidiary. Rudolf Nureyev was obliged to depart *Parade* (1981) when his concept clashed with that of Hockney and John Dexter; and Jonathan Miller has likened his position in his own ill-attuned collaboration with the artist (*Tristan und Isolde*, 1987) to being 'nothing more than an estate agent showing people around the premises'.[54]

Sutcliffe makes other claims. He states 'despite its visual distinction, [Hockney's] work lacks much genuine interpretative or critical energy' and he variously describes his sets and costumes as 'fun', 'jokey' and 'irrelevant'.[55] These statements imply accord with the repeated assessment of the artist's oeuvre as superficial and derivative (John Rothenstein noted this criticism).[56] I argue, however, that whilst he certainly infuses his creations - both theatrical and otherwise - with humour and a childlike sense of wonderment, Hockney's stage designs are founded on a serious study of performance history, art history and musicology. His interpretation of *The Magic Flute* closely adheres to the instructions of the libretto, and many features of *The Rake's Progress* are specifically based on details from Hogarth's etchings. Indeed, it is precisely because he is 'seldom radical' as a designer that he has so keenly acknowledged the heritage of each work.

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[52] Sutcliffe, p. 90
[53] Ibid., p. 88
[54] John Dexter, *The Honourable Beast: A Posthumous Autobiography*, ed. by Riggs O'Hara (London: Nick Hern Books, 1993), p. 160; Miller quoted by Michael Romain, *A Profile of Jonathan Miller* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 71
[55] Sutcliffe, pp. 88, 328
[56] John Rothenstein, *Modern English Painters: Wood to Hockney* (London, MacDonald, 1974), p. 225

The traditionalism of his stage creativity is observed by Arnold Aronson's assertion that Hockney and other visual artists - including Picasso - have 'shown a surprising inability to transpose their radical ideas onto the three-dimensional space of the stage in a manner as equally innovative as their art'.[57] This relates to my earlier mention of the artist's adherence to scenic convention. Certainly he has approached the stage with a painter's, rather than a scenographer's, eye. This is apparent from his own admission: 'A painter tends to think in pictures, all my sets have depended on a lot of drawn things rather than objects you move about on the stage'.[58]

It could be argued - and Sutcliffe *does* - that it is because Hockney is essentially 'an easel painter' that his imagination has stayed within the parameters of the picture.[59] Whilst I agree with that observation, I nonetheless propose that such containment is not necessarily to the detriment of the interpretation. Hockney's calculated use of one-point perspective, for example, affords a concentration of focus. Indeed, director John Cox maintained that it was an express intention for their 'Magic Flute' that the audience did not imagine the scene extending beyond the stage.[60] Yet Sutcliffe's argument raises a pertinent issue that has dogged the artist even in the studio: namely, his struggle with the frame. Hockney has conceded that the need to break the border is 'probably the most consistent theme in my work'.[61] His claim that his treatment of the Stravinsky triple bill was an attempt to tackle this dilemma connects with Aronson's theories concerning the reaction against the proscenium and the twentieth-century's explorations of nonproscenium space.[62] These theories, in the context of Hockney's creativity, will be considered by this thesis.

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[57] Aronson, 2005, p. 15
[58] Hockney quoted by Adam, p. 103
[59] Sutcliffe, p. 88
[60] Author's interview with John Cox, 5 April 2017
[61] Hockney quoted by Lawrence Weschler, 'A visit with David and Stanley Hollywood Hills 1987', in *David Hockney: A Retrospective,* Tuchman, p. 96
[62] Ibid.; Aronson, 2005, pp. 25-6

The individual operas, ballets and plays in his theatrical repertoire are themselves the subject of pertinent literary sources. Much has been writtten about Alfred Jarry and his play *Ubu Roi*, but Keith Beaumont's study (1987) is particularly illuminating in terms of historical background, textual analysis, Jarry's views on the theatre and the performance history of the work.[63] Scholarly accounts of Stravinsky's 'Rake's Progress' by Paul Griffiths (1982) and Nicholas John (1991) - the latter to include *Oedipus Rex* - likewise incorporate background and performance histories, synopses and evaluations; whilst Herbert Lindenberger's chapter in *Modernism and Opera* (2016) feeds directly into my own line of research in its focus on the neoclassical dialogue between Stravinsky (composer) and Auden (librettist) and their connection to Hogarth.[64] Lindenberger's positive view of Hockney's design, in terms of its relevance to the Auden-Stravinsky aesthetic, is one with which I concur.[65] The publication date of Minna Lederman's *Stravinsky in the Theatre* (1949) precludes allusion to this particular opera (which was not performed until 1951), but its insightful chapters on the history and music of the composer's earlier repertoire, interspersed with anecdotes and tributes by colleagues and friends, present a stimulating background overview.[66] More specifically, Charles M. Joseph's *Stravinsky's Ballets* (2011) provides an analytical study of the creation (as opposed to later *re*-creations) of *Le Rossignol* and *The Rite of Spring,* which pertains to Hockney's interpretations of those works within the 'Stravinsky' triple bill.[67]

Regarding *The Magic Flute,* English National Opera's concise guide (1980) has proved useful to my research in its synopses both of plot and musical

[63] Keith Beaumont, *Jarry, Ubu Roi* (London: Grant & Cutler, 1987)
[64] Paul Griffiths, *Igor Stravinsky: The Rake's Progress* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Nicholas John, ed., *Stravinsky: Oedipus Rex/The Rake's Progress* (London: John Calder, 1991); Herbert Lindenberger, 'Stravinsky, Auden, and the Midcentury Modernism of The Rake's Progress', in *Modernism and Opera*, ed. by Richard Begam and Matthew Wilson Smith (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2016), pp. 271-89
[65] Lindenberger, in *Modernism and Opera*, Begam and Smith, pp. 278-9
[66] Minna Lederman, ed., *Stravinsky in the Theatre* (London: Peter Owen, 1949)
[67] Charles M. Joseph, *Stravinsky's Ballets* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011)

themes, and its version in translation of the libretto.[68] Janos Liebner's *Mozart on the Stage* (1972) gives a dramaturgical and musicological analysis of 'The Flute', its comparative links to *The Tempest* and Mozart's use of tonality and allegory; whilst William Mann's *The Operas of Mozart* (1977) assesses the work's Masonic connections, its many diametrically opposed elements and librettist Schikaneder's original staging instructions.[69] A scholarly analysis is likewise afforded by Peter Branscombe's *W. A. Mozart: Die Zauberflöte* (1991), which includes assessment of *The Magic Flute*'s musical and dramatic structure, its historical background and issues of interpretation and critical writing.[70] With the notable exception of chapter eight ('A director's approach') in the latter, these accounts mostly ignore the design element, focusing instead on the dialogue between the musical score and the libretto. They do, however, provoke research regarding the extent to which Hockney has incorporated Masonic symbolism, adhered to Schikaneder's instructions or succeeded in conveying this opera's deliberately-German essence. Such texts, therefore, whilst not directly pertinent to Hockney's interpretation, do raise - if not answer - directly pertinent questions.

Millington and Spenser's *Wagner in Performance* (1992) and Carnegy's *Wagner and the Art of the Theatre* (2006), are likewise indirectly relevant to the focus of this thesis through their scholarly analysis of the theories and designs of historically notable exponents, including Appia, Craig and Wieland Wagner.[71] These creators all placed great emphasis on the use of lighting and considered the music to be the driving force of their interpretations (as, in his later career, did Hockney). Appia's criticism of 'static' painted flats and drops and his insistence that the settings should be 'vague and suggestive' ('just as music exists in time and is quintessentially dynamic, so must the stage-picture

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[68] Nicholas John, ed., *English National Opera Guide 3: The Magic Flute* (London: John Calder, 1980)
[69] Janos Liebner, *Mozart on the Stage* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1972); William Mann, *The Operas of Mozart* (London: Cassell, 1977)
[70] Peter Branscombe, *W. A. Mozart: Die Zauberflöte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)
[71] Barry Millington and Stewart Spenser, *Wagner in Performance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Patrick Carnegy, *Wagner and the Art of the Theatre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006)

be') relates to the stylistic evolution of Hockney's theatre creativity: the arguably 'static' approach of his earlier engagement (*The Rake's Progress, The Magic Flute*) ceding to the more abstract, sculptural designs of his later activity (*Tristan und Isolde, Turandot, Die Frau ohne Schatten*).[72] Indeed, the raked promontory of Hockney's *Tristan und Isolde* (*fig. 24*) can be seen to allude to Appia's sketches of the 1890s for *Die Walkyrie (fig. 25*).

Consideration of Hockney's visual engagement with music naturally leads to the subject of his purported synaesthesia. This phenomenon, described by Simon Shaw-Miller as mostly the instance when 'a sound automatically and instantly triggers the perception of a vivid colour, or vice versa' suggests the existence of correlations between colour and musical timbre and pitch.[73] The topic, and the attributed sensibility of artists and composers such as Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Olivier Messaien and John Cage has been well-documented in the writings of analysts including Shaw-Miller (2002 and 2013), Peter Vergo (2010) and Karin Von Maur (1999).[74] More specifically, in terms of Hockney, the neuroscientist Richard E. Cytowic has studied his stage designs and conducted tests with the painter's personal cooperation (as outlined in his monograph of 2002), from which he discerned that Hockney does indeed have synaesthetic associations 'among sound, color, and shape'.[75] The observation of Cytowic that the artist has a heightened perception of *nuances* of colour (deemed a typical trait of the synaesthete) is supported by that of gallery director Robin Silver, who described how Hockney's installation for an exhibition in 1989 required some amendment, whereupon he painted a perfectly-matching panel from memory, thus revealing his precise recall of the original shade from years previously.[76] Whilst Hockney has repeatedly claimed (when interviewed by Mark

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[72] Appia quoted by Carnegy, p. 179
[73] Simon Shaw-Miller, *Eye hEar the Visual in Music* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), p. 13
[74] Simon Shaw-Miller, *Visible Deeds of Music: Art and Music from Wagner to Cage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Shaw-Miller, 2013; Peter Vergo, *The Music of Painting* (London: Phaidon Press, 2010); Karin Von Maur, *The Sound of Painting: Music in Modern Art* (New York: Prestel, 1999)
[75] Richard E. Cytowic, *Synesthesia: a Union of the Senses* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2002), pp. 312-9
[76] Ibid., p. 315; author's interview with Robin Silver, 6 September 2017

Glazebrook in 1981, for example) that the colouring of his sets was suggested by the music, he expressed to me that he is nonetheless unsure that he is truly synaesthetic ('although I like the idea of seeing the music: it's mixing up the senses').[77] It is on account of the vast and scientific nature of the topic and the potential for ambiguity, that I have taken the decision not to include synaesthesia as a specific facet of my own research.

Finally, it will be observed that this thesis is accompanied by 320 illustrations, drawn from multifarious sources. My inclusion of such a vast range of images is on account of several factors: the highly visual and comparative nature of the project; the necessity to appropriately illustrate points made within the text; and to provide an extensive and scholarly visual record. No publication or archive has hitherto assembled imagery across the entirety of Hockney's projects for the stage. Hence, my collation affords the first opportunity to assess his designs in the evolving context of his complete theatrical engagement. Bearing in mind that little imagery from these productions - particularly pertaining to his play and ballet designs - has survived, this assemblage may prove particularly useful to researchers.

### 1.4. The marginalisation of Hockney's theatre engagement

Notwithstanding the broad scope of the afore-mentioned literature and the inherent necessity for selective investigation within each subject area, it must be stressed that there is considerable imbalance in the quantity and quality of available resources specific to individual works for which Hockney created. In particular, the ballets *Septentrion* and *Varii Capricci*, and Auden's play *Paid on Both Sides* have received scant previous attention. Furthermore, I argue that Hockney's role as a designer has been marginalised in relation to other aspects of his creativity - and despite the considerable time and energy devoted to his theatrical projects. The lack of exhibits relating to his theatre engagement in the major retrospectives of the artist's oeuvre exemplifies my point. Of the 154 artworks displayed in *David Hockney: A Retrospective* of

[77] Transcript of Glazebrook's interview with David Hockney, 30 April 1981, reproduced in *David Hockney: Paintings and Drawings for 'Parade'*, p. 5; author's interview with Hockney

1988-9 (Los Angeles, New York and London), a mere seven pertained to his stage designs; whilst of the 135 artworks in the 2017 retrospective (London, Paris, New York), solely one - a small crayon sketch for *Ubu Roi* (1966) - concerned his work for performance. Such meagre representation is clearly disproportionate to the scope of Hockney's stage involvement in relation to his non-performance creativity.

Chris Stephens, co-curator of the afore-mentioned retrospective at Tate Britain (2017) has defended the decision to omit examples of what was considered to be a somewhat isolated and divergent facet of the artist's career.[78] With over sixty years of material on which to draw, issues of space limitation and the availability and quality of relevant material were factors in that decision.[79] Certainly, theatre artefacts such as *maquettes* are space-consuming and costumes and items of scenery rarely endure. Indeed, the regular fate of scenery is illustrated by that of the painted backdrops of the Hockney-designed ballets *Septentrion* and *Varii Capricci*, which were respectively destroyed in a warehouse fire and in accordance with Royal Ballet post-production policy.[80] Yet many photographs, paintings and drawings pertaining to Hockney's stage designs have survived and could have been displayed, provoking a series of questions that reach beyond the scope of this thesis: Does the collaborative and ephemeral nature of stage design demote its status as artwork? Likewise, its 'craft' associations? If so, is theatre participation potentially detrimental to the careers of 'serious' artists such as Hockney? Do the intangible and variable aspects of performance render it problematical to assess and exhibit? Do art historians and gallery practioners see stage design as beyond their realm? Douglas Cooper, in introducing his book *Picasso Theatre*, claimed that, despite the vast literature concerning the *maestro*, the role of theatre and spectacle in Picasso's art had not hitherto been examined.[81] That Cooper asserted this in 1968 - more than fifty years

[78] Author's conversation wth Chris Stephens, 18 April 2017
[79] Ibid.
[80] Jean-Michel Desiré (lighting designer), e-mail to the author re. *Septentrion*, 13 November 2016; Jennifer Johnstone (archivist, Royal Opera House Collections), e-mail to the author re. *Varii Capricci*, 21 December 2016
[81] Cooper, p. 11

after Picasso had worked on *Parade* - underscores the validity of such queries.[82]

A number of exhibitions have nonetheless been dedicated to Hockney's creativity for performance. In 1975, the designs for *The Rake's Progress* were shown at Manchester City Art Gallery. 1981 saw two theatre-themed exhibitions: *Paintings and Drawings for the Metropolitan Opera's 'Parade' - A French Triple Bill,* at the André Emmerich Gallery in New York, which was reprised at London's Riverside Studios and Galerie Claude Bernard in Paris; and *David Hockney: Stage Designs for 'The Rake's Progress' and 'The Magic Flute'* at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. The exhibition *Hockney Paints the Stage* opened at the Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis, in November 1983, subsequently touring to Mexico City, Toronto, Chicago, Fort Worth and San Francisco before its final showing at London's Hayward Gallery in August 1985. Elements of this exhibition would re-emerge in *Hockney's Opera* which toured Japan in 1992 and which additionally included works pertaining to the since-created *Tristan und Isolde* and *Turandot* (although not *Die Frau Ohne Schatten* which was still in development). In 1991, selected designs were included in the group exhibition *Setting the Stage: Contemporary Artists Design for the Performing Arts* at the Columbus Museum of Art in Ohio; and artefacts concerning the artist's theatre projects have also been displayed at London's V&A Museum, Salts Mill in Saltaire (the Yorkshire mill-turned-arts complex that now houses a permanent exhibition of Hockney's work), and San Francisco's Museum of Performance and Design.

I maintain, however, that the afore-mentioned exhibitions constitute a remarkably scant proportion of the numerous international events devoted to Hockney's vast productivity. Moreover, divergent facets of his artwork - particularly paintings, prints and drawings - have been routinely exhibited

[82] The dilemma of the artist as scenic designer and the demotion of stage design in comparison with fine art are discussed by Christina Young in 'The Changing Role and Status of Scenic Artists in England', *Setting the Scene*, Archetype Publications, September 2013, pp. 102-5. The historical status of crafts is further discussed by Anna M. Fariello: 'Regarding the History of Objects', in *Objects and Meaning: New Perspectives on Art and Craft,* ed. by M. Anna Fariello and Paula Owen (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2005), p. 17

together, whilst his work for the theatre has generally been shown in isolation, indicative perhaps of its perceived disconnection from the other art forms with which he has engaged. A notable exception was the exhibition at London's Kasmin Gallery which ran from 22nd July 1966, in which Hockney's preparatory sketches for the play *Ubu Roi* were paired with his series of etchings inspired by the poems of C. P. Cavafy (1966). As the series were thematically removed, however, even this was a questionable match that was possibly inspired by the promotion of the play itself (*Ubu Roi* had opened at the Royal Court the day before).

Certainly, Hockney's stage creativity has not been easily embraced by the art world. His friend and curator, Henry Geldzahler, recalled that he was once 'frankly concerned that all this preoccupation with theater was distracting [Hockney] from his real job, his painting', albeit conceding that 'this turned out to be nothing but the endemic narrowness of the traditional art historian. I was mistaken'.[83] The theme has been expanded by fellow friend and art historian, Lawrence Weschler:

> A [...] misconception about Hockney's art is that he is essentially a painter and that all the rest - the theater work, the photocollages, the lithographs, the paper-pulp pools, the Home Made Xerox Prints - are somehow secondary, incidental, or tangential, a series of holding actions or at best experiments leading back to the more serious work of painting.[84]

Yet Weschler's description of the artist's reaction on encountering the artwork of Cézanne, Picasso and Braque at the time of his second photocollage show ('Oh dear, I truly *must* get back to painting'), led him to concede that 'occasionally Hockney himself has reinforced that sense of priority'.[85]

The latter remark connects with the theatrical exclusions of the 2017 retrospective. If we consider the gratitude expressed by the curators for Hockney's 'warm engagement' with the project and the acknowledgement of Alex Farquharson, Director of Tate Britain, that 'his contribution to all aspects

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[83] Henry Geldzahler, 'Hockney: Young and Older', in *David Hockney: A Retrospective,* Tuchman, p. 20
[84] Weschler, in *David Hockney: A Retrospective,* Tuchman, p. 82
[85] Ibid.

of the exhibition has been crucial', the artist must have been amenable to the noted omissions.[86] Indeed, his acquiescence suggests - in accordance with Weschler's observation and despite the artist's assertions ('I didn't regard the theatre as just a sideline at all') - that Hockney has likewise considered his stage designs to be, if not secondary to, at least separate from, his solo creativity.[87]

I argue, however, that far from being subordinate to or removed from his work in the studio, Hockney's theatre engagement has been truly integral to it; and that both facets have been shaped by the other. This has been recognised by the texts of Silver, Hardie and Livingstone, the latter observing the theatre's 'liberating influence' and 'constant and dominant presence' in Hockney's oeuvre.[88] None of these writers, however, has fully expounded on the subject. Andrew Wilson, in the accompanying catalogue to the retrospective of 2017, similarly acknowledged that 'opera opened up a new experience of space' and that 'the consistent motor for change [in Hockney's work] through the late 1970s and into the 1980s was his experience of designing for the stage'.[89] Yet these arguments were not developed and the artist's theatre involvement, as previously mentioned, was all but ignored by the said exhibition.

Whilst it is apparent that many gaps prevail in the documentation and investigation of the theatrical facets of Hockney's career, this thesis will build on the content of existent texts and contribute to the alleviation of some of these vacuums. It will make a more probing, objective analysis than currently exists of his Glyndebourne assignments, drawn from archive research and personal engagement with his collaborators on *The Rake's Progress* and *The Magic Flute*. It will also afford the first detailed study of his drama and ballet

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[86] Chris Stephens and Andrew Wilson, 'Acknowledgements', in *David Hockney*, ed. by Chris Stephens and Andrew Wilson (London: Tate Publishing, 2017), p. 9; Alex Farquharson, 'Foreward', in *David Hockney*, Stephens and Wilson, p. 7

[87] Author's interview with Hockney

[88] Silver, in *David Hockney: A Retrospective,* Tuchman, p. 67; William Hardie, 'Novelties: the 1990s', in *David Hockney*, ed. by Paul Melia (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 132-45; Hardie, 1993; Livingstone, pp. 177-8

[89] Andrew Wilson, 'Experiences of Space', in *David Hockney*, Stephens and Wilson, p. 142

designs (*Ubu Roi* and *Septentrion*, to include comparative analysis of the hitherto unresearched *Varii Capricci* and *Paid on Both Sides*); and, by its inclusion of pertinent aspects of his subsequent opera involvement, it will lend scholarly insights into the greater continuum of Hockney's creativity for the performing arts.

## 2. Theatricality in Hockney's life and work prior to his professional involvement with the theatre

Theatricality within Hockney's creativity - even prior to his professional involvement with the theatre - was acknowledged by the artist's comment concerning his earliest stage venture (*Ubu Roi,* 1966): 'I had played with those ideas before and thought of all my pictures as drama. Even the way I was painting at that time was a kind of theatrical exaggeration'.[90] This remark prompts the two key questions which underpin this chapter: Why was he drawn to 'the theatrical' in the first instance? And what precisely was the nature and extent of theatricality within his oeuvre prior to (and beyond) his initial involvement with the theatre? These issues have not hitherto been assessed in any depth by scholars. I will argue that elements associated with theatricality are fundamental to Hockney's general creativity. Moreover, as we shall see, a related notion relevant to the artist's work is that of 'camp', a concept that also has associations with the 1960s, thanks to Susan Sontag's influential formulation. Hockney's alignment with the theatrical and the camp was intertwined, conversely, with his rejection of modernist purism, as promoted during the same period by critic Clement Greenberg and - as an explicitly anti-theatrical stance - by Greenberg's follower Michael Fried. This chapter aims to describe the insistent presence of theatrical features in Hockney's imagery and style; and to investigate the roots of that sensibility in his own experiences, sexuality and creative enthusiasms, reinforced by the cultural atmosphere of the era in which he found his artistic identity.

Before considering its resonance in Hockney's practice, we should explore in more abstract terms the concept of theatricality, the complexities of which have been acknowledged and debated by numerous international scholars. Josette Féral has observed that 'lexically speaking, theatricality is both poorly defined and etymologically unclear'; and Samuel Weber has similarly discerned that theatrical notions are far from self-evident ('they have a vexed

[90] Hockney quoted by Friedman, p. 11

and complex history')'.[91] Erika Fischer-Lichte's study of 1995 illuminates the historical depth of debate surrounding the concept in its consideration of contrasting definitions by Georg Fuchs (*Die Revolution des Theaters*, 1909) and Nikolai Evreinov (*Apologia of Theatricality*, 1908).[92] Fuchs constrained theatricality within the boundaries of staged performance, defining it as those elements beyond literary text, such as movement, sound, light and colour; whilst for Evreinov, its workings and function extended beyond the realm of theatre (both as art form and institution) and within disciplines as diverse as sociology, ethology, history and psychology.[93] Recent scholarship has tended to support the latter interpretation. Joachim Fiebach has observed that 'the notion of theatricality encompasses any societal activities that are theatrically structured'; and Tracy Davis and Thomas Postlewait have similarly perceived that, whilst it shares its etymology with that of the theatre, 'the idea of theatricality has achieved an extraordinary range of meanings, making it everything from an act to an attitude, a style to a semiotic system, a medium to a message'.[94] Martin Esslin further proposed that even 'real' events, such as news features and interviews, comprise a theatrical dimension ('All these items on television contain a high degree of 'reality' but that reality is strongly filtered through a staging and production process').[95]

The participation of the viewer or spectator is widely deemed imperative to the performative dimension of theatricality; hence Féral's insistence that 'theatricality cannot *be*, it must be *for* someone. In other words, it is *for the*

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[91] Samuel Weber, *Theatricality as Medium* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), p. 1; Josette Féral, 'The Specificity of Theatrical Language', trans. by Ronald P. Bermingham, *SubStance*, vol. 31, 2/3, issue 98/99, 2002, p. 95
[92] Erika Fischer-Lichte, 'I - Theatricality Introduction: Theatricality: A Key Concept in Theatre and Cultural Studies', *Theatre Research International*, 20, 1995, p. 86
[93] Georg Fuchs, *Die Revolution des Theaters* (Munich: Georg Müller, 1909); Nikolai Evreinov, 'Apologia Teatral'nosti' ('Apologia of Theatricality'), *Utro* (*Morning*), 8 September 1908
[94] Joachim Fiebach, 'Theatricality: From Oral Traditions to Televised 'Realities', *SubStance*, Vol. 31, 2/3, issue 98/99, 2002, p. 20; Tracy Davis and Thomas Postlewait, *Theatricality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 1
[95] Martin Esslin, *The Age of Television* (Stanford: Stanford Alumni Assocation, 1981), p. 13

*Other*'.[96] Yet this interaction between 'performer' and spectator is also dependent upon recognition and interpretation and is thus, as suggested by Elizabeth Burns, 'a mode of perception'.[97] Signs, codes and symbols are inherent elements, its role as a signifier having been extensively analysed by semioticians, amongst them Keir Elam (1980), Patrice Pavis (1982), Marvin Carlson (1990) and the afore-mentioned Fischer-Lichte (1992).[98] Ragnhild Tronstad has equated the concept directly with the metaphor, a theme expounded by Glen McGillivray ('transformed into the realm of metaphor theatricality becomes a multivalent sign that is used to assert the truth value of something else').[99] Like the metaphor, however - and, I propose, the mirror, which recurrently features in Hockney's early paintings - the creation of 'theatricality' is contingent on a gap or deviation, which serves to distance it from the 'real' original and thus generates links with fakery. This quandary has been acknowledged by Carlson:

> Within the realistic tradition, theatricality is [...] seen quite negatively, since its appearance or acknowledgement calls into question the basic illusion upon which realism is based, the illusion that seeks at least in principle to deny the operations of the theater.[100]

Associations of vacuity, falsity and shallowness have been repeatedly explored by scholars, Davis and Postlewait noting that:

> since antiquity, the critique of theatre has focused on both its tendency to excess and its emptiness, its surplus as well as its lack. In this critique,

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[96] Josette Féral, 'Performance and Theatricality: the Subject Demystified', trans. by Thérèse Lyons, *Modern Drama*, vol. 25, 1, Spring 1982, p. 178
[97] Elizabeth Burns, *Theatricality: A Study in Convention in the Theatre and Social Life* (London: Longman, 1972), p. 13
[98] Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (London: Methuen, 1980); Patrice Pavis, *Languages of the Stage: Essays in the Semiology of Theatre* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982); Marvin Carlson, *Theatre Semiotics: Signs of Life* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Semiotics of Theater* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992)
[99] Ragnhild Tronstad, 'Could the World Become a Stage? Theatricality and Metaphorical Structures', *SubStance*, Vol. 31, 2/3, issue 98/99, 2002, p. 216; Glen McGillivray, 'The Discursive Formation of Theatricality as a Critical Concept', *Metaphorik.de*, 17, 2009, p. 103 <http://www.metaphorik.de/17/mcgillivray.pdf> [accessed 8 June 2016]
[100] Marvin Carlson, 'The Resistance to Theatricality', *SubStance*, vol. 31, 2/3, issue 98/99, 2002, p. 244

> performance is characterized as illusory, deceptive, exaggerated, artificial, or affected.[101]

Notions of duality, division, conflict, opposition - even reversibility - are likewise inherent to many assessments. Joshua Sobol has claimed that theatricality is the reversal of normality, illustrating his argument with the analogy of a person entering a room: if he walked in on both feet, it would be a regular occurence, but if he walked in on both hands, it would be theatrical.[102] Ann-Britt Gran has defined the concept as the relationship between two worlds (or 'turning the world upside down'), a connection she has illustrated with the paradigm of the liberated world of the carnival, which exists solely in relationship to a normal structure where rules and taboos are in place ('carnivalistic theatricality takes as a starting point - even depends upon - there being an ordered universe where hierarchies are intact').[103] Carlson has similarly suggested that 'theatricality, like the closely related term 'mimesis', has built into it a doubleness, or a play between two types of reality'; most familiarly, these are real life and - its mimetic double - the theatre, with real life viewed as 'the primary and grounding term of the binary', and theatre as 'secondary, derived, and for some, even deceptive and corrupting'.[104]

These correlations have been elaborated by Davis and Postlewait to include the issue of gender:

> Almost invariably, the polarity between the natural (or the real) and the theatrical (or the artificial) carries a moral as well as an aesthetic judgement, with the idea of the natural serving, of course, as the positive pole in the equation. [...] In telling ways, this opposition has also been used to distinguish between masculine and feminine traits, with women portrayed (from the perspective of patriarchy) as duplicitous, deceptive, costumed, showy, and thus as a sex inherently theatrical. The norms of natural behavior and sincere judgement reside within masculinity.[105]

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[101] Davis and Postlewait, p. 4
[102] Joshua Sobol, 'Theatricality of Political Theatre', *Maske und Kothurn*, vol. 33, 3/4, 1987, p. 110
[103] Ann-Britt Gran, 'The Fall of Theatricality in the Age of Modernity', *SubStance*, Vol. 31, 2/3, issue 98/99, 2002, p. 255
[104] Carlson, 2002, p. 243
[105] Davis and Postlewait, p. 17

I would add to this observation that the positivity accorded to masculinity is specific to male heterosexuality and becomes diminished in direct relation to degrees of manifestation of homosexuality or the effete. Hence, men who are openly homosexual and those displaying 'female' characteristics may be polarised as negatively as women. This is exemplified by colloquial British slang, in which the derogative term 'bent' describes both a homosexual and someone who is dishonest or corrupt. In either context, that person is other than 'straight' (heterosexual or honest).

This brief analysis of notions of theatricality is not meant to imply that Hockney himself engaged with such theoretical discussion. My intention, rather, is to establish a framework for assessing how and why such general associations resonate with the studio work produced by the artist, particularly in the early 1960s before he embarked on his parallel career as a stage designer. As we shall see, Hockney was both utterly distinctive and entirely representative of his period in embracing theatricality as a positive alternative to both traditional realism and abstract modernism.

**2.1. The manifestations of theatricality**

On the most conspicuous level, Hockney has been repeatedly drawn to performance-related themes, whether staged presentations (*The Hypnotist,* 1963; *The Singer*, 1963*; The Acrobat*, 1964) or happenings or events (*The Cha-Cha that was Danced in the Early Hours of 24th March 1961* and *A Grand Procession of Dignitaries in the Semi-Egyptian Style,* both of 1961). The act of performance is conferred by certain titles, notably *A Theatrical Landscape* (a Cubist-style collage of a pastoral scene, 1963) and *The Actor* (a 'portrait' of a wealthy art collector at home, 1964). Others allude to popular music: *I'm in the Mood for Love* (1961) refers to the eponymous 'standard' from 1935; and *The Most Beautiful Boy in the World* (1961) is a likely pun on Rodgers and Hart's *The Most Beautiful Girl in the World* (1935). Moreover, Hockney is a particularly 'literary' artist, as indicated by the sources, subjects and allusions of his paintings and etchings. These have extended from children's stories (*Illustrations for Six Fairy Tales from the Brothers Grimm*, 1969) to the poetry of William Blake (*The Fires of Furious Desire*, 1961), W.

H. Auden (*The Fourth Love Painting* of 1961) and Wallace Stevens (*The Blue Guitar* series, 1976-7); and the homoerotic writings of Walt Whitman (*The Third Love Painting*, 1960; *We Two Boys Together Clinging*, 1961) and Constantine Cavafy (*Illustrations for Fourteen Poems from C. P. Cavafy*, 1966).[106]

Cavafy's poem *Waiting for the Barbarians* (first publ. 1904) inspired *A Grand Procession of Dignitaries in the Semi-Egyptian Style* (1961, *fig. 26*), which holds a particularly seminal position within the artist's theatrical trajectory on account of its sense of staging, its dialogue with text, and its introduction of the curtain as a theme within his imagery:

> Why have our two consuls gone out, both of them, and the Praetors,
> Today with their red togas on, with their embroidered togas?
> Why are they wearing bracelets, and all those amethysts too,
> And all those rings on their fingers with splendid flashing emeralds?
> Why should they be carrying today their precious walking sticks,
> With silver knobs and golden tops so wonderfully carved?
> Because the Barbarians will arrive today.
> Things of this sort dazzle the Barbarians.[107]

Hockney was seemingly attracted by the theatrical potential of this scene, and his choice of title and description of the work are revealing. Neither the words 'Grand' nor 'Procession' specifically feature in the translation of Cavafy's poem, yet the artist has chosen to include these terms in his own title, thus effectively transforming the gathering of showy dignitaries into a splendid parade, a theatrical event. This is reinforced by the introduction of an horizontal row of sketched tassels suggestive of a stage curtain, with the following explanation:

> The curtain at the top is the first time I used the curtain motif; I wanted it to look theatrical, because I felt the whole event was theatrical - the idea of the people putting on a show for the barbarians.[108]

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[106] Hockney explained these allusions in his publications of 1976 (pp. 62-4, 68, 102-3, 195) and 1993 (pp. 31-2)
[107] Hockney, 1976, pp. 65-6
[108] Ibid., p. 66

The artist has explained that the figures themselves are based loosely, although not totally, on the traditional flat, profiled depictions of Egyptian tomb paintings, hence 'the Semi-Egyptian style'.[109] As a continuation of this profiled perspective, and bearing in mind the theatricality of the piece, the sloping shape on which they walk might be construed as a sideways view of a traditional raked stage. Moreover, the use of ordinal numbers in addition to the identifying cardinal numbers 'stamped' on the figures, lends a suggestion of 'staged' placement. This is emphasised by the slightly higher positioning of the middle ordinal number in relation to those on each side, thus visually evoking a winners' rostrum, as seen at sporting events or beauty pageants. The dignitaries themselves, however, have been reduced to stereotypes (cleric, army officer, industrialist), and are therefore 'characters' - even caricatures.[110]

A particular significance of *A Grand Procession of Dignitaries in the Semi-Egyptian Style* is that this is the first of Hockney's paintings to suggest the ceremonial spectacle of grand opera: an association reinforced by the imposing size of the work - approx. 2.13m x 3.66m (7' x 12') - and the artist's sentiment that such a large canvas demanded a 'large subject, a kind of modern history painting'.[111] Through its historical citation and foreign exoticism, this creation specifically engages with the Romantic operatic tradition. Indeed, its Egyptian theme and titular 'Grand Procession' are redolent of Verdi's opera *Aida* (1871) and specifically its *Grand March*: iconic works with which Hockney, as an opera-goer, would have almost certainly been familiar. The pharaonic and ceremonial associations likewise anticipate his later-discussed designs for *The Magic Flute*. A further noteworthy aspect of this painting is its inclusion of theatrical attire. Hockney tellingly referred to the three large forms as 'costumes' rather than beings ('inside each huge costume you can see the outline of a small person trying to look bigger and more important'), and closer inspection does indeed reveal the human figure

[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.

within each disguise.[112] Their arms are outstretched, as if to support the concealing structures of the giant bodies, with the oversized forms evoking the full-cover, lightweight outfits of the kind worn at carnivals.

The renowned artist and costumier Natalia Goncharova, in her essay, *A Few Words on Theatrical Costume* (first publ. 1930), proposed that, whilst everyday dress is conceived to cover, ornament, disguise, flatter and preserve its wearer, theatrical costume has a different purpose and significance:

> It creates the material aspect of an imaginary personage, his character, his type. When a costume serves this purpose in private life, it is theatrical, intended to realize the material aspect of a personage imagined by the wearer: fancy dress, wedding dresses, etc..[113]

More specifically, she suggested that stage costume:

> is the characteristic sign, the detail that speaks, that makes us understand, explains the character and his potentialities, creates the atmosphere of the character before he has spoken, sung or made a movement.[114]

Certain garments within Hockney's paintings might accordingly be interpreted as 'costumes': the small, pink-spotted apron sported by the man in *Domestic Scene, Los Angeles* (1963, *fig. 27*) on account of its girlish incongruity; Marcia Weisman's pink house-robe (*American Collectors*, 1968, *fig. 28*) which communicates her role as a home-maker; and Christopher Scott's raincoat (*Henry Geldzahler and Christopher Scott,* 1969, *fig. 29*) on the strength of its capacity for metaphor (Hockney: 'Christopher looks rather as if he's going to leave or he's just arrived. He's got his coat on. That is how I felt the situation was').[115] The later-discussed features of transvestism - notably the negligée in *The Most Beautiful Boy in the World* (1961, *fig. 72*) and the drag guise in *Sam Who Walked Alone by Night* (1961) - also constitute costumes, due to their

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[112] Hockney quoted by Friedman, p. 23
[113] Natalia Goncharova, 'A Few Words on Theatrical Costume' (first publ. in *Les Ballets Russes de Serge Diaghilev* by Michel Georges-Michel; Paris: Pierre Vorms, 1930), in *Art and the Stage in the Twentieth Century: Painters and Sculptors Works for the Theater,* Rischbieter, p. 58
[114] Ibid.
[115] Hockney quoted by Mark Glazebrook, ed., *David Hockney: Paintings, Prints and Drawings 1960-1970* (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 1970), p. 15

overt duplicity and realisation, as per Goncharova, 'of the material aspect of a personage imagined by the wearer'.[116]

As selected items of clothing may be deemed costumes within Hockney's paintings, so spaces are turned into stage sets, figures become performers, and objects are used as props. This theatrical punctuation has been acknowledged by curator Chris Stephens: 'A key element in the evident, self-reflexive artificiality of Hockney's depictions is theatricality - a staginess in the settings and compositions, if not a performativity amongst his protagonists'.[117] This 'staginess' is particularly discernible in the 'Domestic Scene' series of 1963 (regarded by the artist 'as another form of theater'), his Californian interiors and pool scenes of the same decade, and his double portraits of the late 1960s and 70s.[118]

*California Art Collector* (1964, *fig. 30*) is a fictitious enactment which corresponds almost precisely with the artist's account of the wealthy, yet artistically ignorant, collectors of Beverly Hills:

> I'd never seen houses like that. And the way they liked to show them off! [...] They would show you the pictures, the garden, the house. [...] The houses I had seen all had large comfortable chairs, fluffy carpets, striped paintings and pre-Columbian or primitive sculptures and recent (1964) three-dimensional work.[119]

As Hockney perceived these items to be 'props' in the Beverly Hills home, so the comfortable chair, fluffy carpet, striped rainbow (*en lieu* of a painting), 'primitive' head and 'William Turnbull' sculpture are displayed as such on the art collector's 'stage'. The scene is entirely imaginary, with additional layers of performance and duplicity introduced through art historical allusions (these are later discussed). *The Actor* (1964, *fig. 31*), as the title implies, similarly presents a collector's home as a theatrical platform on which to 'put on a

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[116] Goncharova, p. 58
[117] Chris Stephens, 'Play within a Play', in *David Hockney*, Stephens and Wilson, p. 16
[118] Friedman, p. 23. N.b. Of pertinence to the issue of performativity, philosopher David Davies contends in *Art as Performance* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004) that *all* artworks are performances by artists rather than objects made by artists
[119] Hockney, 1976, p. 98

show', the sense of performance emphasised by the implication of a three-dimensional thrust stage complete with side curtains. These fictitious scenes heralded the real-life portraits *Beverly Hills Housewife* (1966, *fig. 32*) and the afore-mentioned *American Collectors (Fred and Marcia Weisman)*, of which the subjects correspondingly appear as theatre players, surrounded by their 'props'. The latter (*fig. 28*) shows the couple in a particularly contrived scenario, the wife positioned close to 'centre-stage' and the husband relegated to the side, with the tense profiled posture of an ill-at-ease actor. As Cécile Whiting has observed, within these paintings a physical resemblance visually unites the performers with their properties: the art collector's profile and that of the 'primitive' bust; the housewife's head and the antelope on the wall; and Marcia Weisman's lop-sided smile and the mouth of the totem in the border.[120] Hockney, in acknowledging the latter correlation, has affirmed that 'the objects around the figures are part of them'.[121] This is literally so in terms of *The Actor*, the subject being totally subsumed by a sculpture of antiquity. Such conjunctions clearly add to the staginess of the scene whilst also serving as a satirical comment on the interconnectedness of the subjects and their possessions within a seemingly shallow lifestyle.

An implication of the actualities of traditional theatre staging (proscenium, backdrop, flats, props) can be perceived within other paintings of this period, irrespective of their narrative theme. All the elements of *Atlantic Crossing* (1965, *fig. 33*), for example - from the bulbous clouds to the rows of waves to the ship itself - evoke flat vaudevillian painted scenery, and with the outline of the foreground waves reminiscent of the blackened shields of traditional stage footlights. *Rocky Mountains and Tired Indians* (1965, *fig. 34*) similarly employs flat, 'stage set' shapes to indicate the ranges, its sense of theatre reinforced by the incongruous blue chair, suggestive of a performance prop in front of the painted scenery. Such 'staged' representations have continued to intersperse Hockney's creativity. *Pacific Coast Highway and Santa Monica*

[120] Cécile Whiting, 'David Hockney: A Taste for Los Angeles', *Art History*, September 2011, pp. 861-2
[121] Hockney, 1976, p. 158

(1990, *fig. 35*), painted twenty-five years later, replicates the effect of a theatrical backdrop on a shallow stage with side flats or curtains.

Curtains, steeped as they are in performance and illusory associations, have been a particular source of interest to the artist, prompting his claim that they are 'always hiding and revealing something. That is their attraction for me'.[122] The premise has been expounded by theatre scholar Emanuelle Hénin:

> Because of its reflexive dimension and its absolutely unique capacity to either unveil the representation, or, on the contrary, to hide it from the spectator's view, the curtain takes painting and the theatre back to their essence as representation.[123]

The specific use of stage curtains can, according to Hénin, be traced to the second century BC. She has noted that Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD) used the term *linteum*, meaning linen canvas, to describe the cloth used for both visual art and theatre, and claimed that 'both arts are intimately linked not only in theatrical practice but also in the very concept of illusionism since Plato'.[124] Curtains that are painted, such as canvas stage drops, provide a particularly tangible connection (Hockney: 'A curtain, after all, is exactly like a painting; you can take a painting off a stretcher, hang it up like a curtain; so a painted curtain could be very real'); and it is significant that masters of the Italian Renaissance regularly depicted illusionistic backdrops within their imagery, often behind seemingly staged scenarios for optimum theatrical effect.[125] Veronese's *The Feast in the House of Levi* (1573), is a notable example of this.

Laura Weigert has observed the numerous and striking similarities between late medieval/early modern period tapestries and mystery plays. This, she claimed, was partly on account of the patronage of nobles, such as the Dukes

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[122] Hockney quoted by Adam, p. 9
[123] Emmanuelle Hénin, 'Parrhasius and the Stage Curtain: Theatre, Metapainting and the Idea of Representation in the Seventeenth Century', trans. by Sigrid de Jong, in *Theatricality in Early Modern Art and Architecture*, ed. by Stijn Bussels and Caroline van Eck (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), p. 59
[124] Ibid., pp. 50-1
[125] Hockney, 1976, p. 89

of Burgundy, who financed them in equal measure, hence 'both media drew quite commonly on the same themes'.[126] Fra Angelico repeatedly employed curtains and garlands in his depictions of the Madonna, including the San Marco altarpiece (c.1440) in which the drapes framing the anterior scene effectively render the foreground into a thrust stage. His anterior screen and curtain wrapped over the horizonal rail in *The Healing of Justinian by Saint Cosmas and Saint Damian* (1438, *fig. 39*) likewise creates the effect of staging, particularly as the patient's bed is on a raised dais.

The curtain would resurface as a *trompe l'oeil* device in certain Flemish works of the seventeenth century (notably Rembrandt's *Holy Family with Curtain* of 1646), reflecting the concurrent practice amongst collectors of concealing their acquisitions behind literal curtains and ceremoniously unveiling them for the benefit of their guests.[127] The revelation itself was thus a performance, a spectacle. As Hénin has suggested, by including an illusory curtain, complete with rail and rings to catch the viewer's eye, paintings such as *Still Life with Flowers* (1658, *fig. 36*) by Adrian van der Spelt, 'shift the limits of the image to the viewer's side and include a supplementary fragment of his reality. They thus blur the borders of representation'.[128]

A significant dimension of Hockney's creativity is his regular allusion to the works of previous masters, and the curtain that is featured in *What Is This Picasso?* (1976-7, *fig. 37*), *Self Portrait with Blue Guitar* (1977, *fig. 260*) and, indirectly, *Model with Unfinished Self-Portrait (*1977, *fig. 80*) clearly correlates with that in *Still Life with Flowers*. Although the rail and rings are more contemporary, the colour and sheen of the fabric, the shape and shadowing of the folds and, especially, the horizontal crease marks all connect strongly with the Dutch original. Indeed, the curtain in *What is this Picasso?* is almost a mirror reflection. *Invented Man Revealing Still Life* (1975, *fig. 38*) - an illusory blend of conflicting perspectives and forms - similarly features a curtain which

[126] Laura Weigert, "Theatricality' in Tapestries and Mystery Plays and its Afterlife in Painting', in *Theatricality in Early Modern Art and Architecture*, Bussels and van Eck, p. 26
[127] Hénin, p. 59
[128] Ibid.

Hockney claimed was 'lifted' straight from a Fra Angelico painting; and closer inspection reveals that it does indeed replicate the afore-mentioned drapery of *The Healing of Justinian by Saint Cosmas and Saint Damian* (*fig. 39*).[129] It thus transmits an 'insider's joke', an additional layer of disclosure of the 'falsity' of the image. Further parody is conveyed by the titular word 'revealing', implying theatrical action: the supposed grand gesture of drawing back the curtain, merely to disclose an inanimate pot of flowers. In this regard, Hockney was picking up the theme of an earlier work, *Cubist Boy with Colourful Tree* (1964), in which the actual act of drawing the curtain likewise takes centre-stage, although whether the boy is opening the drape or closing it is subject to interpretation.

The curtain motif is an indication of Hockney's own recognition of theatricality within his work, and most noticeably when its presence - as in *A Grand Procession of Dignitaries in the Semi-Egyptian Style* - is superfluous to the narrative. It has also facilitated his exploration of the (later-discussed) method of literalness. Thus, in *The Hypnotist* (1963, *fig. 40*) and *Closing Scene* (1963, *fig. 41*) the canvas edge infers a stage proscenium, with the parted drapery of the former framing the stage space and performance; and the closing 'tabs' of the latter covering almost the entire plain, except for a partially-hidden performer and the snatch of stage scenery exposed by the gap. Based on a Persian miniature that Hockney had seen in the V&A Museum, the glimpsed 'closing scene' is a parody of a theatre backdrop, rendered in a cartoonlike manner and with garish hues that contrast sharply with the pale expanse of foreground material.[130] The ingenuity of this work, however, lies in its unorthodox treatment of the subject matter, and particularly the curtain itself. This has been promoted from its customary role as a framing or covering device to be the focus of the painting and of greater significance than the scenery or performer exposed by it; yet the blank expanse of fabric and cleanly-drawn tassels, bar and rings render it two-dimensional compared to the painted scenery. Hence, in keeping with Sobol's notion of reversal, the 'real' foreground has less volume than the 'fake' background: a bizarre

[129] Hockney, 1976, p. 294
[130] Friedman, p. 25

exchange that underlines the artifice of the scene. That the performer appears to be applauding, and thus taking on the action of the audience, similarly implies an exchange of roles. Moreover, the intimation of the curtain being drawn over the anterior image infers the illusion of a metapicture. Hockney has confirmed that 'in *Closing Scene*, the very title suggests something else: the idea of the curtain being pulled across to cover up the picture; playing with words and ideas again'.[131]

The paradox of the curtain as the centrepiece of the scene reoccurs in *Still Life with Figure and Curtain* of the same year (1963, *fig. 42*), in which the hanging fleur-de-lys tapestry covers almost the entire canvas, seemingly forcing the 'still life' cluster of flowers and fruit to the bottom edge of the picture. The faceless, de Chirico-styled 'performer' is likewise demoted by the sketchiness of its execution compared with that of the other elements, and Hockney has explained that he deliberately reduced the figure to a simple form 'because the curtain was the most important thing'.[132] As an indication of his interest in this specific theme, the tapestry would be replicated for the opening scene of the opera *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* within the 'Parade' triple bill of 1981. A variation also commands centre-stage in *Seated Woman Drinking Tea, Being Served by a Standing Companion* (1963, *fig. 43*).

Some comparison may be made between the heavy tapestry of the latter and the translucent plastic curtain of *Two Men in a Shower* (1963, *fig. 44*) in terms of their central postitioning, shape and colour, and distinctive and regular pattern. Moreover, in both instances, the curtain serves as a theatrical 'prop' within a suggested narrative. In the depiction of the women, the hanging tapestry is a 'backdrop' that - in conjunction with the shallow platform and floral arrangement (suggestive of a classical music recital) - accentuates the models' role as 'performers'. Within the shower scene, the curtain is a masking screen, cossetting and drawing its occupants together whilst also concealing their activity from the viewer. The inherent sexual implications are underscored by the glimpse of protruding knee, evocative of a striptease

[131] Hockney, 1976, p. 93
[132] Hockney quoted by Friedman, p. 23

show. Similar inferences pervade *Cleanliness is Next to Godliness* (1964) in which the subject, seemingly encaged by the curtain, smiles directly at the viewer as if in performance; the intimation of striptease amplified by flickers of red, suggestive of nightclub lighting effects.

Household drapery likewise contributes to the implied narratives of *Domestic Scene, Notting Hill* and *Domestic Scene, Broadchalke, Wilts.* (both of 1963, *figs. 45-6*). In the former, the blood-red curtain behind the seated man's black shirt intimates vampirish melodrama, even violence (underscored by the trace of red paint on his head and the controlling position of the standing nude). Moreover, its billow ushers movement - a metaphor perhaps for some impending action - into an otherwise static setting. In the latter scene, the drapery - ostensibly wafting despite the closed window - similarly unsettles the languid scenario, perhaps hinting at the prospect of some unexpected happening of which the seated men are as yet unaware. The capacity for metaphor is further exemplified by *Two Friends and Two Curtains* (1963, *fig. 47*), the contrasting fabrics of the drapes seemingly inferring the personalities of the depicted heads (Celia Birtwell and Ossie Clark), which dominate the disclosed space in the way of a cinema screen close-up. There is a strong sense of performance to this work, not only in its visual artifice but also its suggestion of the curtain's facility to hide or expose. This capability has been acknowledged by the artist: 'If you paint a curtain pulled back, it reveals a picture, as a stage curtain does in the theater. A curtain in a painting always does that, even if it's on a window'.[133]

Curtains, together with mirrors and frames, were particularly prevalent within Hockney's creativity prior to the mid-1970s. He used them as devices for theatrical ends: to trick the eye, to stress the staginess or non-reality of the image and, in the manner of Bertolt Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt*, to detach the viewer and underscore his or her active spectatorship.[134] Of these, the

[133] Ibid., p. 25

[134] The German playwright Bertolt Brecht coined the term *Verfremdungseffekt* (the alienation or estrangement effect) in 1936. He described it as 'playing in such a way that the audience was hindered from simply identifying itself with the characters in the play. Acceptance or rejection of their actions and utterances was meant to take

mirror has the singular capacity to reflect, distract, distort and confuse. Indeed, the visual duplicity afforded by its glass may be likened to that of the surface of water, itself a subject that Hockney has keenly explored.[135] Moreover, his allusions to other artists have been literally 'mirrored' (as exemplified by the features of *What is this Picasso?* and - as later discussed - *California Art Collector*), thus adding to the visual conundrum of their inclusion. The potential of the mirror for deception is exploited in *The Cha-Cha that was Danced in the Early Hours of 24th March 1961* (1961, *fig. 48*), in which the dancing figure and the text are inaccurately reflected; and in *Mirror, Casa Santini* (1973, *fig. 49*) which conveys no reflection at all, the draped neckties serving as a metonym. The looking glass which sits prominently in Hockney's portraits of his parents of 1975 and 1977 (*figs. 50-1*) likewise deceives in its formation of a visually-confounding metapicture. This initially displayed the artist's own reflection but, after creative struggles caused him to abandon and ultimately destroy the earlier portrait, he chose not to replicate his image in the later rendition.[136]

The mirror theme - and its inherent duplicity - notably features in *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall* (1961, *fig. 52*): an etching in which fellow student Peter Crutch appears to be jigging in front of a large looking-glass in which his (feminised) reflection is suggested. Above the mirror reads a variant (minus punctuation) of the famous line from *Snow White* - 'mirror mirror on the wall who is the fairest of us all' - and below the mirror, the last two lines including a spelling mistake, of a poem by Cavafy, *The Mirror in the Hall* (1930):

> .. proud to have recieved [sic] upon itself
> That entire beauty for a few minutes

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place on a conscious plane, instead of, as hitherto, in the audience's subconscious'. Brecht quoted by John Willett, ed. and trans., *Brecht on Theatre* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), p. 91

[135] Notable examples of Hockney's studies of water include *Picture of a Hollywood Swimming Pool*, 1964; *Two Boys in a Pool, Hollywood*, 1965, *fig. 161*; *Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)*, 1972, *fig. 163*; *Study of Water, Phoenix, Arizona*, 1976; and *Le Plongeur* of the 'Paper Pools' series, 1978

[136] Livingstone, pp. 181-2. N.b. A surviving photograph by Peter Schlesinger of Hockney with the original portrait is reproduced on p. 95 of *David Hockney: Paintings* (Luckhardt and Melia, 1994) and on the dust jacket of *David Hockney by David Hockney* (Hockney, 1976)

These literary references clearly situate the mirror and its reflected image as the focus of the painting. Yet the distinction between reality and reflection is strangely ambiguous, the physical dancer being depicted paler and sketchier than his mirrored likeness and enshrouded within the shape of a smaller and paler version of the looking glass itself. Hence, Hockney here has used the mirror to confuse the viewer's perception of 'reality'. Moreover, the glass is so dark as to also imply a recess or doorway, thus intimating a metaphorical gateway to a world beyond. This engages with his admiration for the lines of George Herbert:

> A man may look on glass,
> On it may stay his eye,
> Or if he pleases through it pass,
> And there the heaven espy.[137]

Hockney's previously-noted compulsion to 'break the border' is overtly illustrated by the tiny painting *Help* (1962) and *Play Within a Play* (1963, *fig. 53*), in which the figures, according to the artist, 'are desperately trying to cross over that boundary'.[138] The latter, as the title suggests, is a contrived scene, a visual joke in which Hockney's dealer John Kasmin is seemingly trapped within the shallow space between a painted stage curtain and a strip of real plexiglass. Hockney has explained that the reason the glass merely covers part of the image was a practical compromise because complete coverage would have been too weighty (perspex replaced the original when it became broken).[139] In terms of visual contrivance, however, the overtly ineffectual protection adds an extra theatrical dimension, the apparent ease with which Kasmin could 'escape' accentuating the fakery of the scene.

The artist's efforts to overcome the frame have encompassed his occasional departures from the regular rectangular format, the perimeter of his canvas - in accordance with the concept of literalism ('objecthood') - instead emulating the outline of the depicted subject. Such explorations are illustrated by *Figure*

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[137] Webb, p. 36
[138] Hockney quoted by Weschler, in *David Hockney: A Retrospective,* Tuchman, p. 96
[139] Hockney, 1976, p. 90

*in a Flat Style* (1961, *fig. 54*), formed of different-sized canvases and wooden batons; *Tea Painting in an Illusionistic Style* (1961, *fig. 84*) in which irregular-shaped conjoined canvases evoke a patently false three-dimensionality; and A *Man Stood in Front of his House with Rain Descending* (1962, *fig. 55*), in which the spacing of the two upper canvases infers the crenelated walls of the depicted castle. *The Second Marriage* (1963, *fig. 56*) further exploits the trickery of a 'frameless' illusion to infer an isometric room comprised of three conjoined canvases, two of which are shaped and one finely painted to evoke a papered wall with *trompe l'oeil* fissures. The scene is thus transformed into a three-dimensional setting, described by Peter Clothier as a 'stagelike box, which, though insistently flat, keeps teasing the viewer's eye with the illusion of depth'.[140] As an adjunct to this subject, it is, of course, pertinent that the very practice of conjoining canvases is itself strongly allied to the physicalities of traditional scenery production.

The dilemma of the frame with which Hockney was wrestling in the studio correlates directly with the quandaries of his contemporaries in the world of stage design, and particularly in the 1970s: an era when, as theatre scholar Arnold Aronson has observed, 'the reaction against the proscenium was reaching its apex'.[141] Aronson has identified two types of production method: 'nonproscenium', which implies a continuity between the world of the stage and the viewer; and 'postmodern' which is discontinuous and requires some perceptual interruption, with the proscenium as a unifying (framing) device.[142] In descriptions which clearly apply to Hockney's own stage designs for *The Magic Flute*, Aronson has noted that 'many of the postmodern designers frequently refer back to the Renaissance, a period in which the scientific desire for unity clashed with an appetite for diversity and a delight in incongruity'; adding that, whilst that period's inconsistencies were relatively discrete, 'postmodern design tends to blend all periods, styles, and genres within a momentary image within a single frame'.[143] He expounded:

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[140] Clothier, p. 22
[141] Aronson, 2005, p. 25
[142] Ibid., p. 26
[143] Ibid.

> Nonetheless, postmodern design keeps a certain distance; it requires a viewer, not a participant; it is often ironic. It may be possible to achieve this in a nonproscenium environment, but postmodernism is inherently theatrical, and the proscenium (or proscenium-like arrangement) remains the prime semiotic embodiment of theatricality in our visual vocabulary.[144]

For Hockney, this points to what I propose is the fundamental root of his personal dilemma: that in using theatricality to oppose pictorial realism, he was dependent on the very frame or proscenium that he was simultaneously seeking to eliminate.

Within his own creativity for the theatre, the artist moved towards his 'nonproscenium' objective with his design for *Oedipus Rex*, the opera-oratorio that constituted part of the 'Stravinsky' triple bill of 1981 (*fig. 16*). He explained:

> Because the Metropolitan Opera House is made up of certain elements I couldn't alter - the proscenium and curving shape of the auditorium - I made them part of the design. Because I wanted to destroy the proscenium, I thought of the simple device of projecting lines of light on its sides so they would look like Greek columns. The shapes and colors on stage echoed what you saw in the auditorium; the large red circle on the dais was the color of the carpet; the chorus in black tie becomes part of the black and white pattern of the orchestra below it. On opening night, the audience was also in black tie, so everything blended and the whole theater was engulfed in the work.[145]

Even in this solitary instance, however, the 'destruction of the frame' was countered by an apparently theatrical two-dimensionality. Curator Martin Friedman observed that:

> for all its monumental form, the *Oedipus* set was not a collection of heavy masses. Like all of Hockney's theater designs, it had a definite two-dimensional quality, as much the result of its stark, even lighting as its simple, frontal design.[146]

Hence, the artist's attempt to blur the distinction between performance and audience was offset by his own acknowledgement of theatrical illusion; and

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[144] Ibid.
[145] Hockney quoted by Friedman, p. 204
[146] Friedman, p. 204

his dilemma pertaining to the proscenium as a border remained partially unresolved.

Conversely, Hockney has stressed or augmented the borders of his artwork for ironic ends. A thin exterior line surrounds *California* (1965), *Rocky Mountains and Tired Indians* (*fig. 34*) and *A Lawn Being Sprinkled* (1967) which confers upon these canvases the flat disposability of a picture postcard. The broad, pale edges of the trio of 'splash' paintings (1966-7) similarly equate these images with 'instant' Polaroid photographs. Moreover, the tongue-in-cheek mediocrity of *A Hollywood Collection* (1965) - a 'ready-made' series of diverse genres for wealthy yet art-ignorant collectors - is accentuated by their extravagant *trompe l'oeil* frames. That the surrounds are of seemingly greater value than the low quality artwork within them is underscored by the repeated reference to the frame in the quirky explanatory titles, as exemplified by *Picture of a Landscape in an Elaborate Gold Frame* (*fig. 57*). Such titles serve not only to explain the visual joke but - through the inclusion of the word 'picture' - to stress the illusional dimension: a 'device' that the artist employed in other designations of the period (for instance, *Picture of a Hollywood Swimming Pool* instead of simply 'Hollywood Swimming Pool').

Text has additionally been amalgamated within the actual imagery, where - as Letraset titles or scribbled graffiti - it invariably serves to detach the observer and stress his or her role as an active spectator. The inclusion, for example, of the title and authorship within *A Grand Procession of Dignitaries in the Semi-Egyptian Style* immediately reminds the viewer that a picture, as defined by Alan Woods, 'is not a window on the world; it is an object in the world'.[147] That Hockney - whether deliberately or not - included the word 'painted' (which is not part of the actual title) in his inscription reinforces this notion. The artist has explained that if the observer sees lettering on a painting, he or she will read the text first and so interpret the image in terms of the written message:

[147] Alan Woods, 'Pictures emphasising stillness', in *David Hockney*, Melia, p. 35

> One reason for using writing on paintings is that it makes you go and look at the picture in another way. [...] If you put a real message on a painting it is meant to be read, and it will be read.[148]

Moreover, the extreme disparities in the size of Hockney's text insistently oblige the viewer's active participation. The miniscule numbering of the drink glasses in *The Second Marriage*, for example, certainly necessitates a closer look.

A significant additional factor concerning the inclusion of text is that the perceived action of the scene is paused while the viewer reads the words, and so time itself is seemingly suspended. In *Picture Emphasizing Stillness* (1962, *fig. 58*), two men casually stood in conversation are seemingly oblivious to a giant leopard that is leaping to attack them. The first impression is of movement, but on closer inspection, the observer reads a caption placed directly between the animal and the men which states, 'They're perfectly safe, this is a still'. Thus Hockney has wittily 'frozen' the scene, and simultaneously stressed the artifice of the depiction. He explained that 'although it looks as though it's full of action, it's a still; a painting cannot have any action'.[149] His use of the word, 'still' - a term more synonymous with cinematography than fine art - adds further dislocation. As Woods has claimed, this painting characterises the artist's work of the early 1960s, not only in its use of text within the image, but 'in its theatrical manipulation of the viewer'.[150] Its static, temporal suspension anticipated the three 'splash' paintings of 1966-7, which similarly demand the observer's recognition of his or her spectatorship in their capture of a split second of the after-effect of an implied action. That the seemingly-spontaneous splatter of *A Bigger Splash* (1967, *fig. 59*) took Hockney two weeks to paint infers additional duplicity (Catherine Wood: 'This splash is not a splash, but a painstaking and poetic deceit').[151]

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[148] Hockney, 1976, p. 61
[149] Ibid.
[150] Woods, in *David Hockney*, Melia p. 32
[151] Catherine Wood, 'Painting in the Shape of a House', in *A Bigger Splash: Painting after Performance*, ed. by Catherine Wood (London: Tate Publishing, 2012), p. 11

A further notable feature of this period is Hockney's use of citations, some discernible solely to the initiated and others commanding almost instant recognition. The tapestry and visual illusion of *Play Within a Play* (*fig. 53*) nods to Domenichino's *Apollo Killing Cyclops* (1616-8); whilst the concentric rings of *The First Marriage* (1962, *fig. 62*) - the woman's breasts, her earring and the sun - hint to the works (e.g. *Beginnings,* 1958) of contemporary painter Kenneth Noland. The puffy cloud formations of *Iowa* (1964) and *Atlantic Crossing* (*fig. 33*) point to Jean Arp's series of 'Human Concretions' (1935); and the contour lines around the Rocky Mountains (*fig. 34*) - which also top the Alps in *Flight into Italy* (1962) - suggest both the 'Unfurled' series of Morris Louis (*Delta Theta*, 1961) and the coiling themes (*Before the Event*, 1963) of Harold Cohen. Moreover, Hockney has confirmed that for *California Art Collector* (*fig. 30*) he 'borrowed a few notions' from Fra Angelico and Piero della Francesca.[152] This image, with its open room and sloping roof, does indeed connect with both *Annunciation* (1433-4) and *Nativity* (c.1470) respectively, the collector assuming the role of the Virgin Mary whilst schematic legs turn her sculpture into a mirrored form of Fra Angelico's angel and the blob of white paint suggests his holy dove.

Hockney has not only referenced the work of other artists, he has also referenced himself, with motifs from one piece resurfacing in others. The arc design on the robe of *The Boy with a Portable Mirror* (1961, *fig. 60*) reappears on the man's shirt in *Picture Emphasizing Stillness* and on the back of the *The Actor*'s sofa. The abstract curve of *Cubist Boy with Colourful Tree* re-emerges in *Self Portrait with Blue Guitar*. An almost-identical armchair appears in two of the 1963 'Domestic Scenes' (Los Angeles and Notting Hill) as well as *California Art Collector*; and the pattern that adorns the curtain of *Two Men in a Shower* and *Cleanliness is next to Godliness* pops up on the sofa of *Domestic Scene, Broadchalke, Wilts.*. These identifiable allusions likewise serve as 'devices' through their capacity to detach the viewer and, by their apparent appropriation, to accentuate the 'fakery' of the image. Moreover, their display and recognition infer a degree of performance with which the

[152] Hockney, 1976, p. 98

observer is actively engaged. Hockney's unabashed, almost flippant, admission of his borrowings - regarding the Fra Angelico curtain, for example - suggests that he was amenable to, if not actively seeking, the theatrical consequences of his citations.

Arguably the most prevalent device within Hockney's theatrical strategy - and, according to Friedman, 'the rule, not the exception, in his work' - is the unsettling combination of incongruous elements.[153] This is exemplified by three connected paintings of 1962-3. In *Man in a Museum (or You're in the Wrong Movie*) (*fig. 61*) Hockney interpreted the strangeness of a real-life visual union between a friend and a sculpted figure in Berlin's Pergamon Museum.[154] Thus, the human figure is rendered in a loose, realistic manner, and the museum-piece as a caricature with green face and scribbled flesh tones. The quirky title - again, referencing cinematic action - adds to the incongruence that would herald *The First Marriage* (*fig. 62*). This painting features a mature man formally attired in western fashion and his young, red-skinned bride with cartoon breasts. The sketchiness of her depiction compared to his portrayal creates a disparity comparable to that of *Man in a Museum*; whilst the exotic setting, with its palm tree, sun and semblance of grass, is visibly at odds with the man's style of clothes and the gothic arch, which Hockney added simply 'for its ecclesiastical connections with marriage'.[155] By *The Second Marriage* (*fig. 56*) the setting has evolved into a domestic interior of overtly contrasting styles, textures and materials that include chintzy curtains and a mosaic floor. Here, a different bride - her image based on a snapshot of an ancient Egyptian sculpture - is seated with her monochrome sunglass-wearing groom.[156] That Hockney intended this trio of works as an exercise in diversity is underscored by the subtitle of the second, *A Marriage of Styles I*.

[153] Friedman, p. 30
[154] Hockney, 1976, p. 89
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.

It is noteworthy that his amalgamations have routinely derived from multifarious, anachronistic visual and textual sources, including the works of other artists, imagery from the media, real people and objects, photographs, poems and songs. The swimming pool in *California Art Collector*, for example, was based on a newspaper advertisement; and the subjects of *Two Men in a Shower* were respectively painted from a photograph in a magazine and a life model.[157] A miscellany of genres has been similarly juxtaposed. Hence, *The Hypnotist*, although inspired by the screen action of a film (*The Raven,* 1963), evokes a live stage enactment; and *The Cha-Cha that was Danced in the Early Hours of 24th March 1961* incorporates lyrics ('I love every movement') from a contemporary song called *Poetry in Motion* (1960), with no connection to the dance in question.[158]

Incongruity as a device is particularly evident in *Domestic Scene, Los Angeles* (*fig. 27*), for which the sources are an amalgamation of magazine illustrations, the imaginary and real life.[159] In this fabrication, the pot of flowers is disproportionately large, its sharp shadow inferring two-dimensionality as opposed to volume; whilst the tiny telephone, suspended in space, evokes an image stencilled on the wall. A disparity is thus created between the flatness of these elements (likewise the showerhead and tub) and the volume of the human figures and the armchair. The setting is ambiguous, with the chintzy chair implying a lounge, and the gushing shower, a bathroom; perspectives are skewed, so the chair is strangely slanted; and a touch of abstraction in the curve of blue and amorphous yellow reinforces the overarching artifice. The absurdity of this scenario is underscored by the impractical open tub in which the man is showering, and his helper's sporty socks and frilly apron.

Such ludicrous incongruity permeates many of Hockney's works of this era, invoking both visual farce and seditious irreverence. The preposterousness of *Picture Emphasizing Stillness* (*fig. 58*) extends to the appearance of the

[157] Ibid., pp. 93, 98
[158] Ibid., pp. 89-90. N.b. An indirect link of the latter was Hockney's noted 'crush' on both the cha-cha dancer (Peter Crutch) and the singer of the song (Cliff Richard)
[159] Ibid., p. 93

conversing men, one of whom is fully-clothed whilst the other is totally naked. In *Boy With a Portable Mirror* (*fig. 60*), a nondescript looking-glass on a chest of drawers is paradoxically displayed as a star of the stage. The titular gent in *A Man Stood in Front of His House with Rain Descending* (*fig. 55*) extends a ridiculously small and misplaced umbrella before a grandiose castle, complete with turrets.

*Seated Woman Drinking Tea, Being Served by a Standing Companion* (*fig. 43*) is particularly worthy of consideration on account both of its composition and Hockney's treatment of its source material. It features an incongruous amalgamation: a seemingly heavy tapestry, its height and grandeur befitting a stately home or palace, and the flimsy suggestion of a contemporary stool on which the seated figure perches. Based on a photograph in an anatomical reference book (*The Human Figure in Motion* by Eadweard Muybridge, 1907), this scenario appealed to Hockney through the oddness of its content and the comicality afforded by the non-mention of nudity in its lengthy title (which he would replicate).[160] In the original image, two naked women are posed, one seated and the other standing, whilst passing a cup of tea. The occurrence is absurd, not because the women are nude but because they are nude and engaged in the mundane. It is the triviality of their action and the irrelevance of their nudity to it that makes the scene peculiar. Yet within the context of the original study, in which a series of undressed models undertake routine activities to illustrate consecutive phases of muscular actions, this scenario appears less eccentric. The true absurdity of Hockney's interpretation derives from the removal of the depiction from its original framework.

A more abstract example, and contrary to the inference of its title (itself a ruse), *Ordinary Picture* (1964, *fig. 63*) is far from 'ordinary'. Rather, it is an incongruous image that requires the viewer to constantly re-evaluate what he or she is really seeing. The scene is 'framed' by curtains in the manner of a proscenium, revealing what appears to be the view from a window of receding mountains and a lake with reflections. The spectator's eye is confounded,

[160] Eadweard Muybridge, *The Human Figure in Motion* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1907); Hockney, 1976, pp. 90-1

however, by the bizarre proximity of the white picket fence; and distinctions between what is land, water, or reflection on water are unclear. Moreover, the insertion of the title serves to highlight that this is a painting, a mere illusion. *Ordinary Picture* is one of several works to employ the stratagem of a curtained 'window' with a confusing aspect. *A Painted Landscape* (1965) expands the theme, with elements of abstraction breaking through the 'glass' and even the 'wall'; and a surge of carpet - or possibly grass - turning perceived space inside-out.

A recurrent feature of Hockney's creativity which further serves to stress the artifice of the image, is the non-removal of certain working elements (erasure marks, sketched outlines) and mistakes. Preliminary markings, for example, are clearly discernible around the figures of the men in *Picture Emphasizing Stillness* (*fig 58*). Occasionally, actual errors remain visible: the missing letter 'p' in the word 'disappearing' and its apparent insertion within *Egyptian Head Disappearing into Descending Clouds* (1961*, fig, 223*); or - as Hockney freely admitted - the misspelt word 'tea' on the side of the box in *Tea Painting in an Illusionistic Style* (*fig. 84*).[161] In view of the corrigibility of oil paint, such lack of concealment must be considered intentional. Indeed, the artist has confirmed that in the execution of Fred Weisman's portrait (*American Collectors*, *fig. 28*), he left the drips from the model's hand 'because it seemed to make his stance more intense, as though he were squeezing so hard that his paint was coming off'.[162] This visual pun, of course, like the unconcealed markings and errors, serves to accentuate that what we are seeing is merely paint on canvas, an illusion.

An extreme example of this device is afforded by *Accident Caused by a Flaw in the Canvas* (1963, *fig. 64*): a work which stemmed from Hockney's decision to acknowledge, rather than disguise, an imperfection in the weave.[163] In this representation, three torch-bearing athletes are running over uneven terrain, the first appearing to trip on account of the flaw. The real defect thus intrudes

[161] Hockney, 1976, p. 64
[162] Ibid., p. 158
[163] Ibid., p. 93

on the depiction, reminding the viewer of the painting's duplicity. The cartoonish lines which indicate his tumble lend an additional touch of comic book humour which further deflects all suggestion of realism. As Luckhardt and Melia, in considering this image, observed: 'Hockney invests the interaction between viewer and painting with drama: he makes it 'theatrical''.[164]

### 2.2. The foundations for Hockney's embrace of 'the theatrical'

Whilst scholars including Luckhardt, Melia, Stephens and Woods have plainly acknowledged the presence of theatricality within Hockney's creativity, none have specifically explored how and why this feature transpired.[165] Three clusters of factors would seem to bear particular relevance in this regard: the cultural facilities and education afforded by his home city; his family background and the influence of his father; and his experiences whilst at London's Royal College of Art (1959-62). In addition to these foundations, it is imperative to consider Hockney himself: his personality, his sexuality and the issues with which he was dealing in his art. I will argue that elements of 'the theatrical' within his persona and creativity were expressions of his desire to promote himself as an artist, of his homosexuality, and of his creative struggle with conventional methods of pictorial representation.

There is, firstly, much to suggest that Hockney was drawn to 'the theatrical' from a very young age; and his enthusiasm for the theatre, concert hall and cinema can be traced back to his formative years in the north of England. He was born and bred in Bradford: a West Yorkshire city with a proud heritage in Britain's textile industry and which, in the 1940s, boasted a civic art gallery, concert hall, museums, libraries, three theatres and and over forty cinemas, a broad selection of which, the artist is known to have keenly visited.[166] That he was raised in such a well-facilitated urban area was pivotal to his childhood exposure to performance and the arts, and biographers attest to his early

[164] Luckhardt and Melia, p. 39
[165] Ibid.; Stephens, in *David Hockney*, Stephens and Wilson, p. 16; Woods, in *David Hockney*, Melia p. 36
[166] Webb, p. 4

experience of all types of entertainment, including *La Bohème* by the Carla Rosa company, which was his first attendance at an opera.[167] Moreover, his parents had 'a healthy respect for culture', and learning was a priority in the Hockney household.[168] The artist won a scholarship to Bradford Grammar School, he became well-versed in Shakespeare as a schoolboy and, according to Christopher Simon Sykes:

> With Eccleshill Library nearby, the house was always full of books and [Hockney] read a lot, everything from Biggles to the Brontës, the local classics, to Dickens. His father took them all to museums, and to look at the collection of Victorian and Edwardian paintings in Cartwright Hall.[169]

Hockney's father, Kenneth, was additionally an avid theatre- and cinema-goer and encouraged his children in these pursuits. His son has claimed that he was taken each Saturday to the Bradford Alhambra 'to see whatever was on' and that he frequented the cinema 'at least once a week - my father loved the cinema'.[170] This cultural exposure and appreciation extended to classical music, with the artist maintaining that 'from the age of ten to the age of twenty, during the concert season in Bradford, I went two or three times a week, usually to hear the Hallé Orchestra or the Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra'.[171]

The actual extent of Hockney's performance attendance may have been exaggerated by his own accounts. Two or three concerts per week plus his alleged weekly outings to both the theatre and cinema would have occupied a considerable number of evenings and been prohibitively costly for a cash-strapped family with five children (according to Sykes, 'money was as tight as space').[172] It is apparent, however, from biographical sources - including those

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[167] Ibid.
[168] Sykes, 2011, p. 12
[169] Friedman, p. 9; Sykes, 2011, p. 18
[170] Hockney quoted by Friedman, p. 11; Hockney, 1993, p. 11
[171] Hockney quoted by Friedman, p. 11
[172] Sykes, 2011, p. 11. N.b. In her autobiography *My Mother is not Your Mother* (Saltaire: Salts Estates, 2017), the artist's sister Margaret Hockney shares personal memories of the family's financial hardships, including the loss of Kenneth's £3-per-week job as a finance clerk (pp. 27, 30-42). *The Hockneys: Never Worry What the Neighbours Think* by his brother John Hockney (London: Legend Press, to be publ. October 2019) promises to likewise lend insights into the siblings' upbringing (David Jagger, 'New book by David Hockney's brother John tells story of their lives', *Telegraph & Argus*, 15 March 2019

by Sykes (2011), Webb (1988) and Adam (1997) - that, from a young age, the artist was routinely exposed to all manner of art forms and encouraged in his appreciation of them.[173] This is clearly of pertinence to the extent and nature of his later engagement with the theatre and theatricality. Nonetheless, this specific connection has been hitherto unmentioned by writers, with the notable exception of Friedman who observed that '[Hockney's] devotion to the stage was no sudden conversion, but reflected a long-time interest in music and theater that had begun during his Bradford Grammar School days'.[174] The pivotal role of his father in Hockney's developing sense of theatre has likewise been marginalised in literature on the artist, beyond a broad recognition of his love of the arts and the introduction of them to his children.[175] I argue, however, that paternal influence extended beyond mere arts appreciation. It kindled the very nature of his son's creativity and his attraction to theatricality and (the later-discussed) camp.

According to Sykes, Kenneth Hockney was 'a bit of a dandy' who expressed his rather eccentric personality through his attire; sporting detachable shirt collars, which he would hand-decorate with patterns, and bow ties which he spruced up with adhesive coloured dots.[176] He was an avid amateur performer, in his element at family gatherings where his eager renditions of music hall favourites earned him repute as a comical 'ham'.[177] He learnt photography and attended art evening classes, applying his skills to the renovation of bicycles and prams, poster design, and the decoration of the family home in an idiosyncratic fashion.[178] As Hockney has recalled:

> I remember in about 1950 [my father] decided to modernize the house. He began by putting a whole sheet of hardboard flush over each of the panelled doors, and then he painted sunsets on the doors - sunsets that looked as if

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<https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/17501555.new-book-by-david-hockneys-brother-john-tells-story-of-their-lives/>)
[173] Sykes, 2011, pp. 18-21; Webb, p. 4; Adam, p. 13
[174] Friedman, p. 9
[175] Webb, p. 3; Adam, pp. 12-13
[176] Sykes, 2011, p. 8
[177] Webb, p. 3
[178] Hockney, 1976, p. 28

> they were wood-veneer pictures. He painted all the doors like this, and I thought they were wonderful.[179]

The artist's description implies a nascent connection with the physical construction of stage design in the attachment of the hardboard, and with theatrical illusion in the disguise of the underlying panels and the *faux* wood-veneer imagery. Moreover, the enthusiasm of his response to this decorative ingenuity reveals an emergent appreciation of 'theatrical' design. The originality and humour that has infused his own artwork were surely fostered by the creative examples of his parent. Indeed, his solar backdrop for *The Magic Flute* (*fig. 277*) clearly engaged with the radial beams of his father's 'sunset doors' (one of which is visible in a photograph reproduced in his sister's autobiography).[180] Kenneth Hockney's unorthodox taste in dress and eccentric improvisations were likewise a plausible spur to the (later-discussed) sense of 'performance' surrounding Hockney's personal attire - including the wearing of 'drag' to the Slade drag ball of 1960 - and his own attempts on the stage whilst at the Royal College of Art.[181] These comprised two performances by the artist: as a clog-dancer and singer of the music hall ditty *Little Willie's Woodbines* (tellingly his father's song of choice) in the RCA's Christmas revue of 1960; and singing an overtly camp rendition, performed in drag, of *I'm Just a Girl Who Can't Say No* in the Christmas revue of 1961 (*fig. 65*).[182]

Hockney attended the Royal College of Art between 1959 and 1962, and his decision to enrol at this particular institution (as opposed to any other, and particularly the Slade, by which he was also accepted) was, for several

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[179] Ibid.
[180] Hockney, M., p. 44
[181] Keith Howes, 'David Hockney talks to Keith Howes', *Gay News*, London, August 1976, p. 17
[182] Webb, pp. 29-30, 45. N.b. The song *Little Willie's Woodbines* is erroneously referenced as *Little Willie Woodbine* in Webb's account (this has been further mistitled by Adam, p. 23); whilst Sykes, citing the verbal recollection of Derek Boshier, has mistakenly amalgamated Hockney's two revue performances (Sykes, 2011, pp. 79-80, 102-3). The photograph by Ferrill Amacker of Hockney in costume for the 1961 revue supports Webb's account of two separate performances, with clogs and a bathrobe worn for the revue of 1960, and the borrowed dress and high heels for the revue of 1961

reasons, pertinent to his gravitation towards design for the stage.[183] Whilst the Slade, under realist painter William Coldstream, had continued its emphasis on precise observation, the tenet of the RCA - restructured under Robin Darwin, and with Richard Guyatt in charge of Graphic Design - was to actively encourage the exchange between fine art and design, and with the interaction facilitated by the unusual physical proximity of the respective departments of these disciplines.[184] That Hockney was permitted access to the graphic department to try his hand at etching (which resulted directly in his 'Rake's Progress' series and indirectly in his commission and concept for the eponymous opera) is a testament to the cross-disciplinary ethos of his Royal College training.[185] Indeed, his exposure to the world of printing and design would underpin much of his multifaceted creativity, including his subsequent endeavours for the theatre.

The location of the college at South Kensington in the heart of London was likewise pertinent in that it afforded access to the many cultural facilities of the capital and the potential for engagement with the arts of all descriptions. It is noteworthy that Hockney routinely attended the opera during this period, despite the bewilderment of friends and associates:

> I got the [college grant] money once a month, and every time it came I went off to the opera in the first week. I loved it. I remember once I went on to Mick Jagger's after I'd been - he looked at me puzzled and said 'What do you see in it?' Well - how can you explain?[186]

Moreover, fellow student Derek Boshier has recalled that he and Hockney undertook casual work as stagehands at the nearby Royal Court Theatre, a claim affirmed by Hockney himself ('Yes this is correct. I sometimes replaced a regular for two or three performances. I can remember a few people had

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[183] Sykes, 2011, p. 53
[184] Chris Stephens and Katharine Stout, eds., *Art and the 60s: This Was Tomorrow* (London: Tate Publishing, 2004), p. 31; Alex Seago, *Burning the Box of Beautiful Things: the development of a postmodern sensibility* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 25-9, 105-7
[185] Hockney, 1976, p. 64
[186] Hockney quoted by J.W. Lambert, '...To the rise of the curtain', in *Glyndebourne 1978,* ed. by Moran Caplat (Glyndebourne: Glyndebourne Festival Theatre, 1978), p. 98

these easy jobs').[187] This backstage experience within a professional environment would have certainly fostered his appreciation and understanding of stagecraft. Coincidentally, the same theatre would be the venue for his debut as a designer, although I have found no evidence that his role as stage crew was a factor in his selection or that the designs of the plays performed there specifically influenced his own.

Hockney's studentship in London coincided with the start of the so-called 'Swinging Sixties', and the ostensible liberalism of this period supported a bohemian sub-culture, with which he would keenly engage. His embrace of a 'theatrical' appearance and lifestyle was underpinned by two apparent motives: the promotion of his art through the projection of a persona, and the incipient expression of his individuality and sexuality at a time when homosexual practices were still officially illegal.[188] His innate orginality and anti-establishment bent (he is deemed by Sykes to be 'naturally rebellious') spontaneously assisted in the pursuit of these ends.[189]

Whilst a student at Bradford School of Art (1953-7), he had already fostered an idiosyncratic dress sense that owed much to the painter Stanley Spencer. In addition to adopting Spencer's practice of wheeling his art supplies in a pram, he had cultivated a strikingly similar appearance, as revealed by their respective self-portraits of 1939 and 1954 (*figs. 66-7*).[190] Bradford was nonetheless constricting in its provincial attitude (his brother Paul noted how, when pushing the pram whilst wearing his bowler hat, 'everyone stared at David in the street').[191] His relocation to London in 1959 gave him access to the milieu he needed to exert his individuality; and his first trip to New York in

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[187] Derek Boshier and Octavia Reeve, '[R]esource, [C]reativity, [A]dvancement: Derek Boshier', *Royal College of Arts*, publ. 30 June 2016 <https://www.rca.ac.uk/news-and-events/rca-blog/derek-boshier/> [accessed 2 July 2018]; author's conversation with Derek Boshier, 6 September 2018; David Hockney, e-mail to the author, 29 August 2018

[188] Homosexual practices were illegal in England prior to the Sexual Offences Act of 1967, which permitted private acts between consenting males over the age of 21. This age restriction was lowered to 18 in 1994, and to 16 in 2001.

[189] Sykes, 2011, pp. 22-3

[190] Ibid., pp. 49, 77

[191] Paul Hockney quoted by Webb, p. 13

1961 sparked the total overhaul of his personal appearance, including the dyeing of his hair blonde (because 'blondes have more fun').[192] His persona became more markedly flamboyant to include brightly-patterned outfits, hallmark round spectacles and odd-coloured socks (*fig. 68*); and this quirkiness would be picked up and propagated by 'trendy' magazines such as *Queen* and *Town*.[193] His 'northern-ness' and 'Orton-esque weirdness' likewise benefited his mystique within the 1960s metropolitan culture.[194] Moreover, his openly homosexual, bohemian lifestyle would be widely broadcast through the distribution of Jack Hazan's dramatised documentary *A Bigger Splash* (1974).[195] Thus, in the manner of creators such as Salvador Dalí, Andy Warhol and Grayson Perry - whose careers have been propelled and popularised by their personal idiosyncrasies - Hockney's 'theatricality' contributed to the development of a celebrity persona that, in turn, would serve to publicise his art. As David Mellor has observed, 'the promotional fashioning of David Hockney was one of the key events of the early sixties'.[196]

To what extent this fashioning was contrived is unclear. Hockney has inferred that the attention he received was both misrepresentative and unsolicited:

> The way I look at myself is completely different from the way *you* look at me. [...] For some reason, I make reasonably good journalistic copy [...] but that, in a sense, has got nothing to do with the art. The art is an excuse to them [the media].[197]

Yet Christopher Finch has construed that he was certainly complicit ('journalists were not slow to pick up on Hockney's evident willingness to be noticed') and Simon Faulkner has assessed that:

> Hockney was obviously adroit in handling situations for specific promotional effects. This is not to suggest that he developed these activities within a structured agenda for gaining success; his tactics seem more opportunistic

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[192] Hockney quoted by Webb, p. 41
[193] Webb, p. 41; David Mellor, *The Sixties Art Scene in London* (London: Phaidon Press, 1993), p. 143
[194] Mellor, p. 147
[195] *A Bigger Splash*, dir. Jack Hazan, British Film Institute, 1974, DVD
[196] Mellor, p. 143
[197] *Portrait of David Hockney*, dir. David Pearce, British Film Institute, 1972 <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-portrait-of-david-hockney-1972-online> [accessed 28 October 2018]

> than planned. But [...] Hockney clearly understood that any promotional opportunity was useful.[198]

Of course, the downside of this 'theatrical' projection was its inherent implications of shallowness and falsity, and thus its potential to undermine. Perceptions of the artist's social life as an hedonistic whirl amid celebrity friends - including ballet dancer Wayne Sleep, female impersonator Divine, and fashion designers Ossie Clark and Celia Birtwell (all of whom have featured in his portraits) - have both popularised his creativity and thrown its significance into question; likewise, the very flamboyance of his persona. As Luckhardt and Melia have observed, the intended parody of being photographed in a gold lamé jacket with a matching shopping bag missed its mark with certain observers, who questioned 'whether an artist who apparently led a shallow life could actually produce 'serious' art'.[199] Indeed, it is partly on account of his colourful attire and seemingly superficial lifestyle that Hockney has been erroneously labelled a 'Pop' artist, and despite his claim that his Typhoo tea paintings were 'as close to Pop Art as I ever came'.[200] The flagrant artifice of the Pop Art genre nonetheless connects with the notion of camp and the homosexual subculture - specifically, the *American* homosexual subculture - to which the artist was clearly drawn.

Camp, like the previously-discussed theatricality, has a specific historical resonance that warrants some explication; indeed, theatricality has been deemed intrinsic to the concept. Philosopher and cultural critic Susan Sontag, in her seminal essay of 1964, situated theatricality within camp sensibility, as the successor of irony and satire ('camp introduces a new standard: artifice as an ideal, theatricality').[201] Film scholar Jack Babuscio has likewise considered

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[198] Christopher Finch, 'London Pop Recollected', in *Pop Art: US/UK Connection,* by David E. Brauer, et al (Houston: The Menil Collection, 2001), p. 27; Simon Faulkner, 'Dealing with Hockney', in *David Hockney*, Melia, p. 16
[199] Luckhardt and Melia, p. 41
[200] Hockney, 1976, p. 64
[201] Sontag, Susan, 'Notes on 'Camp'' (first publ. in *The Partisan Review*, Fall 1964), in *Against Interpretation and other Essays*, by Susan Sontag (London: Penguin Classics, 2009), p. 288

theatricality to be integral to camp, yet as a co-constituent of irony, together with aestheticism and humour:

> The third element of camp is theatricality. To appreciate camp in things or persons is to perceive the notion of life-as-theater, being versus role playing, reality and appearance. [...] Camp, by focusing on the outward appearances of role, implies that roles, and in particular, sex roles, are superficial - a matter of style. Indeed, life itself is role and theater, appearance and impersonation.[202]

The suggestion of fusion between life and theatre is supported by Mark Booth's observation that theatrical terminology is frequently used as camp vocabulary (as in 'to upstage' or 'make an entrance'); and this further corresponds with Sontag's description of camp as 'the theatricalization of experience'.[203]

Allusions of falsity and exaggeration, incongruity, duality and duplicity recur in definitions of both camp and theatricality and serve to connect the two. Whilst theatricality lends camp its essential traits, however, within the latter they may be more intensely revealed, thus imbuing potential for the presentation of a greater conundrum. It is indicative that Jean Cocteau's enigmatic line, *'Je suis un mensonge qui dit toujours la vérité',* has become in translation the subtitle of Philip Core's 1984 homage to camp.[204] Core's definition of his subject stresses its conflicting and clandestine nature, whilst also observing the power of its inherent idiosyncrasy:

> There are only two things essential to camp: a secret within the personality which one ironically wishes to conceal and to exploit, and a peculiar way of seeing things, affected by spiritual isolation, but strong enough to impose itself on others through acts or creations.[205]

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[202] Jack Babuscio, 'Camp and the Gay Sensibility' (first publ. in *Gays and Film,* ed. by Richard Dyer, London: British Film Institute, 1977, pp. 40-57), in *Camp Grounds: Style and Homosexuality*, ed. by David Bergman (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), pp. 20, 24
[203] Mark Booth, *Camp* (London: Quartet Books, 1983), p. 81; Sontag, p. 287
[204] Trans.: 'I am a lie that always tells the truth' from the poem *Le Paquet Rouge* by Jean Cocteau, in *Opéra: Oeuvres Poétiques 1925-1927* (Paris: Librairie Stock, 1927), p. 67; Philip Core, *Camp: The Lie that Tells the Truth* (London: Plexus Publishing, 1984)
[205] Core, p. 9

Camp facilitates deflection, as explained by performance artist Scottee, who has claimed to have used it to avert attention *from*, rather than draw attention *to*, his homosexuality.[206] The given reasoning was that the comicality and exaggeration inherent in camp renders the vehicle asexual, its projection of those elements actually detracting from the sexuality of the protagonist. Scottee's disclosure highlights two further significant constituents. The first is humour which, whether witty, acerbic or self-mocking, serves to disengage (Sontag: 'If tragedy is an experience of hyperinvolvement, comedy is an experience of underinvolvement, of detachment').[207] The second - as previously discussed in defining theatricality - is the perception of the viewer. This was acknowledged by Denis Denisoff in his claim that 'audience reception is crucial to the success of a camp gesture not just as a piece of comedy, but as a strategy for enhancing cross-cultural sympathy and, potentially, identification'.[208] The text of Core concurs that:

> Camp depends on where as well as how you pitch it. In some senses it is in the eye of the beholder. While their motives may be clear to the camp, their resultant actions remain marked but mysterious to the observer. [...] Besides being a signal, camp was and remains the way in which homosexuals and other groups of people with double lives can find a *lingua franca*.[209]

As an instrument of communication, camp may be used as a political tool, or even a political weapon. Denisoff, for example, has described writer Christopher Isherwood's camp as 'an attack on fascism'.[210] Certainly, it projects a sense of rebellion, an anti-establishment stand that is, according to Core, 'a cry against conformity, a shriek against boredom, a testament to the potential uniqueness of each of us and our rights to that uniqueness'.[211] Moreover, it has the facility to break social barriers, as inferred by Sontag's

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[206] *Queer Disclosures* (performance artist Scottee in conversation with resident artist Sadie Lee), National Portrait Gallery, London, 5 May 2016
[207] Sontag, p. 288
[208] Denis Denisoff, 'Camp, Aestheticism, and Cultural Inclusiveness in Isherwood's Berlin Stories', in *Performing Gender and Comedy: Theories, Texts and Contexts*, ed. by Shannon Hengen, first publ. 1998 (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 84
[209] Core, p. 9
[210] Denisoff, in *Performing Gender and Comedy: Theories, Texts and Contexts*, Hengen, p. 82
[211] Core, p. 5

claim that 'the experiences of camp are based on the great discovery that the sensibility of high culture has no monopoly upon refinement'.[212] This particularly applied within the cultural context of the 1960s - a period in which camp, according to entertainer George Melly, 'helped pop make a forced march around good taste'.[213] In similar vein, Andrew Ross declared that:

> [camp] shaped, defined, and negotiated the way in which sixties intellectuals were able to 'pass' as subscribers to the throwaway Pop aesthetic, and thus as patrons of the attractive world of immediacy and disposability created by the culture industries in the postwar boom years.[214]

Its politicism has been ardently stressed by Moe Meyer in *The Politics and Poetics of Camp*, the very title of which provides an obvious counter to Sontag's contentious claim that 'camp sensibility is disengaged, depoliticized - or at least apolitical'.[215] Meyer was apparently targeting Sontag and her assertion that camp 'converts the serious to the frivolous' when he stated:

> Defying existing interpretations that continue to define Camp as apolitical, aestheticized, and frivolous, [...] Camp is political; Camp is solely a queer (and/or sometimes gay and lesbian) discourse; and Camp embodies a specifically queer cultural critique.[216]

The connection between camp and homosexuality has been signified in numerous texts. In his preface to Core's book, George Melly suggested that camp, whilst not exclusively homosexual, is predominantly so; Babuscio alleged that the term 'describes those elements in a person, situation, or activity that express, or are created by, a gay sensibility'; and despite Meyer's criticism of Sontag's essay 'with its homosexual connotations downplayed, sanitized, and made safe for public consumption', Sontag had indeed acknowledged that homosexuals were 'its vanguard' and that they had 'more

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[212] Sontag, p. 291
[213] George Melly, *Revolt into Style: The Pop Arts in Britain*, first publ. 1970 (London: Faber & Faber, 2008), p. 161
[214] Andrew Ross, 'Uses of Camp' (first publ. in *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, Fall 1988, 2, 1), in *No Respect: Intellectuals & Popular Culture,* by Andrew Ross (New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 136
[215] Sontag, p. 277
[216] Ibid., p. 276; Moe Meyer, 'Introduction: Reclaiming the discourse of Camp', in *The Politics and Poetics of Camp*, ed. by Moe Meyer (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 1

or less invented Camp'.[217] Moreover, her essay *Notes on Camp*, for all its purported flaws, strongly reflects the cultural sensibilities of the era in which Hockney asserted his sexuality.

Whilst sexual implications had been evident within his oeuvre from 1958 (*November*, 1958-9; *Erection*, 1959-60), the artist first specifically referenced homosexuality during his studentship at the Royal College of Art, and notably in 1960 and 1961 when he painted *Queer, Adhesiveness* (*fig. 69*), the series of 'Love Paintings', *Doll Boy* (*fig. 70*)*, We Two Boys Together Clinging* (*fig. 71*)*,* and *The Most Beautiful Boy in the World* (*fig. 72*). His creativity of this period is overtly and aggressively camp in its repeated deployment of homosexual themes with suggestions of androgyny and transvestism, and replete with satire, obfuscation and subterfuge. These elements are conveyed through a deliberate deployment of graffiti-styled inscriptions of the type scrawled on public lavatory walls; and childlike, crudely-painted figures*,* for which the artist has acknowledged his debt to Jean Dubuffet:

> Dubuffet was, in these 1961 pictures, the strong visual influence. [...] At the time I could draw figures quite well in an academic way. But that's not what I wanted in the paintings. [...] Here was an opposite way, a crude way [...] using an anonymous style.[218]

An obvious reason for his evasiveness was that the British capital, for all its purported liberalism, was reluctant in its tolerance of open homosexuality ('Please, Not in Public' begs Francesca Coppa's contribution to *The Queer Sixties,* 1999).[219] Indeed, homosexual practices, as previously-mentioned, were for most of that decade actually illegal. High-profile gays, such as The Beatles' manager Brian Epstein, kept their sexuality publicly concealed; and it is noteworthy that Joe Orton, described by Coppa as '*the* gay British playwright of the sixties', chose not to include a recognisable homosexual

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[217] George Melly, 'Preface', in *Camp: The Lie that Tells the Truth*, Core, p. 5; Babuscio, in *Camp Grounds: Style and Homosexuality*, Bergman, p. 20; Meyer, in *The Politics and Poetics of Camp*, Meyer, p. 6; Sontag, pp. 290-1

[218] Hockney, 1976, p. 67

[219] Francesca Coppa, 'A Perfectly Developed Playwright: Joe Orton and Homosexual Reform', in *The Queer Sixties*, ed. by Patricia Juliana Smith (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 89

character within his plays.[220] Lesbian vocalist Dusty Springfield, according to Patricia Juliana Smith, 'paradoxically expressed and disguised her own unspeakable queerness through an elaborate camp masquerade'; and her eventual 'coming out' in 1970 caused a lengthy hiatus in the singer's career.[221] As Smith explained:

> Although rock stars could, as a rule, openly conduct unorthodox heterosexual lives with near impunity by 1970, virtually no highly visible popular performer had - or would - make a public admission of his or her still-taboo homosexuality.[222]

It is thus important to bear in mind that Hockney's homosexually-charged works were remarkably daring for the era, Francis Bacon being the only other notable London-based artist to have visually suggested the subject (e.g. *Two Figures*, 1953).

American cities, such as New York and Los Angeles, were widely perceived to be more liberal (Hockney: 'swinging London was too straight for me. It wasn't really gay at all, was it? I suppose that's the truth, that's why I didn't like it').[223] Yet such perceptions were to some extent erroneous. Whereas, for example, homosexual practices were decriminalised in England in 1967, they remained illegal in California and New York until 1975 and 1980 respectively; and issues of discrimination and persecution rigorously persisted in American cities, culminating in the Stonewall Riots of 1969. Nonetheless, Hockney's notion of L.A. as a 'glamour place' of sunshine and swimming pools ('it was so sexy, all these incredible boys, everybody wore little white socks') was enticing and, as Whiting has posited, his relocation there in 1963 'had everything to do with his sexual orientation'.[224] This is confirmed by his own admission that he was drawn to L.A. primarily by the photographs of young, Californian males which graced the pages of *Physique Pictorial* (a Los

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[220] Barry Miles, *Paul McCartney: Many Years From Now* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1997), p. 88; Coppa, in *The Queer Sixties*, Smith, pp. 88, 103
[221] Patricia Juliana Smith, "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me': The Camp Masquerades of Dusty Springfield', in *The Queer Sixties*, Smith, pp. 106, 117
[222] Ibid., p. 117
[223] Hockney quoted by Valerie Wade, 'The Annual David Hockney Interview: Tea in Hollywood', *Interview*, July 1973
[224] Hockney quoted by Adam, p. 54; Cécile Whiting, *Pop L.A.: Art and the City in the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), p. 109

Angeles-produced homoerotic magazine, thinly disguised as a fitness publication).[225] Yet his youthful exposure to the fantasy world of the city's film-making industry is also pertinent ('I was brought up [...] in Bradford and Hollywood, because Hollywood was the cinema'); likewise, his delight in the apparent falsity of L.A., with its pseudo-Rhine castles and mock-Tudor mansions.[226] As he told Peter Adam:

> This is theatre; everything and everybody here pretends to be something else... all fake, nothing is real here.[227]

The artist's gravitation to the physical theatre - both as spectator and as participant - may itself be accounted to his homosexual sensibility, the appeal of the stage being historically evident in this regard. The term 'theatrical' has long been used as a euphemism for the homosexual (hence, Neil Bartlett's chapter 'Theatrical Types' in the catalogue to the Tate's *Queer British Art 1861-1967* exhibition of 2017).[228] Moreover, as Andrew Stephenson has observed of the pre-decriminalisation era:

> The modern theatre, like the ballet, opera and cinema, [...] explicitly made visible the male body in performance, focusing attention on a well-developed physique. Providing new ways of interrogating masculine sexuality and its performance, [...] the theatre opened up the conventions of what constituted normal masculinity and its manly codings to the varied interpretation of its queer admirers. Since many actors, dancers and performers were themselves gay men, the overly expressive movement, any excessive attention to the qualities of costume, make-up and decor, and any odd ambiguities in the narrative construction or delivery were carefully perused for evidence of transgressive sexual tastes and same-sex experience.[229]

Gavin Butt has examined the (generally-homophobic) post-WWII American reportage of the disproportion of homosexuals in theatrical circles, including that of *Time* magazine, which in 1966 claimed:

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[225] Whiting, 2006, p. 114
[226] Hockney quoted by Sykes, 2011, p. 20; Adam, p. 54
[227] Hockney quoted by Adam, p. 54
[228] Neil Bartlett, 'Theatrical Types', in *Queer British Art 1861-1967*, ed. by Clare Barlow (London: Tate Publishing, 2017), pp. 68-93
[229] Andrew Stephenson, 'Arcadia and Soho', in *Queer British Art 1861-1967*, Barlow, p. 136

> On Broadway, it would be difficult to find a production without homosexuals playing important parts, either on stage or off. And in Hollywood, says Broadway producer David Merrick, 'you have to scrape them off the ceiling'. [...] In the theater, dance and music world, deviates are so widespread that they sometimes seem to be running a kind of closed shop.[230]

The suggestion of homosexual power and influence in the theatre (and elsewhere) - and Hockney's acknowledgement of the fact - is supported by the text of Andy Warhol's biographer Victor Bockris, which states:

> Acceptance of homosexuality had become widespread in the USA in the late seventies. As more and more homosexuals came out of the closets [...] it became evident that gay men were having a greater influence on lifestyle in America than any other minority group. It was around this time that David Hockney made the remark, 'Three hundred homosexuals rule the world. And I know every one of them'.[231]

The apparent affinities between Hockney and Warhol merit consideration. In the light of his personal styling after Spencer, Hockney's visual similarity to the blonde American - even to include his dachshund dogs - might be deemed more than mere coincidence (*figs. 86-7*). Yet Hockney had bleached his hair in the spring of 1961, during his first trip to New York, and did not become personally acquainted with Warhol until early 1963.[232] As Warhol was little known prior to his ground-breaking exhibition of November 1962, it is unlikely that Hockney was aware of his work or persona at the time he effected his own iconic image. Rather, I argue that their apparent similarities were dictated by their mutual sense of camp. According to Kelly Cressap, Warhol's 'naïf-trickster persona' was a coded surrogate for an admission of homosexuality, and his 'mimings of ignorance and immaturity' afforded ways of dealing with the complications of his sexuality.[233] Comparable obfuscation might be concluded by the childlike graffiti and *faux*-primitivism of Hockney's 'coming

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[230] Gavin Butt, *Between You and Me: Queer Disclosures in the New York Art World, 1948-1963* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), pp. 39-42; 'The Homosexual in America' (uncredited), *Time*, 21 January 1966, p. 40

[231] Victor Bockris, *Warhol: The Biography* (London: Frederick Muller, 1989), pp. 440-1

[232] Sykes, 2011, pp. 97, 128

[233] Kelly Cressap, 'New York School's 'Out': Andy Warhol Presents Dumb and Dumber', in *The Queer Sixties*, Smith, pp. 43-4

out' paintings of the early 1960s (*Doll Boy, We Two Boys Together Clinging* and *Sam Who Walked Alone by Night*, all of 1961); and the somewhat juvenile eccentricity of his youthful demeanour and personal dress. Friedman once described him as 'a walking collage' sporting 'a red and white baseball cap, paint-spattered, high-waisted, 1940s-style pin-stripe trousers held up with red suspenders, a rumpled white shirt with a neon blue and yellow striped tie, and a pair of arresting, multi-colored, wing-tipped oxfords'; concluding that 'on a good day he would be completely at home in *Parade*'s opening crowd scene'.[234] The implication of this description is that the artist's own attire was akin to a costume, thus highlighting his connection with 'the theatrical' and serving - in the way of Warhol's 'naïf-trickster persona' - to disguise.

Humour too - inherent to camp and a recurring feature of the creativity and personae of both men - can be read in their respective work as a form of subterfuge, reminiscent of the innuendo and polysemy of the Polari slang employed by British homosexuals. The double entendre of Warhol's *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* (1964) - a giant mural featuring 'mug shots' of criminals - exemplifies this deceit, as does the title of Hockney's painting *Going to be a Queen for Tonight* (1960). More explicitly, *Teeth Cleaning, W11* (1962, *fig. 88*) makes light of a blatantly homosexual theme in an era when such practices were officially illegal. As Emily Porter-Salmon has suggested, the intended meaning of these paintings 'is on one level clear, yet meted with just sufficient wry humour to convince a potentially heterosexist audience that what is being presented is acceptable, or even fashionably ironic'.[235]

It is noteworthy that Warhol himself had been drawn to the performing arts, designing the programme and sets for the Theater 12 Group in 1953-4.[236] Indeed, a strong association prevailed between literature, performance and the visual arts in the American cultural climate of the era. Writers and artists, notably Frank O'Hara and Larry Rivers, engaged in close creative exchange; and affinities noted by Martin Hammer between their lithograph series *Stones*

[234] Friedman, p. 58
[235] Porter-Salmon, p. 76
[236] Bockris, p. 109

(1958, publ. 1960) and subsequent artworks by Hockney suggest that the latter 'took an informed interest in the New York poetry scene'.[237] That some collaborative couplings transcended into homosexual partnerships (that of O'Hara and Rivers amongst them) would have surely added to the allure.

Amongst the most notable collaborations were those of the artists Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg and composer John Cage and choreographer Merce Cunningham: two homosexual couples that repeatedly worked individually with each other (Johns and Cunningham, for example, created *Walkaround Time* in 1968). Johns was strongly linked to the gay subculture, his work weighted with question and connotation, its anger diffused by humour, his sexuality both sequestered and revealed. Kenneth E. Silver has claimed of his *Target with Plaster Casts* (1955, *fig. 73*) that it is, above all:

> [...] a portrait of the homosexual man of the postwar period, an era of extreme sexual repression: the beseiged gay body - and gay psyche - is fragmented and sorted into compartments, each one capable of being alternately closeted or exposed.[238]

Hockney first became engaged with Johns' creativity through art magazines when he was at the Royal College and concedes that he was inspired by the 'flatness' of John's paintings and that his own *The Snake* (1962) was 'an attempt to animate a target', a theme synonymous with the American.[239] Johns' works are 'literal', the edge of the image concurring with the edge of the canvas and thus equating the painting with the subject itself; and incorporating text and lettering which both define and mislead (such as the word 'red' spelled on a colour patch of yellow in *False Start* of 1959). These exploitations of artifice would feed into Hockney's own explorations (*Kingy B*,

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[237] Martin Hammer, 'David Hockney's Early Etchings: Going Transatlantic and Being British', *Tate Papers,* no.27, Spring 2017 <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/27/david-hockney-etchings> [accessed 19 May 2017]

[238] Kenneth E. Silver, 'Modes of Disclosure: the Construction of Gay Identity and the Rise of Pop Art', in *Hand-Painted Pop: American Art in Transition 1955-62*, ed. by Russell Ferguson (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1993), p. 190

[239] Clothier, p. 28; Hockney, 1976, pp. 87-8

1960; *Figure in a Flat Style*; *The Second Marriage*), affording creative solutions to his perpetual dilemma of non-abstraction without naturalism. Moreover, Johns clearly engaged with the work of other (known or perceived) homosexual creators, including the nineteenth-century American poet Walt Whitman. In this regard he was, according to Butt, 'aligning himself within a preexisting gay cultural tradition'.[240] Hockney's identification with the creativity of both Johns and Whitman may similarly be viewed as an expression of his desire to situate himself within the same (American) homosexual canon.[241]

Hockney has acknowledged that 'in the summer of 1960 [he] read everything by Whitman' and regularly incorporated a method of encryption used by the writer, whereby numbers represent letters (the figure 1 as A, 2 as B, 3 as C etc.).[242] Hence, the numerical labelling (48 and 23.23) of the figures in *Adhesiveness* (*fig. 69*) infer DH (David Hockney) and WW (Walt Whitman); and the scribbled 3 and 18 in *Doll Boy* (*fig. 70*) signify C and R, the initials of contemporary pop star Cliff Richard, on whom the artist had a crush.[243] Similar encryption appears in *The Most Beautiful Boy in the World* and *We Two Boys Together Clinging*, both of which allude to the same singer (DB and 4.2. respectively signifying 'Doll Boy'). In all of these works, the faces are blurred, their features undistinguishable, thus lending anonymity and potential for duplicity; yet, in accordance with the inherent duality of camp, pointers - titular, textual and graphic - are nonetheless revealed to the initiated viewer. The title *Doll Boy* infers Richard's hit song *Living Doll* of 1959; and *We Two Boys Together Clinging* is the name and first line of a verse by Whitman (1860). 'Your love means more to me', as scrawled to the lower right of *Doll Boy* is a line from Richard's song, *I Love You* (1960). Graphic clues are bestowed by Whitman's style of hat in *Adhesiveness*, the musical notes inferring Doll Boy's role as a singer, and the stripes of Hockney's trousers in *We Two Boys Together Clinging*. The smudged number 4 on the righthand

[240] Butt, p. 69
[241] Hockney's self-positioning within a continuum of homosexual creative endeavour is considered by Emily Porter-Salmon's unpublished PhD thesis, 'Textual Clues, Visual Fictions: Representations of Homosexualities in the Works of David Hockney' (University of Birmingham, 2011)
[242] Hockney, 1976, pp. 62-3
[243] Sykes, 2011, p. 76

figure's face in this painting, which at first glance might be mistaken for the nose, denotes of course, the letter D for David. Such hints are indicative of the artist's desire to simultaneously conceal and reveal.

This duality underscores his repeated suggestions of transvestism. The androgyny and anonymity of his subjects and their female-associated attire is invariably countered by clear - often titular - indications of their true gender, *Bertha alias Bernie* (1961) providing an apparent example. The masculine implication of 'boy' in *The Most Beautiful Boy in the World* and *Boy with a Portable Mirror,* and of the male name in *Sam Who Walked Alone by Night* (all of 1961) contradicts the subjects' feminine attire (a translucent 'Baby Doll' negligée, an off-the-shoulder robe and a mini dress respectively). The blurring of fact and fiction, as in *The Cha-Cha that was Danced in the Early Hours of 24th March 1961* (*fig. 48*), affords further obfuscation. This title refers to a real occasion (also the source of *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall*, fig. 52) when, according to the artist, 'a very beautiful boy [Peter Crutch] who was a student at the Royal College of Art danced the cha-cha especially for me'.[244] The subject's original attire was traditionally masculine, although in the depiction he sports a dress with high-heeled shoes and is holding a handbag (the real-life inspiration for this - Crutch guarding a woman's bag whilst dancing - has been explained by Webb).[245] As if to underscore the 'campness' of the theme, the first three letters of the word 'Queen' - or possibly, 'Queer' - are scrawled behind.

The term 'Queen' would appear in other paintings of this period (including *Doll Boy*), invariably infused within the artwork and, with its intimation of effete homosexuality and its visual similarity to the spelling of 'Queer', conveying an acknowledgement that could even be read as an accusation.[246] Yet 'Queen' is alternatively employed as a source of ironic humour. In *I'm in the Mood for*

[244] Hockney, 1976, p. 67
[245] Webb, p. 36
[246] Collins Dictionary, definition of 'Queen': (slang) An effeminate male homosexual <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/queen> [accessed 21 March 2016]; Collins Dictionary, definition of 'Queer': (informal, offensive) A homosexual, usually a male <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/queer> [accessed 21 March 2016]

*Love* (1961), the arm of Hockney's devilish alter-ego indicates the way to 'Queens' - inferring both a New York neighbourhood and homosexual men. The title *Three Kings and a Queen* (1961) is likewise a double entendre. This sense of satire infuses many of Hockney's sexually-themed works. In *Fourth Love Painting* (1961, *fig. 74*) he plays with a sardonic line from Auden's poem *Dichtung und Wahrheit (An Unwritten Poem), XLVIII*, of 1959:

> 'I will love you forever', swears the poet. I find this easy to swear too. *I will love you at 4:15pm next Tuesday*: is that still as easy?[247]

Hockney's variation, 'I will love you at _pm next Wednesday' is impersonally printed on the canvas, with a gap for the inclusion of the scheduled time. Hence, the inserted figure '8' would seem to be a later, changeable, addition, its red colour and hand-drawn style emphasising the joke. The painting's other textual elements - 69, 48 (denoting DH, the artist), tuesday [sic] and Valent[ine] - imply toilet door graffiti, thus underlining the suggestion of casual promiscuity.

The deployment of words and phrases with sexual double meaning are illustrations of Hockney's youthful struggle with the expression of his own sexuality. Ultimately, he used camp as a tool in his 'coming out'. His creativity, as we shall see, would continue to be 'theatrical' and to host explicitly homosexual themes (notably, his series of illustrations for fourteen poems by C. P. Cavafy, 1966), but the specifically camp elements of his Royal College work - the duality and subterfuge, androgyny, transvestism, and satire - noticeably diminished once his homosexuality was openly acknowledged. The issue of his persona is pertinent in this regard. Adam has observed that:

> When he returned to London after three months in New York, there were several visible changes in David's appearance and in his work; not only was he now blond, but he had left behind him that phase in his work of open sexual messages.[248]

No connection was made by the writer between these two occurrences. I argue, however, that it was precisely *because* of the expression of Hockney's

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[247] Hockney, 1976, p. 63; W. H. Auden, *Dichtung und Wahrheit (An Unwritten Poem)*, *XLVIII* (1959), in *W. H. Auden: Collected Poems,* ed. by Edward Mendelson (London: Faber & Faber, 1991), p. 662

[248] Adam, p. 38

homosexuality through the fresh 'campness' of his appearance that it was no longer necessary for him to use camp methods of communication within his art. Moreover, I disagree with Adam's claim that the messages that he had relinquished were 'open'. On the contrary (and as discussed), the earliest sexual intimations within Hockney's work had been veiled by subterfuge or satire. The manifestation of true sexual candidness within his creativity - namely, homosexual themes unobscured by camp devices - occurred only after the emergence of his newfound camp persona.

As an extension of this argument, it is noteworthy that even straightforward (non-camp) homosexual themes disappeared from Hockney's art after the mid-1980s (his depictions of Ian Falconer - including the 'Waking Up' and 'Ian and Me' series - of 1983 were amongst the last). Moreover, his appearance and demeanour became noticeably less flamboyant and effete, as revealed by comparative consideration of Hazan's *A Bigger Splash* (1974), later documentaries - such as those by Alan Benson (1988) and Gero von Boehm (1997) - and Randall Wright's all-encompassing film chronicle of 2014.[249] A probable reason for this 'toning down' was that the artist no longer found it necessary to promote his sexuality: he had achieved his aims in that regard.

In the same vein, and in concurrence with Faulkner's suggestion that the young Hockney had viewed publicity solely 'as a temporary strategy to further his career as an artist', I suggest that he has subsequently ceased to court attention because to do so is no longer of value to him.[250] His recently-expressed lack of interest in self-promotion ('I want my work to be seen, but *I* don't have to be seen; I'm not Grayson Perry') reflects his now-assured status as a globally-recognised artist.[251] Yet this indifference is far removed from his youthful engagement as a willing protagonist in the kind of event noted by Bryan Robertson in 1963:

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[249] *A Bigger Splash*, Hazan, 1974, DVD; *Hockney at the Tate*, dir. Alan Benson, ArtHaus Musik, 1988, DVD; *David Hockney: Pleasures of the Eye*, dir. Gero von Boehm, ArtHaus Musik, 1997, DVD; *Hockney*, Wright, 2014, DVD
[250] Faulkner, in *David Hockney*, Melia, p. 26
[251] Author's interview with Hockney

> At the preview party [...] Mr Hockney's prints were around the walls, Mr Hockney and his friends were amongst the guests, and on a blank wall at one end of the gallery a TV screen projected an additional image of Mr Hockney being interviewed on a popular TV programme.[252]

Beyond the youthful desire to simultaneously promote his career and express his sexuality, the strongest and most enduring foundation to the apparent theatricality of Hockney's oeuvre has been that of creative expression. His principal dilemma in the wake of his youthful flirtation with abstract expressionism was how to reintroduce figuration into his art, without returning to what he has termed the 'trap' of naturalism.[253] The introduction of theatrical elements - falsity and deception, exaggeration, contradiction, allegory and the sense of spectatorship - can be seen as an attempt to overcome this issue, in opposition to the formalist doctrines influentially promoted by art crtics such as Greenberg ('Modernist Painting', 1960) and Fried ('Art and Objecthood', 1967).[254]

In many respects, Hockney was building on his predecessors' example, as defined by Davis and Postlewait:

> [...] the leaders of Futurism, Expressionism, Dadaism, and Surrealism, rejecting the codes and logic of realism, located the defining traits of their artistic programs in the overt exploitation of theatre's 'stagedness'.[255]

The authors maintained that theatricality held mostly positive connotations within these early manifestations of modernism.[256] Fried, however, declared in 1967 that:

> theatre and theatricality are at war today, not only with modernist painting (or modernist painting and sculpture), but with art as such - and to the extent that

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[252] Bryan Robertson, 'The New Generation: Opportunities and Pitfalls', *The Times*, 17 December 1963
[253] Hockney, 1976, p. 295
[254] Clement Greenberg, 'Modernist Painting' (first publ. in *Forum Lectures*, Washington, Voice of America, 1960), in *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), pp. 754-60; Michael Fried, 'Art and Objecthood' (first publ. in *Artforum*, Summer 1967), in *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas,* Harrison and Wood, pp. 822-34
[255] Davis and Postlewait, p. 12
[256] Ibid.

different arts can be described as modernist, with modernist sensibility as such.[257]

Fried's arguments were grounded in the formalist doctrines of Greenberg's 'Modernist Painting' of 1960, in which modernism is defined in terms of its facility for self-criticism ('not in order to subvert it, but to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence'); the autonomy of its art forms ('each art had to determine, through the operations peculiar to itself, the effects peculiar and exclusive to itself'); and the accentuation of the flatness of pictorial art ('flatness, two-dimensionality, was the only condition painting shared with no other art').[258] Fried stressed his own stance within three inter-connected arguments: that 'the success, even the survival, of the arts has come increasingly to depend on their ability to defeat theatre'; that 'art degenerates as it approaches the condition of theatre'; and that 'the concepts of quality and value - and to the extent that these are central to art, the concept of art itself - are meaningful, or wholly meaningful, only within the individual arts. What lies between the arts is theatre'.[259]

In formalist ideology, the viewer is not a consciously-engaged spectator. This contrasts, of course, with 'theatricality' which, as described by Christopher Knight, 'is a mode of address specifically made to a third party, or triangulated speech that is framed with the audience in mind'.[260] Indeed, Fried, in his denunciation of the literalist predilection for 'non-art' ('objecthood'), condemned literalist sensibility as 'theatrical' precisely on account of its inclusion of the viewer: 'the experience of literalist art is of an object *in a situation* - one that, virtually by definition, *includes the beholder*'.[261] Yet as we have seen, Hockney's paintings of the 1960s - notably *Picture Emphasizing*

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[257] Fried, in *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Harrison and Wood, p. 830
[258] Greenberg, in *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Harrison and Wood, pp. 755-6
[259] Fried, pp. 830-1
[260] Christopher Knight, 'Composite Views: Themes and Motifs in Hockney's Art', in *David Hockney: A Retrospective,* Tuchman, p. 28
[261] Fried, in *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Harrison and Wood, p. 825. N.b. Fried coined the term 'objecthood' as a pseudonym for non-art, or art that cannot be precisely classified as either painting or sculpture (p. 825)

*Stillness* and *Accident Caused by a Flaw in the Canvas* - demand the viewer's acknowledgement of his or her active participation. In *Boy With a Portable Mirror* (*fig. 60*), the upward perspective of the stage and the rear view of the front row suggest that the observer is literally seated in the audience. *Play Within a Play*, *The Hypnotist* and *Closing Scene* (*figs. 53, 40-1*) likewise impart a clear sense of spectatorship that is heightened by the literalist implication of the canvas edge as the stage proscenium.

Of course, many of the elements associated with theatricality were embraced by *post*modernism, an aesthetic with which Hockney can be aligned. Justyna Stepien has observed that '[his] exaggeration, artifice and exposure of stylization [...] aptly describe his postmodern sensibility'; Silver similarly remarked on his 'postmodern attitude'; and Stephens has noted that:

> Hockney's assault on the conventions of pictorial representation and of high modernism in the 1960s displayed qualities which would later be ascribed to postmodernism: irony, eclectism, self-reflexivity, parody and pastiche.[262]

Moreover, Catherine Wood, in her reference to *A Bigger Splash*, maintained that Hockney's inclusion of action - a theatrical gesture - in an otherwise representational painting was 'undoubtedly a deliberate stylistic rebuff to American abstract expressionism's dominance at the time' (more specifically, it may be deemed a tongue-in-cheek reaction to Jackson Pollock's 'drip' paintings).[263] In this regard, Hockney was again in sync with Johns, whose *Painting with Two Balls* of 1960 clearly lampoons the sense of machismo associated with the production of that genre.

Greenberg, having dubbed Pollock 'the strongest painter of his generation', was notably unimpressed by Hockney, renouncing his 1969 exhibition at André Emmerich's in New York as 'not art for a serious gallery'.[264] Conversely, the artist has expressed his disagreement with the critic's views on

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[262] Justyna Stepien, *British Pop Art and Postmodernism* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), p. 139; Kenneth E. Silver, *David Hockney* (New York: Rizzoli International, 1994), p. 2; Stephens, in *David Hockney*, Stephens and Wilson, 2017, p. 15

[263] Wood, in *A Bigger Splash: Painting after Performance*, ed. by Wood p. 11

[264] Clement Greenberg, 'Art', *The Nation*, 7 April 1945; Greenberg quoted by Webb, p. 105

photography heralding the end of portrait-painting ('this view of Greenberg's is an example of theory veering off too much from ordinary commonsense').[265] Yet I have found no indication that he saw Greenberg's notions as either a personal or political challenge, or that he deliberately set out to counter the critic's theories. He had, besides, been exploring theatricality for some time before Fried published *Art and Objecthood* in 1967. Rather, it could be argued that, instead of defiantly opposing Greenberg and Fried, the artist was to some extent influenced by their writings. Helen Little has noted that Fried's publication coincided with Hockney's re-embrace of a more naturalistic style; and his self-disassociation from Pop Art despite his stylistic affinity with certain of its elements may have been swayed by Greenberg's essay *Avant-Garde and Kitsch* (1939), the shadow of which, according to Didier Ottinger, 'rendered the pop option suspicious for a long while'.[266]

Hockney acknowledged his stylistic predicament in *Portrait Surrounded by Artistic Devices* (1965, *fig. 75*), the title of which suggests his deliberate deployment of a synthesis of figurative and non-figurative elements. The result might be construed as a 'performance' of his struggle between figuration and abstraction. The human figure - based on a drawing of his father - is literally framed by visual citations (a 'Francis Bacon' shadow and the symbols of expressionism) with additional parody afforded by the 'shelf' of abstract items, possibly brush-strokes, and the badly-stacked pile of cylinders.[267] The latter perhaps suggests a discount shop (and Pop Art assumptions of a disposable society) or a rejection of Cézanne's famous theory that all of nature should be treated by the cylinder, the sphere and the cone: a theory questioned by Hockney in his autobiography.[268] That the mound of cylinders is itself a paper cut-out collaged onto the canvas adds a physical layer of visual trickery that reinforces the artifice of the depiction. This painting is open to many interpretations and Hammer has equated the scene

[265] Hockney, 1993, pp. 129-30
[266] Helen Little, 'Towards Naturalism', in *David Hockney*, Stephens and Wilson, p. 80; Didier Ottinger, 'When Chaplin Dances with Picasso', in *David Hockney*, Stephens and Wilson, p. 238
[267] Luckhardt and Melia, p. 74
[268] Hockney, 1976, p. 44

to a genre of entertainment by likening the seated figure to 'some worthy individual' being interviewed in a television studio.[269] The circular pink dais, the strong directional lighting (inferred by the shadow) and the controlled cross-legged pose of the man in the chair might indeed suggest this. Significantly, the amalgamation of figurative and non-figurative elements, serves to remind, as Alex Farquharson has suggested, 'that what we are looking at is a painting - an invention, an impossibility - that nevertheless equates, in various ways, with lived experience'.[270]

**2.3. Hockney's engagement with the theatricality of other artists**

Hockney's use of parody in *Portrait Surrounded by Artistic Devices* highlights his substantial engagement with the creativity of others. His published opinions - notably in *Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the lost techniques of the Old Masters* (2001) and *A History of Pictures* (2016) - reveal a profound knowledge of art history; and, as previously discussed, allusions to other creators have habitually peppered his work, often serving as devices for theatrical effect.[271] What is striking is that the artists to whom he has been most strongly drawn have themselves been 'theatrical' in terms of subject matter, style or composition.

The first of these was the 'Camden Town' painter Walter Sickert. Bradford School of Art, which Hockney attended between 1953 and 1957, typified art institutions of the period in its attention to life observation and drawing skills; and Edgar Degas and Walter Sickert were the preferred stylistic models.[272] As Hockney has recalled:

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[269] Martin Hammer, 'Hockney as Philosophical Painter', in *David Hockney*, Stephens and Wilson, p. 208

[270] Alex Farquharson, 'To Youth: Hockney's Sixties', in *David Hockney 1960-68: A Marriage of Styles,* by Andrew Brighton and Alex Farquharson *(*Nottingham: Nottingham Contemporary, 2009), p. 8

[271] David Hockney, *Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the lost techniques of the Old Masters* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001); David Hockney and Martin Gayford, *A History of Pictures* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2016)

[272] Livingstone, pp. 12-13

> Sickert was the great god and the whole style of painting in that art school - and in every other art school in England - was a cross between Sickert and the Euston Road School.[273]

Allusions can be seen in his own paintings of this period, and notably in *Portrait of My Father* (1955), which Sykes has described as 'a touching and sensitive work, over which the ghost of Walter Sickert lingers'.[274] Similar terminology, with its implications of an inescapable controlling presence, has been used by Hockney himself to explain his inability to depict London as he could Los Angeles ('In London, I think I was put off by the ghost of Sickert, and I couldn't see it properly').[275] Whilst he eventually broke free from Sickert's muddy palette and studied realism, Hockney's recurrent engagement with the human figure, pictorial narrative and theatrical themes and staging nonetheless suggests a continued connection with his predecessor's work.

The young Hockney would have almost certainly viewed the exhibition of Sickert's oeuvre, presented in 1960 at London's Tate Gallery (18th May - 19th June) when he was at the Royal College, and at Bradford City Art Gallery (30th July - 20th August) when he returned there for the summer break. This exhibition included a substantial number of paintings and drawings on specifically theatrical themes, including scenes from plays, circus scenarios, seaside *pierrots*, performers in action, and music hall audiences.[276] Sickert, whilst never a stage designer, had been a working actor in the 1870s and 80s, and the contemporary theatre was an habitual source of material for his paintings. Like Degas and Béraud before him, he was keen to explore the play of colour and light afforded by the gas footlights, which would garishly illuminate the human skin whilst also casting strange shadows; and he applied similar theatrical effects even to his domestic interiors, with heightened light and shade adding mystery and drama. He potentially drew inspiration from theatrical sources beyond actual performances, including publicity photographs of scenes from productions. As William Rough has expounded:

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[273] Hockney, 1976, p. 34
[274] Sykes, 2011, p. 48
[275] Hockney quoted by Livingstone, p. 70
[276] *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings,* text by Gabriel White (London: The Arts Council of Great Britain, 1960)

> A series of visual compositional similarities emerge between Sickert's images of domestic duets and the photographic records of productions, including an obvious shared interest in gesture, pose and body language. In addition, a recurring composition in theatrical photographs consists of contrasting seated and standing male and female figures with the subject directly addressing the viewer. Ultimately, like Sickert's paintings, these photographs are focused on visually interpreting the conflict and tension within relationships.[277]

Connections between the theatre photographs of the early 1900s and paintings by Sickert can be extended to include more modern works by Hockney (*figs. 76-8*). As a paradigm, a posed scene from Alfred Sutro's drama *The Perplexed Husband* (1911), Sickert's *Ennui* (c. 1913-4) and Hockney's *Mr. and Mrs. Clark and Percy* (1970-1) share considerable similarities. Each image, in the way of a stage play, relates the story of its paired 'performers' and with visual 'props' to lend narrative clues. The unusual positioning of the seated males yet standing females infers close familiarity, yet none of the men addresses his partner; rather, the figures, whilst closely aligned, appear totally disengaged. The 'staged' contrivance of disconnected couples in strangely posed scenes is common to the works of both Sickert and Hockney, with much use made of directional opposition (*Lou Lou I love you*, c. 1911; *California Art Collector*, 1964); an unreciprocated look of address (*What Maisie Knew*, 1914; *Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy*, 1968); or one of the figures turned in full profile (*Summer Afternoon*, 1910; *George Lawson and Wayne Sleep*, 1972-5). It is thus noteworthy that *Lou Lou I love you, Ennui* and *Summer Afternoon* were amongst the displays in the afore-mentioned exhibition of 1960.

Correlations may likewise be made between Sickert's fascination with theatrical illusion and Hockney's exploration of the same. Indeed, the claim by David Peters Corbett that Sickert 'assembles contrasts of represented space and flatness of picture surface in order to confuse and problematise our

[277] William Rough, 'Walter Sickert and Contemporary Drama', *The Camden Town Group in Context*, ed. by Helena Bonett, et al, Tate Research Publication, May 2012 <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/william-rough-walter-sickert-and-contemporary-drama-r1104370> [accessed 2 October 2015]

perceptions of the events he depicts' may equally be said of Hockney.[278] A favoured device of the earlier artist was to present the action as a mirror reflection, as in *Little Dot Hetherington at the Bedford Music Hall* (1888-9, *fig. 79*). At first glance, this appears to be a direct representation of the performer on stage and it is not until the viewer's eye identifies the backs of empty seats against the wall mirror that the initial deception becomes apparent. Hockney has likewise enjoyed the trickery of illusion, as exemplified by the mirror reflection within *My Parents* (*fig. 51*) and the *trompe l'oeil* (a painting propped behind the sleeping man) of *Model with Unfinished Self-Portrait* (*fig. 80*).

Another individual with whom the young artist clearly identified - even, as discussed, with regards to persona - was the Cookham-based painter Stanley Spencer. Retrospectives of Spencer's career were held in Leeds (Temple Newsam) in 1947 and London (Tate Gallery) in 1955; and, although Hockney was merely ten years of age at the time of the former and did not visit London before the age of nineteen (a year after the latter), it is probable that he saw images and read reviews of at least the second exhibition.[279] The artist certainly conceded that he became 'quite interested in Stanley Spencer, possibly because of the literary content'.[280] I propose that, beyond the narrative of Spencer's paintings, which itself forges links with drama, Hockney was drawn by their theatrical resonance. *The Centurion's Servant* (1914-5), with its strong directional lighting and expanse of wooden floorboards - evocative of a theatre stage - may be likened to the setting of a scene from a play. *Christ Carrying the Cross* (1920, *fig. 81*) is presented like an opera, with choreographed groupings suggestive of a chorus, and dramatic shadows cast by overhead lighting. The giant forms and spaces, skeletal platforms, and skewed perspectives of *Shipbuilding on the Clyde - Riveters* (1941) would pre-empt the sculptural scenography of the 1980s, including Hockney's designs for *Tristan und Isolde*. Moreover, the unusual aerial viewpoint sometimes employed by Spencer - as in *Beatitude 2: Knowing* from the

[278] David Peters Corbett, *Walter Sickert* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 2001), p. 18
[279] Hockney, 1976, p. 34
[280] Ibid., p. 38

'Beatitudes of Love' series (1938, *fig. 82*) - reinforces the viewer's sense of spectatorship, the perspective being akin to that of the stage from a theatre box. These examples, all of which featured in the Tate exhibition of 1955, can be seen to anticipate the theatrical devices of Hockney's own creative explorations.[281]

The works of two other artists were particularly significant to the theatrical developments of Hockney's creativity, and exhibitions by both were attended by him in 1960. Francis Bacon's showing at London's Marlborough Gallery (March - April) is known to have impressed the younger painter, not only on account of its treatment of the male nude, but by the deliberate exposure of raw canvas and the use of photographs as source materials, which emphasised the flatness - and thus, the artifice - of the image.[282] These idiosyncrasies were duly transmitted into his own creativity, and notably the introduction of the unpainted background. Hockney's autobiography (1976) repeatedly affirms his creative debt to Bacon, from the blurred figure to the side of *The Second Tea Painting* (1961), to the exposed canvas of *A Grand Procession of Dignitaries in the Semi-Egyptian style*, to his cha-cha depiction of the same year (*fig. 48*) that was 'heavily influenced by Bacon', including its deliberately-smudged subject.[283] He has also mentioned that his reference to Eadweard Muybridge's monograph *The Human Figure in Motion* (1907) was prompted by his knowledge that Bacon had made use of this particular source.[284] Yet the single facet of the older artist's work that I propose most strongly appealed to Hockney was its overriding sense of theatre. Bacon's art is replete with drama, its anguished screaming mouths, violent distortions and menacing close-ups suggesting tortured narratives that invite speculation. Suspended carcasses invoke a gruesome sense of staging, a parody of crucifixion; whilst solo figures occupy delineated spaces - a circular dais or framework cube - in the manner of an actor in a studio performance. The artifice afforded by the juxtaposition of incongruous elements in Bacon's

[281] *Stanley Spencer: A Retrospective Exhibition* (London: Tate Gallery, 1955)
[282] Webb, p. 28
[283] Hockney, 1976, pp. 64, 66-7
[284] Ibid., pp. 90-1

works such as *Painting* (1946, *fig. 83*) would transfer to Hockney's own creativity, including *Rocky Mountains and Tired Indians*, *Self Portrait with Blue Guitar* and his trio of 'Tea' paintings (1961). The third of these, *Tea Painting in an Illusionistic Styl*e (*fig. 84*), also draws upon Bacon's claustrophobic metaphysical 'cage', with its squatting nude encased by the box almost mirroring the figure in *Study for the Nurse in the Film 'Battleship Potemkin'* (1957, *fig. 85*).

The other significant exhibition of 1960 - which was viewed by the young artist at least eight times - was the retrospective of Pablo Picasso at London's Tate Gallery (9th July - 18th September).[285] This comprised a large selection from all periods of Picasso's career and, beyond profoundly inspiring Hockney as a creator (his *Demonstrations of Versatility* series of 1961 would be directly informed by its eclecticism), it introduced him to the Spaniard's considerable engagement with the performing arts.[286] Notable exhibits included the original Picasso-designed drop curtain for the ballet *Parade* (1917), five variations on the theme of harlequin, and *Dwarf Dancer* (1901), all of which would motivate reworkings by Hockney (*figs. 89-93*).[287] The *Parade* drop curtain would be reinterpreted in 1980 in the immediate aftermath of Hockney's own set and costume designs - closely modelled on those of Picasso - for the same ballet (designed 1980, staged 1981). The hallmark striped ladder of the original curtain would re-appear in Hockney's *Harlequin* (1980), which was itself inspired by the harlequins of Picasso; and *Punchinello On and Off Stage* (1980, *fig. 93*) would draw upon Picasso's *Dwarf Dancer* (1901, *fig. 92*) in terms of the stance, the crook of the right arm and the directness of the figure's gaze. Worthy of note, and as if to reiterate Picasso's overarching authority, these original themes belonged to the 1960 retrospective, yet Hockney's variants would be executed twenty years later, in the immediate

[285] Chris Stephens, 'David Hockney and Picasso', in *Picasso & Modern British Art,* ed. by James Beechey and Chris Stephens (London: Tate Publishing, 2012), pp. 185, 198
[286] Livingstone, p. 41
[287] *Picasso* (London: The Arts Council of Great Britain, 1960)

wake of his own version of *Parade* and when reinspired by the 1980 Picasso retrospective at New York's Museum of Modern Art.[288]

Hockney's creative outpouring of this period saw many other performance-related paintings which drew upon works by Picasso which had impressed him two decades previously. *Untitled* (1980, *fig. 94*) which, in terms of content, points to his own contemporaneous designs for 'Parade', simultaneously engages with Picasso's *Three Dancers* (1925, *fig. 95*) in the number and implied movement of the figures, and in its curtains and shapes, suggestive of the latter's wallpaper and windows of the doors. The composition of Hockney's *Two Dancers* (1980, *fig. 96*) likewise nods to Picasso's trio; whilst its semicircular motifs infer the head of *Invented Man Revealing Still Life* (*fig. 38*). This titular figure draws back a curtain, which anticipates the drapery in *What is this Picasso?*; and this, in turn, alludes to Picasso's portrait of Dora Maar, which was likewise shown at the retrospective of 1960. The Maar portrait, *Three Dancers* and several harlequins also featured in the New York Picasso Retrospective of 1980.[289] Hence, Hockney's engagement with Picasso can be seen to literally circulate throughout his career, and would itself be a subject of later exhibitions: *David Hockney: Dialogue avec Picasso* (Paris, Musée Picasso, 1999), *Regards complices - Hommage à Picasso* (Vallauris, Chateau-Musée, 2003) and *Picasso and Modern British Art* (London, Tate Britain, 2012). Moreover, his dialogue with the master has been intertwined with his engagement with the theatrical. He would find in both the way forward in times of impasse; and he would learn from both that art can - and should - be protean.

### 2.4. Conclusion

The objective of this chapter has been twofold: to establish evidence of theatricality in Hockney's early studio artwork, particularly prior to his actual creativity for the stage; and to ascertain the reasons for his apparent attraction to the theatre and 'the theatrical'.

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[288] Webb, p. 189

[289] William Rubin, ed., *Pablo Picasso: A Retrospective* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1980)

In the first instance, it has been revealed that theatricality has manifested itself in his work through performance-related themes, implications of costume and inferences of staging (proscenium, scenery, performers, props); likewise, through 'theatrical devices' which serve to stress the artifice of the image and the active spectatorship of the viewer. These notably include mirrors, frames and curtains, all of which have strong theatrical associations and directly engage with the artist's self-confessed need to 'break the border'.[290]

In the second regard, it has been determined that Hockney's childhood experience was fundamental to his theatrical sensibility and to his appreciation of the performing arts. His education at the Royal College of Art and exposure to the cultural facilities of the British capital, including attending the opera and working as a stagehand, were likewise pivotal. Moreover, London facilitated the cultivation of a theatrical persona, which served both to promote his art and to express his homosexuality. It transpires that camp was his prevailing idiom of this era, with many of his paintings of 1960 and 1961 adopting satire, obfuscation, contradiction, references to transvestism, and expressing the simultaneous desire to conceal and reveal. This chapter has nonetheless concluded that the use of camp in Hockney's art diminished in direct correlation to the manifestation of camp in his persona; and this in turn decreased once his homosexuality was widely acknowledged (likewise, his promotional fashioning would dwindle in tandem with the growth of his global recognition). Moreover, this section has shown that the desire to paint figuratively whilst eschewing naturalism has further underscored the artist's use of 'the theatrical'; and to this end he has been inspired by other creators (notably Sickert, Spencer, Bacon and Picasso) who incorporated theatrical elements within their own work. Precisely how this impulse to theatricality fed into Hockney's designs for the real theatre will be considered in subsequent chapters.

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[290] Hockney quoted by Weschler, in *David Hockney: A Retrospective,* Tuchman, p. 96

### 3. The play *Ubu Roi* at the Royal Court, 1966

Hockney's first venture into stage design came in 1966 when he was invited by the English Stage Company at London's Royal Court to devise the sets and costumes for a new interpretation of Alfred Jarry's notorious play *Ubu Roi* (*King Ubu*).[291] This was Hockney's theatre debut, a stepping stone to a notable sub-career and a connecting bridge between his work in the studio and his engagement with a more collaborative medium. Yet no scholarly analysis has been made of this project, and it has gained little mention in literature on the artist. The designs for this play - in contrast to those of his operas - are also excluded from Hockney's official website, whilst a mere five sketches illustrate that of The David Hockney Foundation.[292] This chapter aims to redress this apparent disregard.

I will consider *Ubu Roi* from three perspectives: correlations with Hockney's own studio creativity, especially in the immediately-preceding years (1961-6); his dialogue with the play's French creator Alfred Jarry and the original conception; and connections between his designs and the creativity of other artists and interpreters of the work. The decision to produce the play in 1966 and Hockney's engagement, as an emergent visual artist with no previous experience as a designer for the stage, also prompts exploration into the context of the commission: namely, the cultural and political background to the venture, and the history and artistic policies of the English Stage Company. Collaborative issues, particularly relating to Hockney as a visual artist in the role of stage designer, will be considered; likewise, the placement of this design in the context of the history of the play, the Royal Court theatre and his own stage creativity. To what extent, for example, did it inform his only other drama design, *Paid on Both Sides*, in 1983?

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[291] The title 'Royal Court' may henceforth be abbreviated to 'the Court'

[292] 'Stage Design', *David Hockney* <http://www.hockney.com/works/stage_design> [accessed 12 October 2016]; 'Theater Works', *The David Hockney Foundation* <https://thedavidhockneyfoundation.org/series/ubu-roi> [accessed 10 November 2018]

An understanding of the play itself is, of course, pivotal to an assessment of its design. A macabre farce, it infamously sparked outrage when first staged at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre in Paris in 1896. Its simple plot, which is widely viewed as a parody of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, concerns an army officer called Ubu who, encouraged by his wife, assassinates the Polish king and usurps the throne, massacres his subjects, taxes the peasants and seizes all property with the help of his henchmen, before being finally driven out by the king's avenging son and the Russian army.[293] Keith Beaumont, in his monograph of 1987, proposed several areas of debate pertaining to *Ubu Roi*, of which two in particular will feed into my investigation.[294] They concern the very nature of the piece (is it slapstick or satire?) and its effect on the audience (why did the premiere incite such outrage? Can and *should* modern interpretations aim to do the same?). In these regards, I will consider the appropriateness of Hockney's approach - with its emphasis on visual comedy over raw aggression - both in terms of the intentions of the play's creator and in relation to its own times.

Hockney's interpretation took the form of 'a stage within a stage' with blatantly two-dimensional backdrops hoisted up and down on visible ropes in the manner of a model theatre (*fig. 97*). The sets were rudimentary and highly stylised, rendered in a vividly-coloured childlike fashion, and with much use of explanatory text. Locations were denoted by painted signage, such as 'Royal Palace' (*fig. 98*), or 'Cave', and with an interchangeable notice indicating the front and back rooms of Ubu's house (*fig. 99*); or by giant letters, set in place by the performers (*fig. 100*), which spelled out the appropriate caption (e.g. 'Parade Ground'). Props were similarly 'explained' by means of inscriptions, such as 'Sword of Vengence' [sic] or 'Phynancial Horse' (Jarry's pun). This stylised rendering blended real features with two-dimensional cartoons,

[293] Jarry's choice of Poland as a location was a form of political satire. In 1896, Poland did not exist, the historical partioning of this state from 1772 by Russian, Prussian and Austrian powers having erased it from the map (its peripheries would be reinstated by the 1919 *Treaty of Versailles*); hence, Jarry's pre-performance statement that the action 'takes place in Poland, that is to say Nowhere'. Alfred Jarry, 'Preliminary Address at the First Performance of *Ubu Roi*, December 10, 1896', trans. by Simon Watson Taylor, in *Jarry: The Ubu Plays* (London: Methuen, 1968), p. xxix
[294] Beaumont, K., pp. 9-11

making 'static' depictions of non-static elements (smoke, clouds and flames) and visually flattening 'real' elements (the bench seats had 'drawn' edges, *fig. 101*). Distinctions between props and costumes were blurred, with sandwich boards and accessories, including a banner, 'worn' as attire amid a bizarre array of heterogeneous outfits (*figs. 1, 102, 129*). These, according to Friedman, transformed the actors into 'walking assemblage sculptures' in what he termed 'a droll variation on the then current *arte povera* style'.[295]

Incongruity was the unifying factor, in terms of period, location and proportion (a miniature windmill adorned the set of Act IV). Bulbous padded costumes were combined with a curious assortment of contemporary garb, including a boiler suit worn with a lengthy striped tie (*fig. 103*); ladies' boots adorned with cowboy spurs; and a uniform jacket with braided epaulettes, mismatched trousers and a sunhat (*fig. 104*). The titular character wore a padded yellow egg-shaped bag and a green bowler hat; whilst his wife (played by a man) sported strap-on 'naked' breasts with battery-driven light-bulbs for illuminative effect (*fig. 105*). The character of Bordure wore, as per the *Yorkshire Post,* 'a vivid green, PVC dress' (*fig. 106*).[296] Props comprised a vintage gramophone and latter-day cash register; a toilet-brush became a sceptre, and a sausage, a military baton. A hint of the medieval was evoked by the soldiers' childlike swords, a spiky mace-like costume with giant codpiece (*fig. 107*), and the scalloped table cloth with its suggestion of heraldry (*fig. 103*). Ultimately, however, the effect was contemporary: a seaside postcard caricature, set in the 1960s. This interpretation prompts the questions: how faithful was Hockney's construct to the author's original concept? And what connections might be made between their respective realisations?

### 3.1. Alfred Jarry's conception and creation (1896)

An understanding of why the play provoked controversy when originally staged in the French language is pivotal to its evaluation and that of subsequent productions. The most apparent source of objection was its radically crude and blasphemous language, in which the opening word -

[295] Friedman, p. 12
[296] 'Ubu Roi' (preview), *Yorkshire Post*, 21 June 1966

'*Merdre*' - sounded, despite the additional 'r' in its spelling, sufficiently close to the (publicly-unuttered) *argot* for excrement that it caused an uproar.[297] Yet the work was condemned for more than its vulgarity. Its unconventional 'theatricality' was also a factor, supported by the alternative account of actor Firmin Gémier that the unrest was sparked by his later mime of 'unlocking' a non-existent door with an imaginary key.[298] Moreover, the play's deliberate artifice, its pioneering structure, use of language and staging was deemed politically subversive in an age of anarchist bomb attacks (1892-4) and the ongoing Dreyfus Affair (1894-1906).[299]

Jarry was twenty-three when this work was premiered, but his concept had evolved over the previous decade from his youthful imaginings and those of other pupils at the Lycée de Rennes, and with the central character based on a loathed teacher, one Monsieur Hébert.[300] Whilst he acknowledged in his preliminary address that Ubu was 'a schoolboy's caricature', the play was not, however, targeted at children.[301] Rather, it was aimed at those it viciously lampooned, the theatre-going bourgeoisie (Jarry: 'I intended that when the curtain went up the scene should confront the public like the exaggerating mirror in the stories of Madame Leprince de Beaumont, in which the depraved saw themselves with dragons' bodies, bulls' horns, or whatever corresponded to their particular vice').[302]

The reasons for his attack, which are central to an understanding of the work, may be drawn from the play's societal background. In his study of the avant-garde publication *La Revue Blanche*, historian Georges Bernier noted two particular factors which informed the 'strong creative stirrings of the times'.[303] The first was the overarching French snobbery - *'le snobisme*' - which

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[297] Beaumont, K., p. 9
[298] Frantisek Deák, *Symbolist Theater: The Formation of an Avant-Garde* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 236
[299] Beaumont, K., pp. 16-17
[300] Ibid., pp. 12-14
[301] Jarry, 'Preliminary Address at the First Performance of *Ubu Roi*, December 10, 1896', in *Jarry: The Ubu Plays*, Jarry, p. xxvii
[302] Alfred Jarry, 'Theatre Questions', trans. by Barbara Wright, in *Jarry: the Ubu Plays*, Jarry, p. xxxi
[303] Bernier, Georges, *La Revue Blanche* (New York: Wildenstein, 1983), p. 16

culminated in the last decade of the nineteenth century; the second was the bourgeois' embrace of the latest technical advances, which were widely perceived as a form of American cultural imposition.[304] Bernier observed that 'many writers and artists were equating America with materialism and a narrow cult of science', describing this reaction as 'the love-hate relationship, the acceptance-rejection of things American'.[305] Such perceptions underpinned the creative backlash of deliberate naivety and unsophistication propagated by Jarry and his associates. They also bear relevance, as we shall see, to the social climate of Hockney's reinterpretation. Yet Beaumont has stressed that few of the play's original spectators fully understood the author's real objective, which was not merely to deliver 'a slap in the face' to his audience, but to stage a new and revolutionary conception of theatre, and one which would shatter the fetters of realism.[306] In the latter regard, as I will argue, the writer and Hockney shared parallel aims.

Jarry's approach drew on his interest and experience in puppetry, and particularly in the French *guignol* tradition, with its accent on the visual, on caricature; and its roots - like British pantomime and 'Punch and Judy' - in *commedia dell'arte*.[307] The *guignol* was a means to surmount the impasse of naturalism and the constraints of time, place and verisimilitude.[308] These were issues with which Hockney would likewise be challenged, and it is pertinent that he agreed to design *Ubu Roi* 'because of its puppet play atmosphere'.[309] Moreover, puppets - or de-humanising variants, such as masks - had been used for comparable reasons by Futurists (Filippo Tommaso Marinetti; Giacomo Balla), Constructivists (Vladimir Mayakovsky), Dadaists (Tristan Tzara) and members of the Bauhaus (Oskar Schlemmer).[310] The play itself

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[304] Bernier, pp. 13, 16-17
[305] Ibid., p. 13
[306] Beaumont, K., pp. 17-20
[307] Jules Bedner, 'Éléments guignolesques dans le théâtre d'Alfred Jarry', *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* 73 (1),1973, pp. 69-71 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40524500/> [accessed 20 July 2016]
[308] Bedner, pp. 71-2
[309] Gene Baro, 'Hockney's *Ubu'*, *Art and Artists*, May 1966, p. 13
[310] The use of puppetry in the work of these creators is a theme explored by RoseLee Goldberg in *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present* (first publ. 1979), 2011, pp. 21-4, 34-7, 68-9, 106-13

had evolved from a puppet show (a schoolboy creation: *Les Polonais*, 1888) and was reprised by Jarry as a marionette version in 1898, its intentionally childlike, crudely-crafted figures serving to oppose the bourgeois culture and the intricate perfection of its mechanical toys and marionettes.[311] Their coarse naivety may have been influenced by the deliberate simplicity of contemporary painters, such as his associates amongst the Nabis, some of whom - Pierre Bonnard, Édouard Vuillard, Paul Sérusier, Paul Ranson and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec - routinely collaborated at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre and were probable contributors to the set and costumes of the stage version.[312]

Jarry's own creativity embraced visual art as well as drama, poetry and art criticsm (it was he who coined Henri Rousseau's moniker of 'le Douanier'); and surviving examples of his artwork depict the character of Ubu as a flabby caricature, either pear-headed or with an elongated nose under a brimmed hat (*fig. 108-9*).[313] Ubu's shape is significant to the characterisation, for it accords both with *le bourgeois bedonnant* ('paunchy bourgeois' - a stock puppet classification, as defined by André Gervais) and with Daumier's irreverent pear-headed cartoon of Louis Philippe I (*Gargantua*, 1831; *fig. 110*).[314] It thus represents and lampoons the middle and ruling classes. In this regard, it is notable that 'the grotesque costume', according to Barbieri, is 'an expression of protest in the face of real or perceived oppression and a means through which anxieties can be shared and understood'.[315] A further defining feature is the giant spiral which decorates the character's belly. Jarry's invented term for this adornment - *une gidouille* - is a possible corruption of *une guedouille* (a twisted double bottle for oil and vinegar); and its contour

[311] Simon Watson Taylor, 'Introduction', in *Jarry: The Ubu Plays*, Jarry, pp. xi-xii; Jill Fell, 'The Manufacture of a Modern Puppet Type: the Anatomy of Alfred Jarry's Ubu Roi and its Significance', in *Pinocchio, Puppets and Modernity: The Mechanical Body,* ed. by Katia Pizzi (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), p. 75
[312] Beaumont, K., pp. 25, 60
[313] Jean-Paul Morel, 'Ambroise Vollard: 'Dónde y Cómo Conocí al Père Ubu', in *Alfred Jarry: De los nabis a la patafísica* (Valencia: Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, 2000), pp. 86-8
[314] André Charles Gervais, *Marionnettes et marionnettistes de France* (Paris: Bordas, 1947), p. 43**;** Christine Van Schoonbeek*, Les Portraits d'Ubu* (Paris: Séguier, 1997), p. 51
[315] Barbieri, 2017, p. 93

may relate, in Symbolist fashion, to Dionysius Freher's illustration of the 'eternal' double ellipse of Jacob Böhme's *Urgrund*, with which the playwright was probably familiar.[316] Whilst such theories are subject to debate, this spiral would become synonymous with the title character and has featured in almost every 'Ubu' costume design, including that of Hockney.

More broadly, Jarry's concept, as outlined in his writings, was for a non-realistic or 'abstract' theatre, highly visual (as opposed to psychological or narrative) and employing non-ephemeral and universal themes.[317] To these ends, he advocated stylised or schematic sets, costumes and props, which would allow the spectator to actively participate in the play's creation through their own visualisation; the actors should perform in the non-personalised manner of marionettes, concealing their individualities with masks, moving in a jerky, puppet-like fashion and assuming voices removed from their own; and absurdities and incongruities should strongly feature (on account of Jarry's theory that mutual contradictions negate each other and thus create a void of time and place).[318] These concepts would inspire the later Dadaists, with the Zürich-based group hailing Jarry 'as one of their main antecedents' (the inaugural performance of the Cabaret Voltaire included a reading from *Ubu Roi*).[319] A correlation may also be made between the short, disyllabic sound of Ubu - a distortion of Ébé, the nickname bestowed upon Jarry's hapless teacher - and the very term Dada: both evoke 'baby talk' and are void of apparent meaning. Moreover, Dada itself would inform Pop Art - an aesthetic much in evidence in Hockney's interpretation.

The writer was quite specific in his intentions for the design. In a letter to the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre director Lugné-Poe, he proposed a mask for the principal character; a cardboard horse's head to suggest the equestrian scenes; a single stage set ('or, better still, a plain backdrop') with placards to indicate

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[316] Michel Arrivé, *Les langages de Jarry: Essai de sémiotique littéraire* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1972), p. 211; Fell, in *Pinocchio, Puppets and Modernity: The Mechanical Body,* Pizzi, pp. 85-6
[317] Beaumont, K., p. 22
[318] Ibid., pp. 22-7
[319] Fell, in *Pinocchio, Puppets and Modernity: The Mechanical Body,* Pizzi pp. 82-4

location; the use of a single performer to represent a collective group, such as an army or mob; and deliberately shoddy - and preferably modern ('since the satire is modern') - costumes, 'as divorced as far as possible from local colour or chronology'.[320]

The precise extent to which these proposals were realised has been sparsely recorded and blurred by contradictions, although the cast seemingly wore banal attire with incongruous suggestions and the props were schematic (a bale of straw inferred a prison cell).[321] Significantly, however, Jarry's original preference for a colourless background achieved by 'an unpainted backdrop or the reverse side of a set' was compromised by a painted backdrop of multifarious images.[322] This was meticulously described by a visiting British writer, Arthur Symons, as 'painted to represent, by a child's conventions, indoors and out of doors, and even the torrid, temperate, and arctic zones at once'.[323] He noted its incongruous details and claimed that the scenes were announced by placards, which were changed by a man in evening dress, who 'trotted across the stage on the points of his toes'.[324]

Symons' description tallies for the most part with a contemporary painting by Léo Dohnem, appropriately entitled *Stage for the opening night in 1896 of Alfred Jarry's play Ubu Roi* (*fig. 111*). This privately-owned depiction, which featured in the exhibition and publication *Alfred Jarry: De los nabis a la patafísica* at Valencia (IVAM) in 2000, has not been reproduced in any other context of which I am aware and is unmentioned by theatre historians and scholars of Jarry's work; yet it is arguably the most significant surviving evidence of the original production. It is also possibly the only visual record, as Théâtre de l'Oeuvre's artists were known to have painted its scenery

[320] Alfred Jarry, 'A Letter to Lugné-Poe', trans. by Simon Watson Taylor, in *Jarry: The Ubu Plays*, Jarry, pp. xix-xx
[321] Beaumont, K., pp. 60-1
[322] Alfred Jarry, 'Of the Futility of the 'Theatrical' in the Theatre', trans. by Barbara Wright, in *Jarry: The Ubu Plays*, Jarry, p. xxiii
[323] Arthur Symons, *Studies in Seven Arts* (London: A. Constable, 1906), p. 373
[324] Ibid.

without the use of preliminary drawings, and the set itself would not have endured.[325]

Dohnem's image suggests the partial realisation of Jarry's design intentions, through the incongrous features of the setting. As noted by Deák, these pertain to both the script and the play's physical signage, yet bear no direct relation to each other.[326] The set - described by observer Valentin Mandelstamm as a single unchanging backdrop - is depicted by Dohnem as three-dimensional, thus prompting the suggestion that it may have encased the stage like three walls of a room, without the use of wings.[327] Such a theory finds support in Mandelstamm's revelation, as cited by François Caradec, that the actors entered and exited through the giant central fireplace.[328] Dohnem's representation of Ubu *within* the fireplace likewise suggests this. The set thus anticipated - even inspired - the Surrealist movement, the fireplace and picture frame clearly pre-empting René Magritte's *Time Transfixed* (1938) and *The Great Tide* (1951) respectively. Beaumont has asserted that the backdrop 'combined extreme simplification and stylization with the juxtaposition of the most heterogeneous and contradictory elements' and thus constituted 'a deliberate *reductio ad absurdum* of all forms of realism'.[329] I contend, however, that whilst the strangeness of the juxtaposition lent ambiguity, the individual elements did not. There was no attempt at abstraction, and the painted scenes, whilst bizarrely incongruous, were conventionally and 'realistically' rendered. Rather, I concur with Arnold Aronson, who argued that Jarry's creation would have qualified as the first postmodern stage design, were it not for its traditional use of scenery and narrative. He alleged that 'both plot and décor preserved, in their own fantastic ways, the essential unity,

[325] Brockett et al, p. 226
[326] Deák, p. 231
[327] Account of *Ubu Roi* premiere by Valentin Mandelstamm (first publ. in *Fantasio*, 42, 15 April 1908) cited by François Caradec, '*Fantasio* et Alfred', *L'Étoile-Absinthe*, 7/8, December 1980, p. 68 <http://alfredjarry.fr/amisjarry/fichiers_ea/etoile_absinthe_007_8reduit.pdf> [accessed 4 April 2016]
[328] Ibid., pp. 67-8
[329] Beaumont, K., p. 60

harmony and moral structure of nineteenth-century drama and production'.[330] Such criticism, as we shall see, applies equally to the re-interpretation of Hockney.

### 3.2. Hockney's interpretation and correlations with his earlier creativity

The artist was initially reluctant to undertake the project, believing that the 'theatrical devices' he had used in his paintings would be ineffective in a theatrical context ('a theatrical device in the theatre is what you'd expect to find').[331] He was persuaded, according to Sykes, 'by the surreal humour of the play, by the way the action raced along, but most of all by the written instructions of the playwright to eschew traditional scenery'.[332] Budgetary constraints, combined with the Royal Court's (later-discussed) policy of focusing on the actors and text as opposed to direction and design, also aligned with a more schematic approach.[333]

Hockney's concerns, particularly regarding the loss of impact of his 'devices', may well have pushed him to a greater degree of exaggeration. As Marco Livingstone has proposed: 'the fact that real people are making real actions appears to encourage him to provide a blatantly artificial setting for their activities, so that their metaphorical content can be better perceived'.[334] Livingstone maintained that this exaggeration was at odds with the contemporaneous development - namely, the swing towards naturalism - of Hockney's work in the studio.[335] I argue, however, that the accentuated outlines and minimalistic simplicity of his designs were nonetheless consistent with his concurrent emphasis on drawing and line, as revealed by the series of etchings *Illustrations for Fourteen Poems from C. P. Cavafy* (1966), twelve of which were shown together with preliminary sketches for the play at

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[330] Arnold Aronson, 'Postmodern Design', *Theatre Journal*, 43 (1), 1991, p. 8 <http://www.jstor.org/> [accessed 3 October 2015]
[331] Hockney, 1976, p. 103
[332] Sykes, 2011, p. 176
[333] Terry W. Browne, *Playwrights' Theatre: The English Stage Company at the Royal Court* (London: Pitman Publishing, 1975), p. 76; Philip Roberts, *The Royal Court Theatre 1965-1972* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p. 43
[334] Livingstone, p. 92
[335] Ibid.

Kasmin's gallery in July 1966. As Hockney has explained: 'I worked on both [the Cavafy etchings and *Ubu Roi*] at the same time, and that's why there are no paintings from 1966 until the summer, until I went back to California'.[336]

The designs for *Ubu Roi* certainly drew on Hockney's flair for comedy, through the blending of real elements with two-dimensional cartoons (*fig. 112*). Max Wall, who played the titular role, recalled:

> My own first entrance in the play was made from beneath the stage as I was hauled up to stage level on a lift while sitting on a toilet that matched up with the backdrop on which was painted a cistern and lavatory chain.[337]

Such irreverent humour was not unique to the artist's theatre involvement. It had infused many of his works of the early 1960s, notably his 'Love Paintings' series of 1960-1; and its evidence extended beyond the studio to include a satirical review of artwork composed on the lavatory walls of the Royal College, entitled 'La Trine Gallery'.[338] Comic-book elements, which had strongly influenced his boyhood creativity (e.g. *The Scouts' Jumble Sale,* c. 1952, *fig. 113*) would be shared across media, with animation marks inferring both the leading athlete's tumble in *Accident Caused by a Flaw in the Canvas* (*fig. 114*) and the glister of the crown on the *Ubu Roi* curtain (*fig. 115*).

Hockney likewise drew on his preceding artwork in his quest to stress artifice. The childish outlines of Ubu's house (*fig. 99*) revived the quirky naivety of his paintings of boulevards, such as *Olympic Boulevard, Los Angeles* and *Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles*, both of 1964 (*figs. 116, 119*); and a painted sketch for the final scene evoked *Atlantic Crossing* in its caricature waves, its stylised - and identically-coloured - ship, and the streaming smoke which mirrored the painting's puffy grey clouds (*figs. 33, 117*).[339] Similar parallels may be made between the bulbous hills and clouds of the 'rural' backdrop (*fig. 97*) and *Rocky Mountains and Tired Indians* (*fig. 34*), even to include the

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[336] Hockney, 1976, p. 103
[337] Max Wall, *The Fool on the Hill* (London: Quartet, 1975), p. 226
[338] Porter-Salmon, p. 63
[339] The ship backdrop for *Ubu Roi* was seemingly informed by Hockney's passage from New York to Southampton on the SS *France* (October 1965). *Atlantic Crossing* was likewise painted in the aftermath of this event, its depicted vessel similarly resembling the famed ocean liner

surrounding 'frame' and incongruous 'stage prop' (the cash register and plastic chair respectively). The frame - which, as previously discussed in this thesis, has been one of Hockney's favoured devices - was employed throughout the play, and most notably for the 'group portrait' of the Polish royal family, in which a giant empty surround was used to create a metapicture (*fig. 118*). Indeed, the very concept of Hockney's sets, with each backdrop as a 'painting' visibly hoisted on ropes, was itself a rendition of the frame as a device.

The incorporation of explanatory text further accentuated the 'non-reality' of the scenes, whilst clearly engaging with the integration of text within many of Hockney's earlier paintings. The afore-mentioned *Doll Boy*, for instance, and *We Two Boys Together Clinging* have their titles fused within the actual artwork; and the captions of *Olympic Boulevard, Los Angeles* (*fig. 116*) and *Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles* (*fig. 119*) are amalgamated into their postcard-styled borders. The display of the road name as the focus of these images lends further idiosyncrasy.

Within the play, the frozen depictions of moving features (such as smoke and clouds) and the visual flattening of three-dimensional elements (the sandwich boards and bench seats) likewise - and in direct opposition to theatrical tradition - served to emphasise artifice rather than simulate reality. Yet the artist's technique was a reversal of his devices in the studio, as critic David Thompson observed:

> Very often [Hockney] has tried composing his subjects in a 'theatrical' manner: he has painted false frames around them, set them behind and in front of curtains, 'staged' them [...], made 'scenes' of them. [...] His stage designs thus become a natural extension of one of his main preoccupations as a painter, only now the game is played back to front: he has real space to deal with, and he sets about making it represent a drawing.[340]

[340] David Thompson, 'David Hockney: A Natural Dandy and *Ubu Roi*', *New York Times*, 14 August 1966

A feature of Hockney's design to arouse considerable comment was his vivid use of colour; an element of the production which, unfortunately, has been poorly preserved. Whilst a few crayon sketches have been reproduced, I have found no evidence of colour photographs beyond the one by Zoë Dominic on the cover of *Plays and Players* magazine (September 1966, *fig. 120*) and a single image of the titular character in the said photographer's archive (currently in the care of Catherine Ashmore).[341] Surviving photographs in the English Stage Company archive (most of them also by Dominic) are solely in black and white.[342] Hockney has acknowledged the scarcity of polychromatic evidence, remarking that stage productions were infrequently photographed, particularly in colour, during that era.[343] Yet observers' accounts attest to the vibrant nature of the design. Artistic director William Gaskill specifically noted its vivid hues; and the sets have been described by Sykes as 'a garish series of poster-paint backdrops' and by Beaumont as 'distinctly pop art in character - shocking pinks, greens (the stage was covered by a sheet of artificial grass such as is used by greengrocers), and the like'.[344]

The 'pop' label would especially be bandied by the contemporary press: 'Pop Art at the Royal Court' (*Telegraph and Argus)*; 'inevitably, impeccably send-up pop' (*The Times Educational Supplement*); 'British framework of pop art for Jarry' (*The Times*).[345] The verdict, for the most part, was positive, with the *Sunday Telegraph* extolling 'the considerable pleasure of David Hockney's pop-art scenery and science-fiction costumes', and *Queen* magazine proclaiming that 'the Royal Court has presented the first stage designs of our leading pop-artist, David Hockney, which in itself makes *Ubu Roi* an event'.[346]

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[341] Author's correspondence with Catherine Ashmore re. Zoë Dominic archive, 25 February 2018
[342] English Stage Company archive, V&A archives (Theatre & Performance), Blythe House, London
[343] Author's interview with Hockney
[344] Gresdna A. Doty and Billy J. Harbin*, Inside The Royal Court Theatre, 1956-1981: Artists Talk* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), p. 191; Sykes, 2011, p. 177; Beaumont, K., p. 69
[345] 'Pop Art at the Royal Court', *Telegraph and Argus*, 23 July 1966; 'Father of Modernism?', *The Times Educational Supplement*, 5 August 1966; 'British framework of pop art for Jarry', *The Times*, 22 July 1966
[346] 'Seventy Year Old Shocker', *Sunday Telegraph*, 24 July 1966; 'Ubu Roi' (review), *Queen*, August 1966

Of course, the irony of these reviews is that Hockney did not consider himself a 'pop' artist - and had shouted as much during a private view party in 1962.[347] Neither did his flat planes of exuberant colour concur with the greater part of his studio endeavour prior to 1964. This was when when he first used a superior brand of American acrylic paint that prompted his move away from oils and lent itself to a less textured, less nuanced, more vibrant and 'artificial' syle.[348]

One of the first works to employ this particular paint was *California Art Collector* (*fig. 30*); and this anticipated *Ubu Roi* not only in its flat blocks of intense hues, but in its stylised execution, its combination of two and three-dimensionality, and its quirky incongruity. Moreover, its contemporary and historical allusions - the 'primitive' head, 'William Turnbull' sculpture, and references to fifteenth century works by Fra Angelico and Piero della Francesca - render it, like Hockney's designs for the play, a blatant invention.

Within these play designs, two particular elements of costume - Ubu's bowler hat and his wife's luminescent breasts - warrant specific investigation. The inclusion of the hat would seem to be prompted by Jarry's original artwork and instructions ('Ubu is to wear [...] a bowler hat on his head which is topped by a crown when he becomes king').[349] Yet it also engaged with Hockney's teenage persona (a photo of the artist shows him sporting a bowler in a dandyish pose; *fig. 121*) and with two of his earlier paintings, in which similar hats were employed for comedic effect. The first is the hat in *Adhesiveness* (*fig. 69*), which he claimed to have added 'so you'd notice they were figures', although it clearly lends absurdity as well as clarity to the scene (he described this as a bowler, although it more closely - and appropriately, in view of the title - resembles the type of hat worn by the poet, Walt Whitman).[350] The

[347] Luckhardt and Melia, p. 8
[348] Hockney, 1976, p. 98
[349] Jarry quoted by Beaumont, K., p. 61n
[350] Hockney, 1976, p. 62. N.b. Maire Mullins has observed that many of Whitman's 'Calamus' poems 'unabashedly use the term [adhesiveness] to refer to same-sex male desire, affection and commitment'. Maire Mullins, 'Sexuality', in *Companion to Walt Whitman*, ed. by Donald D. Kummings (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p. 171

second is the 'pork pie' variant in *A Man Stood in Front of his House with Rain Descending* (*fig. 122*), its flattened top affording a hint of slapstick, reinforced by the word 'Idiot' inscribed above its band.

It is relevant to the artist's use of the bowler that this style of hat has comedic associations. Colourful versions - and that of Ubu was bright green - are traditionally worn by circus clowns; and Hockney's childhood entertainment included Charlie Chaplin and Laurel and Hardy, all of whom wore bowler variants.[351] At the time of his work on the play, Mike and Bernie Winters were a well-known British comedy act, with Bernie sporting a ridiculously pulled-down bowler; whilst a popular contemporary, Freddie 'Parrot-face' Davies, wore a black homburg in a similarly ludicrous manner. Hockney, with his genuine interest in all forms of entertainment, would have certainly been familiar with the style of these showmen, and others - such as Flanagan and Allen - who utilised hats for comic effect. Moreover, it is pertinent, considering the absurd nature of *Ubu Roi*, that bowlers function as both costumes and props in the Absurdist play *Waiting for Godot*, at least one production of which Hockney claimed to have viewed since its London debut in 1955.[352]

The second costume element of particular note is Mère Ubu's outrageous fake breasts (*fig. 123*). These appendages - which visually engaged with the bride's stylised bosom in *The First Marriage* of 1962 (*fig. 124*) and in its sequel of the following year (*fig. 125*) - can be seen to characterise the duality of the era, their shape evoking the conical cups of the fashionable 'bullet' bras of the 1950s, and their nakedness inferring the feminist rejection of the bra in the subsequent decade. Overtly strapped outside her dark dress, they were presumably intended to add a burst of visual comedy in the farcical manner of traditional British pantomime. Whether, however, they were appropriate in the context of the play and whether they accorded with Jarry's own objectives will be considered later in this chapter.

[351] Sykes, 2011, pp. 20-1
[352] Ibid., p. 175

### 3.3. Hockney's designs in relation to Jarry's conception

Jarry, as previously discussed, was quite specific in his intentions for *Ubu Roi* (although some remained unrealised even in his own production), and his directions pertaining to the set and costumes made recommendations for every character, in varying degrees of detail, and with many intended to appear 'Polish' (*'en polonais*').[353] These instructions have been translated and replicated in various editions of the text and Hockney was almost certainly aware of them, yet it is apparent from surviving drawings and photographs of the Royal Court production, that his designs did not adhere to the specificities of Jarry's suggestions (notably, the stipulation of a single, ambiguous, stage set and masks).[354] They *did*, however, comply with the writer's preference for 'modern' costumes - and if one considers that the original mode of attire - such as the top hat and tails of the gent in Dohnem's painting - was 'modern' only in the 1890s, then it was appropriate for Hockney to update the flavour of the piece to the 1960s.[355] The fantastical eclecticism of his creations was likewise in keeping with Jarry's desire for 'costumes as divorced as far as possible from local colour or chronology'; whilst elements such as the oversized overalls and knee-high socks certainly fulfilled the author's wishes for 'shoddy' garb to make the play 'even more wretched and horrible'.[356]

Nevertheless, some aspects of Hockney's costume designs were at odds with the *essence* of the original concept. The outfit of Ubu included the proposed bowler hat, the exaggerated paunch and suitable variants on other accessories, including the small cane in the pocket; yet it failed to convey the sense of puppetry that was so important to Jarry's vision. The author had stipulated masks so the actors would 'lose their own personalities'; and yet at the Royal Court - and this is a consequence of the direction as much as the design - the stage persona of the star would override that of the character, prompting critic Ann Shearer's comment that he had turned Ubu into a

[353] Alfred Jarry, 'Répertoire des Costumes', in *Jarry: Ubu Roi*, inc. dossier by Patrick Besnier (Paris: Flammarion, 2011), Jarry, pp. 143-5
[354] Jarry, 'A Letter to Lugné-Poe', in *Jarry: The Ubu Plays*, Jarry, p. xix
[355] Ibid., p. xx
[356] Ibid.

Blackpool comic with his ad-lib banter.[357] Variants on this viewpoint would be made by other reviewers, Christopher Andreae amongst them:

> Père Ubu had been stripped of his mask of violence and greed, and had instead become, in the glint-eyed person of Max Wall, an amiable buffoon, an obese cross between Humpty Dumpty and Tweedledum.[358]

The decision not to use masks, for which Hockney was presumably at least partly responsible, would have set the course for this particular characterisation. Moreover, none of the performers - despite director Iain Cuthbertson's resolution to 'emphasize the marionette-like quality of the play' - resembled or acted like puppets.[359] The sandwich boards lent a two-dimensional facet which stressed theatrical artifice, but they did not de-humanise the actors in the way that masks or other devices might have done. In this regard, the (later-discussed) designs of Jean-Christophe Averty (*fig. 126*) or Franciszka Themerson (*fig. 128*) came much closer to realising Jarry's conception.

The role of Ubu's wife was played by a man (Jack Shepherd) in the Royal Court production, affording a pantomime quality that was heightened by the role of Bougrelas being played by a woman (Janet Chappell). Martin Esslin wrote favourably of this treatment, claiming: 'The very fact that a man has here been cast as a female, and that he is given monstrous breasts which light up when Ma Ubu is amorously excited, shows the area in which Jarry was trying to locate the style of the play'.[360] Yet Esslin's comment is contestable on two counts. Firstly, in his writings on the theatre, Jarry had specifically expressed his aversion to cross-dressing ('transvestism has been forbidden by the Church and by art') and was vociferously disparaging of females undertaking male roles.[361] Secondly, the strap-on breasts introduced what Beaumont described as 'a questionable sexual element' into the

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**357** Jarry, 'Preliminary Address at the First Performance of *Ubu Roi*', in *Jarry: The Ubu Plays*, Jarry, p. xxvii; Ann Shearer, 'Ubu Roi at the Royal Court', *Guardian*, 22 July 1966

358 Christopher Andreae, ''Ubu Roi' at Royal Court', *Christian Science Monitor*, 15 August 1966

359 Iain Cuthbertson, 'Let's Forget the Labels', *Plays and Players*, June 1966, p. 55

360 Martin Esslin, 'Ooboo in Chelsea', *Plays and Players*, September 1966, p. 17

361 Jarry, 'Of the Futility of the 'Theatrical' in the Theatre', in *Jarry: The Ubu Plays*, Jarry, pp. xxv-xxvi

portrayal of the character, albeit made derisory by the role being played by a man.[362]

It is noteworthy that Hockney was not the first designer to have introduced this feature. Themerson had bestowed bare breasts on Mère Ubu, both in her caricature illustrations for Gaberbocchus Press (1951) and in her designs for Michael Meschke's stage production of 1964 (*fig. 128*). It is thus possible that Hockney's rendering may have been partially informed by her ideas. The breasts in these versions by Themerson (and in her later series of strip-cartoons, *fig. 127*) did not, however, afford the same degree of sexual innuendo as those of Hockney's design. In her drawings, any hint of eroticism was tempered by the grotesqueness of the representation; whilst in her stage design, the mammoth bosom was an integral part of an almost full-coverage cartoon costume, which even hid the performer's face. Hence, the innuendo was assuaged by this feature's integration within a totally 'unreal' caricature. Moreover, her designs were realised in black and white, as opposed to the more sexually-ascribed colours (magenta, according to Beaumont) of Hockney's lurid palette.[363]

Michel Arrivé, in his many studies of the language of Jarry's play, proposed numerous sexual inferences amongst the polysemy of its vocabulary and terminology.[364] Beaumont, however, claimed that these had little bearing when considering the work 'as a play'. Rather, he proposed:

> Sexual allusions are minimal, and wholly derisory, in the play, and the relationship between Père and Mère Ubu is in no way a sexual one. Ubu is emphatically not an embodiment of lust, any more than are the other characters in the play, and any attempt to introduce such considerations runs entirely counter to Jarry's own intentions.[365]

Thompson's report that the breasts 'flash on and off at moments of crisis' and a description by Peter Lewis of them lighting up 'when people swear on them

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[362] Beaumont, K., p. 69
[363] Ibid.
[364] Michel Arrivé, 'Langage et 'Pataphysique'', in *Histoire de la langue française 1880-1914,* ed. by Gérald Antoine and Robert Martin (Paris: CNRS, 1985), pp. 517, 521-3
[365] Beaumont, K., p. 38

(for lack of a Bible)' counter the more sexual interpretations of Esslin and others (*Socialist Leader:* '[they] glow when manhandled') and suggest a visual humour beyond erotic parody.[366] Nonetheless, the sheer gimmickry of the device, even without the sexual implication, made this a questionable inclusion.

A further contestable element of Hockney's design was 'Ubu's Closet' - the lavatory on which the lead actor made his grand entrance. Beaumont described this as 'a somewhat dubious touch' and, certainly, it bore no obvious relation to Jarry's original text or previous productions.[367] It could be argued, however, that this cartoon rendition was a visual counterpart to the character's famous opening line (*'Merdre!'* - note the extra 'r'): close enough for the audience to comprehend, yet deliberately short of the real thing. It was also a logical extension of the humour afforded by the 'toilet brush' sceptre, which apparently originated in Jarry's own production. The poet, W. B Yeats, having witnessed the inaugural performance in Paris, wrote in *The Tragic Generation*:

> The players are supposed to be dolls, toys, marionettes [...] and I can see for myself that the chief personage, who is some kind of King [sic], carries for sceptre a brush of the kind that we use to clean a closet.[368]

He would, of course, have meant a water closet, in which case, the depicted lavatory might be deemed to have engaged with the humour of the author himself.

The inclusion of these elements prompts questions as to why Hockney chose to place such emphasis on caricature and visual comedy. On the most apparent level, he was simply building on the author's specifications for schematic sets, props and costumes, and the inclusion of signage (*fig. 129*). As he explained:

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[366] Thompson, 1966; Peter Lewis, 'Ubu Roi' (review), *Daily Mail*, 22 July 1966; R.R., 'Ubu Roi (Royal Court)' (review), *Socialist Leader*, August 1966

[367] Beaumont, K., p. 69

[368] William Butler Yeats, 'The Trembling of the Veil, Book IV: The Tragic Generation' (first publ. 1922), in *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats,* Vol. III: Autobiographies*,* ed. by William H. O'Donnell and Douglas N. Archibald (New York: Scribner, 1999), p. 266

> You can invent lots of things because Jarry gives lots of instructions: Don't bother about scenery, just put a sign up saying 'Polish Army'; and that really appealed to me. And some of the sets are just like that. The Polish army was just two people, and we tied a banner round them, and it just said 'Polish Army'.[369]

His interpretation also drew on the general nature of the play, which is a farcical portrait of tyranny, employing Punch and Judy-styled characters of rudimentary psychology. Whilst many attempts have been made to construe this work as a political and social satire, its extreme degree of caricature and widespread disrespect (it derides the bourgeoisie and peasants alike) refutes this single interpretation: a point stressed by Beaumont in his argument that *Ubu Roi* represents a universal and moral, not a socio-political, conception.[370] Symons too, in his original appraisal of the work, claimed that:

> One sees truly, the excuse, the occasion for an immense satire, a Swiftian or Rabelaisian parody of the world. But at present M. Jarry has not the intellectual grasp nor the mastery of a new technique needful to carry out so vast a programme. [...] M. Jarry's present conception of satire is very much that of the schoolboy to whom a practical joke is the most efficacious form of humour, and bad words scrawled on a slate the most salient kind of wit.[371]

The stupidity and naivety of the title character, combined with the play's inherent physical comic action dictates the childlike, slapstick approach to which Hockney's cartoon renderings adhered. His colourful, 'pop art' styling corresponded with this method, whilst also fulfilling the director's reported intention to 'find a contemporary equivalent to Jarry's visual idiom'.[372]

Current British censorship was a further possible factor in the burlesque treatment of this historically-contentious work for, in highlighting its farcicality - and thus non-reality - the potential to offend was somewhat minimised. It is notable that, whilst amendments were indeed required to specific elements of the *Ubu Roi* translation on account of alleged profanity or sexual innuendo, the physical violence of the play - enacted in slapstick fashion - passed

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[369] Hockney, 1976, p. 103
[370] Beaumont, K., pp. 43-6
[371] Symons, p. 375
[372] Cuthbertson, p. 55

unquestioned; yet Edward Bond's *Saved* of the previous year, which showed brutality rendered in a 'naturalistic' manner, was refused permission to be publicly performed without substantial modifications.[373] The mid-sixties' mood of British popular culture was thus ambivalent, and often expressed a sense of 'Englishness' that Michael Bracewell has claimed 'had one foot in the future and one in the past'.[374] This 'tug-of-war' between futurism and nostalgia was clearly visible in Hockney's design. His bold, optimistic colours and contours, which could have pushed the project towards greater abstraction, eschewed their potential and instead conjoined with a comic book humour and pantomime approach which clearly identified with childhood reminiscence, and in a specifically British context.

To an extent, this format was pre-determined by the interpretation of director Iain Cuthbertson, whose personal translation from the original French stressed the play's farcicality. This was observed in the autobiography of the starring actor, Max Wall: 'The translation had been carried out with comedy in mind, in direct contrast to Jarry's original idea, which had been to shock the whole of France with vulgarities and cold-blooded horror'.[375] Cuthbertson's concept also included songs, composed specifically for the production by Frank Spedding, of which the titles ('We're the nicest people', 'Song of Finance', 'How right you are, Père Ubu') suggest pantomime ditties.[376] It is noteworthy, however, that Jarry had likewise included incidental music of the type played at fairgrounds and befitting a puppet play; and these musical interludes would have served to break up the narrative, stress 'theatricality' (non-reality) and lend a perceptible air of down-to-earth burlesque.[377]

The Royal Court production concurred with Jarry's vision in other ways. Firstly - and significantly, considering the farcical nature of the play - Hockney's

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[373] Correspondence from Lord Chamberlain's office to Helen Montagu (General Manager), *Ubu Roi* production management file, ref. GB 71 THM/273/4/1/32, English Stage Company archive; Roberts, p. 30
[374] Michael Bracewell, *England is Mine: Pop Life in Albion from Wilde to Goldie* (London: Flamingo, 1998), p. 13
[375] Wall, p. 225
[376] Hand-written running order of songs, production management file for *Ubu Roi*
[377] Symons, p. 372

design supported physical comic action, as revealed by the wheeled horse, cartoonishly lengthened with a concave middle to allow Ubu to 'ride' it (*fig. 130*).[378] His trap doors tucked within the fake grass demonstrated comparable ingenuity, providing an unorthodox means of entrance and exit akin to Jarry's giant fireplace.[379] His use of signage to indicate crowds and locations closely followed the author's original. Less obviously, his medieval allusions (the swords, mace-like costume and scalloped table cloth) engaged - whether knowingly or not - with the heraldic theme of the characters' names: Bordure, Cotice, Giron and Pile being elements of a shield (the border, diagonal band, triangular- and wedge-shaped charges).[380] The 'toy theatre' backdops, and the manner in which they were hoisted up and down in full view of the audience, also accorded with the author's own emphasis on artifice and disjointedness, whilst clearly delineating the performance space and thus the performativity of the action. As Livingstone has described:

> Most of the scenes were done as small backdrops measuring eight by twelve feet, so they are presented in effect as a series of static visual images which define a specific space for the human participants.[381]

The humorous, childlike quality of Hockney's designs likewise engaged with the youthfulness of Jarry's own creativity, and this is reflected in the terminology of the press reviews: 'The simple, child's paintbox sets'; 'The *Beano*-style costumes and sets'; 'The sets by Hockney at the Royal Court are simple, with all the naughty flavour of the play'.[382] Yet the artist's vibrant colour fields contravened Jarry's intent for a colourless background, to be achieved 'by an unpainted backdrop or the reverse side of a set. Each spectator can then conjure up for himself the background he requires'.[383] The shocking hues opposed this concept (despite - or perhaps, because of - their concurrence with the vision of the play's director: 'And so where Jarry called

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[378] Jarry, 'Répertoire des Costumes', in *Jarry: Ubu Roi,* Jarry, p. 145
[379] 'Heading for Hollywood', *Kensington Post*, 29 July 1966
[380] Arrivé, 'Langage et 'Pataphysique', in *Histoire de la langue française 1880-1914,* Antoine and Martin, p. 522
[381] Livingstone, p. 92
**[382]** 'Ubu Roi' (review), *Punch*, 3 August 1966; 'Ubu Roi' (review), *New Statesman*, 29 July 1966; 'Heading for Hollywood', *Kensington Post*, 29 July 1966
[383] Jarry, 'Of the Futility of the 'Theatrical' in the Theatre', in *Jarry: The Ubu Plays,* Jarry, p. xxiii

for drabness, our sets will have lots of colour').[384] The caricature forms also defied the original demands for visual abstraction, although Jarry himself had notably compromised on this issue.

Moreover, this realisation lacked the anger, vulgarity and cycnicism that was Jarry's motivation. The author's toilet brush 'sceptre' had been a form of vicious ridicule, whilst that of Hockney was a schoolboy prank. It was in the details that the savagery was lost: the attire of Ubu was rendered cosy by the simple addition of a fluffy pompom (*fig. 131*). It is pertinent that *The New Statesman* described these sets as 'elegant', and the claim in *Punch* that they were 'witty' implies a dandyish drollery rather than crudity.[385] Thompson's review made a similar point:

> I would have thought that David Hockney's set designs [...] were altogether too sophisticated for the gross and loud-voiced anarchy of Jarry's schoolboy shocker. They are extremely attractive, within their neat toytown convention, but hardly a celebration of vulgarity; Hockney just doesn't go in for that sort of unbridled energy.[386]

Here, perhaps, is the root of the divergence. Hockney is first and foremost an accomplished draughtsman, a stylistic explorer, a man of ideas; but even at his most radical, there is a sense of calculation that is at odds with Jarry's rugged spontaneity (hence, the adjectives of Thompson's review - 'attractive', 'neat', 'sophisticated'). His designs, whilst basic, were simply too 'twee' for the coarseness and brutality of Jarry's script. Rather, as Thompson contended, 'The play is essentially crude and violent, and Hockney isn't'.[387] Ultimately, Hockney's concept was rooted in the humour of his own youth - that of pantomime and comic books, and Chaplinesque slapstick. It did not connect, on the deepest level, with the hateful bitterness of Jarry's conception. This had been more appropriately conveyed by the designs of Averty, executed the year before. Moreover, the stylistic devices (the framed sets, the flattened

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[384] Cuthbertson, p. 55
[385] 'Ubu Roi' (review), *New Statesman*, 29 July 1966; 'Ubu Roi' (review), *Punch*, 3 August 1966
[386] David Thompson, 'Natural Wonders', *Observer*, 24 July 1966
[387] Thompson, 14 August 1966

props), were contrived in the manner of his painterly experiments. They *displayed* artifice but they were *not* artifice. Hockney here was like a magician revealing how the trick was done. Jarry, on the other hand, with his professed aversion to theatrical illusion, would have probably preferred no trick at all.

### 3.4. Jarry and Hockney: Creative correspondences

*Ubu Roi* was written in an age when - like the art world of the 1960s - the theatre was re-defining itself, and Jarry's attempts to eschew realism and established traditions were not dissimilar to those, decades later, of Hockney. Both creators would employ 'devices' to stress the non-reality of their endeavours, and would challenge and rebel against existing notions in their fields; both were battling the restrictions of society (politically and sexually respectively) and used their work as a means of dissent; and somewhat ironically, and despite their ingenuity, both also conformed in their traditional methodology and their basic adherence to narrative and figuration. Moreover, both assumed a persona that was intertwined with and promulgated their creativity: Jarry adopting the speech and manners of his titular character, and Hockney assuming a physical appearance that was a visible extension of his art.[388] Thus, parallels emerge between Jarry and the artist, even prior to Hockney's involvement with the play.

Conversely, whereas Hockney used *theatrical* devices in his art, Jarry employed *pictorial* devices in his drama. Whilst aiming to reject narrative and psychology (which he ascribed to the novel) in favour of visual impact, he concerned himself with staging, movement and lighting, so that *Ubu Roi* essentially became a series of disconnected 'pictures'.[389] This disjunction would feed into Hockney's own approach and it is notable that the artist would describe his designs as 'little painted backdrops [...] like big paintings'.[390] The sheer quantity of scenes in *Ubu Roi* - requiring nineteen different settings and twenty-two scene changes - may itself be deemed a 'device', for it renders

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[388] Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France 1885 to World War I,* first publ. 1959 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969), pp. 211-2
[389] Beaumont, K., pp. 27-8
[390] Hockney, 1976, p. 103

conventional, illusionistic staging almost impossible. It also affords a parody of classical theatre, in much the same way as Hockney's visual allusions have parodied the works of past masters.[391] *What Is This Picasso?* (*fig. 37*) is a notable paradigm in its quotation - as a mirrored image - of both Picasso's *Portrait of Dora Maar* (1937) and *Still Life with Flowers* (*fig. 36*) by Spelt. The intentional miminalism (placards instead of backdrops, for example) of Jarry's staging instructions likewise corresponds with the basic selectivity of Hockney's compositions, as illustrated by his 'Domestic Scenes' of 1963, of which he claimed, 'I deliberately ignored the walls and I didn't paint the floor or anything I considered wasn't important'.[392] This practice was noted by Gene Baro, who suggested that 'much of Hockney's painting essentialises rather than elaborates. He induces us to feel more by actually seeing less'.[393]

Such simplicity extends to the childlike naivety which has permeated the works of both creators. The uncomplicated logic of *Ubu Roi* springs from a youthful vision of the world, as also projected by Hockney's comic-styled *Flight into Italy - Swiss Landscape* of 1962; the vulgarity of Ubu's terminology is as juvenile as *Erection* (1959-60); and Beaumont's appraisal that 'it is impossible to imagine *Ubu Roi* as anything other than a product of childhood, a creation of an exuberant, unruly and disrespectful schoolboy imagination' could equally be said of *Life Painting for a Diploma* (1962).[394] Puppetry and mime - the more 'childlike' art forms - which infuse Jarry's conception, likewise find a counterpart in Hockney's *faux*-naive artworks, including *We Two Boys Together Clinging* (*fig. 71*). Indeed, the human figures of several of these paintings - most notably that of *Doll Boy* with its strangely suspended head (*fig. 70*) - possess a distinctly puppet-like appearance.

Significantly, both men have induced the active participation of the viewer. Hockney's *Picture Emphasizing Stillness* (*fig. 58*), for example, compels the observer to approach the painting and read the miniscule text in order to

[391] Beaumont, K., p. 32
[392] Hockney, 1976, pp. 92-3
[393] Baro, p. 11
[394] Beaumont, K., p. 58

understand the joke; whilst Jarry's schematic conception obliges its spectators to use their imagination, as personally explained in his opening night address ('you are free to see in Mister Ubu as many allusions as you like, or, if you prefer, just a plain puppet, a schoolboy's caricature...').[395]

The chronological and temporal distortions of the play - which include the use of swords and guns as weapons within the same scene (Act IV, scene 2) - again bring to mind *Picture Emphasizing Stillness*, in which the event is both improbable and frozen in time; whilst the deliberate disjointedness of the play's action which, according to Baro, 'jerks and leaps forward', compares with the disjunction in Hockney's sequence of etchings *A Rake's Progress*.[396] This lack of coherence adds to the potential for confusion, the sense of mystery, even hoax, which has imbued the works of both creators. Hockney's textual allusions and obfuscatory codes (including his substitution of letters for numbers) find their match in Jarry's schoolboy jargon, his phrase 'By my green candle!', being incomprehensible to all but initiates.[397] The incongruities of both the play and Hockney's paintings have lent further mystification, Jarry's deliberate blend of linguistic forms - archaic and modern, formal and slang - as the verbal counterpart to the visual absurdities of *The First Marriage* or *Domestic Scene, Los Angeles*.

Arguably the strongest connective factor is the inclusion of humour. Action and gestural comedy - in the manner of slapstick or Punch and Judy - is integral to *Ubu Roi*, and constitutes a theatrical counterpart to the 'situation' comedy of Hockney's *Help* or the comic-strip fun of his *Accident Caused by a Flaw in the Canvas*. Jarry's verbal distortions (his lists of rhyming insults or the added 'r' in '*merdre*') align with Hockney's *double-entendres*, such as the arm pointing to 'Queens' in *I'm in the Mood for Love*; and humour is a mutually-employed device in their personal quest to counter realism, as typified by Jarry's instruction for Ubu to don a crown atop his bowler hat, and the quirky

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[395] Jarry, 'Preliminary Address at the First Performance of *Ubu Roi'*, in *Jarry: The Ubu Plays,* Jarry, p. xxvii
[396] Baro, p. 10
[397] Beaumont, K., pp. 14, 51-2

titles (e.g. *Picture of a Pointless Abstraction Framed under Glass*) of Hockney's series *A Hollywood Collection* (1965).[398] As the latter demonstrates, such humour also serves as a means to deride, with the artist's collectors and the writer's audience equally lampooned: an act of subversion against their own patrons.

Moreover, an 'absurd' humour, defined by Beaumont as 'based on the deliberate exploitation of incongruity or of outright logical contradiction', has permeated the creativity of both men.[399] A drawing by Jarry that was printed in *La Revue Blanche* (February 1903, *fig. 132*) reveals the closeness of this connection. In his sketch, a caricature Ubu holds an extended arm under a cloud of rain, whilst his umbrella is tucked beneath the other arm which is under the sun. Almost sixty years later, Hockney would paint *A Man Stood in Front of his House with Rain Descending* (*fig. 55*), which is a surprisingly analogous image, in terms of theme, composition and even the man's attire. When I interviewed the artist, he acknowledged that he had encountered Jarry's sketch, but not prior to his research for the play, which was several years after his execution of the painting.[400] So these fantastical artworks provide tangible evidence of two remarkably similar creative minds.

### 3.5. The Royal Court in 'Swinging London': the background

Creative parallels between Jarry and Hockney were intimated by director Cuthbertson when sharing his intentions to revive the play at the Royal Court theatre in 1966. In an article for *Plays and Players* magazine, he referred to Jarry's 'Salvador Dalí landscape' as part of a visual mythology that had become somewhat tired, and the need for a fresh approach.[401]

> I wanted to replace this worn mythology with an interpretation which would have the same kind of original impact Jarry aimed at - and for this it was necessary to find somebody who was a visual artist in his own right. David Hockney read the play, and he felt he could find a contemporary equivalent to Jarry's visual idiom. And so where Jarry called for drabness, our sets will

[398] Beaumont, K., p. 61
[399] Ibid., p. 94
[400] Author's interview with Hockney
[401] Cuthbertson, p. 55

> have lots of colour, and emphasize the marionette-like quality of the play. I'd like to infuse the whole piece with something of the cartoon quality.[402]

That the play should be revived by the Royal Court is of relevance for, as Richard Findlater explained, this was 'the most persistently seminal, significantly productive and stubbornly controversial place in the British - perhaps in the Western - theatre'.[403] An intimate Victorian venue, with a traditional proscenium and horseshoe auditorium, it had been home to the English Stage Company since 1956, and had situated itself at the forefront of daring new writing and contentious revivals. Plays by Brecht, Wesker, Pinter and Orton were regularly featured. John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956) and *The Entertainer* (1957) were premiered here; likewise, *Krapp's Last Tape* and *Not I* (1973) by Samuel Beckett; and, in the same year, *The Rocky Horror Show* by Richard O'Brien. The works staged were stylistically diverse, yet united in their quest to provoke, question, even enrage. The scene in Bond's *Saved* (1965), in which a baby is stoned to death in its pram, sparked an uproar akin to that which had greeted Jarry's *Ubu Roi*.[404]

The emphasis of the Royal Court's policy was - and still is - firmly on the writing, as underlined by its self-identification as 'the writer's theatre'.[405] It became, in 1968, the first playhouse in London to appoint a resident dramatist, with David Hare and Caryl Churchill amongst those fulfilling this role; and a tradition from 1957 to the mid-1970s was the presentation of 'Sunday Night Productions Without Decor'.[406] These performances allowed the presentation of new works, performed with merely the suggestion of

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[402] Ibid.
[403] Richard Findlater, 'Preface', in *At the Royal Court: 25 years of the English Stage Company,* ed. by Richard Findlater (Ambergate: Amber Lane Press, 1981), p. 7
[404] Roberts, pp. 29, 40
[405] 'About us', *Royal Court Theatre* <https://royalcourttheatre.com/about/> [accessed 18 November 2017]
[406] Gordon Maxwell Bolar, 'The Sunday Night Productions Without Decor at the Royal Court Theatre, 1957-1975 (England, playwriting, drama)', *LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses. 4006* (unpublished PhD thesis, Louisiana State University, 1984), pp. iv, 201 <https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/4006/> [accessed 18 November 2017]

setting and costume. The priority of text and action over sets and costumes was a fundamental tenet, as explained by designer Jocelyn Herbert:

> George Devine [the company's founding artistic director] wanted to get away from swamping the stage with decorative and naturalistic scenery; to let in light and air; to take the stage away from the director and designer and restore it to the actor and the text. This meant leaving space around the actors, and that meant the minimum of scenery and props, i.e. only those that served the actors and the play.[407]

In the light of this description, the company's engagement of an emergent celebrity artist as designer was an anomaly. Whilst publicly-known actors were routinely employed, its stage design had been invariably effected by theatre professionals - Alan Tagg and Herbert amongst them - whose names were unknown beyond theatrical circles.[408] No visual artists had designed for the Court before Hockney, which prompts the question: why was he actually approached to do it? The answer would seem to lie in the events and policies of the era.

1966 was the year that *Time* journalist Piri Halasz coined the term 'Swinging London' to describe the youth-driven optimism behind the city's metamorphosis from a gloomy, post-war capital into the epicentre of modernity.[409] Sloane Square, where the theatre is sited within the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, had itself evolved from a 1950s 'backwater' (so described by general stage manager Michael Hallifax) into a hub of contemporaneity.[410] Hence, the Royal Court's position - literally and metaphorically removed from the mainstream 'West End' - was now at the heart of this cultural re-fashioning. As William Gaskill later explained: 'it was the time of swinging London, and Chelsea was rather at the center of that. [...] It was a time of trend, one has to say, a very trendy time'.[411]

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[407] Jocelyn Herbert, 'Discoveries in Design', in *At the Royal Court: 25 years of the English Stage Company*, Findlater, p. 84
[408] Appendix I (list of productions/designers 1956-1980), in *At the Royal Court: 25 years of the English Stage Company*, Findlater, unpaginated
[409] Piri Halasz, 'You Can Walk Across it on the Grass', *Time*, April 1966
[410] Doty and Harbin, p. 197
[411] Gaskill quoted by Doty and Harbin, p. 191. N.b. The conference at which Gaskill was speaking ('The English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre: Production Practices and Legacies, 1956 - 1981') was held at Louisiana State University in 1981

The effects of urban reconstruction, women's liberation, new sexual freedoms, and the development of a welfare state underpinned the British confidence of the times; whilst the influence of American consumerism - reflected in the fresh abundance of synthetic materials, supermarkets and readily-disposable everyday items - was visible in the Pop Art with which the period would become identified. Yet it was also an era of instability and contradiction, and with American influence as ambivalently met in London as it had been in Jarry's Paris. Alex Seago has noted that 'the arts departments of British universities during the 1950s and early 1960s were bastions of the anti-American cultural criticism which characterized that period'.[412] 'CND' protest marches (1958-63), the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) and the assassination of American president, John F. Kennedy (1963) were in very recent memory; whilst The Cold War (1947-91) and the highly emotive Vietnam War (1955-75) kindled a fear of Communism that echoed the anarchy-driven suspicions of the *belle époque*. As David Mellor observed:

> A vision of catastophe and the lures and promises of an advanced consumer society were at the heart of the culture of dissent in London.[413]

These background dynamics, beyond their patent parallels with the sentiment of the era in which *Ubu Roi* was created, also connected with the play itself and its violent blend of tyranny, instability, 'Goon Show' humour and revolt.[414] Hence, the time and place were conducive to this revival.

Additional factors, specific to the Royal Court, also played a part. The English Stage Company was facing increased rivalry in its staging of new and classic works. The Royal Shakespeare Company had acquired a London base (1960); the National Theatre had been founded (1963); Joan Littlewood's politically-inspired Theatre Workshop had garnered mainstream success (latterly, *Oh, What a Lovely War!*, 1963); and the Court's foreground position

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[412] Seago, p. 9
[413] Mellor, p. 31
[414] *The Goon Show* was a British radio comedy programme, known for its seminal brand of surreal and absurd humour, that was broadcast by the BBC from 1951 to 1960. According to Sykes (2011, p. 29), the teenage Hockney would impersonate the show's character of Henry Crun for the amusement of his peers

as a non-commercial platform for cutting-edge new writing was being threatened by the rapid growth of London's 'fringe' theatre (an often-political, low budget alternative to commercial, mainstream production). Indeed, it was partly in response to the growth of 'the fringe' that the Royal Court would open its secondary venue, the Theatre Upstairs, in 1969.[415]

This rival emergence was a plausible factor in the decision to stage *Ubu Roi*. The only productions of this particular play to have otherwise been presented in Britain were by London's Irving Theatre in 1952 and Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre in 1963. That *Ubu Roi* had featured in the inaugural season of the Traverse - the venue which had arguably given 'the fringe' its moniker - prompts my suggestion that this Royal Court production was intended to draw the new 'alternative' audience. The play's French origins also engaged with the trend for presenting translations of works by foreign writers (this was established Court policy, with Sartre's *Nekrassov* and Ionesco's *The Chairs* staged as early as 1957).

Moreover, founding director George Devine had died in January 1966; and his successor, William Gaskill, was facing funding and financial challenges and censorship battles with the Lord Chamberlain (the official who, since the Theatres Act of 1843, had absolute authority to determine what could be publicly staged in Britain).[416] A way to circumvent the censorship was to operate as a private club (the Irving and Traverse theatres, which had given the first productions of *Ubu Roi* in Britain, did so by functioning in this way), although a potential complication for the Royal Court was that Arts Council funding - which the venue received - was subject to its status as a public theatre.[417] The Court did stage Osborne's *A Patriot for Me* (1964) and Bond's *Saved* (1965) as a 'private club' rather than compromise those plays through imposed script changes, but was prosecuted for not effectively enforcing the membership rule of entrance (the ensuing legal case contributed to the implementation of the Theatres Act of 1968 and its abolition of pre-

[415] Bolar, p. 166
[416] Browne, pp. 62, 74-6
[417] Ibid., p. 68

performance censorship).[418] Hence, the Royal Court, at the time of *Ubu Roi*, was widely perceived as an anti-establishment hothouse. The censor's power was also still in force, evidence of which includes correspondence to the Court from the Lord Chamberlain's office concerning the play's translation by Cuthbertson. Certain terms would be prohibited - 'Pinky Boy' and 'Dribblecock' amongst them - and 'shikker' was proposed as a substitute for 'merdre'.[419] It was against this backdrop that Hockney was hired.

The artist's engagement was proposed by William Gaskill ('Hockney was brought in while I was running the theatre; it was my idea. I think I had kind of Diaghilev ambitions at that time'); but he did not elaborate on why he felt the painter would be suitable for the task.[420] I have found no evidence that Hockney was acquainted with either Gaskill (who hailed from neighbouring Shipley) or the play's director Iain Cuthbertson prior to the 'Ubu' project; and his friendship with Royal Court director (and fellow West Yorkshireman) Tony Richardson evolved *from* the 'Ubu' engagement, not the reverse.[421]

Hockney's potential to draw attention to the play was a plausible motive for his inclusion, particularly as, for reasons of finance, the Royal Court had changed from a repertory system to a series of 'straight runs', and it was deemed essential to include celebrities wherever possible.[422] His contribution would indeed attract greater media attention than would ordinarily be the case, and it is noteworthy that both Cuthbertson and Gaskill made specific reference to his participation in their attempts to lure others into the project. A surviving letter from Gaskill to Lord Snowdon, for example, requesting him to photograph the production, makes persuasive mention of the fact that Hockney was the designer.[423] Thus, Hockney's appointment hinged in part on his emergent

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[418] Ibid., pp. 61-71
[419] Correspondence from Lord Chamberlain's office to Helen Montagu (General Manager), *Ubu Roi* production management file, ref. GB 71 THM/273/4/1/32, English Stage Company archive
[420] Gaskill quoted by Doty and Harbin, p. 191
[421] Sykes, 2011, pp. 175, 204-5
[422] Browne, pp. 74-6
[423] William Gaskill, letter to Lord Snowdon, 8 July 1966, *Ubu Roi* production management file, ref. GB 71 THM/273/4/1/32, English Stage Company archive

*avant garde* persona in Gaskill's 'time of trend'. It was also in keeping with the Royal Court's policy to transcend 'legitimate' borders: an agenda that applied even to casting, with the music hall comedian Max Wall assuming the role of Ubu.[424] Arguably the most significant pointers, however, to the selection of the artist as designer rest in the synopsis of a surviving playbill:

> UBU ROI is an outrageous and impudent play. Ubu and his wife are the modern Punch and Judy: they personify the grossness of the bourgeois, seen through the eyes of a child.[425]

Hockney's creativity bore all the traits - outrageousness, impudence, naivety and humour - that this new interpretation of Jarry's play demanded.

### 3.6. Collaborative issues and the visual artist as designer

Whilst the artist's innovation seemingly accorded with the Royal Court vision, the cooperative nature of theatre prompts our consideration of the extent to which his design was independently realised or impacted by the collaboration. It is clear from a letter concerning the translation that Cuthbertson was keen to amalgamate production elements, explaining his intention to 'make the design, with music and the text as far as possible a unity of style'.[426] His intimation of a creative evolution ('during the course of rehearsals we shall want to keep the text under constant revision') further infers a pooling of ideas.[427] Wall's long career as a variety artist and Cuthbertson's own experience of directing 'panto' would have surely impacted the resulting performance which, according to Beaumont, 'was conceived in terms of a cross between children's pantomime and music hall comedy'.[428] Hockney's childhood experience of these genres also informed, as previously noted, the visual humour of his design.[429] Collaborative influences on his concept and creativity for *Ubu Roi* have, however, been largely indiscernible, for which I propose the following explanations.

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[424] Findlater, '1965-1969', in *At the Royal Court: 25 years of the English Stage Company,* Findlater, p. 101
[425] Playbill for *Ubu Roi*, July 1966, *Ubu Roi* production management file, ref. GB 71 THM/273/4/1/32, English Stage Company archive
[426] Iain Cuthbertson, letter to Deborah Rogers, *Ubu Roi* production management file, ref. GB 71 THM/273/4/1/32, English Stage Company archive
[427] Ibid.
[428] Beaumont, K., p. 70
[429] Roberts, p. 20

Firstly, Hockney had devised the sets - in the form of simple drawings, which were then transformed by technicians into the scenery - prior to the rehearsal period. This commenced on 6th June 1966 and, before the end of that month, he would depart to fulfil a teaching obligation at the University of California, only returning to attend the play's opening on 21st July.[430] Hence, there was limited scope for collaborative interaction (certainly less than in his subsequent opera ventures) and scant opportunity for ongoing changes. Rather, it appears that he was given 'free rein'; and although this was his first theatre undertaking and despite his initial reluctance ('When I was asked to do it, I remember I put up a little resistance, saying I didn't think I could...'), it was the artist's creativity that would set the direction for the entire production.[431] As Baro observed:

> Hockney's designs are a full visual interpretation of Jarry's play. They consult the author's ideas for staging, of course, and they are made in co-operation with the English Stage Society [sic] management; but they are not - as most stage designs are - mere conveniences for the exploitation of the text. With these designs, what we see and how we see are so closely controlled as to effect the whole meaning of the presentation. In a sense, the designs compel the director and the actors along certain courses.[432]

A further reason for the lack of collaborative input was that *Ubu Roi* was Iain Cuthbertson's directorial debut at the Royal Court. William Gaskill, who had offered him the position, later conceded that he had been ill-suited to the role, being 'rather overawed [...] by the set up' and 'very nervous of the intellectuals of the Court' to the point that he delayed directing a play (*Ubu Roi*) till nearly the end of the first season.[433] Indeed, Gaskill acknowledged that:

> All of the ideas about the production were really [Hockney's] ideas. They weren't the director's ideas. He would say [imitating Hockney's Bradford accent], 'We'll have this thing - that says 'Royal Palace', and p'haps the 'ace'

[430] Iain Cuthbertson, letter to Max Wall, *Ubu Roi* production management file, ref. GB 71 THM/273/4/1/32, English Stage Company archive; Sykes, 2011, pp. 177, 182
[431] Webb, p. 76; Hockney, 1976, p. 103
[432] Baro, p. 13. N.b. the English Stage Society was the original short-lived title (July - October 1954) of the English Stage Company
[433] William Gaskill, *A Sense of Direction* (London: Faber & Faber, 1988), p. 65

> can fall off after the battle and it will say 'Royal Pal'.' He was kind of naive, and when he first saw the scene he said, 'Oh, they have reproduced my brush strokes exactly, only it's much bigger, isn't it? I didn't mean it to be like that a'tall. I just meant it to be kind of white, you know'.[434]

Gaskill's observation, besides recognising Hockney's substantial creative contribution, also sheds light on his theatrical inexperience, a factor freely acknowledged by the artist:

> I agreed to do it without knowing how to do it. I made drawings. I took each scene and made a drawing of it. They worked from those. The concept was basically very simple: little painted backdrops. much smaller than the stage. They were like big paintings, about twelve feet by eight feet. They dropped down with big ropes on them, like a joke toy theatre, and on one of them there was a big rope falling down the side on to the stage. I said Why have you put that there? And they said It's in the drawing. And in the drawing I'd drawn a line like that and then corrected it to draw the straight edge. My God, they're just so literal, I couldn't believe it. But then I realized that's how scene painters work; they just copy exactly what you do.[435]

That Gaskill recounted the same occurrence in his autobiography implies that this was an uncommon issue, and serves to illustrate the mutual challenges of collaborations between theatre companies and visual artists with no working background in stage design.[436]

A modification to one of Hockney's earliest drawings for the play further reveals his inexperience of stagecraft: his sketch *Ubu Getting Rid of the Nobles* (*fig. 133*) depicts the action from an unorthodox sideways perspective which would have obliged the lead actor to have sat in profile to the audience, whereas the set was eventually realised with Ubu's throne, more conventionally, facing downstage (*fig. 134*). Additional disparities exist between the ideas expressed in preliminary sketches for *Ubu Roi* and the final realisation. The original drawing for Bordure's prison shows a two-dimensional set of bars, suspended on ropes, which was quite dissimilar to the ultimately-

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[434] Gaskill quoted by Doty and Harbin, p. 191
[435] Hockney, 1976, p. 103
[436] Gaskill, p. 75

fabricated giant 'birdcage' (*figs. 135-6*); and I have found no production evidence of the tailcoat depicted in *Ubu with Orchestra* (*fig. 137*) or of the *Battle Machine* (*fig. 138*). This was a property in two parts, with illustrated ranks of interior figures depicted in profile, suggestive of both the mythical Trojan Horse and Hockney's earlier painting *A Grand Procession of Dignitaries in the Semi-Egyptian Style*. The preliminary depiction shows each section, shaped to connect together, being physically wheeled across the stage, as if opposing sides to be locked in battle. Yet neither Hockney nor the actor Jack Shepherd have been able to recall this property in their respective conversations with me, and it is possible that, for whatever reason, this idea never reached fruition.[437]

Several further issues highlight the artist's inexperience of practical theatre. Firstly, it is clear that Hockney's costumes, whilst visually innovative, were not designed from a practical standpoint, actor Kenneth Cranham recalling that 'some of the costumes [...] were like sandwich boards, they were made of wood, and they were terribly hard to do anything in. They cut into your thighs and hurt you' (*figs. 1, 102*).[438] Moreover, I have found no evidence that the artist considered the nature of the performance space in conjunction with his concepts (the Royal Court stage, with its limited wing space yet abundance of height, was fortunately well-suited to the drop-down method of scenery).[439] The illumination of the sets was also seemingly handled post-installation by the theatre's lighting designer (the late Robert Ornbo) rather than as an inherent consideration. This supposition is supported by Hockney's admission that a subsequent painting, *The Room, Tarzana* (1967), was 'the first picture in which I'd taken any notice of light, shadows. [...] I remember being struck by it as I was painting it; real light; this is the first time I'm taking any notice of shadows and light'.[440] As Hockney's theatre involvement progressed, he would increasingly consider illumination as an integral part of his design, a

[437] Author's interview with Hockney; author's interview with actor Jack Shepherd, 12 May 2018
[438] Cranham quoted by Ruth Little and Emily McLaughlin, *The Royal Court Theatre Inside Out* (London: Oberon Books, 2007), p. 99
[439] Webb, p. 75
[440] Hockney, 1976, p. 124

practice which culminated in his elaborate use of 'Vari-lites' for *Tristan und Isolde* (1987).[441] That he did not do this in his engagement with *Ubu Roi* is an indication of his stage inexperience at the time. He did, however, bring to his first production a painterly vision that drew not only on his background as a visual artist but on his knowledge of the creativity of others.

### 3.7. Connections with the work of other artists and interpreters

Hockney would have certainly been mindful of Jarry's conception when embarking on his own design, as contextual information has been included in many publications of the text. Biographer Webb has claimed that he was 'well aware of the Absurdist background to the play' and the artist has personally stated that, when approached, he was already familiar with Jarry and had read the work but 'didn't really remember too much about it'.[442] This admission implies, however, that he had not seen an actual performance. Hockney was nonetheless an avid theatre-goer in the 1960s, and two plays specifically referenced as having been viewed by him were *Waiting for Godot* and *Under Milk Wood*.[443] As the Royal Court had produced the former in December 1964 (a period when Hockney was briefly resident in London), this version may well have been witnessed by the artist and could have informed his approach to *Ubu Roi*.[444] It is certainly pertinent that he was familiar with Beckett's masterpiece, bearing in mind that its Absurdist nature, minimal scenery, and costumes (bowler hats) cross-functioning as props directly engage with Jarry's notorious play.

Some notable productions of *Ubu Roi* had also been staged prior to Hockney's commission and these would have been likely subjects for his investigation. Actor Firmin Gémier, who had originally played the title role, had produced, designed (in collaboration) and again starred in a revised version in Paris in 1908, abandoning the stipulated face mask in favour of fake flabby

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[441] 'Vari-lite' is the brand name of a system of automated stage lighting. Introduced in the 1980s, it afforded the innovation of colour transitions without gel changes
[442] Webb, p. 75; Hockney, 1976, p. 103
[443] Sykes, 2011, p. 175
[444] The 1964 Royal Court production of *Waiting fror Godot* was designed by Timothy O'Brien and directed by Antony Page, under the auspices of author Samuel Beckett

cheeks and a bald head (*fig. 139*). In this revival Mère Ubu was played by a man and Bougrelas by a woman, and the scenery - described by Beaumont as 'a backdrop painted according to a child's conventions, with doll's house, geometrically regular lawns and neatly conical trees, and a vaguely Slavonic palace in the background' - was rendered in an almost caricature style, yet lacking the deliberate incoherence of the original.[445] Jean Vilar's Paris production of 1958, designed by Jacques Lagrange, employed a bare stage except for a stepped platform, and schematic props that included a giant wooden horse. It also saw Ubu sporting a green bowler hat and a *gidouille*-emblazoned orange 'balloon' (*fig. 140*) which violently clashed with his wife's striped dress.[446] Michael Meschke's award-winning version (Stockholm, 1964) fused live actors, puppet-like figures, two-dimensional cut-outs and cartoonish line drawings in a surreal, monochrome design by Franciszka Themerson (*fig. 141*); and a similar juxtaposition of live actors and animated drawings - combined with technical effects such as photo-montage - was powerfully realised for black-and-white television by Jean-Christophe Averty in 1965 (*fig. 142*).[447]

Elements from these productions would find their way into Hockney's designs. His stylised backdrop, renunciation of masks and cross-gender costuming shared obvious parallels with Gémier's interpretation; whilst his costume for Ubu (the bright 'balloon' garb complete with *gidouille*, striped trousers and green bowler hat) was remarkably similar to that of Lagrange. The blend of real and cartoon elements connected with the versions of both Themerson and Averty, Hockney's final scene (a childlike depiction of a ship with 'sea' scrawled beneath it) clearly engaging with the paper boat and 'Mer'-inscribed waves of Averty's film for French television.[448] This prompts my suggestion that the artist was aware of - and may have been inspired by - these earlier renditions.

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[445] Beaumont, K., p. 64
[446] Ibid., p. 67
[447] 'Ubu Roi', dir. by Jean-Christophe Averty (1965), *ubu.com* <http://www.ubu.com/film/jarry_ubu-averty.html> [accessed 30 November 2017]
[448] Beaumont, K., p. 70

Beyond the realms of performance, many visual artists have chosen to interpret Jarry's monstrous title character, including Pablo Picasso (six 'Ubu' sketches, 1905), Max Ernst (*Ubu Imperator*, 1923), Georges Rouault (*Réincarnations de Père Ubu*, 1932) and Dora Maar (*Père Ubu*, 1936). In 1937, Ernst designed the set and costumes for a production of *Ubu enchaîné* at the Comédie des Champs Élysées in Paris, with an accompanying programme that featured 'Ubu' drawings by Picasso, Joan Miró, Yves Tanguy and René Magritte. Miró also created three series of illustrated texts based on the character (*Suites pour Ubu Roi*, 1966; *Ubu aux Baléares,* 1971; *L'Enfance d'Ubu*, 1975).

It is notable that these artists all rendered Ubu as a caricature (Maar's photographic interpretation, whilst of a real armadillo, is nonetheless a caricature in its representation of a human). Hockney's cartoon treatment thus strongly adhered to this pictorial tradition of outrageous exaggeration. In its childlike, stylised forms and vibrant colours, it also connected with Miró's series of lithographs *Suites pour Ubu Roi* (*fig. 143*) of the same year, of which the vivid hues and their containment within shapes delineated by overlapping outlines are somewhat reminiscent of a child's colouring book. Hockney's flat patches of bold colour with their distinctly defined edges further engaged with the Japanese-influenced simplicity of the Nabis who collaborated on Jarry's original backdrop. Sérusier's *Portrait de Paul Ranson* (1890) and Vuillard's *Le rideau jaune* (1893) exemplify this connection. Moreover, the use of commonplace and inexpensive objects to represent status-defining items (the toilet brush 'sceptre', a plastic tiara) clearly drew on the concepts of both Jarry and the Dadaists, the lavatory referencing Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917).

I nonetheless propose that, whilst connections can certainly be made between Hockney's notions for this play and the works of earlier artists, the key to his interpretation lies in the professed intention 'to find a contemporary equivalent to Jarry's visual idiom'.[449] His design mirrored facets of 1960s' visual art, with its minimalism and deliberate banality evoking *Arte povera*; and its

[449] Cuthbertson, p. 55

exaggerated colour, simple lines and comic book allusions suggestive of the Pop Art with which the artist himself had become associated (although his nostalgic, childlike execution notably eschewed the modern precision of Lichtenstein's benday-dotted canvases). His juxtaposition of absurdly incongruous elements implied the use - or illusion - of collage: a Pop Art characteristic illustrated by R. B. Kitaj's *The Ohio Gang* (1964) and the cover design by Peter Blake and Jann Haworth for the album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967). His concept of 'a stage within a stage' engaged with the metapictures of both Blake (*On the Balcony*, 1955-7) and Richard Hamilton (*My Marilyn*, 1965); and the amalgamation of explanatory text aligned with Pop Art's textual inclusions, of which Blake's *Tuesday* (1961) and *Beach Boys* (1964) offer notable paradigms in their insertion of the title within the artwork.

The cross-dressing nature of Mère Ubu's characterisation accorded with the theme of gender duality in the works of Allen Jones *(Man Woman*, 1963); whilst the 'exposed' breasts superimposed on the character's dress bore strong affiliations with two items of recently-executed imagery, of which Hockney was possibly aware: the garb of the central figure in his friend Kitaj's afore-mentioned 'Ohio Gang' (*fig. 144*); and a costume design by Tadeusz Kantor for Eugène Ionesco's absurdist play *Rhinoceros* (Warsaw and Krakow, 1961; *fig. 145*).[450]

Moreover, and beyond its Duchamp associations, Ubu's lavatory suggested the left-hand image of Francis Bacon's triptych, *Three Figures in a Room* (1964, *fig. 146*). As previously noted, several of Hockney's preceding paintings had been clearly informed by the creativity of Bacon. *The Second Tea Painting* (1961) had included a human figure that Hockney acknowledged was based on those of his contemporary; and *Tea Painting in an Illusionistic Style* (*fig. 84*) had likewise featured a male nude, seated in the manner of

[450] It is worthy of mention that the conical bosoms of Allen Jones' fetishist depictions - which might also be seen to engage with this particular costume feature - had not yet emerged within Jones' creativity

Bacon's models, as if on a toilet.[451] The pink rear wall of *California Art Collector* (*fig. 30*) had engaged with Bacon's garish backgrounds of the preceding year, including *Lying Figure with Hypodermic Syringe* and *Portrait of Henrietta Moraes*; and the curving dais and heavy shadow of Hockney's *Portrait Surrounded by Artistic Devices* (*fig. 75*) had referenced those distinctive features in the work of the older artist, including *Study of George Dyer in a Mirror* (1963). It is thus plausible that Ubu's lavatory - conceived in a period when Hockney was clearly inspired by Bacon's work - was to some extent impelled by the triptych in question. Bacon's spatial demarcations in the form of visible geometrical markings within his paintings may have also had some bearing on Hockney's clearly delineated performance spaces (the 'stage within a stage').

The designs by Niki de Saint Phalle for the ballet *L'Éloge de la Folie* (1966) also warrant comparison. Saint Phalle had created selected scenes of this work (other aspects were undertaken by Jean Tinguely and Martial Raysse) and her contribution shared many parallels with Hockney's concept for *Ubu Roi*. Blocks of Pop Art colour and heavy contour lines prevailed, and real and cartoon elements were fused through giant 'nana' sculptures and foam rubber figurines with which the *artistes* danced (*fig. 147*). The boldly painted lines of these figures implied two-dimensionality, thus anticipating Hockney's 'drawn' edges (notably the bench seats) at the Royal Court, and their target-like breasts bore a visual similarity to those of Mère Ubu. Saint Phalle's design is particularly significant because it was staged in Paris in March 1966, and so coincided with the preparations *for Ubu Roi* (which opened on 21st July). Moreover, the ballet was produced by French choreographer Roland Petit, who is known to have met with Hockney around this time regarding a potential collaboration, so the artist would have surely been aware of this production.[452] A later costume design by Hockney for *Parade* (introducing the gender-reversal theme of *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, staged within the same triple bill), would also indicate Saint Phalle's figurines in its inclusion of bold stripes, short underskirted dress and rounded breasts of different colours (*fig. 148*).

[451] Hockney, 1976, p. 64
[452] Roland Petit*, J'ai dansé sur les flots* (Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle, 1993), pp. 17-18

### 3.8. Post-premiere

Cuthbertson's stated intention to find 'a contemporary equivalent to Jarry's visual idiom' that 'would have the same kind of original impact Jarry aimed at' demands consideration, for it raises questions as to whether modern interpretations can and should express the same aims as the original creation and whether they can achieve a comparable effect.[453] Theatre is of its time and I argue that to have staged this play in London in 1966 in the manner in which Jarry envisioned was unlikely to have produced a satisfactory outcome. The Irving Theatre, which had presented the play (performed by the East and West Drama Society) in December 1952, seemingly endeavoured to do this, with the actors in masks, behaving as marionettes, and the producer (William Jay) introducing the work as Jarry had done.[454] Lance Mekeel, in his PhD thesis of 2013, determined that:

> the Irving Theatre production attempted to recreate the Oeuvre production of 1896 as a museum piece. The production was tame, with its collection of expletives and grotesqueries merely annoying, rather than truly affecting an imaginative or emotional response in the reviewer.[455]

Mekeel had found evidence of a single review (*The Times*, 30th December 1952), in which the events were described as 'faintly humorous' but 'too detached to be unbearably disturbing'.[456] I have located a further review by *The Stage* (1st January 1953) which voiced bored confusion rather than outrage:

> As one nonsensical scene follows another, it becomes almost impossible to decide what the author intended to convey. Action and dialogue alike are too commonplace to provoke fear, pity or laughter, leaving behind nothing more than an uneasy suspicion that the whole sad spectacle is a hoax.[457]

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[453] Cuthbertson, p. 55
[454] Lance Mekeel, 'From Irreverent to Revered: how Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi* and the 'U-effect' changed theatre history' (unpublished PhD dissertation, Graduate College of Bowling Green State University, Ohio, 2013), p. 174
[455] Ibid., p. 175
[456] Ibid., pp. 174-5
[457] 'The Irving: 'Ubu Roi'', *The Stage*, 1 Jan 1953 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001179/19530101/129/0019> [accessed 5 December 2017]

Thus, the re-creation of a play that had sparked a riot in the *belle époque* provoked barely a yawn in 1950s' Soho. In the light of this, the Royal Court's decision to take a different tack - a jolly celebration of the whacky and outrageous, flying in the face of mainstream conservatism - seems justifiable, and particularly as the productions of Meschke (1964) and Averty (1965) had recently tapped a darker vein.

Moreover, if one considers the nature of theatre in London at the time of this interpretation, it was daringly different, both in relation to Royal Court artistic policy and to contemporary productions within the broader spectrum. As actor Jack Shepherd (Mère Ubu) has emphasised, this outlandish rendition was stylistically and thematically opposed to the gritty realism of the 'kitchen sink' style of drama with which the Court had become synonymous.[458] It was also removed from the glut of musicals and revivals that concurrently dominated the West End. Some of these were Broadway imports (notably *Funny Girl* and *Hello Dolly*), yet many were British creations on domestic themes: foxhunting (*Jorrocks*), the theft of GCE examination papers (*On the Level*), and dissent in a Bryant & May match factory (a plot duplicated in *The Matchgirls* and *Strike A Light*). Nostalgic tributes to the clown Grimaldi and escapologist Houdini (*Joey Joey* and *Man of Magic*) afforded visual spectacle with circus performers and scenic effects respectively; but all of these shows were conventionally presented and none embraced the modernity of concurrent art or culture. Contemporary visual art forms, whether abstract expressionism or Pop Art, had simply not traversed from the gallery to the established London stage. Yet Hockney had extracted the fundamental elements of an avant-garde style and applied them to a play, effectively creating 'Pop Theatre'. In successive years, the musicals *Hair* (1967) and *Godspell* (1970) would integrate the psychedelic imagery of the late 1960s; but *Ubu Roi* was their forerunner.

This prompts the question, to what extent did Hockney's interpretation inform subsequent productions of the play? Numerous versions have since been

[458] Author's interview with Shepherd

staged around the globe, particularly in the late 1960s and 1970s, when student groups adopted the work for political protest.[459] Whilst many employed caricature, the other memorable features of Hockney's design - his Pop Art colouring and 'play within a play' staging - have been absent from all renditions that have come to the fore. The most internationally salient productions have, instead, applied opposing concepts. The Phénoménal Théâtre (Paris, 1970-1) used a scatalogical colour scheme on a thrust stage, with scaffolding and ladders encircling the audience; Peter Brook's seminal *théâtre brut* rendition (Paris, 1977; London, 1978; and globally) featured no setting, deliberately drab costumes and multi-functional props (giant cable reels, bricks and tubing); whilst that of Antoine Vitez (Paris, 1985) employed a *bourgeois* living-room set, entirely decorated white, which became progressively littered and bespattered. Of Hockney's original elements, the lavatory is the sole feature to have clearly manifested itself in subsequent productions, variants having featured in at least three different versions: by A Noise Within Theatre Company (Pasadena, 2006), Paravan Theatre (Nicosia, 2008) and Théâtre de la Place des Martyrs (Brussels, 2015). It is, of course, possible that the creators of these post-Millennium renderings were unaware of the Royal Court's much earlier staging.

In terms of Hockney's legacy, and despite Gaskill's positive reaction to his contribution ('it has completely removed my fear of working with an artist outside the theatre'), it is notable that successive seasons saw no further visual artists employed as designers at the Royal Court.[460] The single exception was Patrick Procktor, and his designs for *Twelfth Night* and *Total Eclipse* (both in 1968) echoed Hockney's vibrant colours, with the proscenium coated 'buttercup yellow' for the former and - together with the back wall - pink for the latter.[461] Yet beyond these instances of Procktor's use of colour (which were as much a feature of his own creative expression as that of his

[459] Beaumont, K., p. 74
[460] William Gaskill, letter to David Hockney, 25 July 1966, *Ubu Roi* production management file, ref. GB 71 THM/273/4/1/32, English Stage Company archive
[461] Patrick Procktor, *Self-Portrait* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1991), p. 115; Harriet Devine, *Looking Back* (London: Faber & Faber, 2006), p. 141

predecessor), no subsequent productions by this avant-garde theatre have directly deferred to Hockney's innovations.

His Royal Court engagement can, however, be seen to have informed all areas of his personal creativity. In terms of his subsequent theatre undertakings, the large portable letters clearly anticipated the giant alphabet blocks of his designs for *Parade*; the vivid hues and childlike execution predicted *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*; the stylised row of flames were recreated in his 'Magic Flute' (*figs. 134, 275*); and the comic-book props and casual attire (tee-shirts and sportswear) fed into *Paid on Both Sides*. The sandwich boards found counterparts in his two-dimensional models for the *Hockney Paints the Stage* exhibition of 1983. Moreover, in the studio, the garishness of this play design was a catalyst for the boldness and vibrancy of the Hollywood scenes which followed, including *Beverly Hills Housewife* (*fig. 32*), which was the first major painting to be created in its wake. The shocking pinks of *Ubu Roi* were transferred to the model's attire, whilst the lurid green grass re-emerged as the foreground lawn. Such unnaturally vivid hues did, of course, contribute a sense of artifice, both on canvas and on the stage.

I propose that Hockney's work on the play, devising 'paintings' on a greater scale than his studio canvases, and with real actors integrated within the scenes, also informed his subsequent creations in terms of dimension, theme and composition. *Beverly Hills Housewife*, measuring 1.8m x 3.6m (6' x 12'), was almost as large as his *Ubu Roi* backdrops - which were 2.4m x 3.6m (8' x 12') - and marked a noticeable shift towards theatrical-sized canvases. His largest paintings of the previous two years (notably *California Art Collector*, *Atlantic Crossing* and *Portrait Surrounded by Artistic Devices*) had a length or height of 1.8m (6'), yet the largest of his post-'Ubu' paintings (including *A Bigger Splash*; *The Room, Tarzana*; and *The Room, Manchester Street*, all of 1967) were at least 2.4m (8') wide or tall. His ensuing double portraits were on a particularly imposing scale, each approximately 2.1m x 3.0m (7' x 10'), prompting my suggestion that their almost-theatrical size was informed by the

artist's practical experience of creating imagery with real-life actors against a depicted backdrop.[462]

It is significant that following this venture and its inherent engagement with human animation, Hockney again looked to the human figure for inspiration. Moreover, his interest in depicting identifiable people - as opposed to invented or anonymous subjects - and situating them in staged settings is evident only in his studio creativity after *Ubu Roi*. His portrait of Betty Freeman (*Beverly Hills Housewife*) is a case in point. It features a real individual as the subject, framed as if performing on a stage, the action seemingly frozen like a snapshot. That Hockney based this portrait on a series of black and white photographs, yet took considerable licence with its compositional details, further connects with the theatrical blending of real and invented elements with which he had engaged in his drama undertaking.

This was the first of a series of large, theatrically-staged portaits of real people which evolved from photographic studies, yet with the subjects transposed to a partially-invented or totally different setting.[463] *Peter Getting Out of Nick's Pool* (1966) was based on a photo of the model leaning forward against a car as opposed to a poolside; and the giant sofa of *Henry Geldzahler and Christopher Scott* (*fig. 29*) was shot before a pair of closed doors and not the resultant window with a view.[464] Photographs were routinely used as working aids to Hockney's paintings of this period, yet he has acknowledged that the camera omits weight and volume, creating 'a flatness' (and thus, a two-dimensional 'non-reality').[465] Hence, whilst his spontaneous drawings tended to conform to a 'naturalistic' style, his major canvases displayed a sense of staging, temporal freezing and flatness, by which the naturalism was countered. Moreover, in his double portraits, the models were strangely distanced from each other in their own clearly-delineated space, thus

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[462] Hockney's notable double portraits include *American Collectors (Fred and Marcia Weisman)*, 1968; *Christopher Isherwood and Don Bacardy*, 1968; *Henry Geldzahler and Christopher Scott*, 1969; *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy*, 1970-1; *Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)*, 1972
[463] Livingstone, p. 94-5
[464] Ibid., pp. 97-8, 114-5
[465] Ibid., p. 88

continuing the spatial demarcation of *Ubu Roi*'s physical frames. In the light of these observations, I reiterate my disagreement with Livingstone's claim that Hockney's exaggerated and anti-naturalistic treatment of this play was 'at odds with the development of the rest of his work at that time'.[466] Although ostensibly it may seem that his stage designs and studio explorations were pulling in different directions, I argue that the opposite actually applied. Each fed into the other and his theatre involvement motivated new trajectories in his struggle to find a non-naturalistic means of figuration.

### 3.9. Correlations with *Paid on Both Sides* (1983)

Hockney's design for *Ubu Roi* was, for the most part, a critical success and he claimed to have enjoyed his Royal Court experience ('It was fun doing it'), so it is perhaps surprising that he did not undertake another theatre project in its aftermath.[467] In part, this was because he returned to California; in part, because he wished to concentrate on his own artwork ('I just want to spend some months painting'); and, in part, according to the artist, simply because no-one asked him.[468] The latter is not strictly true, as correspondence to Hockney from Gaskill reveals. In a letter dated 25th July 1966, the artistic director thanked and complimented Hockney on his contribution to *Ubu Roi*, concluding:

> I would love you to design another show for us, preferably not such a way-out play because I would love to see the invention and stimulus you would bring to a Restoration Comedy for instance. [...] in fact I would love to work with you myself. I know you are going to be away for some months but let me know if this idea interests you and we could start thinking about it for the future.[469]

Hockney did not follow up on Gaskill's offer and almost nine years would pass before he again engaged in theatre creativity (*Septentrion* and *The Rake's Progress*, staged in 1975, May and June respectively). In May 1983, however, the cartoon imagery would re-emerge in his only other design for a play: W. H.

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[466] Ibid., p. 92
[467] Hockney, 1976, p. 103
[468] 'Heading to Hollywood', *Kensington Post*, 29 July 1966; author's interview with Hockney
[469] William Gaskill, letter to David Hockney, 25 July 1966, *Ubu Roi* production management file, ref. GB 71 THM/273/4/1/32, English Stage Company archive

Auden's *Paid on Both Sides* (1928, first publ. 1930), produced by Eye and Ear Theater in New York.

This creation is the least documented of Hockney's projects for the stage. It is unmentioned by his official website and that of his foundation, and in biographies and other literature concerning the artist beyond a brief acknowledgement in Friedman's closing paragraph.[470] A low-budget production, performed in St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery, it may be deemed a strange choice of assignment for a man who had recently completed a set for the Royal Ballet at the New York Metropolitan Opera.[471] His involvement ostensibly hinged on the project's connection, like the preceding ballet, with the 'Britain Salutes New York Festival' of 1983; and the policy of the Eye and Ear company, co-founded by Ada Katz (wife of artist Alex Katz), which 'sought to encourage artistic collaboration through Off Broadway productions of plays written by poets with sets and costumes designed by painters and sculptors'.[472] It transpires, however, that Hockney never wished to undertake the assignment and was coerced into it by Alex Katz (with whom he was acquainted) after Katz had seen his work on *Parade* at the New York 'Met'. As he vehemently explained to me:

> I must tell you this. [*Paid on Both Sides*] was done almost under protest. I tried to get out of it, but he [Katz] wouldn't let me. [...] Where it was done - and they only did three performances or something - it wasn't really theatre to me. I should have said 'no', but in those days it was a bit difficult for me to say 'no'.[473]

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[470] Friedman, p. 243

[471] Total estimated expenses for this production were $53,410, of which $10,000 was for set construction and $2,400 for costuming (a possible over-estimation, considering the company's minimalist approach). Hockney's personal fee was $1,000 (the same as accorded to the play's director). The maximum revenue for twelve performances in the 300-seat venue was anticipated to be less than $30,160. 'Budget Summary - *Paid on Both Sides*', Box 2, folder 25, subseries G, series II, Eye and Ear Theater Archive 1965-1996 (Bulk 1980-1988) MSS 195, The Fales Library & Special Collections, New York University, New York

[472] 'Historical Note', 'Guide to the Eye and Ear Theater Archive 1965-1996 (Bulk 1980-1988)', MSS 195, *The Fales Library & Special Collections* <http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/fales/eyeandear/eyeandear.html> [accessed 18 June 2016]

[473] Author's interview with Hockney

Beyond elucidating the circumstances of his involvement, Hockney's disclosure highlights two issues of pertinence to this thesis: that he has been vulnerable to pressure for creative favours (as substantiated by Sykes' description of the demands on his time, 'caused by his inability to say no'); and that he does not regard small-scale performances in non-traditional venues as 'theatre' *per se*.[474] The latter observation also supports my theory that he was little interested in the 'happenings' and 'performance art' that attracted artists such as Claes Oldenburg, Allan Kaprow and Judy Chicago in the 1960s.[475]

Nonetheless, Hockney's keen literary interests, his personal acquaintance with W. H. Auden (he had met and depicted the writer in 1968), and their mutual friendships with Christopher Isherwood and Stephen Spender bear relevance to his participation; likewise, that Auden had co-written the libretto to *The Rake's Progress*, for which Hockney had designed the Glyndebourne production of 1975. The artist admired Auden's talent, regularly quoting his *Letter to Lord Byron* (1937); and the two creators had a shared interest in the technical aspects of their respective crafts, in exploring across media and adapting to new forms.[476] Moreover, Auden had been drawn to 1920s' Berlin for the same reason that Hockney was attracted to 1960s' L.A.: namely, its liberal homosexual scene (Poger: 'Both poets [Auden and Isherwood] wanted to cruise the boy bars in Berlin in an atmosphere of accessibility which was impossible in strait-laced London').[477] Auden's play, written in the spring of 1928 and revised in the winter during his Berlin residence, reveals the influence of German Expressionism, the jazz-infused cabarets and Brechtian

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[474] Sykes, 2011, pp. 72-3
[475] Such events have been documented by Cécile Whiting in chapter 5 ('L.A. Happenings and Performance Art'), in *Pop L.A.: Art and the City in the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 167-201
[476] Hockney, 1976, p. 195; Roger Kimball, introduction to 'Four Early Poems of W. H. Auden', *The New Criterion*, Vol. 12 (10), p. 32; Christopher Innes, 'Auden's plays and dramatic writings: theatre, film and opera', in *The Cambridge Companion to W. H. Auden,* ed. by Stan Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 82
[477] Sydney Poger, 'Berlin and the Two Versions of W.H. Auden's 'Paid on Both Sides'', *Ariel,* 17, April 1986, p. 19 <https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/ariel/article/download/32945/26994> [accessed 14 June 2016]

style of drama associated with that city.[478] Like *Ubu Roi*, it presents a dark parody, a blend of violence and farce, its elements serving to stress its own artifice. It thus engages both with Jarry's play and Hockney's designs for that play. Indeed, a connective triangle can be drawn between the endeavours of Jarry (1873 - 1907), Auden (1907 - 1973) and the artist, which underpins this New York production.

As *Ubu Roi* can be seen to parody Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, so *Paid on Both Sides* draws on *Romeo and Juliet* and Anglo-Saxon literature, notably the epic poem *Beowulf,* which was also the source of the play's title (*Beowulf* line 1305: 'That was no good exchange - that they should pay on both sides with the lives of friends').[479] The plot concerns two feuding families - the Nowers and the Shaws - which are due to be united through marriage. The matriach of the bride's family, however, in revenge for the death of her son, incites his brother to shoot the bridegroom, thus obliterating the prospect of peace and mutual toleration. This plot of revenge clearly parallels that of Ingeld's wedding in *Beowulf* (lines 2017-67).

Auden's drama, like that of Jarry, was a youthful project that similarly referred to the author's schooldays; and constituted, in the words of theatre critic Alan Hollinghurst, 'for all its precocity, [...] a work which describes the co-ordinates of an adolescent imagination'.[480] Published in January 1930 in T. S. Eliot's quarterly *The Criterion*, it was first performed in university venues in New York (1931) and at England's Cambridge Festival Theatre (1934), where the actors were simply seated on chairs on either side of the stage. Elements of pantomime and medieval mummers' plays (notably in the 'dream' trial conducted by Father Christmas) serve as folkloric counterparts to Jarry's *guignol*; and the play's language, which fluctuates between schoolboy slang and an alliterative pastiche of old English, is correspondingly incongruous and

[478] Ibid., pp. 17, 19, 22
[479] Edward Mendelson, *Early Auden,* first publ. 1981 (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000), p. 42
[480] Alan Hollinghurst, 'Middle-class mumming', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 27 May 1983

obfuscatory.[481] Like Jarry, Auden stressed the absence of a stage set ('no scenery is required') and was equally specific in his instructions concerning the highly-stylised costumes and props.[482] These, as indicated in the text, were to include a giant feeding bottle and a doctor's bag containing circular saws and bicycle pumps.[483] His instructions that 'the distinction between the two hostile parties should be marked by different coloured arm bands' and that the chorus should wear 'similar and distinctive clothing' infer a non-realistic, minimalistic conception that further concurs with that of his predecessor (Auden once wrote to Isherwood, 'The whole of modern realistic drama since Chekhov has got to go').[484] Moreover, by writing in verse, he was likewise aiming to create - or *re*create - a radically different theatrical form. As Christopher Innes observed:

> Auden belonged to a group of poets, including MacNeice and Spender, which aimed to revolutionise English theatre by restoring 'serious' drama, always seen as 'poetic'.[485]

Innes argued that 'from the start Auden was forced to experiment radically if he was to find a viable form of poetry for contemporary drama', and that *Paid on Both Sides* 'constantly verges on burlesque - Auden's great dramatic weakness'.[486] Such comedic exaggeration further connects his creativity with that of Jarry, whilst his humour - described by James D. Brophy as 'frequently ironic' and '[dependent] on brevity and immediately confuting juxtaposition' - can be seen to engage with the visual parodies of Hockney.[487] Yet Brophy's assertion that 'there is nothing of hatred even in [Auden's] satires, nor in his rational objectivity is there a personal 'ax to grind'' suggests a still deeper affiliation with the artist, whose designs for *Ubu Roi*, as I have argued, were unable to convey the raw loathing of Jarry's conception.[488]

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[481] Mendelson, 2000, pp. 48, 50
[482] W.H. Auden, *Paid on Both Sides*, in *W. H. Auden: Collected Poems*, 1991, p. 3
[483] Ibid., pp. 12, 15
[484] Ibid., p. 3; 'Program notes', in *Paid on Both Sides,* Eye and Ear Theater programme, 1983
[485] Innes, in *The Cambridge Companion to W. H. Auden,* Smith, p. 82
[486] Ibid., pp. 83, 85
[487] James D. Brophy, *W. H. Auden* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 21
[488] Ibid., p. 7

For Auden's (as sub-titled) 'charade', Hockney followed a remarkably similar trajectory to that of *Ubu Roi*, and despite the developments within his own creativity in the seventeen-year interim. His design, as at the Royal Court, drew on caricature, modernity and incongruity; yet with the additional understatement befitting a low-budget production. The *New York Times* anticipated the event:

> Tonight at 8, [Eye and Ear Theater] opens 'Paid on Both Sides' by W. H. Auden, with sets (minimal) and costumes (maximal) designed by David Hockney. The work, a charade, will be performed in the main, high-ceilinged sanctuary of St. Mark's Chuch-in-the-Bowery, Second Avenue and 10th Street. Bob Holman directs the cast of more than a dozen actors, dancers and poets, including Kenneth King, choreographer-dancer; Jane Goldberg, tap dancer (a cameo bit), and four women poets in the chorus.[489]

Whilst liberties were clearly taken with the script (the addition of the tap dancer being a case in point), Auden's renunciation of scenery was essentially honoured. Reviewer Amei Wallach noted that the 'sets' comprised little more than nets strung across wheeled garment racks, and water colour paintings of a tree and a red ladder, the latter quirkily hiding a real red ladder (Hockney again blending real and illusional elements).[490] Yet the cavernous performance space was inventively utilised, as revealed by Hollinghurst's review:

> Unable in the large space to play out their vendetta as a claustrophobic drawing-room charade, they [the cast members] enterprisingly deploy the whole church, punning on the pilastered apse (for Auden's 'raised recess') in which the birth and death of [bridegroom] John Nower are presented in baroque *tableaux vivants*, as Nativity and Pièta; and on the floor itself, marked out for volleyball, where they present a diverting session of games and exercises as the performance begins.[491]

In recent correspondence, the play's director Bob Holman has also recounted the sporting theme:

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[489] Richard F. Shepard, 'Going Out Guide', *New York Times*, 12 May 1983
[490] Amei Wallach, 'A play by Auden', *Newsday*, 19 May 1983
[491] Hollinghurst, 27 May 1983

> We turned St Mark's Church into a big athletics field. Hockney had the actors in grey sweats - I can't remember how we distinguished the families. I think I remember a volleyball net that moved according to the action. I certainly remember the twenty or so actors that had to do a dance called 'Tying Your Shoes'. [...] Hockney took me on a trip to see Christopher Isherwood to discuss the play and Hockney took one of his polaroid portraits of Chris and me talking about the play.[492]

The director's recollections, whilst vague, serve to substantiate several notable factors: that dance (and possibly, music) had been integrated into the performance, thus adding to the non-realism and sense of burlesque; that the play was ingeniously realised in the manner of a volleyball game; and that there was a degree of collaboration between the director, Hockney and possibly Isherwood and others.[493] Indeed, it is probable considering Gaskill's admission concerning *Ubu Roi* (that all the ideas were Hockney's) that the very concept of treating this play as a game, with the two feuding families as opposing teams, was that of the artist; likewise, the *tableau vivant* themes, which picked up the biblical and historical allusions of his earlier paintings, notably *California Art Collector*, which (as previously discussed) referenced Piero della Francesca's *Nativity* and Fra Angelico's *Annunciation*.

Hollinghurst's review reveals a further notable design element: the use of projected imagery. In what he described as 'an imaginative compromise' (in terms of Auden's preferred absence of scenery), the critic noted that:

> the fictional Pennine geography of Brandon Walls, scene of an ambush, is created as a rapidly shifting ordnance map; while during a later skirmish the juvenile iconography of 'Battleships' and other war games - guns and moving grids - is flashed on the walls with running totals of casualties to the Nowers and Shaws.[494]

This use of technology is significant because it marked the only occasion in Hockney's theatre involvement when projected images have been used in this

[492] Bob Holman, e-mail to the author, 30 June 2016
[493] Regarding the dance element, a surviving programme credits sound design by L. B. Dallas, and sound/music by Jacob Burckhardt and Raphael Mostel (composer). No choreographer is credited
[494] Hollinghurst, 27 May 1983

way, prompting my suggestion that they may have been inspired by the high profile emergence of contemporary practitioners of video art (Bill Viola springs to mind for his full-room installations which envelop the viewer through recorded sound and moving image). The extent of Hockney's involvement in these projections is unclear, as the artist was unable to recall them when I asked him about them; and William Tudor and Christopher Peregoy - both credited for 'illuminations' in the handout programme - have been accorded (by Wallach) with the creation of this element.[495] Nonetheless, as the overall designer, he would surely have had some input.

Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of this project, in terms of Hockney's creative development, was the very building in which it was presented. A non-traditional venue, this large working church lacked the stage and proscenium of every other location for which he would design. As his earlier comments reveal, the artist was disparaging ('Where it was done - and they only did three performances or something - it wasn't really theatre to me'); and a group photograph (*fig. 150*), in which he tellingly stands unsmiling and detached from the apparently jolly cast, imparts an uncharacteristic lack of enthusiasm.[496] Yet, as we can glean from Hollinghurst's review, the nature of the site was actually facilitating. It obliged him to think 'outside of the (proscenium) box', to utilise space in inventive ways, to incorporate the very features of the church, and to bring the performance *into* the audience. The location of this minor 'fringe' production, of which Hockney was embarrassed, ironically enabled him to break through the frame in a way that he could never accomplish in the opera house.

By the mid-1990s, the Eye and Ear company had ceased production and, beyond non-costumed rehearsal shots (including *fig. 150*) in its archive at the Fales Library of New York University, little imagery has survived. Yet three uncredited photographs - including one in colour (*fig. 149*) - reproduced in the catalogue of a small American exhibition (*Artist in the Theater* at Long Island University, 1984) provide visual evidence of Hockney's mode of realisation

[495] Wallach, 19 May 1983
[496] Author's interview with Hockney

and, notably, his means of distinguishing the families.[497] The cast, as per Holmen's recollection, was uniformly attired in grey jogging suits, yet the sleeves of one group were green and those of the other were red (at least two actors, presumably playing 'neutral' roles, wore a sleeve of each colour). These coloured sleeves provided an easily-identifiable substitute for Auden's suggested armbands. The white rubber-soled sports shoes worn by the actors were also uniform, inferring that they were items of considered costume as opposed to their personal footware. A distinguishing badge in the shape of a shield adorned the front of each sweatshirt (*fig. 151*); and the caps of the chorus - which Auden had instructed should be 'school caps' - took the form of white mesh baseball caps, in accordance with the sporting theme (*fig. 149*). Specific items of costume - hats, coats, a scholar's cap and gown, a Father Christmas outfit - were donned as props over the grey jogging suits (*fig. 12*), whilst other properties emerged as giant cardboard cut-outs, their black and white rendition accentuating their 'drawn' two-dimensionality (*fig. 149*).

Hockney thus adhered to three significant aspects of his *Ubu Roi* design: he had situated the action in a commonplace, contemporary context (the jogging suits paralleled the boiler suits of the Royal Court); he had blurred the distinction between costumes and props; and had used cartoon imagery to stress non-reality. Moreover, he inspired a similar critical response, with Amei Wallach describing the costumes as 'characteristically witty' yet Nadine Frey arguing that 'sweatshirts somehow aren't banal or benign enough to replace costuming. They become another of this production's many senseless gimmicks distracting from whatever merit the play has'.[498] Frey's assessment, including her description of the dream sequence as 'more 'Alice in Wonderland' than angst' echoes some of the criticisms levelled at *Ubu Roi* (we are reminded of Christopher Andreae's reference to Tweedledum).[499]

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[497] *Artist in the Theate*r (New York: Hillwood Art Gallery, Long Island University, 1984), pp. 18-20
[498] Wallach, 19 May 1983; Nadine Frey, 'Sweating it out: poetry and activewear do not a play make', *Daily News Record*, vol. 13, no. 98, 20 May 1983
[499] Frey, 20 May 1983

As a final comment, it is noteworthy that the greatest degree of caricature within Hockney's entire stage creativity was reserved for *Ubu Roi* and *Paid on Both Sides*, his sole designs for drama. Both received a 'comic book' interpretation that afforded a higher degree of artifice than his designs for opera and dance. As drama is potentially the most 'naturalistic' of the theatre arts (opera and ballet by their very nature are more stylised), this exaggeration may be seen as a further device to deflect the capacity for realism and ensure the spectator's awareness of the artifice of the presentation.

### 3.10. Conclusion

In order to evaluate Hockney's interpretation of *Ubu Roi*, this chapter has investigated the nature and circumstances of the original production of 1896 and the aims of its creator Alfred Jarry, and the character of Hockney's concept and the context of his engagement for the Royal Court's staging of 1966. Parallels have been observed in their means of realisation (drawing on puppetry and pantomime respectively) and the underlying issues (impending catastrophe, rapid modernisation and an advancing consumer society) common to Paris in the *belle époque* and London in the 'swinging' 60s. It has transpired that the timing of the latter venture, the decision to involve Hockney and, to some extent, the nature of his interpretation were determined by the artist's emergent celebrity, and events and policies specific to that era, to London and the Royal Court theatre.

Correlations have been observed between Hockney's creativity and that of Jarry, in their deliberate naivety and incongruity; their use of caricature, text and other devices in their respective quest to surpass realism; and - perhaps ironically considering their ingenuity - in their methodological conventionality. Connections have also been made between Hockney's interpretation of *Ubu Roi* and those of other visual artists (notably Saint Phalle and Bacon) and previous designers of the work, including Themerson and Averty. Yet consideration of Hockney's colourful, caricature, concept has revealed that, whilst it complied with the author's intentions in its absurdity, heterogeneity, and amalgamation of text, it lacked the violent and bitter essence of the

original; and his design, with its absence of masks and puppetry, failed to de-humanise the actors as Jarry had intended.

Questions raised - and answers proposed - by this chapter concerned the artist's emphasis on comic exaggeration (drawing on censorship issues, the caricature nature of the play, and the respective visions of Jarry and the director) and whether modern interpretations can and should express the same aims - and achieve comparable effect - as the original creation. The indifferent reception to the re-creation of *Ubu Roi* at the Irving Theatre (1952) suggests that the Court's jolly pantomime approach, cocking the snook at established convention rather than endeavouring to shock or outrage, was indeed appropriate for that specific era. Hockney's Pop Art cartoons spoke the language of their day; and the Royal Court production was of its time.

It has emerged that, despite some technical issues on account of his inexperience, Hockney's contribution to this *Ubu Roi* collaboration was considerable and his ideas set the course for the entire production. His design would inform his subsequent stage creativity, and particularly - in its emphasis on caricature, contemporaneity and incongruity - his only other play design *Paid on Both Sides* (1983). It also drew from and fed into his work in the studio, and afforded the artist fresh directions in terms of non-naturalistic figuration. The interaction confirmed by this chapter underscores the primary argument of this thesis that Hockney's theatre engagement has been integral to his creative development; and that his stage and studio endeavours have each been shaped by the other.

## 4. The ballet *Septentrion* for the Ballets de Marseille, 1975

Hockney's second design for the stage and first creation for a work of dance comprised two painted backdrops for the 1975 premiere of *Septentrion* for the Ballets de Marseille (subsequently the Ballet National de Marseille).[500] This work of approximately forty minutes duration was based upon a narrative by the contemporary writer Yves Navarre, who drew his inspiration from a Roman gravestone in the museum of Antibes, which commemorated a young man with the epitaph *'saltavit et placuit'* ('he danced and gave pleasure').[501] Navarre transposed the setting to the contemporary riviera where the titular youth (danced by Rudy Bryans) successively seduces all members, male and female, of a party of fashionable idlers through his erotic dancing. Ultimately, however, they reject his charms and return to their state of inertia, provoking the young man to kill himself, with the ironic conclusion that even his death is inconsequential to them. Hockney's design for this ballet featured a large, Mediterranean villa and manicured garden with small hedged conical trees, an angular swimming pool and a Léger-styled sculpture. The backdrop was duplicated as a nocturnal scene to suggest the passage of time (*fig. 152*).

The project, with a musical score by Marius Constant, was directed by the celebrated French choreographer Roland Petit, whose reputation for innovation is not inconsequential. Three years previously, having chosen to relinquish his prestigious post as the *directeur de la Danse* at the Opéra de Paris, he had founded a new ballet company in the city of Marseilles, with a mission to be both daring and different. As Edmonde Charles-Roux proclaimed, 'from the very first, the Marseilles Ballet took their stand in opposition to the fashions of the day [...] a clear refusal to have one's freedom

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[500] *Septentrion* was first performed on 15th May 1975 at l'Opéra de Marseille and ran for a total of 20 performances. It was reprised in March 1978 at le Théâtre de la Ville, Paris. 'Chorégraphies', *Roland Petit site officiel* <http://www.roland-petit.fr/index.php?p=chore&chore=1> [accessed 17 October 2016]. N.b. This chapter employs the English spelling of Marseilles except for titles (e.g. Ballets de Marseille) and citations in French, when the French spelling is used. French titles throughout this thesis also adhere to French conventions of non-capitalisation (e.g. Bibliothèque national, not National), except where the title itself rejects this convention (e.g. Ballet National de Marseille)

[501] Webb, p. 151

limited'.[502] In his quest for originality, and like Sergei Diaghilev before him, Petit was committed to consolidating eclectic talents from the worlds of music, dance, literature and the visual arts; and his many collaborations would include the artists Pablo Picasso, André Derain and Marie Laurencin, composers Olivier Messaien and Michel Legrand, the writer Jean Cocteau, and designers Christian Dior, Yves Saint Laurent and Gianni Versace.

Hockney had been previously recommended to him by the ballet critic Richard Buckle, and Petit had met with the artist in London in 1966 when he was seeking a designer for *Le Paradis Perdu* (1967).[503] On that occasion, Martial Raysse secured the commission, for which Petit would offer differing explanations: in his autobiography, he claimed that he had wanted to collaborate with Hockney but issues of scheduling intervened, whereas he disclosed to Gérard Mannoni that the artist's style at the time was unsuited to that particular concept.[504] By 1974, however, Hockney was living in Paris and part of a social circle that included the writer Navarre (according to Webb, it was Navarre who first suggested the project to him).[505] Moreover, his work had evolved, and the colours and themes - especially the swimming pools - of his exhibition at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs now totally concurred with the choreographer's vision for *Septentrion* (Petit: *'Il est devenu le maître d'une esthétique très personelle, absolument parfaite, très 'clean''*), and he was duly offered - and accepted - the commission.[506]

Despite Webb's mention of the artist making sketches for both costumes and scenery, designs for the former were not, in fact, required.[507] Rather, the Roland Petit website lists the costumes for *Septentrion* as *'presque rien'*

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[502] Edmonde Charles-Roux, 'Birth of a company', in *Ballet National de Marseille: Roland Petit,* ed. by Marie-Claude Elsen and Jean-Marie LeDuc (Paris: Albin Michel, 1981), p. 6
[503] Petit, p. 17
[504] Ibid.; Gérard Mannoni, *Roland Petit: un chorégraphe et ses peintres* (Paris: Hatier, 1990), p. 172
[505] Webb, pp. 129-30, 151
[506] Trans.: 'He has become the master of a very personal aesthetic, absolutely perfect, very 'clean''. Petit, pp. 17-18. N.b. in Petit's text, the date of Hockney's exhibition is erroneously credited as 1975 (it was held Oct-Dec 1974); Mannoni, 1990, p. 172
[507] Webb, p. 151

('almost nothing'), and surviving photographs show the dancers in simple ballet tights and leotards (*fig. 153*).[508] This was not unusual for Petit's productions of that era, with creations such as *Pink Floyd Ballet* (1972), *Danses de Travers* (1974) and *Fascinating Rhythm* (1976) similarly employing rudimentary attire. Hence, Hockney's contribution was solely two large backdrops featuring the afore-mentioned scene by day and by night.

Eight years later, he would undertake *Varii Capricci* (1983; *figs. 154-5*), a strikingly similar project, yet comedic as opposed to tragic in narrative. Its single set would likewise feature a Mediterranean mansion with landscaped trees and a swimming pool, where the seducer - a slick-haired, caricature gigolo (danced by Anthony Dowell) - conducts a fling with the hostess of the party (Antoinette Sibley). He departs the scene, only to return, not for the woman but for his sunglasses. Choreographed by Frederick Ashton to music by William Walton and with costumes designed by Ossie Clark, this eighteen-minute work was premiered within a quadruple bill by The Royal Ballet as part of the 'Britain Salutes New York' season at New York's Metropolitan Opera in April 1983, and reprised at London's Royal Opera House in July of the same year. The music for the ballet was a version of Walton's five *Bagatelles* for guitar (1972), which the composer had since orchestrated and, on Ashton's request, expanded.[509] Indeed, the adjustments to the finale were Walton's ultimate musical writing, completed immediately prior to his death in March 1983.[510]

*Varii Capricci* was the last of four dance projects to be undertaken by Hockney, *Parade* and *Le Sacre du Printemps* having been staged in the interim. *Parade* was the brief opening work of the New York Metropolitan Opera's eponymous triple bill of February 1981 (*fig. 5*); and in accordance with Gray Veredon's choreography which built on the original conception of

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[508] 'Chorégraphies', *Roland Petit site officiel* <http://www.roland-petit.fr/index.php?p=chore&chore=1> [accessed 17 October 2016]
[509] Christopher Palmer, 'Walton: A First Symphony Scrapbook', in accompanying booklet to the CD *Walton: Symphony no.1*; *Varii Capricci'* (Colchester: Chandos Records, 1991), p. 7
[510] Ibid.

Léonide Massine, Hockney drew heavily on the set design and costumes of Pablo Picasso for Diaghilev's premiere of 1917. For *Le Sacre du Printemps*, which constituted part of 'The Met"s 'Stravinsky' triple bill (December 1981, *fig. 8*), he devised a circular theme which mirrored the ritualistic cycles of Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux's choreography and with the lighting integrated into the design.[511] It is noteworthy that this creation - the most 'scenographic' of his ballet concepts - was staged prior to his designs for *Varii Capricci,* which followed a more retrogressive methodological trajectory. It is also significant that both *Parade* and *Le Sacre du Printemps* were conceived and executed within the context of a triple bill. Associations of war (barbed wire), punchinellos and giant alphabet blocks interlinked the three works of the 'Parade' bill, whilst the 'Stravinsky' pieces were conjoined by circular imagery and masks. These creations - which merit research beyond the boundaries of this thesis - should therefore be assessed as collective, rather than singular, entities.

The focus of this chapter will be *Septentrion*, on account of its position within the chronological framework of my research, its creative self-containment, and its significance as Hockney's initial dance undertaking. *Varii Capricci*, as the artist's only other individually-realised ballet and with thematic and conceptual correspondences to *Septentrion*, will also be considered. Despite the calibre of the respective dance companies and the renown of Ashton and Petit as choreographers, there has been little documentation and no analysis of these productions. In literature on the artist, Webb has discussed both works in brief; Friedman has made passing mention of both; and Sykes and Livingstone have touched on *Varii Capricci* and *Septentrion* respectively.[512] The Bibliothèque national de France claims a mere performance programme and an audio recording pertaining to *Septentrion*; and Royal Opera House Collections host a limited assemblage of photographs and press cuttings for *Varii Capricci* (albeit including the only visual record of Hockney's set that I

[511] Hockney also designed *Le Rossignol* for this 'Stravinsky triple bill' which, although classed as an opera, contained substantial ballet elements, choreographed by Frederick Ashton

[512] Webb, pp. 151, 210-1; Friedman, pp. 12, 243; Sykes, 2014, pp. 183, 190-1; Livingstone, p. 177

have hitherto discovered).[513] No videos of either production are in evidence. Moreover, the two backdrops for *Septentrion* were destroyed in 2011 in a fire at the warehouse of the Ballet National de Marseille, and the set for *Varii Capricci* is presumed to have been discarded, in keeping with the Royal Opera's post-production policy.[514]

Through an analysis of the available evidence concerning these ballets and Hockney's designs for them, this chapter will examine the relationship between this specific sphere of his creativity (namely, design for dance performance) and his wider body of work. His interplay with the works' co-creators and collaborators will be considered; and an assessment will be made of the extent to which these designs - and the personal artworks which correlate with them - have been informed by the creativity of other artists and designers. In the first instance, however, it is useful for us to identify the key issues specific to designing for dance (as opposed to other performed art forms).

### 4.1. The challenges of dance design and Hockney's response to them

Dance presents unique design challenges within the performing arts through its use of human movement as its principal visual and interpretative tool. It especially requires sufficient space for such movement to occur and adequate lighting for it to be well-observed; and, as a kinetic art form, costumes and settings in harmony with, and conducive to, movement. The dancing, as veteran choreographer Stuart Hopps has emphasised, must take precedence and be supported, not usurped, by the other visual elements.[515]

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[513] 'Septentrion: Roland Petit (1924-2011)', *Data BnF* <https://data.bnf.fr/11953643/roland_petit_septentrion/> [accessed 2 March 2016]
[514] Jean Michel Désiré (lighting designer and correspondent of *rolandpetit.fr* website), e-mail to the author confirming the destruction in 2011 of the backdrops of *Septentrion* in a fire at warehouses of the Ballet National de Marseille, 13 November 2016; Jennifer Johnstone (of Royal Opera House Collections), e-mail to the author acknowledging the presumed disposal of the *Varii Capricci* backdrop in accordance with company policy after the performance run of 1983, 21 December 2016
[515] Author's interview with Stuart Hopps (choreographer and former chairman, 1990-2000, of the British Association of Choreographers), 8 March 2018

Designer Bruce A. Bergner has equated the performance space of dance with an empty box, which has the potential to assert a dynamic identity, as dictated by the performers' actions.[516] Bauhaus creator Oskar Schlemmer demonstrated the volumetric presence of this space in 1927 by dividing the stage with bisecting lines within a circle under vertically-crossing wires which, combined with the moving lines of the dancers' bodies as they followed these tracks, created what he described as a 'stereometry' of space.[517] Choreographer Merce Cunningham similarly exploited the entirety of the dance space, the action being assigned to any part of the stage and viewed from many angles, as opposed to the conventional 'centre stage' focus and frontal orientation (his own studio employed an L-shaped seating configuration).[518]

The theories and examples of these practitioners built on the earlier tenets of Adolphe Appia, whose absorption with the spatial possibilities of the stage was such that he once instructed a student to 'design with your legs, not with your eyes'.[519] Director-designer Edward Gordon Craig, had likewise propounded that the stage is a space (not a picture) and, like Appia, rejected flat, illusional sets in favour of three-dimensional forms, sculpted by lighting rather than painted colour.[520] Craig's use of screen arrangements - his 'Thousand Scenes in One Scene' - afforded numerous permutations of appearance and mood which, significantly, also facilitated movement (McKinney and Butterworth: 'These scenes were not to be presented as a succession of static images, but as 'an architectonic construction with a life of

[516] Bergner, p. 9
[517] Goldberg, 2011, p. 104
[518] Susan Au, *Ballet and Modern Dance*, first publ. 1988 (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012), p. 156
[519] Oenslager, p. 185
[520] Rischbieter, in *Art and the Stage in the Twentieth Century: Painters and Sculptors Works for the Theater*, Rischbieter, p. 10. N.b. Craig was notably scathing of visual artists as designers, causing reviewer Ivor Guest to claim that 'the introduction of the studio painter into the theatre was wholly repugnant to him'. Ivor Guest, '*Gordon Craig on Movement and Dance*. Edited, and with an introduction by Arnold Rood. New York, Dance Horizons, 1970', *Theatre Research International*, vol. 5, issue 3, Autumn 1980, p. 246

its own").[521] The concept would be developed by the scenographer Josef Svoboda, whose designs - notably for the Prague productions of both the play (1963) and the ballet (1971) of *Romeo and Juliet* - aroused great interest in the 1960s and 70s. His manipulation of space using independently mobile architectural components, mirrors, projections and light broke new theatrical ground, propelling and assimilating with the action and affording scene changes which, in his own words, were 'like a cinematic cross-fade'.[522]

The work of Ralph Koltai has been compared to that of Svoboda in its integration with the action; its use of modern materials and technology; and the often-abstract, three-dimensionality that prompted Jarka Burian to comment that 'much of Koltai's work displays a sculptor's sensibility' (Koltai did indeed pursue a later parallel career as a sculptor).[523] His designs for Ballet Rambert made repeated use of scaffolding, including a building site structure for *Cul de Sac* (1964); and a wooden framework for *Hazaña* (1959), upon which a heavily-weighted cross was borne with genuine effort by a single dancer. Such features evolved as integrated components of the production, whilst simultanously obliging the protagonists to explore the vertical, as well as horizontal, stage space. The choreographer of these ballets, Norman Morrice, explained the significance of Koltai's contribution to his work:

> [Koltai] really opened my eyes to colour, shape, texture and how you could best serve the choreography and the music as a composite [...] He made me look at buildings, made me look *up*, instead of just down at the pavement. [...] Ralph turned the design process into a living thing that evolved on a daily basis and involved all of us in the company.[524]

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[521] Butterworth and McKinney, pp. 111-2. Craig explained his concept in *The Thousand Scenes in One Scene*, first publ. in 1915, of which an illustrated extract is reprinted in *Craig on Theatre*, ed. by J. Michael Walton (London, Methuen, 1983), pp. 128-153

[522] Burian, 1971, p. 111

[523] Jarka M. Burian, 'Contemporary British Stage Design: Three Representative Scenographers', *Theatre Journal*, vol. 35, no. 2 ( May 1983), publ. by Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 222 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3207150> [accessed 6 October 2015]

[524] Tim White, 'Norman Morrice, Choreographer, talks to Tim White', in *Ralph Koltai: Designer for the Stage*, ed. by Sylvia Backemeyer, first publ. 1997 (London: Nick Hern Books, 2003), pp. 47-8

Hockney was surely familiar with the creativity of these scenographers, especially as his own assistant Mo McDermott had previously assisted Koltai; and Svoboda, like himself, had designed for Roland Petit.[525] Indeed, the ballet *La Symphonie Fantastique* (the first of several Petit-Svoboda collaborations) was staged at the Opéra de Paris in March 1975, a mere eight weeks prior to the opening of *Septentrion* in Marseilles. With friends in the dance world - notably the dancer Wayne Sleep, whom he had first encountered (together with Frederick Ashton) whilst drawing a Royal Ballet rehearsal in 1967 - Hockney would have understood that realm.[526] He would have also surely known of significant dance designs by contemporary visual artists, including Jasper Johns' *Walkaround Time* (1968), Andy Warhol's *Rainforest* (1968) and Martial Raysse's 'Pop Art' set for Petit's *Le Paradis Perdu* (1967; the ballet for which he had been considered). These works all employed structures that were amalgamated into the performance space - and even the performance itself (Raysse's giant mouth was used as an exit, *fig. 156*). Still more intrinsic to the action were Rouben Ter-Arutunian's scaffolding for Glen Tetley's oft-revived *Pierrot Lunaire* (1962, *fig. 157*); Nadine Baylis' mobile constructions for Tetley's *Ziggurat* for Ballet Rambert (1967); and Joop Stokvis' forest of ropes for Nederlands Dans Theater's *Hi-kyo* (1971). These inclusions, like those of Koltai, facilitated an extended range of spatial and kinetic permutations, allowing the performers to climb, swing and transcend from floor level into the space above.

Such performative integration can also be powerfully realised through costume (Melissa Trimingham: 'Costume has agency, and nowhere more so than when it transforms the human body visually, physically, in motion and in the charged context of a shared performance').[527] *Triadisches Ballett* (1922, *fig. 158*) by the afore-mentioned Schlemmer was particularly notable in the way its costumes distorted the dancers' bodies in motion, to create mobile

[525] Hockney, 1993, p. 22
[526] Wayne Sleep, *Precious Little Sleep* (London: Boxtree, 1996), p. 63
[527] Melissa Trimingham, 'Agency and Empathy: Artists Touch the Body', in *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture and the Body*, Barbieri, p. 137

geometric forms with visceral impact.[528] Such designs built on the earlier explorations of dancer Loïe Fuller (1862-1928), whose seminal performances had involved the manipulation of fabric, combined with synchronised changes of lighting, to remarkable effect. Robert Rauschenberg similarly drew on this tradition of integration in his designs for Cunningham's *Travelogue* (1977, *fig. 159*), in which he employed a lengthy, translucent strip of cloth and colourful sectioned 'skirts', which were worn and manipulated by the performers as evocative moving shapes.[529] That Hockney was not engaged in the costuming of either of his independent ballet designs meant the opportunity to activate the power and potential of costume was lost. He had, of course, wrapped 'the Polish army' in a banner for the play *Ubu Roi*, yet the purpose and effect of this costume element were markedly different from those of Rauschenberg, serving to explain the narrative rather than contributing a performative dimension.

I argue that Hockney's design for *Septentrion* was likewise narrative-focused, setting the scene as opposed to driving the action. His interpretation rejected contemporary templates to follow a comparatively retrogressive trajectory, comprising painted representational backdrops beyond a level expanse of stage. These 'paintings' were static and two-dimensional: flat, illustrative pictures outside the performance, as opposed to sculptural, suggestive forms encompassing and facilitating it. Indeed, it is apparent from my recent conversations with the artist that his approach to dance has been particularly non-scenographic (Hockney: 'For ballets you need to leave the space [centre stage for the dancers], so you can only really do a backdrop').[530] Displayed behind, and disconnected from, the action, these backdrops were in direct opposition to the contemporary practices of designers such as Svoboda and Koltai; and the theatrical principles of Appia and Craig, whose scenographies,

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[528] 'Triadisches Ballett von Oskar Schlemmer', Bavaria Atelier, *YouTube*, publ. by Altor Merino Martinez, 7 March 2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHQmnumnNgo> [accessed 14 April 2018]
[529] 'Excerpt from Merce Cunningham, The South Bank Show, 1980', London Weekend Television, 1980, *Vimeo*, publ. by Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, 2015 <https://vimeo.com/104666439> [accessed 11 March 2018]
[530] Author's interview with Hockney

according to Christopher Baugh, were 'collaborators in performance'.[531] The artist's dance designs contravened Craig's precept of the stage as a space, not a picture; and with regard to *Septentrion*, he freely admitted that 'I was not thinking in space when I did the drawing'.[532]

Of comparable interest, the abstract artist and personal friend of Hockney, Howard Hodgkin, also engaged in ballet design, his debut being *Night Music* (1981) for Ballet Rambert. Hodgkin's sets, like those of Hockney, comprised a simple backdrop in front of which the performers danced. Hence they too were 'pictures' behind the action. Yet their sweeping strokes of vibrant hues (*Piano*, 1988; *Kolam*, 2002) afforded movement in a way that Hockney's representational depictions did not; and they interconnected with the dancing through the fabrics and colours of his costumes, which drew on the essence of the abstract imagery. Two noteworthy parallels may nonetheless be made. Firstly, Hodgkin incorporated shapes as well as colours, *Mozart Dances* (2006) comprising spherical, feathered forms; and *Pulcinella* (1987, *fig. 160*), box-like figures and patches. These shapes evoked the spirit of the music, the latter clearly engaging with the angularity of Stravinsky's score. Hodgkin's work, in this respect, corresponded with that of Hockney, whose later-discussed designs for *The Rake's Progress* opera were similarly inspired by the 'spiky' quality of the music.[533] Secondly, Hodgkin designed both sets and costumes for his three earliest dance projects, yet did not undertake the costumes for his latter trio of works: a factor which suggests that he, like Hockney, considered the sets to be of greater significance - and despite the afore-mentioned capacity for costume to engage with and propel the action. In this regard, both visual artists have been 'designers' for dance as opposed to 'scenographers'.

As a further indication of Hockney's non-scenographic approach, I have found no evidence to suggest that he considered the effects of illumination on either

[531] Baugh, p. 59
[532] Friedman, p. 12
[533] Hockney interviewed in 'An Introduction to The Rake's Progress' (extra feature), *The Rake's Progress*, Roussillon, 2010, DVD

the dancers or the sets. The kind of interplay between costume, lighting and the movement of the human body that, according to Scott Palmer, allowed the afore-mentioned Fuller to dance 'with' rather than 'in' the light, was notably absent.[534] Rather, surviving photographs suggest the use of a simple 'wash' with follow spots which would have contributed little to the performance beyond basic illumination. It is possible that the inclusion of the second backdrop for *Septentrion*, depicting the scene by night, was to provide a solution to the dilemma of lighting the required nocturnal setting. To literally darken the stage would have lessened the visibility of the dancers' movements, whereas the nocturnal depiction enabled the conveyance of nightfall under full stage illumination. The original *éclairagiste* is uncredited, but lighting designer Jean-Michel Désiré (a long-term collaborator with Petit), has suggested that the use of dual backdrops was simply an artistic decision of the choreographer.[535] I argue, however, that there was no justification for painting two almost-identical scenes, beyond the incapacity of 'nocturnal' lighting to sufficiently illuminate the action. Hockney, whilst unable to categorically recall his motive, concurred with my reasoning when we recently discussed this issue.[536]

It is particularly significant, considering the strong kinetic aspect of ballet as an art form, that the artist's designs did not foster - and possibly hindered - the movement of the performance. He was certainly aware of the kinetic limitations of paint on canvas, having discussed the lack of real movement in paintings with the art critic Guy Brett in 1963 (Hockney: 'In spite of one's immediate impression, there is of course no action in these paintings at all. Things don't actually move - the figures are, and will always remain, exactly where the painter put them').[537] Yet, within these stage designs, the natural movement of transient features - clouds, shadows, the surface of the water -

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[534] Palmer, S., 2013
[535] Désiré, e-mail to the author, 1 April 2017. N.b. Désiré, whilst unable to find any record of the original lighting designer for *Septentrion*, has suggested that Jean Fananas - a veteran technical director for Roland Petit - may have assumed that responsibility
[536] Author's interview with Hockney
[537] Guy Brett, 'David Hockney: A Note in Progress', *London Magazine*, 1 April 1963, p. 74

was frozen in time by their painted portrayal, their stasis emphasised by the foreground action and the duration of the performance (the scenery being viewed for extended periods of time). I therefore propose that the inclusion of these elements was an intentional strategy to counter the kinesis of the dancing and to stress the illusion of the spectacle. Moreover, it is notable that these designs - the most 'immobile' of his entire stage involvement - were intended for the world of ballet, which is a particularly movement-led art form. They thus parallel the opposition of his extremely non-realistic designs for drama (the most potentially 'realistic' art form). The combination of stasis and implied or actual dynamism is a recurrent theme in Hockney's work, as my consideration of these dance projects in relation to his broader creativity will demonstrate.

### 4.2. Exchanges between *Septentrion* and Hockney's wider body of work

Hockney's design for *Septentrion* can be seen to connect both thematically and stylistically with his studio ventures and, particularly, with two distinct facets: the cleanly-executed explorations of the previous decade, and the retrospective shift of his paintings during his concurrent Paris residency (April 1973 to November 1975).

The theme of this ballet clearly relates to the content of Hockney's projects during his first years in California (1964-7), when a series of paintings centred on private swimming pools and their associations of an affluent, hedonistic and voyeuristic lifestyle.[538] Such pools were amongst the artist's first impressions of Los Angeles and he was plainly attracted to their exoticism, recalling his excitement as he viewed them from the air: 'I remember flying in on an afternoon, and as we flew in over Los Angeles I looked down to see blue swimming pools all over'.[539] Their mystique and allure stem from their concealment, exclusivity and suggested escape from reality, as writer Charles Sprawson has observed: 'Secluded behind high walls, these Hollywood pools

[538] Notable artworks of this period include *California* (1965), *Two Boys in a Pool, Hollywood* (1965, *fig. 161*), *Sunbather* (1966), *Portrait of Nick Wilder* (1966) and *Peter Getting Out of Nick's Pool* (1966)
[539] Sykes, 2011, p. 142

offer a retreat, a suspended world that induces a mood of fantasy and self-delusion in those that use them'.[540] He noted that they are imbued with semiotic connotations, serving as a gauge to the fortunes of their owners:

> As John Gilbert began to lose his popularity, his decline was symbolised by his 'sad, leaf-filled pool'. At the beginning of *Citizen Kane*, [...] one of the images is of Kane's great swimming pool, now empty, a newspaper blowing across the cracked floor of the tank.[541]

In the light of these examples, it was an appropriate - if possibly unintended - portent that the surface of the water in the depicted pool of the ballet displayed a feature like a giant crack.

The ever-changing surface of water and the play of light on it has been a constant attraction for Hockney. In the years preceding *Septentrion*, he experimented freely with different styles of depiction, drawing on the abstract patterns and 'spaghetti' pictures of contemporary artists Jean Dubuffet and Bernard Cohen respectively. Hence, correlations may be made between Dubuffet's *Allées et Venues* (1965) and *California* (1965); and Cohen's *In That Moment* (1965) and *Sunbathe*r (1966).[542] More broadly, Hockney's fascination with water has expressed itself through showers (*Man Taking Shower*, 1965), flowing pipes (*Water Pouring into Swimming Pool, Santa Monica,* 1964), lawn sprinklers (*A Lawn Being Sprinkled*, 1967) and splashes (*The Little Splash*,1966; *The Splash*, 1966; *A Bigger Splash*, 1967). These images are rendered 'theatrical' by the temporal 'flash-freezing' of the water's movement; yet this artifice is compensated by vivid expressions of mood and physical temperature. A palpable mid-day heat is conveyed by *Sunbather* and *A Bigger Splash*, whilst the cooling spray of the lawn sprinklers is almost tangible. It is thus pertinent to Hockney's interpretation of *Septentrion* that the pool is strangely still, the water's white and turquoise hues lending an 'ice cube' frigidity to the scene: a visual reflection of the communal sentiment towards the titular seducer.

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[540] Charles Sprawson, *Haunts of the Black Masseur: The Swimmer as Hero,* first publ. 1992 (London: Vintage, 2013), p. 270
[541] Sprawson, pp. 271-2
[542] Hockney, 1976, p. 100

The central character's all-encompassing sexuality was clearly established by the work's author: 'He dances and one by one he seduces the girl, the woman with jewels, the strong man and the idol'.[543] Hockney would have surely been enticed by the sexual - and specifically the homosexual - eroticism of the narrative, as this was similarly implicit in his own paintings of naked young men engaged in pool-related relaxation (*California, Sunbather* and *Two Boys in a Pool, Hollywood, 1965*). His favoured homoerotic magazine *Physique Pictorial* had featured a pool complete with 'Greek' plaster statues, which the artist determined to visit in 1964; and a photograph published by the same magazine (January 1963) of nude males floating on their stomachs in a quasi-swimming lesson, can be seen as the stimulus for *California* (1965).[544]

From a compositional standpoint, *Septentrion*'s combination of pool, ornamental trees and residential building affords further parallels with Hockney's swimming pool paintings of the 1960s, and notably with *The Splash* of 1966 (*fig. 162*). Both the backdrop and *The Splash* incorporate a direct perspective; distinctive, angular garden features; and a horizontal background element (the white railing and distant hills respectively) at right-angles to the building's side. The reflections in the windows (*The Splash*) and the surface of the pool (*Septentrion*) contribute a comparable sense of stillness; whilst the depiction of transient features (the clouds and the splatter of water respectively), serves to freeze these constituents in time. Moreover, in each instance, the house, pool and some other components are cropped by the edge of the frame; hence, the viewer sees merely a portion of the scene, the implication of further undivulged elements lending a sense of mystery.

The style and mood of the backdrop may especially be likened to *Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)* of 1972 (*fig. 163*). Both works share a precision of detail (most comparably in the pool tiling); a similar palette (cream, blue, green); a colourful, static upright figure (the flower sculpture and

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[543] Yves Navarre, 'The Story', trans. by A. Laude, LP sleeve, *Septentrion* by Marius Constant, Ensemble Ars Nova, cond. by Marius Constant, 1977, Erato, LP STU 70917

[544] Hockney, 1976, p. 98

male observer respectively), each somewhat strangely positioned close to the water's edge; and a time-suspended, contemplative redolence of the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich and Edward Hopper, both of whom Hockney admired (the theme and composition of *Portrait of an Artist* notably corresponds with Friedrich's *Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer* of c.1818).[545] Shades of René Magritte's surrealism can likewise be discerned in the stark clarity, the shade of mystery, and temporal freezing of both the backdrop and the painting. Magritte's *Le Mal du Pays* (1940) with its solitary figure looking from a bridge, presumably over water, is particularly brought to mind by the latter. Sprawson has suggested that 'in *Portrait of an Artist* a figure gazes down on his submerged self, a projection of the isolation and self-absorption of the artist in general'.[546] Whilst this interpretation is lacking in accuracy (Hockney explained the realisation of this work in his autobiography, with no mention of the two figures representing the same person), it is pertinent that Sprawson continued his analogy by equating the image specifically with *Septentrion*, and with reference to the (later-discussed) programme notes: 'The dancing swimmer kills himself, and in his death Hockney felt he had depicted the fate of the true artist who refuses to compromise'.[547]

An implied human presence - or absence - through inanimate objects (the empty sandals in *Pool and Steps, Le Nid du Duc*, 1971; the discarded clothing in *Chair and Shirt*, 1972) is a recurrent feature of Hockney's paintings of this period, evoking a sense of melancholy, loss or abandonment; and with the items serving to remind of his recently-terminated relationship with his partner Peter Schlesinger. These paintings clearly connect with the empty, yet well-maintained, garden and pool of *Septentrion* and their expectation of human occupancy: a void that in the ballet would be filled by its real-life performers. *Two Deckchairs, Calvi* (1972, *fig. 164*) likewise engages with the backdrop in terms both of mood and composition. Unpeopled, its closed deckchairs propped against the wall, it similarly features a pale plastered house with

[545] Henry Geldzahler, 'Introduction', in *David Hockney by David Hockney,* Hockney, 1976, p. 21
[546] Sprawson, p. 270
[547] Hockney, 1976, p. 247; Sprawson, p. 270

brightly-painted shutters; and a comparable degree of detail in the texture of the terrain (paving stones and gravel respectively), the protruding window ledges and wooden shutter slats. Moreover, in both images, only one pair of shutters is fully opened, suggesting occupancy yet inaccessibility and thus inviting speculation.

Windows with shutters or blinds had featured prominently in Hockney's paintings since the mid-1960s, most notably in *The Room, Manchester Street* (1967), *Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy (*1968), *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy* (*fig. 78*) and *Sur la Terrasse* (1971). Such elements could serve as a theatrical device: as a backdrop to the subject or employed, in the manner of a stage curtain, to conceal or reveal. The most pertinent in terms of *Septentrion* is *Contre-jour in the French Style - Against the Day dans le Style Français* (1974, *fig. 165*), which also typifies the retrospective bent of Hockney's work in the year he undertook Petit's commission: a trajectory that included a return to oil paint following a decade-long preference for acrylic. An interior view of a window of the Musée du Louvre, it is meticulously executed in a naturalistic manner. Its wrought-iron detail and polished floor evoke Caillebotte's *Les Raboteurs de Parquet* (first and second versions, 1875 and 1876 respectively; *fig. 166*), whilst its dappled walls smack of nineteenth-century *pointillism*. The manicured lawns, angular paths and evenly-spaced trees glimpsed beneath the lowered blind reveal Hockney's interest in symmetry and order. Strikingly comparable qualities and features - the straight-on perspective and clean, naturalistic style; an attention to detail (in the shutter slats and tiling of the pool); the dotted, 'pointillist' gravel; the neat and evenly-spaced topiary - would imbue the *Septentrion* backdrop; albeit from an exterior, as opposed to interior, viewpoint.

Stage properties were not utilised in this ballet, with all significant elements painted onto the two backcloths. Of these, the Fernand Léger-styled sculpture (*fig. 167*) raises the most speculation. Hockney's depiction clearly referred to Léger's giant sunflower of 1952 (*Grand Tournesol, fig. 168*), which Petit claimed was included in the design simply because Hockney admired that

artist's work (*'[un] clin d'oeil à un des peintres préférés'*).[548] Its inclusion, however, was boldly incongruous with the surrounding classical style of French Mediterranean architecture and topiary, just as the ballet's mysterious seducer was innately distinct from the group of other characters. This allusion to Léger's famous sculpture - described by André Verdet as 'the tranquil assertion of the exuberance of life' - might thus be interpreted as a representation of Septentrion.[549] More broadly, it can be seen to allude to the concept of the creator at odds with the world (as suggested by Hockney's description of Léger as an artist 'whom nothing and no-one has been able to corrupt'); and, more specifically, to Hockney himself.[550] The latter notion is particularly plausible if we consider that floral elements within his paintings - including *Domestic Scene, Notting Hill*; *Henry Geldzahler and Christopher Scott*; and *My Parents* - have been deemed by art historians Nanette Aldred, Melia and Luckhardt to be a metonym for the artist.[551]

The inclusion of the sculpture and its clear identifiability followed the course of much earlier studio creativity. Hockney had featured works in the style of well-known sculptors in several paintings of the previous decade, notably *California Art Collector*, *Beverly Hills Housewife* and *American Collectors (Fred and Marcia Weisman)*; and these artworks, as Whiting has observed, were integral to his parody of wealthy, yet artistically ignorant, Hollywood socialites ('Hockney pokes fun at art collectors, undermining their claims to taste through the importation of English sculpture').[552] The insertion of the incongruous 'Léger' in the stately garden of a French mansion can be interpreted as a comparable jibe towards the *poseurs* of the riviera, some of whom might have paradoxically constituted a faction of the ballet's audience (as, indeed, the American collectors were the artist's potential benefactors).

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[548] Trans.: 'A wink [nod] to one of his favourite painters'. Petit*,* p. 18
[549] Artist-poet André Verdet quoted by Yvonne Brunhammer, *Fernand Léger; The Monumental Art* (New York: 5 Continents, 2005), p. 140
[550] Hockney quoted (and trans. from *Septentrion* programme notes) by Webb, p. 151
[551] Nanette Aldred, 'Figure paintings and double portraits', in *David Hockney,* Melia, p. 75; Luckhardt and Melia, pp. 92-5
[552] Whiting, 2011, p. 861

Parallels - in terms of lifestyle, climate and the closeted hillside locations - may certainly be drawn between the swimming pool culture of California and that of the French riviera. By the time of *Septentrion*, Hockney had gained first-hand experience of both *milieux,* and his design for this ballet seemingly drew on collected fragments of his own encounters. From 1969 he had been a regular guest at Le Nid du Duc, the holiday home of his friend Tony Richardson which, nestled in the hills near Saint Tropez, routinely accommodated artists and *literati* (*fig. 169*).[553] The swimming pool, with its spectacular vista, provided the setting for *Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)*, as attested by an entry in an auction catalogue concerning a preliminary study for the painting:

> The drawing pinpoints the setting to the pool at Le Nid du Duc, director Tony Richardson's house in the South of France which had become a hotbed and bolthole for London artists who, liberated from the restrictions of London, were free to indulge themselves in a lifestyle that mirrored the carefree sunshine world of glamorous swimming pools which Hockney had found so alluring in Los Angeles.[554]

Whilst its rustic buildings and natural foliage (*fig. 170*) were at odds with the elegant precision of *Septentrion*'s mansion and garden, Le Nid du Duc nonetheless informed the stage design, as it did the painting, in terms of the shape and tiling of the pool and the backdrop's semblance of altitude (inferred by the lack of horizon beyond the white railings). Correlations may also be made with other exclusive properties with which Hockney had become acquainted just prior to his work on the ballet. In 1973, he had been a guest at two magnificent privately-owned *palazzi* in Italy: Villa Reale near Lucca (*fig. 171*) and La Pietra near Florence (*fig. 172*), both of which comprised imposing, rather austere buildings with shuttered windows and topiary-filled gardens.[555] These mansions were similar in form and formidability (on account of the mostly-closed shutters) to the section of the house which

[553] Sykes, 2011, p. 205
[554] 'Study for *Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)*', catalogue notes, Sotheby's auction of Modern and Post-war British Art, London, 12 June 2017, *Sothebys.com* <http://www.sothebys.com/fr/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.24.html/2017/modern-post-war-british-art-l17141> [accessed 2 April 2018]
[555] Sykes, 2011, p. 290

dominated the *Septentrion* backdrop; and the neatly-hedged and gravel-bordered topiary of Villa Reale in particular, can be seen to correspond with the miniature trees and shrubs of Hockney's design. It is significant in terms of the creative strands which interlace the artist's work, that these elements would reappear in his design for *Varii Capricci*.

### 4.3. Parallels and distinctions between *Septentrion* and *Varii Capricci* (1983)

As a ballet, *Septentrion* shared several common threads with its later counterpart. Thematically, and despite their opposing *dénouement* (tragic and comic respectively), the works were connected by a narrative of idle hedonism, narcissism, seduction, boredom and betrayal. In terms of design, both employed a simple painted set: a single backdrop (two in the case of *Septentrion; fig. 152*), with the addition of six sidedrops for *Varii Capricci* (*fig. 155*). Compositionally, both comprised an exterior, Mediterranean setting with ornamental trees, painted clouds, a mansion with shuttered windows and an angular swimming pool as the defining feature (the inclusion of the pool was, in each case, dictated by plot constraints).

The creations were, nonetheless, stylistically dissimilar. The *Septentrion* set - complete with manicured topiary, tended gravel and 'Léger' sculpture reflected in the water of its pristine pool - was neatly rendered, with considerable attention to detail; whilst that of *Varii Capricci* boasted bolder and warmer colours, broader strokes, and its features (the slatted shutters, foliage, the water surface and pool balustrade) were more coarsely and cheerily represented, in keeping with its blithe, comedic theme. The latter design also referred - at the behest of Frederick Ashton - to a specific, rather than generic, location: La Mortella, Sir William Walton's garden on the Italian island of Ischia.[556]

Hockney's vivid splashes for this ballet took their cue from Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* and the vibrant creativity of Bakst's *Schéhérazade* (1910),

[556] Stephen Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), p. 251n; Webb, p. 210

Goncharova's *Le Coq d'Or* (1914) and Larionov's *Soleil de Nuit* (1915). The brilliant hues of such designs had been fundamental to the daring innovation of Diaghilev's productions, with *Schéhérazade* credited (by Clarke and Crisp) as having 'banished the fustiness and literalism that had so afflicted the ballet stage in the west'.[557] Such boldness ran the risk, however, of overwhelming the action, and Larionov's design for *Chout* (1921) was dismissed by Cyril Beaumont as 'an orgy of colour', its strident contrast 'inclined to reduce the choreography to a subordinate position'.[558] Similar criticism has been levelled at Hockney's concept for *Varii Capricci*. David Dougill noted that the artist's set 'is in itself a voluptuous delight; but it dominates the stage at the expense of the dancing', whilst Ann Nugent's comment that it 'hits us with its colour and straight-on perspective' likewise suggests an inappropriate assertion.[559] The exaggerated colours did, of course, serve to stress the artifice of the scene and may thus be deemed a 'device' against realism. Indeed, this backdrop, despite its traditional mode, was far from 'naturalistic' in its depiction.

The result was approved by most reviewers: 'the stupendous and evocative set'; 'a colourful splash by David Hockney'; 'the wittily frivolous and gorgeously coloured scenery'; 'the David Hockney brilliant setting'.[560] A recurring criticism, however, was that the foliage and warm, Fauvist hues were not indicative of the region they were supposed to represent. Irene Freda Pitt (*Daily American)* observed that 'the colors of David Hockney's garden set [...] were perhaps too intense for the Mediterranean'; and Jann Parry of the *Observe*r noted that 'Hockney's set, based on the Waltons' garden and swimming pool on Ischia, looks more tropical than Mediterranean'.[561] Yet the allusion to Walton's garden was of consequence, for this Italian terrain was indeed home to an

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[557] Clarke and Crisp, p. 115
[558] Beaumont, C., p. xxvii
[559] David Dougill, 'Sir Frederick Ashton salutes the memory of Walton', *Classical Music*, 20 Aug 1983; Ann Nugent, 'Old Friends, New Friends', *Dance and Dancers*, October 1983
[560] Vivi Anderson, 'Slumming it with the Royal Ballet', *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 5 August 1983; 'Varii Capricci' (review), *Daily Mail*, 26 July 1983; Fernau Hall, 'What a divertissement!', *Daily Telegraph*, 21 July 1983; Mary Clarke, 'Varii Capricci' (review), *Guardian*, 21 July 1983
[561] Irene Freda Pitt, 'Ballet in London', *Daily American*, 12 August 1983; Jann Parry, 'Party piece', *Observer*, 24 July 1983

atypically lush vegetation. Gillian Widdicombe's programme notes for the ballet's Covent Garden reprise explained:

> Lady Walton has turned the volcanic rock of Ischia into a tropical paradise packed with rare ferns, camellias, exotic trees, and a luxurious swimming pool from which the idle guest has a perfect view of sea, sky and Vesuvius. This forms the setting for Ashton's last tribute to his beloved friend.[562]

Whilst Ashton had been a guest at La Mortella (as noted in Susana Walton's biography of her husband), Hockney has confirmed that he had neither met the composer nor visited his home; and his interpretation of the property was not historically accurate.[563] The photographs throughout Lady Walton's book on the subject reveal an abundance of vegetation and several verdant ponds (*fig. 173*), but no neat landscaping comparable to the depicted slender trees.[564] Moreover, the house - nicknamed 'the barracks' by their neighbours - was of a different style and more austere than Hockney's riviera stereotype (*fig. 174*); and the swimming pool (in which the Waltons took to the water for the documentary *William Walton - At the Haunted End of the Day,* 1981) was without balustrades and of a different shape entirely.[565] It thus appears that the artist chose to integrate the sequence of poplars and make amendments and additions to lend the 'Mediterranean' character that was lacking in the real house and garden. These elements seem to have been drawn from his earlier design for *Septentrion* and the Italian mansions of his personal experience. The building depicted on the side-drops strongly engaged with the previously-mentioned Villa Reale in terms of its distinctive, identically-coloured, two-toned facade; the notched underside of the roof; and the style, colour and dimensions of its shuttered windows, including the smaller windows on the ground floor (*figs. 175-6*). The pool's surrounding balustrade was also

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[562] Gillian Widdiscombe, 'Notes on *Varii Capricci'*, in The Royal Ballet performance programme, Royal Opera House, London, 20 July 1983

[563] Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 133; author's interview with Hockney (note that his assurance that he had never met Walton refutes Webb's reference to their friendship. Webb, p. 210)

[564] Susana Walton, *La Mortella: An Italian Garden Paradise* (London: New Holland, 2002)

[565] Ibid., p. 28; 'William Walton - At the Haunted End of the Day', dir. Tony Palmer, London Weekend Television, 1981, *YouTube,* publ. by Arturs Krumins, 6 December 2015 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PK1y1k7zDgw> [accessed 28 December 2018]

suggestive of the lemon garden pool at Villa Reale, which is encased by a strikingly similar feature (*figs. 177-8*).

A distinguishing element of *Varii Capricci* was the white sun lounger on which the lead ballerina reclined (*fig. 188*). Such loungers had figured prominently in Hockney's Californian pool depictions of the 1960's, and most notably in *Two Boys in a Pool, Hollywood* (*fig. 161*) in which the sunbed constitutes a central compositional element. The lounger may be seen to denote, almost as much as the pool itself, the languid hedonism of an affluent, leisure-filled lifestyle: an identification exemplified by the prominent position of the distinctive recliner in *Beverly Hills Housewife* (*fig. 32*). In Ashton's ballet, the sun lounger similarly served to highlight the idle inertia of the characters; yet it also pertained to the staging and choreography, affording the sole physical connection between the performance and the set, and a point of visual interest with the reclining dancer creating a low, horizontal, as opposed to vertical, line. A similar item (a scribbled lounger or deckchair) can be seen to the left of a study for *Septentrion* (*fig. 179*), although this, together with the palm tree and striped awning, was unrealised in the final creation, possibly because - in contrast to Ashton's vision - it served no practical purpose within Petit's choreography.

A subtle feature common to both ballets, despite the time lapse between them, was the strangely proximate 'horizon' with its implication of altitude and the possibility of a sheer drop beyond. Whilst this accorded with the real locations that inspired the designs (Le Nid du Duc was high above sea level, and Susana Walton specified that their pool was 'on top of the hill'), the effect is nonetheless one of enclosure and isolation, of the action unfolding on a precipice, of being literally 'on the edge'.[566] This - whether intentional or not - may be seen to mirror both Septentrion's ultimate demise and the seemingly insular lifestyles of the protagonists of both works. The stifling sense of oppression is further conveyed through the overwhelming, dominant features of these settings. The mansion of *Septentrion* is tall and bulky, and with no indication of the extremities of its profile (its roofline, for example, is

[566] Walton, S., 1989, p. 175

undepicted); the poolwater of *Varii Capricci* threatens to engulf the stage; and unlike its counterpart in *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* (1981, *fig. 180*), the giant tree with its mass of spikes (*fig. 155*) offers no shade or protection. Both the night sky of *Septentrion* and the sky of 'Capricci' are hellishly coloured; and almost every shutter of each villa is defensively closed. Moreover, neither image reveals a visible means to exit (or escape) the scene.

I propose that Hockney's personal residency was pertinent to the nature of these designs. At the time of *Septentrion* and, despite experiencing a stylistic *impasse* in terms of naturalism in his art, he had chosen to reject the modernity of the USA, and inhabit Paris: an historic city steeped in painterly associations, where he would depict a bastion of traditional art (the Louvre) in a retrograde pointillist manner.[567] Such background factors surely account for the traditional, accurately-painted style of this backdrop, as opposed to the vibrant daubs and unusual perspective of *Varii Capricci*, which was executed some eight years later when he was back in California and exploring fresh ideas.

Hockney's move to a new home in the Hollywood Hills had provoked a turning point in his work, whereby his paintings became, in the manner of the Fauves, more dramatically colourful, spontaneous and exuberant; also larger in scale. *Mulholland Drive: The Road to the Studio* (1980), for example, at 2.18m x 6.17m (7'2" x 20'3"), is almost equal in size to a theatrical drop. Bearing in mind the artist's intensive involvement with Glyndebourne between 1975 and 1978, and his preparations for *Parade* at the New York 'Met' (to be staged in February 1981), this theatrical scale may itself be an indication of exchanges within his creativity. Moreover, several paintings of this period suggest a narrative (such as a car journey on a twisting road), yet with all aspects of the sequence simultaneously displayed. They thus connect with the Polaroid composites and photographic collages ('joiners') of the same period, and their deliberate distortions of space and time. The disjointed imagery and shifting viewpoints of the *Varii Capricci* set presents similar correlations, the ballet's

[567] Hockney, 1976, p. 285

riven mansion also anticipating the shuttered buildings of the Place Fürstenberg 'joiner' of 1985 (*fig. 182*).

In contrast to the precision of *Septentrion*, the overriding emphasis of this later phase of creativity was on mood and sensation rather than accuracy, a priority apparent in all spheres of the artist's work. Hence, the vibrant colours, the shapes and spacing of the trees and the bold strokes of the backdrop's tropical foliage can be seen to engage with *Nichols Canyon* (1980, *fig. 183*), likewise the slightly aerial perspective. This unusual angle would have been at odds with the 'real' perspective of the performance (the exaggeration is particularly evident in the photograph of the set taken from the stalls of the Royal Opera House in 1983, *fig. 155*). Indeed, its viewpoint serves to visually thrust the backdrop forwards, thus literally overwhelming the action. It is possible that this was a calculated effect to accentuate the insularity of the scenario, although this should not be assumed. Two preliminary paintings of the design, depicting (a) the backdrop and (b) the backdrop plus six sidedrops, reveal a noticeable discrepancy in the slant of the pool (*figs. 184-5*); and I suspect that the technical team may have simply copied the latter, irrespective of whether the adjustment had been deliberately or inadvertently made. This theory is particularly plausible when one considers a similar incident was noted during the creation of *Ubu Roi* (Hockney: 'They're just so literal, I couldn't believe it').[568]

It is perhaps pertinent that the swimming pool of Hockney's new residence would have been viewed from his terrace at a comparable angle to the pool of this ballet (as suggested by *Self Portrait on the Terrace*, 1984; *fig. 186*). The distinctive pattern on the water surface of the backdrop was also very similar to the design that he had painted on the bottom of his own pool; and which he would replicate in 1988 when he decorated the pool of the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. This pattern has featured in subsequent depictions, including the composite Polaroid, *Sun on the Pool Los Angeles: April 13th 1982* (*fig.*

[568] Ibid., p. 103

*187*).[569] The cyclic nature of these connections is further underscored by the painted colours of his terrace, which themselves were inspired by a previous theatrical undertaking, *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* of 1981.[570] Thus, the creative exchange between Hockney's theatre involvement and his studio ventures has evidently encompassed his domestic environment.

### 4.4. Interplay with creators and collaborators

As with all collaborative engagement, the realisation of Hockney's vision for these ballets was partially dependent upon the interpretations of colleagues. Whilst I have found no video evidence of Petit's ballet *Septentrion*, surviving photographs suggest a modern work, focused on contemporary, as opposed to classical, movements and formations. Like Hockney, the choreographer explored different styles, and his ventures into abstraction required allusive, rather than illustrative, music and designs (or indeed, as in *Formes* of 1967, no costumes or sets whatsoever); whilst for those works with a stronger line of narrative, he naturally tended towards the figurative.[571] Petit was exacting in his creative demands, so Hockney's depiction must have concurred with the choreographer's vision; yet there is clearly a disparity between the representational backdrop and the abstraction of the dancers wearing leotards instead of role-specific costumes. Moreover, whilst Petit's creativity invariably drew on the musical score (Zizi Jeanmaire: *'La musique prend possession de lui. Elle a sur lui un impact énorme'*), Hockney's imagery did not visibly connect with the ultra-modern soundtrack of Marius Constant.[572]

Constant - whose previous work for Petit included the music for *Formes* (1967) - wrote a score for *Septentrion* that was not identifiably melodious. Rather, it comprised clusters of sounds, mostly atonal, by combinations of musical instruments, electronic means and non-traditional devices (bird whistles, clacking pebbles and clickers). A recorded female voice,

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[569] Friedman, p. 55
[570] Ibid., p. 56
[571] Mannoni, 1990, p. 174
[572] Trans.: 'The music takes hold of him. It has an enormous effect on him'. Dancer and wife of Roland Petit, Zizi Jeanmaire, quoted in *Roland Petit,* by Gérard Mannoni (Paris: L'Avant Scène, 1984), p. 67

representing the hero, addressed the listener through song, speech, whispers and giggles across simultaneous tracks; a rasping saxophone added a stream of free jazz that dissolved into languid 'big band' nostalgia; whilst the mounting discords imparted the unsettling tension of a thriller film. The whole, with the inclusion of the electronic instrument *ondes Martenot*, induced a strange, dreamlike mood, evocative of a cinematic score that was both non-pictorial and contemporary (Constant also composed the musical theme for *The Twilight Zone* TV series of the 1960s).[573]

Whilst the illustrative mode of the set was at odds with the abstraction of the music and the dancers' lack of costume, its 'frozen' qualities nonetheless imbued a hint of surrealism which corresponded with the score's disorientating sense of timelessness; and its almost-precisionist rendering lent a modernity that may have been in harmony with the dancing (this can only be surmised in the absence of choreographic evidence). The pallid expanse of the building and gravel also complemented the pale tones of the dancers' attire, and did not dominate the stage in the manner of the later-designed *Varii Capricci*.

It transpires that in his engagement with *Septentrion*, Hockney was most inspired by the narrative. Its writer, Yves Navarre, described the artist's enthusiasm to Peter Webb: '[...] he empathized with Septentrion as epitomizing the loneliness of the true artist, who won't compromise. He felt this very strongly and later wrote a little piece about it for the theatre programme'.[574] The piece in question, translated from the French text by Webb, reads:

> Every artist is alone... Ambition makes his life more and more difficult. He enters into competition with the present and the past of his art. He feels more and more alone, and under attack, but this can at the same time stimulate him.[575]

[573] Marius Constant, *Septentrion,* Ensemble Ars Nova, cond. by Marius Constant, 1977, Erato, LP STU 70917**.** N.b. this is the only commercially-available audio recording of this work to have hitherto been produced
[574] Webb, p. 151
[575] Ibid.

Considering that Roland Petit remarked in his autobiography on the succession of visitors - friends, editors, art dealers - who filed through Hockney's studio during his visit in 1975, one might presume that the artist here is referring to an inner, creative solitude rather than a social one. It is, however, noteworthy that the project concurred with Hockney's residency in Paris following the breakdown of his relationship with Peter Schlesinger: a period of self-proclaimed intense loneliness that he would have certainly recalled.[576] The hedonistic pool party milieu of *Septentrion* and its theme of betrayal and loss would have likewise registered with the artist, since the bitter end of this personal romance was played out against an ironically glamorous social backdrop in Carennac, Cadaqués, and the south of France.[577] Moreover, Hockney has constantly sought solitude in order to focus on his work. As he recently explained:

> When I first came to California, I was running away from London. I knew, in England, 'society' [and its social demands] can ruin an artist. I went to Paris because of London, then in Paris it became the same, so I went back to London and then I came here [Los Angeles]. I've always been able to work here because they leave you alone. There are so many other celebrities, they don't bother *me*.[578]

The mood of *Varii Capricci* was considerably lighter than *Septentrion* and with an overriding sense of parody that would have appealed to the artist. As reviewer Anna Kisselgoff observed: '*Varii Capricci* is Sir Frederick fooling around, caught up in a spirit of fun. It is that rare ballet bird - a self-parody and an honorable parody of the Royal Ballet's own traditions'.[579] Ashton shared Hockney's distinctly British, pantomime-rooted humour (he had choreographed and played an 'ugly sister' in the Royal Opera's *Cinderella* of 1948); and like Hockney, he had a flair for 'the theatrical', to which his

[576] Petit, p. 18; Hockney, 1976, p. 240
[577] Sykes, 2014, pp. 253-6
[578] Author's interview with Hockney
[579] Anna Kisselgoff, 'Ballet: Royal in 'Capricci' premiere', *New York Times*, 20 April 1983

colleagues have attested (dancer Alexander Grant: 'I think that Frederick Ashton is one of the most theatrical of modern choreographers').[580]

The correlation between Ashton's choreography and Walton's score was widely-praised: 'The ballet is as brilliant and light-hearted as the music'; 'the dance, growing wonderfully out of the light-hearted score [...]'; 'Ashton has choreographed so that there is no discrepancy between the impact on ear and eye'.[581] Like Petit, he invariably derived his inspiration from the score, claiming that 'it's always the music that starts me off. The story doesn't count at all [...]. Usually I just hear a piece of music and I do that'.[582] His connection to Walton was particularly strong, with Walton's melodies having previously inspired *Siesta* (1936), *The Quest* (1943) and the John Armstrong-designed comic ballet *Façade* (1931), which was similar in both mood and style to *Varii Capricci*. Indeed, reviewer Edward Thorpe described the 'Capricci' gigolo, danced by Anthony Dowell, as 'a cross between John Travolta and the Dago from that 1931 Ashton-Walton comic masterpiece Facade'.[583] Hockney, however, was initially unimpressed by Walton's score, expressing his disappointment to Ashton, who retorted that 'it is not for listening to, it's for dancing to'.[584]

Despite the artist's early indifference, I argue that his bold colours and strokes did evoke the Latin American inflections of Walton's music; and that the set visually divided itself between the sybaritic melodiousness of the 'Alla Cubana' and the spring-loaded rhythms of the first and last movements. The stately trees and elegant balustrade (to the left, as viewed by the audience) would seem to correspond with the former and the spiky leaves and angular frontage (to the right) with the latter. The vivid hues can also be seen as a testament to the composer, whose yearning for light and sunny climes in response to the grey skies of his northern England roots would have certainly struck a chord

[580] Grant quoted by Zoë Dominic and John Selwyn Gilbert, *Frederick Ashton: a choreographer and his ballets* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1971), p. 132
[581] Pitt, 12 August 1983; Nicholas Dromgoole, 'The royal couple', *Sunday Telegraph*, 24 July 1983; Alistair Macaulay, 'In July', *Dancing Times*, September 1983
[582] Ashton quoted by Dominic and Gilbert, p. 168
[583] Edward Thorpe, 'A hug and a shrug', *London Evening Standard*, 21 July 1983
[584] Author's interview with Hockney

with Hockney.[585] It is noteworthy that, in contrast to *Septentrion*, of which the narrative was clearly the artist's inspiration, Walton's music was ultimately the most apparent influence in this design, exemplifying a point that I have made elsewhere in this study: namely, that Hockney's impetus shifted from narrative to music as his theatre creativity evolved. That Walton's score was more tonal than that of Constant also affords the potential for investigation beyond this thesis into the artist's purported synaesthesia.

*Varii Capricci* received many positive reviews, and there would seem to have been cohesion in the cheery comedy which pervaded the production: in Walton's quirky use of percussion, the parody of the gigolo's costume, Ashton's choreographic 'party tricks', and the painted ripples of Hockney's pool. Yet beyond a shared humour, the collaboration faltered. The scene was described as 'busy' and the production 'composed of clashing elements', with reviewers noting that 'the choreography, like the design, did not fit together as a coherent whole' and that 'with so much going on, the music which was the ballet's starting point gets rather obscured'.[586] Hockney's set appeared detached from Ashton's choreography, its bold colours and oblique perspective eclipsing the action on the stage, whilst also failing to gel with Ossie Clark's costume designs (*fig. 188*), which were generally considered inappropriate for the work.

Media reviews were overwhelmingly critical of Clark's endeavours, with particular attention paid to the conflict between the costumes and Hockney's set: 'The eight supporting dancers dressed in ruffles and rags in pastel colours of jade, lemon, rose and lilac, seem to belong to another ballet altogether'; 'Ossie Clark's costumes do not relate to the decor at all'; 'four couples in silly fluttery costumes (by Ossie Clark, in pastel shades at war with Hockney)'; 'over-fussy pastel costumes for the supporting cast detracted from one's pleasure in their dancing'; 'Ossie Clark's costumes attempt to compete for attention and only serve to distract; neither Hockney's set nor Ashton's

[585] Walton, S., 1989, p. 176
[586] Dougill, 20 Aug 1983; John Percival, 'Two friends' last collaboration', *The Times*, 21 July 1983

choreography needs a mass of flounces'.[587] To an extent, the perceived conflict negatively impacted the reaction to the sets, with one critic noting that 'Hockney has designed his Mediterranean poolside in the Fauves manner, very like Derain, totally at odds with the costumes'.[588] Moreover, the sexual ambiguity of the androgynous garb generally confused perceptions, with the four males described by another reviewer as 'so pretty that it is a surprise when they grab Sibley rather than Dowell for a brief adagio'.[589] Yet another questioned: 'Who are they interested in? - their female partners? Capricciosa? Each other?'.[590]

Ashton, having worked with Hockney on *Le Rossignol* in 1981, had intended the artist to design both scenery and costumes, which would have lent a very different look and greater coherence to the overall production.[591] Hockney, however, proposed Clark - the financially-struggling fashion creator - as costume designer.[592] Reviewer David Dougill astutely remarked that 'perhaps Hockney was doing his friend Clark a favour at a difficult time; but it is a great pity that the painter did not design the whole thing himself'.[593] That Hockney had chosen to delegate the costuming, for whatever reason, is revelatory of his underestimation of the afore-mentioned power and potential of costumes - particularly dance costumes - to actively contribute to the performance and to generate creative cohesion. Moreover, it is telling that, for the artist's subsequent theatrical ventures, he did indeed assert control of this aspect, either undertaking the costume design himself (*Tristan und Isolde*, 1987) or, whilst allotting it to Ian Falconer, nonetheless maintaining supervision (*Turandot* and *Die Frau Ohne Schatten*, 1992).[594] Hockney's accord with the critics is disclosed by Clark's own diary, in which he recounted a confrontation

[587] Thorpe, 21 July 1983; Dougill, 20 Aug 1983; David Dougill, 'In a summer garden', *The Times on Sunday*, 24 July 1983; Pitt, 12 August 1983; Parry, 24 July 1983
[588] Thorpe, 21 July 1983
[589] Percival, 21 July 1983
[590] Macaulay, September 1983
[591] Author's interview with Hockney
[592] Ibid; Sykes, 2014, p. 190
[593] Dougill, 20 Aug 1983
[594] Author's interview with Cox (re. Hockney's supervision of Falconer's designs). N.b. As with Ossie Clark, Hockney's personal relationship with Ian Falconer - who had limited experience in costume design beyond assisting the artist on *Tristan und Isolde* (1987) - was the foundation to their collaborations

at the dress rehearsal at the Metropolitan Opera House. The artist demanded of his creations, 'Just tell me what period this is supposed to be?'.[595] According to Clark:

> I felt very hurt with David's non-appreciation, but shrugged it off when Sir Fred came over, obviously very pleased. I told him DH wasn't thrilled with my costumes and he just shrugged his shoulders as though to say, 'Well I'm very happy and that's all that matters'.[596]

Significantly, from a collaborative standpoint, Clark's diary entry suggests that Hockney had not seen the costume designs prior to the dress rehearsal, which reveals - and in marked contrast to his opera engagements - a remarkable lack of creative communication. Certainly, the entire production was hurriedly assembled, as Ashton's biographer Julie Kavanagh attested:

> Working against the clock, Ashton choreographed the eighteen-minute piece in three weeks, but considered it nowhere near complete by the time the company arrived in New York.[597]

According to Webb, Ashton had actually choreographed the work before Hockney was brought into the project, which further accounts for the disjunction between their respective creativity; and suggests that the set was likewise hastily compiled with minimal collaborative engagement and that, like that of the earlier *Septentrion*, its realisation was relatively subsidiary to the artist's concurrent creativity.[598] These suppositions have been affirmed by Hockney, who volunteered that he undertook both projects primarily because he knew the choreographers personally; and that the collaborations were far less intensive than those of his opera engagements.[599] 'I treated [ballet] seriously', he explained, 'but not as seriously as the operas'.[600] The pre-eminence of the operatic art within his theatre engagement is further suggested by his continued use of mere sketches in the working process of his ballet designs, whilst scale models were routinely employed for the

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[595] Henrietta Rous, ed., *The Ossie Clark Diaries* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998), p. 134
[596] Ibid.
[597] Julie Kavanagh, *Secret Muses: The Life of Frederick Ashton* (London: Faber & Faber, 1996), p. 578
[598] Webb, p. 210
[599] Author's interview with Hockney
[600] Ibid.

creation of all his operas. Moreover, both his official website and the David Hockney Foundation website, which include information and images pertaining to all the artist's opera designs (including the two triple bills and their dance elements), make no mention of his stand-alone ballets.[601]

To an extent, this reflects a wider, long-established disparity between the two art forms, with ballet sometimes perceived as opera's 'poor relation': a term that literally applies. A comparative study of 2004 revealed that, whilst seat occupancy was comparable, ticket prices for opera were generally twice as high as those for ballet; and that production costs were approximately four times higher for opera than ballet.[602] Moreover, whilst dance has historically been amalgamated into opera, the tradition has not applied in reverse.[603] This subordination has been a cause of some contention and it is noteworthy that when Roland Petit formed the Ballets de Marseille, it was specified that the company 'would enjoy full autonomy and would have no compulsory part to assume in operas'.[604]

### 4.5. Connections with the work of other artists and interpreters

Hockney's attraction to sunny climes was as evident in these ballet designs as it is in his paintings, in his use of vibrant, primary colours and depicted shadows to denote the absence of cloud cover ('My complaint with England and Bradford was that there were no shadows [...] I'm always drawing little shadows under things'); yet his Mediterranean vision tended towards the stereotypical - as illustrated by the palm tree and striped awning in the

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[601] 'Stage Design', *David Hockney* <http://www.hockney.com/works/stage_design> [accessed 12 October 2016]; 'Theater Works', *The David Hockney Foundation* <https://thedavidhockneyfoundation.org/series/ubu-roi> [accessed 10 November 2018]

[602] Philippe Agid and Jean-Claude Tarondeau, *Management of Opera: an International Comparative Study* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 98

[603] Musicologist Sarah Hibberd has explained that, whilst often omitted from contemporary performances, ballet was regularly incorporated into nineteenth-century operas (such as Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*), as a *divertissement* to enhance the local colour of the music, scenery and costumes; and to offer a 'breathing space' within the action. Sarah Hibberd, 'The role of ballet in grand opera', *Royal Opera House,* publ. 22 June 2015 <https://www.roh.org.uk/news/the-role-of-ballet-in-grand-opera> [accessed 12 April 2018]

[604] Charles-Roux, in *Ballet National de Marseille: Roland Petit,* Elsen and LeDuc, p. 4

preparatory sketch for *Septentrion* - and with allusions to the joyful riviera themes of Raoul Dufy.[605] Dufy himself had undertaken stage designs including, in 1933, the set and costumes for the Massine-choreographed ballet *Beach* for the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo (*fig. 189*). Apects of this creation anticipated Hockney's own stage interpretations, particularly the inclusion of the physical sun lounger, the optimistic use of colour, and the 'static' depiction of moving elements (the boats, the fish, the waves), which served to stress the pictorial illusion of the backdrop. Dufy's drop curtain design for *Beach* (*fig. 190*) featured a red and white striped awning and drapery, which affords comparison with Hockney's preliminary *Septentrion* sketch; whilst its warm, Fauvist hues and centred perspective can be seen to align with those of *Varii Capricci*. Hockney was surely aware of Dufy's theatre work when he embarked upon the first of his own ballet commissions. Certainly he was familiar with that artist's paintings, although he has claimed that they were of little interest to him.[606] Nonetheless, suggestions of *Beach*, as well as Dufy's set for *Le Boeuf sur le Toit* (1920), would re-emerge in Hockney's cheery designs for *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* (*fig. 299*) within the 'Parade' triple bill of 1981.

The colours and shapes of *Varii Capricci* likewise engage with the Fauvist depictions of André Derain (especially those of L'Estaque, c. 1906), and the paintings and cut-outs of Henri Matisse. The simplified forms of the series of trees, for example, suggest *papier-collé*, whilst the mass of spiked leaves evokes the spray of *La Gerbe* (Matisse, 1953).[607] These artists had also undertaken creativity for the stage. Derain had designed prolifically for Diaghilev, including the sets and costumes for *La Boutique Fantasque* (1919) and *Jack-in-the-box* (1926), choreographed by Massine and Balanchine respectively; whilst Matisse and Massine had joined forces on *Le Chant du Rossignol* of 1920 and *L'Étrange Farandole* (*Rouge et Noir*) of 1939, the

[605] David Hockney quoted by Patrick O'Connor, 'Hockney at the Opera', *BBC Music Magazine*, November 1992, p. 19
[606] Hockney, 1976, p. 242
[607] Associations between Hockney's stage creativity and the art of Matisse would become particularly apparent in the shapes and colours of *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* for the *Parade* triple bill of 1981

former later inspiring Hockney's designs for the opera version of the same work (*Le Rossignol*, 1981).

A significant facet of these creations was the integration of the visual with the action. The costumes for *Jack-in-the-box* (1926, *fig. 191*) employed symmetrical two-toned patterns which effectively turned the pirouetting ballerinas into spinning tops (drawing perhaps on the spiralling dancer of Schlemmer's *Triadisches Ballett* of 1922); whilst for *L'Étrange Farandole,* colour patches were applied to the dancers' leotards, which produced shifting illusions as they moved (*fig. 192*). In this regard, a true fusion was established between the visual arts and dance; and to include the music with which the movement was synchronised. In the case of Matisse, this fusion would follow through to his studio projects, his *Jazz* collage sequence creating its own 'theatre' in which, according to Rischbieter, colours and shapes 'contain so much freshness and tension in their interrelationship that they evoke in the spectator the idea of movement, of gay, lively, joyful rhythms'.[608] Hockney's designs for *Septentrion* and *Varii Capricci* did not connect to the action or music in such a way, partly because the artist's involvement was restricted to the setting and did not include the costumes in which the dancers moved. As I have argued, however, even his sets for these ballets were largely disconnected from the other production elements.

Associations might be made between Hockney's creativity for dance and aspects of the previously-mentioned *Façade* (1931), which had likewise been composed by Walton and choreographed by Ashton for London's Royal Ballet. The scenery and costumes for this work had been designed - and re-designed in 1940 (*fig. 193*) - by John Armstrong, in a caricature style that predicted Osbert Lancaster's interpretation of *The Rake's Progress* opera at Glyndebourne (1953). The ballet's cheery theme clearly engages with *Varii Capricci*, yet Armstrong's design invites comparison with Hockney's set for *Septentrion*. The direct perspective; the dominant mansion and its adjacent

[608] Henning Rischbieter, 'The Lines and Colors of Henri Matisse', in *Art and the Stage in the Twentieth Century: Painters and Sculptors Works for the Theater*, Rischbieter, p. 81

metal railing; the implication of a precipice, on account of the sky beyond; and the static depiction of the fluffy white clouds were remarkably similar to those elements of Hockney's later creation for Roland Petit. The patent illustration of mobile features - the clouds, the boldly billowing laundry and the depicted woman at the window also served, in the way of the features of the *Septentrion* backdrop, to highlight the artifice of the scenario. More broadly, it is pertinent that, prior to its re-invention as a ballet score, Walton's music for *Façade* had been amalgamated with the abstract poetry of Edith Sitwell, with the first recital given in 1923. The artist John Piper had painted an intriguing stage curtain for a performance of this version in 1942, on which was depicted a bust of antiquity with a giant open mouth, through which the verse was recited with a megaphone (*fig. 194*). This distinctive central figure with its unusually angular head can be seen to anticipate the 'ancient Greek' masks that were later drawn by Hockney for *Oedipus Rex* (*fig. 195*). Hence, it is likely that Hockney was cognisant of the performance designs of Armstrong and Piper, and that they fed into his own theatre creations even beyond his dance assignments.

A further work of consequence, produced by the Royal Ballet in the months succeeding *Façade,* was *Rio Grande* (originally entitled *A Day in a Southern Port,* 1931).[609] Also choreographed by Ashton to a jazzy score by Constant Lambert, this was one of several ballets designed by visual artist Edward Burra. Its evocation of the seamy world of sailors and louche women in a tropical seaport was ideally suited to that artist's imagination, with the production later described as 'a Burra painting come to life'.[610] Yet his innovation had faced similar criticism to that bestowed on *Varii Capricci*, the backcloth having been deemed 'too colourful and busy for a stage design'.[611] As a notable adjunct to the subject of artists as designers, it was further claimed that such creative overshadowing 'always happens when you take a

[609] *Façade* and *Rio Grande* are amongst many Ashton-choreographed works discussed by David Vaughan in *Frederick Ashton and his Ballets* (London: A & C Black, 1977). His monograph does not, however, include *Varii Capricci*, which was not created until six years after its publication
[610] Dancer William Chappell quoted by Kavanagh, p. 140
[611] Kavanagh, p. 140

talented young man from outside the theatre'.[612] Burra, for his part, revealed the ambivalence of an outsider to stage collaboration when, in 1947, he described (in his inimitable, barely-punctuated style) his only foray into opera:

> I saw act I of Carmen the set I mean, it couldn't have been worse painted [...] but from the 10th row youd [sic] never notice any of the little nuances and from anyway [sic] further just a lovely far away dream.[613]

Whilst Hockney may not have been familiar with the entirety of Burra's theatre involvement, aspects of the older artist's designs - and notably *Rio Grande* - have clearly engaged with his own. Burra's scenery for this ballet (*fig. 196*), with its hillside setting, the distinctive balustrade, its lush and vivid flora, and static depiction of water (in the fountain) - predicted Hockney's creations for *Septentrion* and *Varii Capricci*; whilst his costume for the 'Creole Boy', with its diamanté-trimmed singlet (*fig. 197*), foresaw the camp stylisation of Clark's outfit for Anthony Dowell (*fig. 154*). The beaked carnival masks of Burra's costumes for *Don Juan* (Sadlers Wells, 1948) - which also appear in some of his paintings - were precursors to the madhouse masks of Hockney's 'Rake'; and the linear perspectives of *Miracle in the Gorbals* (Sadlers Wells, 1944) and the afore-mentioned *Carmen* (Royal Opera, 1947) anticipated those of Hockney's 'Magic Flute' (1978). Moreover, the *essence* of Burra's theatrical ingenuity - the blend of traditional production methods and visually distinctive design - would find its way into Hockney's stage creations.

Hockney's own legacy within the world of dance is ill-defined, and compounded by limited staging and referencing. Unlike his often-revisited operas - and beyond a sole re-run of *Septentrion* in Paris (March 1978) - neither of his ballets have been fully re-staged beyond their original series of performances. The reasons for this are multifarious. Petit was a particularly prolific creator who tended to immerse himself in new choreography rather than re-workings; and Ashton never envisioned his short comedy to be more than a supplement to his major undertakings (Kavanagh: 'For Ashton, too, the

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[612] Economist John Maynard Keynes quoted by Kavanagh, pp. 140-1
[613] Correspondence by Burra quoted by Jane Stevenson, *Edward Burra: Twentieth-Century Eye* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), p. 296

ballet was a trifle - 'it wasn't meant to stagger'').[614] Moreover, both were relatively low-budget affairs that did not require multiple airings to recoup financial outlay, and their short duration (forty and eighteen minutes respectively) naturally restricted performance options.

Whilst the lack of repeat staging is not necessarily indicative of quality or public reception, I have also found no evidence within the ensuing creativity of other designers to suggest any clear affiliation with these specfic sets; and neither has there been a balanced two-way exchange with the artist's own work in the studio. These dance designs, as I have argued, drew strongly on his previous paintings - and even his home environment - yet they did not comparably feed into his personal innovations. This was in marked contrast to Hockney's later opera undertakings which, as noted in my concluding chapter, would patently inform his studio endeavours.

### 4.6. Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated clear connections in terms of theme, mood and composition, between Hockney's self-standing ballet designs and his earlier work in the studio, and most notably his swimming pool interpretations and their representation of an exclusive, hedonistic - and frequently homosexual - lifestyle. These dance creations also mirrored the effect on Hockney's art of his personal environment and experience: the retrogressive shift of his paintings during his residency in Paris; the vibrant colours and fresh perspectives of his move to the Hollywood Hills; and the inspiration derived from his own home and private properties in Italy and France at which he had been a guest.

In terms of stagecraft, it has been revealed that both designs followed a retrogressive trajectory, employing painted, two-dimensional scenery, displayed behind - as opposed to integrated within - the performance, and with no creative consideration of space or illumination. They set the scene but did not drive the action or foster movement. Rather, the time-suspended

[614] Kavanagh, p. 579

stasis of both sets - emphasised by the 'frozen' depiction of transient elements (clouds, the surface of water) - served to counter the kinesis of the choreography and stress the illusion of the spectacle. Moreover, the exaggerated colours and coarsely painted forms of *Varii Capricci* were counterparts to those devices employed by the artist to oppose realism within his studio creativity.

As collaborations, it has emerged that these ballet endeavours were particularly disjointed. The set designs engaged with certain facets of the works' other production elements (notably the narrative of *Septentrion* and the music of *Varii Capricci*), yet were largely disconnected from the costumes and choreography. The potential for cohesion and agency through the costuming was lost because Hockney was not involved in this aspect of the projects; and, in both cases, it transpired that the set was created with minimal collaborative engagement and within a relatively short period of time.

Connections have been made in this chapter between Hockney's ballet designs and the previous undertakings of other visual artists; yet, conversely, these ventures have not noticeably inspired interpretations by other creators. Likewise, whilst there is much evidence that Hockney's personal creativity informed his dance designs, there are negligible indications that his ballet involvement served to shape his work in the studio. In terms of these projects, the exchange was unequal; yet, as I have mentioned, reversals would emerge, whereby his studio endeavours would clearly be driven by his ultimate trio of opera designs.

Significantly, these self-standing ballets have been amongst the least performed and least documented of Hockney's theatre commissions. Hence, this chapter, in assessing degrees of creative exchange, has also contributed to our understanding of this specific facet of his creativity.

## 5. The opera *The Rake's Progress* at Glyndebourne, 1975

Hockney's first engagement with the creation of opera was with the Glyndebourne Festival Opera, for which he undertook the set and costume designs for a new production, directed by John Cox, of *The Rake's Progress* (1975). This opera, with music by Igor Stravinsky and libretto by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman had been premiered at La Fenice theatre in Venice in 1951 and had since been staged around the globe. Indeed, between 1953 and 1963, Glyndebourne itself had presented numerous perfomances of a previous production of the work, directed by Carl Ebert and with sets and costumes designed by Osbert Lancaster.

Cox had approached Hockney to collaborate on Glyndebourne's new production of 'The Rake' in the summer of 1974.[615] He was familiar with the artist's creativity, including his youthful etchings on the 'Rake's Progress' theme; he had also previously attended the Hockney-designed *Ubu Roi* at the Royal Court in 1966; and through a mutual friend in that theatre's wardrobe department, the two had become personally acquainted during the play's series of performances.[616] A further eight years would pass, however, before Cox invited Hockney to undertake what is arguably his most distinctive stage design, with its ubiquitous cross-hatching effects evoking William Hogarth's series of prints *A Rake's Progress* (1735, *figs. 198-205*).[617]

Stravinsky had likewise been inspired, not by the etched and engraved prints but by Hogarth's paintings from which they derived (1732-3), which he had viewed at the Chicago Art Institute - on loan from London's Sir John Soane's Museum - in May 1947.[618] The subsequent prints by which Hockney was

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[615] Author's interview with Cox
[616] Ibid.
[617] Hogarth's prints were realised both by etching and engraving techniques, as delineated by Ronald Paulson's catalogue raisonné *Hogarth's Graphic Works* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965). N.b. Hogarth's original series of paintings and prints and the etching series of Hockney (1961-3) are entitled *A Rake's Progress*, whilst the opera is entitled *The Rake's Progress*
[618] Robert Craft and Vera Stravinsky, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978), p. 396

motivated are more detailed, although thematically and compositionally very similar. The series constitutes eight depictions of a moralistic fable: the rise and fall of one Tom Rakewell, who squanders his inheritance amid extravagance and debauchery, ending his days destitute and in a lunatic asylum. Yet Hogarth's visual narrative has been significantly modified by the opera's libretto, which includes the addition of the villainous Nick Shadow (thus also introducing a Faustian element to the plot); the substitution of the pregnant (by Tom) city dweller Sarah Young with the chaste 'country girl' Anna Trulove; and Tom's marriage of convenience, not to an old crone but to a celebrity bearded lady known as Baba the Turk. Only the brothel and madhouse scenes directly connect to Hogarth's representations (Act I, scene 2 and Act III, scene 3 linking with the third and eighth images respectively).

Hockney's sets for this opera comprised flat, traditional items of scenery which, together with the costumes, props and wigs, were overlaid with linear strokes suggestive of eighteenth-century engraving. The scenes depicted the garden of the Trulove family (by day and by night, *figs. 206-7*), the brothel of Mother Goose (*fig. 208*), the drawing room of Tom's lavish London house (later revisited in a cluttered state and as the location for the auction of his goods, *fig. 209*), the exterior of the same mansion (*fig. 210*), a graveyard by night (*fig. 211*), and the madhouse (Bedlam, *fig. 212*). A themed drop curtain was also included (*fig. 219*). Hockney adhered in essence to the libretto's instructions, with the exception of two scenes (arguably the most memorable of this production): the brothel and the madhouse. In the former, the specified drinking table was replaced by a large central bed, in accordance with the director's focus on the rake's sexual encounter with Mother Goose (this notably took place *en scène*, in opposition to the original instruction for Tom to be led offstage by her, *fig. 213*). In the latter, the chorus was incarcerated in ranks of wooden coops behind Tom's straw bale, instead of being freely positioned downstage of it (*fig. 214*). This was also against the grain of the libretto. Yet such dramatic licence would probably not have offended the composer. Stravinsky, when interviewed for a BBC documentary on Auden, claimed that he had chosen the poet as librettist for the opera, not for his skills as a dramatist but 'because of his special gift for versification':

> What I required was a versifier with whom I could collaborate in writing songs, an unusual starting point for an opera, I hardly need to add, as most composers begin with a search for qualities of dramatic construction and dramatic sensation. I had no knowledge of Wystan's dramatic gifts or even whether he was sensible to operatic stagecraft. I simply gave all priority to verse, hoping that we could evolve the theatrical form together.[619]

Both Stravinsky and Auden were accustomed to historical allusion at the time of their association. Auden had previously appropriated Greco-Roman stanzas (*In Memory of Sigmund Freud*, 1939), Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse (*Paid on Both Sides*, 1928; *The Wanderer*, 1930), and the poetic forms of Byron (*Letter to Lord Byron*, 1936) and Shakespeare (*The Sea and the Mirror*, 1944). Stravinsky, between the 'Russian' (c. 1907-19) and serialist (c. 1954-68) phases of his creativity, had referenced Pergolesi (*Pulcinella*, 1920), Tchaikovsky (*Le Baiser de la Fée*, 1928), and Beethoven and Haydn (*Symphony in C*, 1938-40). *The Rake's Progress* (1951), with its allusions to Monteverdi (*Orfeo*, 1607) and Mozart (*Don Giovanni,* 1787; *Cosí fan Tutte,* 1790) was the composer's final and most extensive work of this period; and it indulged his self-conscious imitation of earlier musical forms, as revealed by the specific correlations between the opening bars of *The Rake's Progress* and those of *Orfeo,* and between its epilogue and graveyard scene and those of *Don Giovanni*. Yet, as musicologist Herbert Lindenberger has argued, 'the listener is always reminded, by means of its dissonances and rhythmic irregularities, that the composer is not simply reproducing the past but rather interpreting it in a characteristically contemporary way'.[620]

That assertion prompts the investigation of this chapter into Hockney's visual re-interpretation of 'The Rake' and the extent to which he has likewise situated historical allusion within a modern framework. It provokes an assessment of his creative response to Igor Stravinsky's score of 1951 and the

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[619] Stravinsky's recollections of his collaboration with W. H. Auden were filmed at his Hollywood home on 5 November 1965 for the television documentary *Poet of Disenchantment: W H Auden*, written and prod. by Christopher Burstall for *Sunday Night* (TV series), British Broadcasting Corporation, broadcast on BBC1, 28 November 1965

[620] Lindenberger, in *Modernism and Opera*, Begam and Smith, p. 273

accompanying libretto of Auden and Kallman; and invites consideration of his engagement with Hogarth's creativity, particularly 'The Rake' prints of 1735, and his adaptation of elements of those eighteenth-century models into a compelling and distinctively contemporary design.

As Lindenberger has noted, a facet of early twentieth century neoclassicism is that its sense of pastiche infers a lack of seriousness, the feeling of playing with the audience.[621] Stravinsky later said of Auden, 'The making of poetry he seemed to regard as a game. [...] All his conversation about Art was, so to speak, *sub specie ludi'*.[622] Yet Lindenberger has argued that Stravinsky held a similar attitude towards his own neoclassical creativity, and has noted the general criticism that 'instead of making major pronouncements or stirring up big emotions, neoclassical composers and poets teased their consumers by doing little more than playing games'.[623] This prompts further questioning of Hockney's conceptualisation: Was this design a rounded and appropriate interpretation that connected with the aims of creators and collaborators or simply a vehicle for a singular witty allusion?

In terms of creative exchange, exploration will also be made of the interplay between the artist's studio creativity and his set and costume designs for this opera; and his relevant engagement with the creativity of other artists and designers. Such correlations will continue to be assessed from a scenographic, as well as an art-historical, perspective. Consideration will thus be given to the 'workability' of the designs, both in practical and theatrical terms; issues of collaboration specific to stage production; the degree and balance of fusion with other integrated art forms; and - after decades of repeated staging - the extent to which this specific interpretation has withstood the test of time.

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[621] Ibid., pp. 275-6. N.b. 'Neoclassicism' in the context of music infers reference to the Greco-Roman-inspired styles of the Baroque and Classical periods of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; whilst, in literature and the visual arts, it implies direct allusion to the period of Ancient Antiquity

[622] Robert Craft and Igor Stravinsky, *Memories and Commentaries* (London: Faber & Faber, 1960), p. 157

[623] Lindenberger, in *Modernism and Opera*, Begam and Smith, pp. 275-6

### 5.1. Hockney's engagement with the music and libretto

My consideration of the elements which served as starting points within Hockney's entire theatrical undertakings suggests a shift of emphasis as his career progressed, with his earlier focus on the given work's literary aspects ultimately ceding to the stimulus of the music. This appears to further correlate with a transferal of focus within his studio projects: most notably, from his youthful narratives to his post-'Rake' visual explorations. At the time of his Glyndebourne creativity, the textual or narrative content still appears to have been his initial source of inspiration, with his engagement with the music as a less immediate, but ultimately significant, evolution. Of *The Rake's Progress*, he would claim:

> First I read the libretto and I loved that straight away. It was by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman - a wonderful, witty, very literate libretto - which not all operas have. I started listening to the opera. To begin with, the music seemed very difficult; I listened and there was probably very little I got, maybe the Chatterbox aria when she sings 'Snuffboxes came from Paris'; it's wonderful music, that Chatterbox. But slowly the music came to me. The more I listened, the more beautiful it became, and I saw how exciting it was.[624]

Hockney has claimed that it was on account of the music, and its eighteenth century references, that he felt impelled to return to Hogarth's etchings for visual inspiration; and that the jagged, linear quality of Stravinsky's composition led him to explore the idea of cross-hatching, which he considered to be a visual equivalent.[625] In this regard, it is noteworthy - especially in the light of his purported synaesthesia - that Hockney appears to possess a particular empathy for the 'shape' as well as the 'colour' of sounds, later criticising the Peter Sellars' production of *Pelleas and Mélisande* (designed by George Tsypin, 1993) because it 'was dominated by straight lines in the midst of fluid music. [...] I couldn't connect'.[626] Director John Cox has praised the resulting coherence between Hockney's design and the score,

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[624] Hockney, 1993, p. 21
[625] Friedman, p. 100
[626] David Mermelstein, 'An Artist in Many Dimensions', *New York Times*, 2 February 1997 < https://www.nytimes.com/1997/02/02/arts/an-artist-in-many-dimensions.html> [accessed 19 August 2017]

noting that he had achieved 'a visual equivalent of the music in the most extraordinary way: very angular, very strict, very disciplined, with a lot of clarity and a lot of sensitivity too'; and that 'the music was 'engraved'; and what makes David's work so strong is that it looks engraved'.[627] I propose that the musical inclusion of the harpsichord is particularly pertinent in this respect, because its strings are plucked rather than struck, and this lends a *staccato* precision to its sound to which Hockney's sharply defined lines corresponded.

His appreciation of the 'Chatterbox' aria nonetheless supports my view that text and/or narrative was the primary impetus within his early opera creativity, the emphasis of this particular song being firmly on the lyrics (and despite the artist's compliment to the music). This aria may have appealed to Hockney on account of its stylistic evocation of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas and the ditties of music hall and pantomime that he would have encountered during his childhood theatre attendances. These would have similarly featured clever lyrics performed almost as *recitative*.

Two further factors are of relevance to the secondary position of music as a stimulus. Firstly, Hockney did not read music and had no formal musical training.[628] This is revealed by errors in his representations of musical notation, particularly within the 'Blue Guitar' etchings. Secondly, the unexpectedness of Stravinsky's score with its unconventional harmonies and instrumentation (as explained by musicologist Brian Trowell) rendered *The Rake's Progress* the least musically accessible of all the operas for which the artist would create.[629]

I suggest that Hockney's primary engagement with the libretto owes much to his broad personal interest in literature. It is pertinent to this connection that he admired and regularly quoted the lines from Auden's *Letter to Lord Byron*, (1936):

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[627] Cox interviewed in 'An Introduction to The Rake's Progress', *The Rake's Progress,* Roussillon, 2010, DVD; author's interview with Cox
[628] Webb, p. 11
[629] Brian Trowell, 'The New and the Classical in *The Rake's Progress*', in *Stravinsky: Oedipus Rex/The Rake's Progress,* John, pp. 62-3

To me Art's subject is the human clay,
And landscape but a background to a torso;
All Cézanne's apples I would give away
For one small Goya or a Daumier.[630]

His youthful familiarity with Auden's verse is further demonstrated by *The Fourth Love Painting* of 1961, which presents the (previously-discussed) pun on the line 'I will love you forever' in the form of 'I will love you at 8pm next Wednesday'.[631] That Hockney had been previously drawn to the works of Hogarth - described by Horace Walpole as 'a writer of comedy with a pencil, rather than a painter'- underscores his literary leanings.[632] Indeed, the facility for narrative had been the attraction of Hogarth's 'Rake's Progress' chronicle as the foundation for Hockney's own series of etchings (1961-3) on a loosely-based, contemporary theme ('I decided to do *A Rake's Progress* because this was a way of telling a story').[633]

Hockney genuinely enjoyed the company of writers, counting Stephen Spender and Christopher Isherwood - whose partner, Don Bachardy, was a visual artist - amongst his friends; and in 1969, he had met and depicted W. H. Auden, whose celebrated output already included the libretto of *The Rake's Progress* and the previously-discussed play *Paid on Both Sides* (first staged in 1930, and on which Hockney would collaborate in 1983). Such literary associations were surely a foundation to his dialogue with the operatic narrative and text. It is noteworthy, however, that despite his acquaintance with Auden, the artist never had occasion to discuss 'The Rake' with either of its librettists, both of whom had died just prior to the Glyndebourne staging (Auden in 1973 and Kallman, having relocated to Greece, in January 1975).[634] Moreover, communication with Auden had been negatively impacted by the awkwardness of the said encounter, the writer having been disgruntled at the

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[630] Hockney, 1976, p. 195; W. H. Auden, *Letter to Lord Byron* (1936), in *W. H. Auden: Collected Poems,* ed. by Edward Mendelson (London: Faber & Faber, 1991), p. 100
[631] W. H. Auden, *Dichtung und Wahrheit (An Unwritten Poem), XLVIII* (1959), in *W. H. Auden: Collected Poems*, Mendelson, p. 662
[632] Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England, vol. 4* (London: J. Dodsley, 1781)
[633] Hockney, 1976, p. 65
[634] Author's interview with Hockney

uninvited attendance of Peter Schlesinger and R. B. Kitaj at his portrait sitting with Hockney for *The Observer*.[635] Schlesinger later noted that 'feeling he'd been put on display, Auden was furious, so I tried to be as inconspicuous as possible'.[636]

Hockney had, of course, routinely incorporated physical text into his pre-Glyndebourne studio work. It had allowed him to convey a message, and to introduce homosexuality as a theme at a time when, as Melia and Luckhardt have suggested, 'he had not yet found a figurative means of presenting the subject'.[637] Its inclusion also assisted him in overcoming creative barriers of realism and abstraction, for even the presence of a single word - as in *Queen* (1960) - could invest a painting with both artifice and meaning. Within this opera design, the inclusion of text likewise stressed the 'non-reality' of the performance and served as a communication tool. It was used to inform (within signs and 'speech balloons' on the drop curtain); to identify (on Tom's portal and the auctioneer's podium); and to reinforce the librettists' message (in poetic extracts prominently displayed within the brothel and madhouse scenes). Text would continue to feature in Hockney's subsequent designs for *The Magic Flute* (1978) and *Parade* (1981), yet was not an element of any of his later stage creations; and I propose that it is no coincidence that the integration of text within his theatre engagement diminished in direct correlation to its reduction within his studio innovation, to his development as a stage designer, and to music as the supplanting catalyst within his theatre creativity.

Moreover, I argue that Hockney used text as a connecting bridge between music and visual art. This can be seen in his youthful paintings, in which musical references (such as the previously-noted song title *I'm in the Mood for Love*) had mostly taken a titular or textual - as opposed to directly pictorial - form. Text would similarly interconnect music and art within his stage design

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[635] Hockney, 1976, p. 194
[636] Peter Schlesinger, *A Chequered Past: my visual diary of the 60s and 70s* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), p. 25
[637] Luckhardt and Melia, p. 14

for 'The Rake', with allusions to Auden and Kallman's lyrics incorporated (as mentioned) into the imagery. The brothel banner 'Shut your ears to prude and preacher, follow nature as thy teacher' reiterated Tom's musical declaration that his duty is 'To shut my ears to prude and preacher / And follow Nature as my teacher' (Act I, sc. 2); whilst the Bedlam banner, 'Leave all love and hope behind, out of sight is out of mind', was a direct transcription of the lyrics, as sung by the chorus in Act III, sc. 3 ('Leave all love and hope behind! Out of sight is out of mind / In these caverns of the dead').

Two issues, however, concerning the stimuli of this interpretation are worthy of note. Firstly, Hockney's reference to Hogarth's prints was distinct from the composer's own source, Stravinsky having drawn inspiration not from the etchings and engravings, but from the series of oil paintings which preceded them; and these do not possess the 'linear, spiky' qualities that Hockney identified in the music and chose to evoke.[638] Secondly, the artist elected to work on the designs - between October and December 1974 - in Hollywood rather than Europe, later becoming aware that Stravinsky had likewise composed his self-proclaimed 'Italian-Mozartian' music in Hollywood between 1947 and 1951.[639] Yet the libretto, comprised of iambic tetrameters and pentameters, was written in classic English verse; and both Hogarth and his visual fable are synonymous with London.[640] Indeed, 'The Rake' series references several of that city's real locations at the time of its creation: the infamous Rose Tavern in Drury Lane (scene 3), St James's Palace and Whites' gambling house (scene 4), Marylebone Old Church (scene 5), The Fleet debtors' prison (scene 7), and Bethlehem Royal Hospital ('Bedlam', scene 8). In terms both of motivation and research resources, Hockney's decision to eschew London for Los Angeles whilst conceiving these designs might be considered curious, particularly as Hogarth was his primary source of visual reference. His personal explanation was that London, on account of

[638] Hockney interviewed in 'An Introduction to The Rake's Progress', *The Rake's Progress,* Roussillon, 2010, DVD
[639] Hockney, 1993, p. 23; Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: the Composer and His Works* (London: Faber & Faber, 1979), p. 418
[640] White, p. 418

its social distractions, was less conducive than L.A. to the intensity of focus required by the project.[641]

### 5.2. Hockney's engagement with Hogarth

The artist's connection to Hogarth would seem to extend beyond *The Rake's Progress*. As one who has retained his Yorkshire accent and customs despite years of overseas residency, Hockney has surely identified with his predecessor's 'Englishness', particularly in terms of subject matter.[642] The rise of the Industrious 'Prentice, for example, to become Lord Mayor of London (*Industry and Idleness*, 1747) was mirrored within his own family when his brother Paul became Lord Mayor of Bradford in 1977. Moreover, such identification is implicit in the 'Englishman abroad' context of his earlier etchings on the 'Rake's Progress' theme.[643]

A shared sense of humour includes the use of satire, and most notably concerning those with wealth yet lacking judgement. This theme prevails in Hogarth's *Taste in High Life* (1742), *A Harlot's Progress* (1732) and *Marriage à la Mode* (1743) series, and in his second plate of *A Rake's Progress* (*fig. 199*), in which the coiling list discloses Tom as an esteemed patron of the arts whilst his display of works proclaims his true ignorance and vulnerability to deception. Comparisons may be made with Hockney's *California Art Collector*, *The Actor*, *Beverly Hills Housewife*, and *American Collectors (Fred and Marcia Weisman)*. In each case, much of the satire rests in the depicted artworks, with Hogarth parodying the follies of fashion of the 1740s and Hockney, the kind of sculptures which were *de rigeur* for collectors of the 1960s. Hogarth's satirical use of metapictures likewise feeds into Hockney's opera design in the rather pompous paintings adorning the walls of Tom's grand home. These in turn illustrate the cyclical interplay between his stage and studio creativity in their evocation of *A Hollywood Collection* of 1965: his

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[641] Author's interview with Hockney

[642] Hockney's Californian acquisition of specifically English food items (the yeast spread Marmite and Weetabix breakfast cereal) and his fruitless quest for bloater paste is noted by Sykes, 2011, p. 144

[643] Hockney's eponymous series of sixteen etchings (1961-3), whilst nodding to Hogarth's original concept, is loosely based on his experiences during his first trip to the United States in 1961 and bears no direct correlation to his designs for this opera

'ready-made' set of deliberately bad images, satirising the taste of the ignorant collector.

A linking personal foundation may underpin this particular shared theme. Hogarth, as described by Julie Egerton, 'began at the lowest level of artistic work, engraving designs on silver' and 'began late, and had little formal training' as a painter (he enrolled in the Academy of Painting in 1720).[644] His work, despite its popularity, was regularly disparaged - including, in 1759, by his contemporary Joshua Reynolds, who contested that it lacked the nobility and grandeur of art of the Italian Renaissance; and, as David Bindman has since suggested, 'in one sense Reynolds reasserted the values of the 'Connoisseurs' who had been on the Grand Tour in Italy, and who built their own visual culture around Italian painting'.[645] Indeed, in 1971, Tate director Norman Reid conceded that '[Hogarth's] appeal to an audience far wider than the normal art-loving public has perhaps made him slightly suspect to the connoisseur and aesthete'.[646]

Hockney presents a similar case. Although a well-trained graduate of the Royal College of Art, his northern working-class roots rendered him an 'outsider' in the cultural milieu of London, whilst his associations with Pop Art and 1960s' celebrity served to promote, but also to undermine, his reputation.[647] The lampooning of the art establishment and its collectors may be viewed as a reaction by both creators to their personal denigration; likewise their respective contributions to the field of art theory, which intimate a desire to be taken seriously.[648] This is particularly significant in the light of

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[644] Judy Egerton, *Hogarth's Marriage A-la-Mode* (London: National Gallery Company, 2010), p. 7. N.b. *Marriage à la Mode* is variously spelt by publishers and authors, as exemplified by Egerton's title

[645] Jenny Uglow, *Hogarth* (London: Faber & Faber, 1997), p. 616; David Bindman, 'The fame of *A Rake's Progress*: The paintings and the prints', in *A Rake's Progress: From Hogarth to Hockney,* ed. by Robin Simon and Christopher Woodward (London: Apollo Magazine, 1997), p. 4

[646] Norman Reid quoted by Stephen Deuchar, 'Foreward', in *Hogarth*, ed. by Mark Hallett and Christine Riding (London: Tate Publishing, 2006), p. 9

[647] Faulkner, in *David Hockney*, Melia, pp. 21, 24

[648] Hogarth's manuscripts *The Apology for Painters* (unfinished) and *The Analysis of Beauty* (1753) are discussed in the monographs of Ronald Paulson (1974, pp. 301-23, 393-4) and David Bindman (1981, pp. 149-65); Hockney's writings, as previously

the perceived flippancy of their respective personae (Hogarth has been labelled a 'pleasant rogue' and Hockney a 'clown with vision').[649] Ironically, the very humour that has popularised their creativity - whether Hogarth's biting satire or Hockney's quirky playfulness - has itself been a factor in their marginalisation, for comedy has traditionally been a lowly-ranked art form; and, as Paul Barlow has expounded, 'this hierarchy was also typically allied to class hierarchies, the lower genres being associated with the lower classes'.[650]

In their respective ways, both men have been political pioneers. Hogarth successfully lobbied to protect the copyright of artists and did much to promote English art within his own country (as revealed by *Battle of the Pictures*, 1744-5).[651] Demonstrating his interest in and concern for the theatre, he also waged an effective campaign for the revival of Shakespeare 'in the original'.[652] Hockney's political message has centred on his homosexuality, whether broaching the theme in the first place at a time when it was still illegal (*We Two Boys Together Clinging*), or representing same sex domesticity as acceptable and unexceptional (*Domestic Scene, Los Angeles*).

Both creators have astutely and empathetically observed the human condition. Indeed, critic Philip Hensher, in considering *My Parents*, observed that the whole humanity of Hockney's mother was in 'the shy awkwardness' of her slightly-bent right ankle (*fig. 51*).[653] Hockney has acknowledged Hogarth's precedence in this regard: 'To any English art student, William Hogarth is a great artist. It always seemed to me that he had a very human eye. He

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noted, include *Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the lost techniques of the Old Masters* (2001) and *A History of Pictures* (2016)

[649] Mark Hallett, *Hogarth* (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), p. 99; Emma Yorke, 'Clown With Vision', *Town*, September 1962

[650] Paul Barlow, 'The Death of History Painting in Nineteenth-Century Art?', *Visual Culture in Britain*, vol. 6, no. 1, Summer 2005, p. 1

[651] Robin Simon, *Hogarth, France and British Art* (London: Hogarth Arts, 2007), p. 1

[652] Robin Simon, 'Hogarth and the Popular Theatre', in *Renaissance and Modern Studies* vol. 22, ed. by George Parfitt and J. H. Reid (Nottingham: University of Nottingham, 1978), p. 13

[653] Philip Hensher, 'David Hockney', *The Mail on Sunday* (*Event* magazine), 12 Feb 2017, p. 30

understood mankind's follies and had a soft spot for them'.[654] It is thus notable that Hockney was approached to design 'The Rake' on account of his own 'human element', with Cox opting to project the emotional facet of the opera.[655] As the director explained:

> I thought, this was somebody who has thought of the subject and would be easy and comfortable with this kind of moralistic tale - which at the same time has a lot of humour, as well as a lot of humanity. For me, it's a very human story. It's not a satire, it's not a social commentary.[656]

Cox also remarked upon Hockney's eye for detail: an attribute likewise shared by his predecessor.[657] In his studied scenarios, for example, Hogarth would depict the small velvet patches that were worn on the face to disguise blemishes from the pox (*fig. 200*). Their inclusion, however, was never incidental but always to shed light on a character or situation. In a latterday parallel, a surviving document from the Hockney-Cox collaboration stipulates that 'no black spots should be worn by performers outside of the brothel scene': a contemporary nod to Hogarth's own meticulousness.[658] Such attention to specifics would extend to the flooring, which was precisely overlaid with the ubiquitous cross-hatching. In fact, Hockney, having routinely spectated from upper balconies in his youth - and recalling a version of *Der Rosenkavalier* in which the appearance of the floor was changed for each act - has been particularly mindful of the physical stage as seen from above.[659]

Hogarth too was an avid theatre-goer and, like Hockney, enjoyed a diversity of entertainment, recalling in his later years how shows of all sorts gave him 'uncommon pleasure'.[660] Fairground booths, plays and players are recurrent subjects in his works (*A Scene from 'The Beggar's Opera'*, 1731; *David*

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[654] Hockney quoted by Friedman, p. 100
[655] Cox interviewed in 'An Introduction to The Rake's Progress', *The Rake's Progress,* Roussillon, 2010, DVD
[656] Author's interview with Cox
[657] Ibid.
[658] *The Rake's Progess* production file, Glyndebourne archives
[659] Sykes, 2011, p. 18; Antony Peattie, 'Painter's Progress', *Opera Now*, October 1991
[660] Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth: His Life, Art and Times*, abridged by Anne Wilde (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 5

*Garrick as Richard III*, 1745); and, according to Robin Simon, he may have personally worked as a scenery painter at Drury Lane and at Southwark and Bartholomew fairs.[661] Moreover, the works of both artists are 'theatrical' in their visual trickery, notably *The Painter and his Pug* (1745, *fig. 215*) and *Model with Unfinished Self-Portrait* (*fig. 80*), both of which are 'paintings of paintings'; likewise in their sense of staging, as demonstrated by *The Strode Family* (c.1738, *fig. 216*), and *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy* (*fig. 78*). Hockney's pictorial theatricality has been previously argued in this thesis, whilst Frédéric Ogée and Olivier Meslay similarly suggest of Hogarth that 'one can always feel an element of 'staginess' in these tableaux, occasionally underlined by the presence of a dark curtain on the side'.[662]

An implication of collage permeates Hogarth's groupings which intensifies the theatricality of his crowd scenes. His swathes of human activity and their contiguous clusters of intricacy add density and texture, as exemplified by *An Election Entertainment* (1755, *fig. 217*) and *Southwark Fair* (1733, *fig. 218*), the former being thematically and compositionally aligned to *The Rake at the Rose Tavern* (*fig. 200*) from the 'Rake's Progress' series. As Ogée and Meslay have argued, 'a striking characteristic of [Hogarth's] *oeuvre* became his recourse to a kind of visual tangibility, or tactility, through a constant proliferation of details'.[663] Hockney, as we have seen, has likewise made use of collage, both literally and metaphorically, within his own creativity (*Life Painting for a Diploma*; *Portrait Surrounded by Artistic Devices*) and this element would be developed in his photographic 'joiners' and implied in his paintings of the 1980s, including *A Visit with Christopher and Don, Santa Monica Canyon, 1984* (1984).

As a characteristic of Pop Art, collage was implicit in the works of his contemporaries - R. B. Kitaj (*Errata*, 1963-4), Richard Hamilton (*Just what is it*

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[661] Simon cites J. T. Smith (*Ancient Topography of London*, 1815, p. 60) and Sybil Rosenfeld ('Was Hogarth a Scene Painter?', *Theatre Notebook*, VIII, 1952, p. 18) in support of his suggestion that Hogarth had painted scenery for the theatre. Simon, in *Renaissance and Modern Studies* vol. 22, Parfitt and Reid, pp. 13-15

[662] Olivier Meslay and Frédéric Ogée, 'William Hogarth and Modernity', in *Hogarth,* Hallett and Riding, p. 27

[663] Ibid.

*that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?*, 1956), Eduardo Paolozzi (*Real Gold*, 1949) and Peter Blake (*On the Balcony*, 1955-7) - and Hockney would have certainly been familiar with their approach. His sensibility to collage, fostered by his 'Pop' affiliations and his own creative practice, can be identified in his setting for Tom's drawing room; and particularly in the auction scene (Act III, scene 1; *fig. 230*) where the clutter of incongruous artefacts and the horizontal 'human tide' visibly resonates with Hogarth's own models. Moreover, the immediate illegibility of this scene also harnesses that crucial element of Hogarthian aesthetics whereby the spectator is obliged to look closer in order to discern and assimilate the details. Even then, many opera-goers would be unaware that Hockney's hanging reptile was extracted from the later-discussed *Hudibras beats Sidrophel* (*fig. 231*), just as those perusing *Southwark Fair* (*fig. 218*) would be unlikely to comprehend the topical significance of the left-hand banner, which concerned a real 'mutiny' at the Drury Lane Theatre.[664] Hockney's designs, like some of his paintings, can thus be read on different levels, just as Hogarth's creations - and particularly his etchings - are replete with encrypted allusions.

In purely practical terms, the most evident connection between Hogarth and Hockney is their shared engagement with printmaking. Hogarth oversaw etchings and engravings of many of his paintings, and Hockney's personal skills in etching set him apart from most of his contemporaries. Described by art critic Waldemar Januszczak as 'an intuitive mark-maker', his predilection for symmetrical design, marks and symbols is of relevance to this pursuit.[665] Michael McNay has noted that an early lithograph (*Self-portrait, 1954*):

> [...] shows the boy David against striped wallpaper in a striped tie and striped trousers: quite why he was togged up like that is anyone's guess, but pictorially it demonstrates an absorption in pattern and flat spatial planes that

[664] Sean Shesgreen, ed., *Engravings by Hogarth* (New York, Dover Publications, 1973), text re. plate 27 (unpaginated)
[665] Waldemar Januszczak, 'How he made his mark', *The Sunday Times* (*Culture* supplement), 12th Feb 2017, p. 45

> points to his future, to work such as his second shot at the Rake's Progress [his stage designs for Glyndebourne].[666]

A photograph of the artist - again sporting a striped shirt and striped tie - by Peter Schlesinger, which features on the dust jacket of his autobiography (1976) is particularly pertinent in this regard, as it was taken in 1975, the actual year of the Glyndebourne production.

The printmaking correlation is intertwined with a further, French, connection. Both Hogarth and Hockney spent considerable time in Paris; and French artistic influence, particularly in terms of etching and engraving, would be pivotal to their respective creativity. Robin Simon, in his book *Hogarth, France and British Art*, claimed that his subject 'was driven from his earliest days by a thorough awareness of French painting and engraving, the principles of French artistic training and the operations of the French academy'.[667] It is known that Hogarth journeyed to Paris with a view to commission engravers, whilst Hockney honed his etching technique in that same city under Aldo Crommelynck, the long-time master printmaker to Pablo Picasso.[668] He was working with Crommelynck in Paris in 1973 and early 1974, just prior to designing *The Rake's Progress* opera; and this, I suggest, was a probable catalyst to his use of cross-hatching within this production.

### 5.3. Specific connections to Hogarth's prints

The theme of etching within Hockney's interpretation was introduced from the very outset in his design for the distinctive drop curtain (*fig. 219*), which connects in terms of form and composition with the second image of Hogarth's two-part *Analysis of Beauty* (1753, *fig. 220*). Its integrated boxes allude - in the manner of Hogarth's boxed studies - to the musical score (specifically, the opening bars of the prelude), the artist's palette, and etching techniques. In the uppermost box to the front of the tree, a sketched likeness of Hogarth is accompanied by the figure 88 which, in the context of Hockney's earlier coding system, might be translated as HH, indicating the Hockney-

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[666] Eamonn McGabe (photos) and Michael McNay (text), *Artists and their Studios* (Dartmouth: Angela Patchell Books, 2008), p. 49
[667] Simon, 2007, p. 1
[668] Egerton, p. 70; Hockney, 1976, p. 288

Hogarth association. On the central palette, a separate pairing of the numbers 9 and 4 similarly infer the letters 'I' and 'D' (possibly 'Igor' Stravinsky and 'David'). The central motif clearly replicates Hogarth's frontispiece to Clubbe's *Physiognomy* (1763, *fig. 221*) - a work that claimed to consider 'the different tempers, passions and manners of men'.[669] The original depiction shows nine figures in varying gravity-defying positions, with the underlying caption asserting the lowermost as intellectual, the middlemost as having common sense and the uppermost as a stark fool. A notable feature, however, is the giant magnet by 'the weighing house' sign that is symbolically causing the men's misalignment. Hockney's version, in omitting this feature, detaches itself from the original meaning and, out of context, his arc might be construed as representing the rake's demise, his figures appearing to fall rather than be raised. In a further reversal, the man pulling down on the magnet's rope is transposed as holding aloft a wooden sign.

The drop curtain provides a visual introduction, literally spelling out that this is a fable and - using speech balloons in the style of eighteenth-century cartoons (as employed by Hogarth in *A Just View of the British Stage*, 1724) - imparting useful snippets of production information: music by Igor Stravinsky; libretto by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman; produced by John Cox; decor by David Hockney, assisted by Mo McDermott; after W. Hogarth. As a throwback to the scribblings of Hockney's early-1960s paintings, the script is childlike in form and inconsistent in content (Hogarth preceded by an initial, yet Stravinsky by the complete forename); and the - deliberate or not - misspelling of 'assisted' ('assited', *fig. 222*), with the missing letter surmounted rather than overpainted, adds to the sense of amateurish spontaneity. Significantly, this same 'device' - for the error could surely have been less obviously corrected - had been previously used by Hockney in his 1961 painting *Egyptian Head Disappearing into Descending Clouds* (*fig. 223*), in which the letter 'p' has been noticeably added beneath the misspelled word, 'disapearing' [sic]. Elements of the curtain would be transferred by Hockney to the cover design

[669] John Clubbe, *Physiognomy; being a sketch only of a larger work upon the same plan: wherein the different tempers, passions, and manners of men, will be particularly considered*, first publ. 1763 (Farmington Hills: Gale ECCO, 2010)

for the opera's accompanying programme and to the set design for the later-discussed madhouse scene, yet now, as noted by Tim Batchelor, 'in anarchic disarray from their containment'.[670] Moreover, the necessity for the viewer to scrutinise these images in order to decipher additional layers of meaning engages with the original works of Hogarth, which host a profusion of detailed subplots and references that are not immediately discernable.

Allusions to Hogarth's creativity and the juxtaposition of its elements are fundamental to Hockney's design, upholding his claim that 'everything in it comes from Hogarth'.[671] Hence, the wall and gateway to the rear of the frontispiece (*fig. 224*) re-emerge almost exactly - to include the accompanying tree - in Hockney's set design for the opening scene (the Truloves' garden, *fig. 225*) and are further evoked in the walled graveyard of Act III, sc. 2.

His set for the brothel (*fig. 226*) presents precise parallels with Hogarth's sardonic etching *The Lottery* (1721, *fig. 227*) in the large wooden dais and its imposing central structure; the pictures, the giant lottery wheels and allegorical figures; and the row of rectangular panels below the stage. These were transformed by Hockney into operational doors (for which Hogarth's figure in the shuttered 'window' of the stage may have provided inspiration); and these doors both anticipate the cooped enclosures of the later mad scene and remind of the boxes at the lower edge of the drop curtain. The shape of the curtain is likewise evoked by the respective lines of the looping overhead garland and the angular wooden structure framing the bed. A study of performance photographs (including *fig. 228*) reveals two further features, which were borrowed from *Masquerade Ticket* (1727, *fig. 229*): the central clock on the back of the bed (which was possibly a later addition because it does not feature in the preliminary model); and, to measure sexual appetites, the 'lecherometers' at each side of the proscenium (barely visible in *fig. 228*)

[670] Tim Batchelor, textual contribution, in *Hogarth,* Hallett and Riding, p. 49
[671] Friedman, p. 62

which, far from being a Hockney invention, are precise extractions, including the text.[672]

Several hanging objects from Baba the Turk's collection of treasures (*fig. 230*) can be directly traced to Hogarth's eighth illustration for Samuel Butler's 'Hudibras' (*Hudibras beats Sidrophel*, 1726; *fig. 231*); whilst a similar crocodile adorns the ceiling of the third plate in his *Marriage à la Mode* series. In both instances, by showing these bizarre specimens in the office of a 'quack' doctor, Hogarth was satirising the contemporary trend for collecting as a testament to intellectual curiosity. Mummy cases were prized acquisitions (hence their inclusion in the back room of the latter), so Hockney's decision to pick up on this facet accentuated the satire of Tom and Baba as *parvenus*, with aspirations of intellectual, as well as financial, upward mobility.

A working sketch (*fig. 232*) reveals other hanging artefacts (some partially visible in *fig. 230*). Of these, the puppet violinist and statue with the note nailed to its head were procured directly from Hogarth's etching, *A Just View of the British Stage* (1724) and the musical mouth bawling for blood, from *Credulity, Superstition and Fanaticism* (1762, *fig. 237*). These items have prompted me to question whether Hockney simply dipped in and out of Hogarth's works, extracting ideas at random, or whether there were methodical lines of engagement. The artist, in his rather casual explanations has implied the former ('I looked all through the engravings [...] and I took from anything'), yet the themes of certain etchings on which he has drawn suggest a more formulated approach.[673] The graveyard tomb on which Tom and Nick Shadow play cards was directly informed - as affirmed by Cox - by the visually and thematically similar, third plate of Hogarth's *Industry and Idleness* series (*The idle 'prentice at play in the church yard, during divine service*, 1747; *fig. 233*); whilst the elegant facade of Tom's new mansion, signifying his sudden

[672] The 'lecherometers' (giant barometers) in *Masquerade Ticket* (*fig. 229*) are, according to the print's explanatory subtitle, an 'invention' of Hogarth to measure the 'inclinations' of the assembled company. They are respectively labelled 'Expectation, Hope, Hot, desire [subscript], Extreem Hot [sic], Moist, Sudden Cold' and 'Cool, Warm, Dry, Changable [sic], Hot, moist [subscript], Fixt [sic]'
[673] Author's interview with Hockney

rise in status, bears a strong resemblance to that of the sixth plate of the same series, which illustrates similarly auspicious circumstances (*The industrious 'prentice out of his time, and married to his master's daughter*, 1747; *fig. 234*). The 'bread machine' *(fig. 235)* - the most incredulous element of the entire opera - by which Tom attempts to turn stones into loaves, aptly replicates the equally fantastical money-making device in Hogarth's sardonic depiction *Some of ye Principal Inhabitants of ye Moon: Royalty, Episcopacy and Law* (1724, *fig. 236*). Moreover, the thematic connection between the excess and insanity of *Credulity, Superstition and Fanaticism* (1762) and the opera's evocation of Bedlam might, I suggest, have triggered Hockney's borrowing of the grotesque chandelier, the bawling mouth and the - ultimately unused - 'mental state' thermometer for inclusion in his asylum imagery (*figs. 237-8*).[674]

The artist's madhouse scene was structurally removed from its original counterpart (the eighth in Hogarth's 'Rake's Progress' series, *fig. 239*), yet closely adhered to it in terms of its elements. These included the musician with his music book on his head; the character peering through a telescope; and those wearing conical hats or crowns (*fig. 240*). The graffiti that covered the stage set 'walls' connected with Hogarth's inmate, scrawling behind the door (a figure that was the starting point for all the graffiti in this scene).[675] It also engaged with the scribbled text and personal, coded allusions of Hockney's paintings of the early 1960s. The madhouse jottings held comparable cryptic references, including the initials 'WH' as a probable homage to both William Hogarth and W. H. Auden; the recurring 'CK' in reference to the librettist Chester Kallman; and '$H_2O$', suggestive of both Hogarth and Hockney. Keith Benson (Glyndebourne's former head of lighting) informed me that, amongst the doodles, Hockney also chose to include his own telephone number.[676] This was confirmed by John Cox, with no other explanation than it was 'just David's humour'.[677]

[674] Author's interview with Cox
[675] Friedman, p. 105
[676] Author's interview with Keith Benson, 7 March 2017
[677] Author's interview with Cox

The innovation of installing the chorus in individual boxes might be perceived as an extension of Hogarth's row of cells in the original etching, although Hockney has claimed his sources of inspiration to be St. Mary's church in Whitby, 'full of very tall pews', and a picture by Hogarth of 'similar pews and heads showing above them'.[678] The box pews of St. Mary's do indeed resemble Hockney's set (*fig. 241*); whilst *The Sleepy Congregation* (1736) and plate II of the *Industry and Idleness* series (*The Industrious 'Prentice Performing the Duty of a Christian*, 1747) are plausible candidates for the unnamed picture. Certain features of the masks - and indeed, the vey concept of human heads in boxes - further identify with *The Analysis of Beauty II* (*fig. 220*). By positioning the chorus in rising tiers, Hockney - whether knowingly or not - also introduced a visual formation used repeatedly by Hogarth, as exemplified by *Scholars at a Lecture* (1736-7, *fig. 242*).

It could be argued, however, that the decision to install the chorus in these boxes was inappropriate, partly because it patently digressed from Hogarth's original *Rake's Progress* etchings (in which the inmates are milling about together); and partly because it contravened the original stage directions, which stipulate that the chorus should be mobile - in fact, at one point, even dancing 'with mocking gestures' - during the mad scene.[679] This design, as distinctive as it was, was thus in opposition to the concept of the opera's creators. Rather, it literally incarcerated the chorus and made what might have been a scene of frenzy, visually very static (*fig. 243*). John Cox was compliant in this; indeed, he told me that he *wanted* the chorus to be immobile, because he desired the madhouse to be 'a picture of Tom's brain' rather than 'a snapshot of what it was like in Bedlam in that era'.[680] The masks, he claimed, were meant to depersonalise, whilst the containment of their wearers enhanced the ambiguity: Were they really there or simply in Tom's mind? Thus Hockney's concept clearly aligned with that of the director

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[678] Author's interview with Hockney; Hockney quoted by Peattie, October 1991
[679] W.H. Auden and Chester Kallman, *The Rake's Progress* (libretto), in *Stravinsky: Oedipus Rex/The Rake's Progress,* John, p. 103
[680] Author's interview with Cox

although, for better or worse, it totally changed the mood of the scene in question.

### 5.4. Hockney's interpretation as theatre

This raises the issue of the extent to which these distinctive designs succeed in the context of performance. Are they appropriate? And do they 'work' in a practical, theatrical sense? Despite the general affirmation of the public (Hockney: 'The audience loved it') and mostly positive reviews (Jolliffe: 'among the most unforgettable strokes of genius in modern theatre design'), some critics remained unconvinced.[681] Author Spike Hughes has recorded that 'while there was much humour in Mr. Hockney's designs, there was nevertheless criticism that [...] the grotesque and evil side of the opera was missing in this production'.[682] In part, this could be due to the direction of John Cox, who has since assured me that he 'did not want evil', but it is pertinent that similar criticisms had been previously levelled at the Hockney-designed play *Ubu Roi* (1966).[683]

Tom Sutcliffe was vehemently opposed to the concept, arguing in his book *Believing in Opera* that:

> Hockney's jokey Hogarthian cross-hatching was irrelevant both to the opera's moral conundrum, its critique of experience and reason, and to Stravinsky's sense of musical and operatic history, his citations of earlier operatic music.[684]

Yet I counter his accusations of gimmickry and Hockney's failure to fully connect with the subtleties of the libretto and score, by citing the manifesto written by librettist W. H. Auden for the Group Theatre in 1935. In this statement the writer claimed that proper dramatic characters - as opposed to those in novels - should always be 'simplified, easily recognisable and over-life size' and that 'the Music Hall, the Christmas Pantomime and the country

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[681] Hockney, 1993, p. 28; John Jolliffe, *Glyndebourne: An Operatic Miracle* (London: John Murray, 1999), p. 244
[682] Spike Hughes, *Glyndebourne: A History of the Festival Opera* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1981), p. 263
[683] Author's interview with Cox
[684] Sutcliffe, pp. 328-9

house charade are the most living drama of today'.[685] Together with Kallman, Auden applied this theory to the 'Rake' libretto, changing the narrative to introduce the stylised and pantomime-sounding characters of Nick Shadow, Mother Goose, Anna Trulove (*en lieu* of Hogarth's Sarah Young), and the vaudevillian 'bearded lady' Baba the Turk (whom Tom marries in place of Hogarth's old crone). The simplistic, almost caricature, imagery of Hockney's design - to include the later addition of comedic red wigs for Mother Goose and the auctioneer - can be seen to correlate with Auden's theatrical objectives.

Regarding the music, Stravinsky's personal correspondence reveals that he perused the scores of Mozart for inspiration and instructed the librettists to observe the given era but that the consequence should nonetheless be contemporary.[686] His own composition adhered to this directive, its use of harmony and note distribution suggesting to Trowell that he was 'a man who listened to Mozart with very modern ears'.[687] Hockney's evocative cross-hatched grilles yet present-day 'comic book' outlines clearly afforded visual parallels. Indeed, the artist has acknowledged that, as the music was a pastiche of Mozart, so his design was a pastiche of Hogarth.[688]

The connection was underscored by his bold use of a mere three colours (red, blue and green) plus black and white, which were conventionally, albeit conservatively, used in eighteenth-century printing (*fig. 3*). His innovation of deploying these colours in abundance would lend a vibrant and visually-striking modernity to his design, whilst still engaging with the work's historical time frame. Colour - or lack of it - was also used to convey the hour and the mood, the nocturnal scenes and Tom's post-marriage home being reduced to stark tones of black and white. According to opera critic Nicholas Wroe:

> Innocent greens in the opening scenes are offset by a splash of red on Tom Rakewell's jacket, which then [quoting John Cox] 'spreads and bleeds with

[685] Auden quoted by Roger Savage, 'Making a libretto: three collaborations over *The Rake's Progress*', in *Stravinsky: Oedipus Rex/The Rake's Progress*, John, p. 57
[686] Griffiths, pp. 10-2
[687] Trowell, in *Stravinsky: Oedipus Rex/The Rake's Progress,* John, p. 63
[688] Friedman, p. 100

> the onset of his luxury and success'. Blacks and whites go on to define his decline, fall and redemption.[689]

In practical terms, however, the extensive cross-hatching was clearly a gamble, raising initial doubts as to its viability and necessitating much calculation and adaptation.[690] Keith Benson has recollected that the scenery was 'very flat' and with more white than is customary, and so was challenging to illuminate: 'You couldn't use cross-lighting because it would show the wrinkles on the canvas, so we had to flood the stage with light and let it bounce off the floor onto the set'.[691] Former head of wardrobe Tony Ledell also recalled that the cross-hatching on the first sample costumes resembled 'a checked tablecloth' and had to be totally re-scaled.[692] That the costumes were covered in the same markings as the scenery conferred the added potential for the performers to melt into the environment rather than stand out from it; and in a video interview, the conductor of the 2010 revival, Vladimir Jurowski, made the intriguing comment that:

> You need good actors to fill the space and to start owning the production, and dominating the production, and not becoming [sic] the sounding accompaniment to the set. This is a set which is quite difficult to compete with.[693]

The madmen's boxes were physically restrictive, with the chorus obliged to remain, sometimes hidden, in the cramped booths throughout the entire scene. Hockney has acknowledged that its members 'had to squeeze down' at strategic points, to be out of view from the balcony; whilst the director explained that the differing size of compartments obliged the physically smaller members to be positioned at the front, regardless of their vocal

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[689] Nicholas Wroe, 'The Rake's Progress: when Hockney met Hogarth', *Guardian*, 2 August 2010
[690] Friedman, p. 102
[691] Author's interview with Benson
[692] Author's telephone conversation with Tony Ledell, 12 April 2017
[693] Jurowski interviewed in 'Behind The Rake's Progress' (extra feature), *The Rake's Progress,* Roussillon, 2010, DVD

category.[694] He further conceded that, throughout the work, the players seemed 'hemmed in' by the scenery.[695]

The obvious reason for these design limitations is that Hockney was first and foremost a painter, and thus thought in terms of pictures, whereas an experienced scenographer might have created more sculpturally, more in terms of physical space. His stage designs *would* become more sculptural, more three-dimensional, as his career evolved. Indeed, Cox, who also directed Hockney's ultimate opera (*Die Frau ohne Schatten*) in 1992, suggested to me that stage design was 'possibly the closest that David ever got to sculpture'.[696] At this early stage, however, it would seem that he was still essentially creating a series of images that happened to have real people performing in them. Hogarth once claimed, 'My picture was my stage and men and women my players'.[697] Hockney's 'Rake' was the antithesis: the players were his models and the stage was his picture.

### 5.5. Collaborative and technical issues

Some of the afore-mentioned points highlight both the collaborative nature of stage creativity and Hockney's theatrical inexperience. Glyndebourne owner George Christie has recalled the need to recalculate Hockney's preliminary set measurements ('We were using imperial measurements at that time, and he was using metric') and the inventiveness of the wig department - by using multicoloured string - in the absence of clear directions from the designer.[698] Tony Ledell reported the need for similar improvisations concerning the costume designs for Anna Trulove and the chorus, and that Tom's dressing gown and Nick Shadow's overcoat - both of which were key to their characterisations - were 'collaborative additions', the original costume for the latter being a waistcoat and breeches.[699] Former stage crew member Nick

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[694] Peattie, October 1991; author's interview with Cox
[695] Author's interview with Cox
[696] Ibid.
[697] William Hogarth, 'Autobiographical Notes', in *The Analysis of Beauty with the Rejected Passages from the Manuscript Drafts and Autobiographical Notes*, ed. by Joseph Burke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), p. 209
[698] Christie quoted by Sykes, 2011, pp. 323-4
[699] Author's telephone conversation with Ledell

Murray corroborated that Hockney, as a newcomer, 'was very much guided by the Glyndebourne technical staff'. [700] Hence, for his opera debut, he both required and accepted the assistance of others.

The process was seemingly two-way, however, with Hockney contributing a painterly vision and expertise from which his colleagues could likewise learn. This is shown by the following account by the production's lighting designer, Bob Bryan:

> The biggest change made as we started to light the various scenes, was the use of colour. As we went through and David saw what effect colour was having on the set and singers, he encouraged me to use stronger colour in many scenes. The most striking was probably the opening of the brothel scene, where I used a very strong 'showbiz' pink Lee 128 and over the years that became Rosco 342. The snap Q into the Brothel with this strong colour was terrific. Similarly an open white snap into the Auction scene had the audience applauding.[701]

Despite Bryan's apparent enthusiasm, the illumination was clearly a collaborative challenge. Cox has revealed that Hockney was uncomfortable with other people lighting - and thus, changing the look of - his work; and how, during a technical break, when the focus lamps were extinguished and the basic working lights were enabled, he mused, 'Oh, why can't it always look like that!'.[702] This implies that the artist had not considered the matter of lighting - or its potential contribution - when he had drawn up 'The Rake' designs, as confirmed by his later admission: 'Lighting was something I'd never paid much attention to. When I did *The Rake's Progress* I didn't think about it at all and it wasn't well lit'.[703] This was in direct contrast to his ultimate trio of opera projects, for which the lighting would be intrinsic to his concept. For the first of these (*Tristan und Isolde*, *fig. 13*), Hockney has explained that 'we built a complex model and lighting system, knowing that the lighting had to

[700] Nick Murray, e-mail to the author, 29 March 2017
[701] Bob Bryan, e-mail to the author, 14 March 2017
[702] Hockney quoted by Cox; author's interview with Cox
[703] Hockney, 1993, p. 39

be an important part of the design' (*fig. 314*); and for *Turandot* (*fig. 315*) he stressed that 'we used lighting right from the start'.[704]

I argue that his awareness of stage illumination developed in tandem with his awareness of theatrical space. The sets for the artist's latter three operas woud be noticeably more sculptural than those of his previous undertakings, with each incorporating 'distant horizons' which gave illusory depth to the performance space. The evolution to greater three-dimensional creativity is underscored by Hockney's explanation of his working process for 'Tristan', in which he 'never made drawings, but kept cutting out shapes, placing them in space, then lighting it'.[705] He described how lighting and texture were used for spatial effect:

> The first act of Tristan takes place aboard a ship. I realized that the sails could be used so as to reduce the distance between the audience and the stage. The rest of the ship was painted in bold patterns, but the sails were painted in solid colour which, lit in a certain way, made them appear very close up, drawing the audience into the scene. [...] Devices like this pulled you into the scene, called the audience into the space of the drama. It was all done with lighting and with lines that made spaces, at times contradictory spaces.[706]

It is noteworthy, in this regard, that writer and critic Gao Xingjian said of scenographer Robert Wilson:

> He was one of the earliest in theater to suggest the possibility of working with *light* beyond simply *lighting*. Light for him, is the set, is the space. It plays a major role'.[707]

Regarding 'The Rake', a significant collaborative development from Hockney's previous theatre engagement was his resolve to leave nothing to chance in terms of the interpretation of his ideas for the settings. On the advice of his assistant Mo McDermott, who had garnered some previous experience in opera production, he presented scale models of the sets *en lieu* of preliminary

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[704] Ibid., pp. 172, 218
[705] Ibid., p. 172
[706] Ibid., p. 173
[707] Gao Xingian, 'Portraits for an absurd world', in *Robert Wilson from Within*, ed. by Margery Arent Safir (Paris: Arts Arena/Flammarion, 2011), p. 265

drawings.[708] These models were shown to the production team at the very outset and this would set a precedent for all his subsequent opera designs.

Although a working partnership between experienced stage professionals and a visual artist accustomed to creative autonomy was a potential recipe for disaster (Hockney: 'I'm willing to collaborate with people, but I'm not interested in illustrating someone else's ideas'), the alliance appears to have been successful.[709] John Cox later reported that '[Hockney] was keen on the idea of collaboration, which nobody expected'; the artist claimed that he 'had enjoyed collaborating with other people'; and of those individuals with whom I later engaged, none were critical of his teamwork.[710] On the contrary, Keith Benson described him as 'down-to-earth, not egotistical' and observed that, unusually, he made adjustments to the set himself; whilst Bob Bryan found him to be 'very collaborative to work with'.[711] In answer to my question whether dealing with Hockney - as a famed visual artist - was different to liaising with a 'regular' stage designer, Bryan replied:

> After our first meeting and David getting to know the lighting method, the answer is 'No'. We (myself, David and John) had a very close working relationship.[712]

The input of John Cox was integral to the finished design, most notably in the introduction of the hanging swing in the Truloves' garden and in the realisation of the madhouse scene. The swing (*fig. 253*) - which Cox has claimed was his conception, and is absent from the prelimary model (*fig. 206*), which indeed suggests a later insertion - served to stress the initial childlike innocence of the protagonist and his beloved, and the polar opposition of their youthful milieu to the subsequent locales of the capital.[713] The madhouse, according to Cox, evolved from Hockney having drawn two or three sketches of a lunatic stood in a box as an indication of captivity, whereupon he responded, 'Why

[708] Friedman, p. 100; Peattie, October 1991
[709] Hockney, 1993, p. 21
[710] Cox quoted by Sykes, 2011, p. 324; Hockney, 1993, p. 28
[711] Author's interview with Benson; Bryan, e-mail to the author, 14 March 2017
[712] Bryan, e-mail to the author, 14 March 2017
[713] Author's interview with Cox

don't we put them *all* in boxes?'.[714] Cox maintained that the chorus masks similarly developed from his initiative.[715] Yet Hockney's account of events somewhat differs, with the director simply being 'delighted' at his [Hockney's] idea.[716] Ultimately, it would seem that the artist and Cox bounced and developed proposals between each other, and with much overlap in creative roles. This is pertinent to the later direction of Hockney's theatrical engagement (in 1997, he would assume the position - and title - of director for the refreshed *Tristan und Isolde*). Cox has acknowledged the uniqueness of this situation:

> Normally the director is supreme arbiter of all questions about what is seen and done, but when you invite someone like David Hockney to team up with you, you know you will surrender much of your autonomy.[717]

Nevertheless, Cox's vision was seemingly the driving force, with the artist given preliminary notes upon which to draw ('David always worked from my notes, so when he was looking at his Hogarth sources, he knew what he was looking for, for me').[718] The principal elements of two scenes, in particular - the brothel and the madhouse - germinated from Cox's concern to contain the action and maintain the focus ('I didn't want everybody scratching themselves and upstaging one another').[719] These locales are also twinned as pivotal sites in Tom's demise - the former where he loses his innocence, the latter where he loses his mind - and Hockney picked up on this by introducing comparable features, exclusive to these scenes: an overhead banner, humorous thermometer variants either side of the stage and, most notably, a central bed and cellular theme (the multiple doors to the prostitutes' rooms and the lunatics' compartments respectively).[720] These lent both focus and containment and thus fulfilled the director's intent.

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[714] Ibid.
[715] Ibid.
[716] Hockney quoted by Peattie, October 1991
[717] Cox quoted by Friedman, p. 78
[718] Author's interview with Cox
[719] Ibid.
[720] The 'Lustometers' of the Bedlam scene (counterparts to the brothel's 'lecherometers') were directly transposed from those of Hogarth in *Credulity, Superstition and Fanaticism* (1762). For unspecified reasons, they were ultimately unused

Cox was equally adamant that the sets should indicate the direction of Tom's fate, and this too would be reflected in the final designs, with each scene conceived either as a room or an enclosed exterior space.

> I wanted the garden to look like a prison. The walls had to look strong, solid, and there was only one way out and Tom could never himself open that door. No scenes had doors where you would have expected them. The rooms had no doors and we always did wing entrances. Tom is always in some way trapped.[721]

Jenny Uglow's account of Hogarth's seventh plate (the Fleet Prison scene) of his 'Rake's Progress' series is remarkably comparable. Indeed, it is striking how precisely this description by an art historian of Hogarth's creativity connects with the theatrical vision of Hockney and Cox:

> Once again we are in the stage set of nightmare, the locked room of bricks and barred windows. Looking back, the bars and chains have always been there - the padlock on the miser's wall, the fire grille in the gambler's den - even the wedding ring is a fetter.[722]

### 5.6. Connections with the work of other creators

Aspects of Hockney's interpretation can be seen to connect with events and creativity beyond those of this collaboration or the opera's originators. Stylistic and compositional analogies may be made, for example, between the seemingly random markings of the drop curtain, madhouse wall and Hockney-designed programme cover for *The Rake's Progress,* and the visual cacophonies of shapes, symbols and musical allusions of the painter Joan Miró. It is therefore noteworthy that two major exhibitions of Miró's works were held in Paris at the time of Hockney's residency in the French capital and commencement of the opera design: 'Miró: l'oeuvre graphique' at the Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris (22nd May - 15th September 1974) and the large retrospective at the Grand Palais (18th May - 13th October 1974). *Carnaval de Arlequin* (1925) and *La Poétesse* (1940), both of which featured in the latter, illustrate the connections. Particular similarities exist between

[721] Author's interview with Cox
[722] Uglow, p. 255

*Carnaval de Arlequin* and the Bedlam graffiti (*figs. 244-5*) in terms of the synthesis of assorted shapes, the interconecting straight lines and spheres pierced by them, the black starfish forms (central to Miró's painting and to the left of Hockney's model), the dark conical shape to the rear of both images (in Miró's 'window' and behind the boxed heads) and the circular 'face' (red/blue and in chandelier form respectively).

We also know from his autobiography that Hockney was inspired by the flatness of the paintings of Jasper Johns.[723] Yet Johns had likewise explored the techniques of cross-hatching and Hockney would reveal his awareness of this by reworking the right-hand panel of Johns' *Corpse and Mirro*r (1974, *fig. 246*), together with Van Gogh's iconic chair, into *The Perspective Lesson* of 1985 (*fig. 247*). Hence, the large cross in Johns' original - which possibly inferred a symbol used in printing - was deployed by Hockney as an erasure mark, implying rejection of the stylistic naturalism of the depicted chair, whilst the cross-hatchings of Johns' pattern were transposed as the parquet floor.[724] Johns had first employed a cross-hatching technique in 1972 and he was heavily engaged in its exploration around the time that his contemporary was planning the opera.[725] In fact, Hockney commenced his designs in the winter of 1974, which was the same year that Johns created *Corpse and Mirror*. This prompts my suggestion that the cross-hatching for 'The Rake' may have drawn on his engagement with Johns' work. It should be mentioned that Hockney, in response to this notion, has denied a conscious citation of the ingenuity of either Johns or the afore-mentioned Miró.[726] Creative correspondences are nonetheless evident.

Contemporary events in the overlapping spheres of visual art and theatre are likewise possible stimuli to aspects of the design. The concurrently popular dramas of Brecht, Beckett and the Theatre of the Absurd paralleled the conscious artificiality of Hockney's 'cardboard cut-out' sets and their

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[723] Hockney, 1976, p. 87
[724] Richard Francis, *Jasper Johns* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1984), p. 86; Luckhardt and Melia, p. 126
[725] Francis, p. 79
[726] Author's interview with Hockney

detachment of the viewer. Experiments with face coverings in Saul Steinberg's photographs (1959-63), Stanley Brouwn's 'happening' (1964) and the film *Pornografollies* (1970) by Curt McDowell - whose work, with its 'pioneering, hard-edged gay aesthetic' was surely known to Hockney - engaged with the depersonalised masks of the madhouse scene.[727] The clean, 'comic book' lines of Pop Art could be identified in the enlarged cross-hatching: a visual element which, as Friedman proposed, produced an optical vibrato akin to Lichtenstein's benday dots.[728] Moreover, on the opera stage, John Stoddart's design for Mozart's *Cosí fan Tutte* (Scottish Opera, 1967; *fig. 248*) had likewise included suggestions of cross-hatching that were remarkably similar to those of Hockney's 'Rake'.

In terms of previous productions of this particular opera, Hockney's spectatorship had been limited, according to Livingstone, to the Sadler's Wells' staging of 1962.[729] This version, which the artist later claimed to have 'completely forgotten', was visually distinctive, with simplistic, representational sets by Margaret Harris of the design team Motley and based upon a theatrical, 'stage-upon-a-stage' theme (*fig. 249*).[730] Its identification with Stravinsky's score over Hogarth's visual narrative assumed a different emphasis to that of Hockney (Harris: 'We didn't want the production to get weighted down by Hogarth, who took a sharper point of view'); but its stylised simplicity and deliberate artificiality nonetheless anticipated the general trajectory of Hockney's own stage designs, and particularly connected with his 'metastage' interpretations of *Ubu Roi* (1966) and *Parade* (1981).[731] I therefore argue that, whilst the artist may not have consciously drawn upon this Sadler's Wells' production, the Motley concept was a plausible trigger to aspects of his own creativity beyond Glyndebourne.

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[727] Wheeler Winston Dixon, *The Exploding Eye: A Re-Visionary History of 1960s American Experimental Cinema* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 115
[728] Friedman, p. 104
[729] Livingstone, p. 173
[730] Hockney, 1993, p. 20
[731] Harris quoted by Michael Mullin, *Design by Motley* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996), p. 159

Hockney's awareness of other 'Rake' productions may have extended to Sarah Caldwell's modern-dress rendition, designed by Helen Pond and Herbert Senn, for the Opera Company of Boston (1967). This interpretation, for which Caldwell was loaned six Triumph motorbikes, set the action in contemporary London, with the protagonist sporting a leather jacket and 'Stravinsky'-emblazoned sweatshirt.[732] Stravinsky apparently approved and, after watching a performance in Los Angeles in 1968, issued a statement that, according to Caldwell's biographer, 'appeared aimed at throttling various critics who had condemned the updating as violating the composer's intentions':

> The Caldwell production exposes a wholly new point of view and is inventive in many, many particulars. Some critics who saw it in the East have not liked it because they are now defending the work that only a short time ago they loathed. But I like it.[733]

To Hockney, who has insisted that 'you couldn't possibly ignore the eighteenth century', it is incomprehensible to set this opera in modern times.[734] His reasoning, as he explained to me, is based on three factors: the specifics of the plot ('machines were new in the eighteenth century, so some gullible person might believe they could make bread from a stone [in the 'bread machine'], but in 1920s' Berlin, *nobody* would'); the style of the libretto, which deliberately employs outmoded language ('if you update it, the words seem a bit mad')'; and the fact that the inspiration for the opera was not a book or a play, but a series of actual images:

> You can do *The Magic Flute* all kinds of ways. You could do *Tristan und Isolde*, even, all kinds of ways. But 'The Rake' has to go back to Hogarth because you've got a truly real and visual source for it.[735]

Hockney has said of previous renditions that he was 'amazed how little was done from Hogarth, who was the real source of the story'.[736] Yet Rex

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[732] Daniel Kessler, *Sarah Caldwell: the First Woman of Opera* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2008), p. 74
[733] Kessler, and Stravinsky quoted by Kessler, ibid., p. 76
[734] Hockney quoted by Lambert, in *Glyndebourne 1978,* Caplat, p. 98
[735] Author's interview with Hockney
[736] Hockney quoted by Peattie, October 1991

Whistler's designs for the Sadler's Wells' ballet version of 1935 certainly looked to Hogarth's depictions, his sketches of the pope and the king being precise extractions from the original madhouse scene (*figs. 250-1*). The opera premiere in Venice (with sets and costumes by Gianni Ratto and Ebe Colciaghi, 1951) and subsequent productions designed by Osbert Lancaster at Glyndebourne (1953) and the afore-mentioned Motley (Margaret and Sofia Harris) at Sadler's Wells (1962) also reveal consistent adherence to the Hogarthian period. Indeed, Glyndebourne historian John Jolliffe, in referencing Hockney's creation, specifically noted that his work was 'like Lancaster's' in its allusion to Hogarth's engravings (Lancaster had, however, 'put the clock of fashion forward a few decades' to avoid similarities with a revival of the Whistler-designed ballet).[737] At least two versions of the opera - Ingmar Bergman's staging, designed by Berger Bergling, in Stockholm (1961) and the previously-noted modern dress rendition by the Opera Company of Boston (1967) - had featured sets in monochrome, suggestive of engravings; and Bergling had similarly based his designs on Hogarth's original etchings.[738] Moreover, musicologist Paul Griffiths has claimed that many directors have engaged with Hogarth's manner and groupings and that few have not recognised that the third and eighth work in his 'Rake's Progress' series correspond with the brothel and madhouse scene respectively.[739] Whilst Hockney may not have seen the afore-mentioned versions, he would surely have been aware of the concepts of their creators (according to Livingstone, 'he carried out all possible research into previous productions and did a considerable amount of reading about the opera and its libretto'); so his statement must refer to the compositional details of Hogarth's 'Rake', rather than the broader issues of period, theme or style.[740]

Analogies are apparent between Hockney's interpretation and the original Venice staging of 1951. Shared features of the Truloves' garden scene (*figs.*

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[737] Jolliffe, p. 144; Knox, p. 148
[738] Craft and Stravinsky, V., p. 462; Kessler, pp. 74-5; 'The Rake's Progress', *Ingmar Bergman* [official website] <http://www.ingmarbergman.se/en/production/rakes-progress> [accessed 4 July 2018]
[739] Griffiths, pp. 56-7
[740] Livingstone, pp. 173-4

*252-3*) included the upstage horizontal wall and central gate (the latter in accordance with the stage instructions); the similarly-positioned tree stump and chair (both serving as a seat); the stylised trees on each side of the gate; and, especially, the hilly hinterland. The renditions of Tom's mansion bore further parallels, notably the character of the drawing room with its large Georgian-styled windows and picture-bedecked walls with coping (*figs. 254-5*). Hockney also nodded to his Glyndebourne predecessor Osbert Lancaster through his comedic bent and fascination with pattern. Lancaster - both as a designer and as a cartoonist - paid great attention to the detail of fabric, and his costumes for 'The Rake' (staged 1953-63, *figs. 256-7*), had made much use of stripes. These stripes adorned the palatial columns of the set as well as the clothes and accessories of the cast, producing a crispness of line that is strikingly comparable to Hockney's ubiquitous cross-hatching. Lancaster's caricature depictions of scenic features (the scrolled tops of pillars or the London skyline) also added humour and theatrical non-reality in the manner of Hockney's stylised elements. As the 'Lancaster Rake' was last aired at Glyndebourne in 1963, Hockney would not have seen it in performance, although in his thorough research of previous productions, he would have surely perused surviving drawings and photographs, some of which can be viewed in the Glyndebourne archives.

### 5.7. Post-premiere

Reprised around the globe for over forty years, 'Hockney's Rake' is still, in the words of reviewer Tim Ashley, 'widely regarded as the benchmark staging of Stravinsky's great, if difficult, opera'.[741] It has seen few design amendments since the production's inception, although the characterisations of Mother Goose and Sellem (the auctioneer) have since developed along comedic lines that have included the addition of red wigs (possibly dictated by the differing physiques and interpretations of individual performers, *fig. 258*). The insistence by La Scala on a chorus of thirty-six instead of the customary

[741] Tim Ashley, 'The Rake's Progress', *Guardian*, 9 August 2010

twenty-four, also necessitated additional brothel doors and madhouse compartments for the staging in Milan in 1979.[742]

A continuing challenge, due to the nature of the sets, has been the lengthy time required for scene changes. This, Cox conceded, was a creative compromise, especially as it contravened the fluidity of the composer's conception:

> Stravinsky wanted it to be quite flowing, sequential, but I did not want to reject the whole concept on the basis that it had to flow, because I felt there was much more value in having a sequence of strong pictures.[743]

Audiences have tolerated the delays, but in 2006, opera critic Michael Magnusson, whilst observing that the design still registered, nonetheless noted that 'thirty years on it is uncommon to encounter 4-minute scene changes'; and in 2010, musicologist Mark Berry reiterated the issue, describing the pauses as 'wearisome' and advising that 'it might not be a bad idea to call time now'.[744]

Perhaps on account of its originality and the repeated global stagings of this iconic production, I have found no veritable imitations of Hockney's conception, although Jonathan Miller's version of 1997 boasted a giant suspended shark that hinted at the Hogarthian reptiles. Subsequent interpretations, perhaps to establish their own identity, have instead followed very different, often contemporary, trajectories. Elijah Moshinsky's rendition at Covent Garden in 1979 (designed by Timothy O'Brien and Tazeena Firth) transported the rake into the ninteenth century; whilst Jörg Immendorf's designs for the Salzburg Festival (1994) juxtaposed Hogarth's original imagery with present-day, sexualised costumes. In both cases the protagonist was identified as a real-life individual (Auden and Immendorf respectively). Miller's afore-mentioned staging, designed by Peter J. Davison (sets) and

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[742] Author's interview with Cox
[743] Ibid.
[744] Michael Magnusson, 'The Rake's Progress at Opera Australia', *Opera Today*, April 2006; Mark Berry, 'The Rake's Progress, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, 29 August 2010', *Boulezian*, publ. 30 August 2010 <http://boulezian.blogspot.co.uk/2010/08/rakes-progress-glyndebourne-festival.html> [accessed 1 January 2015]

Judy Levin (costumes), set the scene in 1920s Berlin; and Peter Sellar's provocative rendering of 1996, designed by Adrianne Lobel (sets) and Dunya Ramicova (costumes), was set entirely in a modern jail, the anterior rows of cells lending an authentic contemporary twist on Hogarth's original etching. More recently, Simon McBurney's 2018 interpretation for the Dutch National Opera (with sets by Michael Levine and costumes by Christina Cunningham) likewise moved the proceedings into the modern world, albeit with Tom inhabiting an eighteenth-century mansion replete with chandelier.

Some prominent visual artists have adapted 'The Rake' theme since Hockney's interpretation of the opera, including Peter Howson (*The Rake's Progress*, 1995), Yinka Shonibare (*Diary of a Victorian Dandy: 11.00 hours, 14.00 hours, 17.00 hours, 19.00 hours, 03.00 hours*, 1998), and Grayson Perry (*The Vanity of Small Differences*, 2012).[745] Indeed, 'The Rake' had already been a longtime subject for artists, cartoonists and satirists, notably George Grosz (*Das neue Gesicht der herrschenden Klasse* print series of 1930); David Low (*A Modern Rake's Progress* in *Pall Mall Magazine* of 1934); and Ronald Searle (*The Rake's Progress* series of drawings in *Punch*, 1954-5). The repeated staging and surrounding publicity of Hockney's rendition for Glyndebourne has, however, been a catalyst for contemporary artists being drawn to the theme. Howson, for example, has acknowledged that his sequence of seven paintings was inspired not by Hogarth's images but by Hockney's designs for the opera.[746]

Arguably the most significant outcome of Hockney's undertaking was the change that it provoked within his own creative development: namely, his treatment of space and perspective, and his triumph over realism. His use of cross-hatching - which built on the caricature methods employed for *Ubu Roi* - visually compressed the scenes as pseudo-etchings, thus reversing the

[745] Paula Rego has similarly taken Hogarth's *Marriage à la Mode* series (1743-5) as the foundation for her narrative trio *The Betrothal: Lessons: The Shipweck, after 'Marriage à la Mode' by Hogarth* (1999)
[746] Verena Bertmaring, 'Twentieth-century interpretations of *A Rake's Progress*: The inspiration of a 'Modern Moral Subject'', in *A Rake's Progress: From Hogarth to Hockney*, Simon and Woodward, p. 34

traditional tenets of stage design whereby *trompe l'oeil* sets imply spatial depth. The de-humanising masks and the cross-hatched costumes, which bestowed on the performers the characteristics of the background, also allowed the artist to eschew the naturalistic modes of description with which he had hitherto been struggling in his paintings. These progressions would feed into his studio explorations, with Hockney later observing:

> 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.[747]

Central to this evolution was *Kerby (after Hogarth) Useful Knowledge* (1975, *fig. 259*). This work emerged directly from his research of Hogarth's prints, and was clearly founded on *Satire on a False Perspective* (1754) which was the frontispiece to *Methods of Perspective*, published by Joshua Kirby (the surname would be misspelled in Hockney's version). Hockney's rendition, like the image which prompted it, distorts what at first appears to be a 'naturalistic' rural scene through its spatial anomalies and perspectival trickery. In so doing - and building on his earlier spatial shenanigans (*Ordinary Picture* and *A Painted Landscape*) - it offers a release from an illusional means of representation.

The artist has claimed that 'Kerby' was his only painting to come out of *The Rake's Progress*, yet I argue that his intense involvement with this opera did indeed inform other studio works, and most notably *Invented Man Revealing Still Life* (*fig. 38*).[748] This was realised in the spring of 1975, just prior to 'Kerby' yet in concurrence with Hockney's preparatory engagement with Glyndebourne. The figure's cross-hatched torso clearly connects with the theme of the opera design, its angular shape and red and blue grid specifically implying the madhouse boxes; whilst its stylised white head with red cheek and nose likewise engages with the madmens' masks (*fig. 240*). Moreover, the contrasts of idiom (the 'drawn' figure amid 'realistic' elements), the conflicting perspectives and spatial discontinuity, the paint streaking

[747] Hockney, 1993, p. 29
[748] Ibid.

behind the curtain - a sign of the contrivance being witnessed by the viewer - establish this work as a theatrical fabrication, as opposed to a conventional illusion of reality. These elements would re-emerge in *Self-Portrait with Blue Guitar* and in *The Blue Guitar* series of twenty etchings (1976-7).[749]

*The Blue Guitar* etchings - inspired by Wallace Stevens' poem *The Man with the Blue Guitar* (1936), which was itself inspired by Picasso's *The Old Guitarist* (1903) - are particularly notable in their reiteration of the markings and allusions of 'The Rake' drop curtain. Each serves to demonstrate diverse etching techniques, some in the boxed manner of the curtain itself (*Franco-American Mail*, *fig. 261*); most include musical or literary associations (*The Poet*, *fig. 262*); and many are presented as if 'performing' on a stage replete with curtain (*Etching is the Subject*, *fig. 263*), thus emulating the performative role of the cross-hatched sets of Glyndebourne. Allusions to Picasso permeate the series, most notably in the afore-mentioned *What is This Picasso?*, which literally mirrors the maestro's *Portrait of Dora Maar*, together with the curtain of Spelt's *Still Life with Flowers*. These references traversed into *Self-Portrait with Blue Guitar*, thus contributing to the continuum of Hockney's homages, of which his precise extractions from Hogarth constitute a part.

### 5.8. Conclusion

Taking heed of the fact that Stravinsky and his librettists created this opera in a self-consciously eighteenth-century style, this chaper has sought to assess the extent to which Hockney's re-interpretation has likewise situated historical allusion within a contemporary framework. Whilst his designs clearly harnessed the essence of the music, the findings of this chapter indicate the libretto as his initial resource, with the musical score as the secondary, albeit more apparent, foundation. This accords with my argument that music became a primary source of inspiration later in the artist's theatre engagement (culminating in *Tristan und Isolde* in 1987). Hockney's literary interests and

[749] The twenty etchings of *The Blue Guitar* series were published in book format, together with the poem by Wallace Stevens by the Petersburg Press (London and New York) in 1977

evidence of creative exchange with them, the strong alignment between literature and the visual arts within his cultural milieu, and his use of physical text within his early creativity - including his designs for this opera - have supported my conclusion in this regard. Moreover, this chapter has asserted that text has been used by the artist as a linking bridge between music and visual art.

Of previous productions of this opera, notable allusions have been discovered between the design of Hockney and those of Ratto and Colciaghi (Venice, 1951) and Osbert Lancaster (Glyndebourne, 1953). Connections have likewise been established between aspects of this design and the creativity of other artists and designers (Miró, Johns, Stoddart) and with specific aspects of contemporaneous events within both the performing and the visual arts. Correlations have especially been made between Hockney and Hogarth, on both personal and creative levels: their respective 'Englishness' and often-satirical humour, the popularity - yet underestimation - of their work, their pioneering sensibilities and empathy to the human condition; and within their creativity, their theatricality, use of narrative and allusion, their suggestion of collage, attention to detail, and their mutual capability as print-makers. Specifically, this chapter has established points of exchange between Hogarth's body of etchings and Hockney's designs for the opera. Most of these correspondences have been hitherto unrecorded.

This chapter has sought to assess Hockney's interpretation in theatrical as well as art-historical terms, and has thus considered its relevance and practicality. I have concluded that these designs, whilst stressing the humour of the narrative, did not convey the darker aspects of the opera (this is of pertinence, considering the same criticism had been applied to his interpretation of *Ubu Roi*). They did, however, through the ubiquitous cross-hatching and selective yet vibrant use of colour, provide a modern equivalent to Hogarth's original prints that correlated with Stravinsky's music and the Auden-Kallman libretto in relation to eighteenth-century music and language.

As this chapter has demonstrated, the nature of the scenery, the application of cross-hatching to both sets and costumes, Hockney's theatre inexperience and lack of forethought regarding illumination clearly gave rise to collaborative challenges. Nonethess, the consensus from my interviews of his colleagues, was that the artist was cooperative, flexible, and amenable to teamwork; and that a positive two-way exchange developed particularly between him and the opera's director.

The resulting designs have been repeatedly and internationally staged and have endured with few amendments, with the only major contemporary criticism being the length of time required for the scene changes. Perhaps because of its iconic status, subsequent productions have not noticeably drawn on Hockney's interpretation; yet his engagement has inspired other artists to undertake the 'Rake's Progress' theme and prompted changes within his personal creativity, particularly in his treatment of space and perspective and in terms of his struggle with realism. In these respects, 'Hockney's Rake' has facilitated a particularly broad range of creative exchanges.

## 6. The opera *The Magic Flute* at Glyndebourne, 1978

Hockney's second opera design was for Glyndebourne's 1978 production of *Die Zauberflöte* (hereafter terrmed *The Magic Flute*), in which he again collaborated with director John Cox, lighting designer Bob Bryan and head of wardrobe Tony Ledell.[750] This opera, with music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder, presented the artist with different challenges than those of its predecessor, and his approach to the material and methods of dealing with these issues is pertinent to his development as a visual artist and as a designer for the stage.[751] In this chapter, I will analyse Hockney's thematic choices: the exaggerated use of perspective and colour, the incongruities and anachronisms, and the humour and juvenility with which these designs are infused. I will argue that some of these elements contributed to the obfuscation and fragmentation of this production; and that they all aligned with overarching themes within his broader creativity. Correlations, for example, between the artist's concepts and methodologies for this opera and his earlier and later stage ventures suggest a recurrent treatment of the performance space as a model theatre.[752] In terms of his creative development, this chapter will also seek to demonstrate that these sets and costumes for *The Magic Flute* served as a connecting bridge between his previous stage designs and his subsequent theatre engagement.

The plot of 'The Flute' is fundamentally more complex than that of 'The Rake', having derived from multifarious sources, including the fairy tale *Lulu, oder der Zauberflöte,* by A. J. Liebeskind (one of a collection of 'oriental' tales

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[750] As explained in the notes of the introduction, this production - sung in German - is officially titled *Die Zauberflöte*; but to maintain consistency with most English-language references, this thesis employs the titular translation of *The Magic Flute*

[751] Authorship of the libretto has been attributed (notably by E. J. Dent, 1911) to Carl Ludwig Giesecke in addition to Schikaneder, but this has not been universally acknowledged. *English National Opera Guide 3: The Magic Flute* (1980), which is a resource of this chapter does, however, credit both men as authors

[752] It is pertinent that, on acquiring a scale working model to design the later 'Parade' triple bill, the artist would volunteer 'performances' for visitors, in which 'he gave voice to the various roles' and 'hummed along with the chorus' whilst raising and lowering the flats (Friedman, p. 173)

gathered by Christoph Martin Wieland and published under the title *Dschinnistan* in 1786); the Egyptian-themed pseudo-historic treatise *Sethos* (1731) by the Abbé Terrasson; and popular eighteenth-century entertainment forms, notably *Singspiel* (literally 'sing-play') and *commedia dell'arte*.[753] Its plot concerns the prince Tamino who, having been saved from a serpent (in Hockney's version, a dragon) by the three attendant ladies of the Queen of the Night, seeks to rescue the queen's daughter Pamina from the prison of rival ruler Sarastro. Accompanied by the bumbling birdcatcher Papageno, and each armed with protective musical instruments (a magic flute and magic bells respectively), Tamino is guided in his quest by three guardian boys in a flying machine. Pamina, having attempted to escape, is recaptured by Sarastro's Moorish chief slave Monostatos, but is freed by Papageno, whose stumbling intervention inadvertently frightens the Moor. Meanwhile, Tamino becomes convinced that, contrary to the queen's account, Sarastro is a benevolent ruler, and he and the birdcatcher are invited to undertake the initiation rights of Sarastro's realm. Papageno fails the trials of silence by declaring his love for his female counterpart (Papagena), who appears to him disguised as an old crone. Tamino, however, succeeds by refusing to greet Pamina, even though they have fallen in love with each other. Both couples are forced to part, with Pamina and Papageno each driven to consider suicide, before the Three Boys co-ordinate their respective reunions. Pamina successfully accompanies Tamino through his final trials of fire and water; and the Queen of the Night, who has been plotting against Sarastro's realm, is ultimately vanquished as sunlight permeates the stage.

The midway good-evil character reversal of the Queen of the Night and Sarastro has long been a source of bewilderment to opera-goers. The queen - from whose attendants Tamino and Papageno receive their protective flute and bells - draws sympathy in the first act, whilst Sarastro is perceived as a tyrannical abductor. Her subsequent transformation into a murderous furie and his into the incarnation of benevolent reason is one of opera's great mysteries; and, in the mid-nineteenth century, various 'refraction' or '*Brucht'*

[753] Rodney Milnes, ''Singspiel' and Symbolism', in *English National Opera Guide 3: The Magic Flute*, John, 1980, pp. 13-14

theories were generated, which surmised that Mozart and Schikaneder had changed their work-in-progress to avoid confrontation with the similar plot of rival production *Kaspar der Fagottist (Kaspar the Bassoonist)*.[754] Such theories have since been dismissed by musicologists on account of a letter written by Mozart on 12th June 1791 in which he seemed unfazed by the competition ('there's absolutely nothing to it') and his known unwillingness to make artistic compromises.[755] Moreover, the text of Janos Liebner proposes a musical *leitmotif* as proof that the queen's manipulative trickery is evident from the outset (the manifestation of the creature from which our prince was 'saved' was part of her ruse); and that the 'great trouvaille' of *The Magic Flute* is that we, the audience, have been equally deceived.[756] It is pertinent that Hockney has likewise dismissed the refraction theories: 'I don't believe Mozart would have accepted the change just like that, if it went against all his intentions. After all, he was pretty fussy about his libretti, wasn't he?'[757] Yet the artist has nonetheless acknowledged the perplexity of a plot in which the hero-prince is fearful of a snake and requires three ladies to kill it for him.[758] In this chapter I will argue that his visually anachronistic interpretation was partly resultant from the need to deal with such conundrums.

*The Magic Flute* represents all things to all people: fairy tale, Masonic ritual, historical allegory, political satire. In the wake of its premiere, Joseph Valentin Eybel (*Dialogues of the Gods against the Jacobins*, 1794) and Leopold Alois Hoffmann (attributed author of *Secret History of the Jacobins in the Austrian States*, 1795) were amongst those activists and intellectuals who perceived the opera as an allegory of the contemporaneous French Revolution.[759] In this context, the Queen of the Night symbolised the *ancien régime* and Sarastro, the new order. Later writings of the period, including essays by Georg

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[754] *Kaspar der Fagottist (Kaspar the Bassoonist)* was a *Singspiel* by Wenzel Müller and Joachim Perret that was staged by Karl Marinelli at Vienna's *Theater in der Leopoldstadt* from 8 June 1791. Branscombe, pp. 29, 205-6
[755] Liebner, p. 236; Branscombe, pp. 31-2 (cited letter), 205-7
[756] Liebner, pp. 238-41
[757] Hockney quoted by Lambert, in *Glyndebourne 1978,* Caplat, p. 98
[758] Lambert, in *Glyndebourne 1978,* Caplat, p. 98
[759] Jay MacPherson, '*The Magic Flute* and Viennese Opinion', *Man and Nature*, 6, 1987, pp. 162-3 <https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/man/1987-v6-man0239/1011876ar.pdf> [accessed 14 August 2018]

Friedrich Daumer (1861) and Moritz Alexander Zille (1865), have argued the equation of the plot with Viennese politics at the time of the work's premiere, with the queen here identified with the ecclesiastically-controlled (and anti-Masonic) rule of Empress Maria Theresa of Austria and Sarastro representing the liberalised regime introduced by her son Joseph II.[760] These ideologies would feed into director Jonathan Miller's distinctive interpretation of 1983: a production to which we will later return. A further allegory - and the one suggested by scholar Jay MacPherson as perhaps the closest to the thinking of the work's creators - is that of Ludwig von Batzko (1794), in which Sarastro represents Reason, with the urge to protect and nurture the Enlightenment; and the Queen of the Night is Superstition, which seeks to take control of it.[761] In what I propose is an extension of this concept, Hockney's interpretation centred on the progression from chaos to order, with the realm of the Queen of the Night as an untamed wilderness and that of Sarastro as a geometrically balanced and harmonious domain.[762]

The opera was premiered on 30th September 1791 at Vienna's Freihaus Theater auf der Wieden: a large venue, accommodating an estimated thousand spectators, and technically well-equipped to facilitate the thirteen rapid scene changes of *The Magic Flute* (three in Act I, ten in Act II) and the flying machine demanded for the Three Boys.[763] With solely one interval between the two acts and the libretto's demands for spectacular transitions ('The mountains part and the stage is transformed into a magnificent chamber', Act I, sc. 6), this work was - and still is - challenging to stage. The original design was attributed to one Herr Nesslthaler, with Herr Gail accredited as 'theatre painter'.[764] No imagery survives of their initial creations, but engravings by Joseph and Peter Schaffer of scenes from Schikaneder's 1795 revival (first published in 1795, *figs. 264-5*) may provide some visual indications. Likewise, few textual accounts can be found of the first production beyond snippets of personal correspondence and a reference in Berlin's

[760] Ibid., pp. 165-6
[761] Ibid., p. 164
[762] Friedman, p. 117
[763] Branscombe, p. 142
[764] Ibid., p. 151

*Musikalische Wochenblatt*, dated 9th October 1791, which described the work as 'a comedy with machines [...] given at great cost and with much magnificence in the scenery', yet with the contents and language of the piece decried as 'altogether too wretched'.[765] The latter allegation may have stemmed from professional and regional jealousies because, according to the composer's letters, the opera was well-received.[766] Such sentiment is similarly suggested by the reaction of the co-director of the Berlin National Theatre who, in 1792, sniped that 'it seems to have been the author's intention to crowd together every conceivable difficulty for the stage designer and machinists, and a work has thus been created whose sole merit is visual splendour'.[767] What is striking, however, about these comments is their resonance with contemporary creativity. Reviewer George Heymont has observed that 'whereas landmark productions of beloved operas are often referred to by the name of their stage director, productions of *The Magic Flute* are more often associated with the artists who have designed them'.[768] Modern reviews are frequently titled to include the designer ('Hockney Adds Magic to Mozart'; 'Mozart Meets Sendak'); and critic Peter Davis noted that 'the current [Julie Taymor] Met production, like its predecessors, is likely to be remembered more for the way it looks than how it sounds'.[769] Hence, this opera continues to be a vehicle for visual spectacle and innovation, and a testament to the evolution of stagecraft methodologies.

Flying machines such as that required for the Three Boys were common to most theatres of Schikaneder's era, and all stages would have housed trap-

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[765] Ibid., p. 154
[766] Ibid., p. 152
[767] (Unidentified) co-director quoted by Nicholas John, 'A Public for Mozart's Last Opera', in *English National Opera Guide 3: The Magic Flute,* John, p. 42
[768] George Heymont, 'A Most Magical New Flute', *Huffington Post*, 15 August 2012 <https://www.huffingtonpost.com/george-heymont/a-most-magical-new-flute_b_1783067.html?guccounter=1> [accessed 4 December 2015]
[769] Donal Henahan, 'Hockney Adds Magic To Mozart', *New York Times*, 12 January 1991 <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/01/12/arts/review-opera-hockney-adds-magic-to-mozart.html> [accessed 5 September 2015]; Wes Blomster, 'Mozart Meets Sendak in Opera Colorado's 'Magic Flute'', *Daily Camera*, 5 November 2006 <http://www.dailycamera.com/ci_13066837> [accessed 5 September 2015]; Peter G. Davis, 'Amadeus Ex Machina', *New York*, 25 October 2004 <http://nymag.com/nymetro/arts/music/classical/reviews/10102/> [accessed 22 November 2015]

doors or star-traps for dramatic entrances and exits, as required for the Queen of the Night, Monostatos, Papageno and the Three Ladies.[770] Such facilities are rarely installed in modern theatres and many trap-doors have been removed from older ones; hence, despite technological - and particularly electronic - advancements, it can be difficult and costly to achieve scenic effects that in the eighteenth century were standard practice.[771] In terms of 'The Flute', the issues are compounded by the number and nature of required set changes. In his writings on the subject, veteran stage director Anthony Besch stressed the need for rapid, yet smooth transitions, and noiseless preparations:

> Unbroken continuity and fluidity of movement from one scene to the next is essential in order to fulfil the authors' musical and dramatic progression and preserve the concentration of the audience.[772]

Such practical issues, as we shall see, would challenge Hockney in his engagement with Glyndebourne; and his treatment of them and solutions to them will be assessed by this chapter.

Thematically, Hockney's sets closely followed the libretto's demands in the essence of their representions: the barren, rocky domain of the Queen of the Night, which metamorphoses into a starry sky (*figs. 266-7*); an Ancient Egyptian-themed room within Sarastro's palace (Pamina's prison, *fig. 268*); a sacred grove with three pyramidal-roofed temples (*fig. 269*); Sarastro's lush palm grove (*fig. 270*); the exterior forecourt and hall of the great temple (*figs. 271-2*); the vault of a pyramid (*fig. 273*); a garden (*fig. 274*); the wall of fire and giant waterfall through which the lovers are obliged to pass on their ritual trials (*figs. 275-6*); and the ultimate stage-encompassing sun (*fig. 277*). These scenes were realised in retrogressive fashion with illusionistically-painted full and partial drops, side flats and 'cardboard cut-out' free-standing scenery. They thus identified with the stage sets of Mozart and Schikaneder's era, and connected this interpretation to the original production and its creators. Yet the exaggerated perspectives, with their lines transcending the backdrop,

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[770] Anthony Besch, 'A director's approach', in *W. A. Mozart: Die Zauberflöte,* Branscombe, p. 184
[771] Ibid., pp. 183-4
[772] Ibid., pp. 183, 186

served to accentuate the methodology of eighteenth-century stagecraft; and the sharply-defined blocks of solid, vivid colour lent a contemporary twist of Pop Art that rendered this production - like that of the earlier 'Rake' - a pastiche. The costumes, which were also undertaken by the artist, similarly fused the implied exoticism of the Near East (turbans and robes) with historical allusions (female dresses in fifteenth- and eighteenth-century styles), suggestions of the original designs (Papageno's feathered garb) and hints of contemporary pantomime (the slaves' outlandish attire; and the 'Robin Hood'-styled green tunic, brown leggings and cape of the prince).

The disparity of these design elements ultimately ceded to a stylised final scene of symmetrically-ranked chorus members, uniformly clad in robes of blue and gold, and the geometrical rays of the central sun extending over three staggered cloths: a metaphorical affirmation of the victory of order over chaos (*fig. 278*). The artist has explained that 'it only lasts two minutes, this final scene, but it's got to be the visual climax of the whole thing'.[773] It would indeed be a memorable representation, described by David Littlejohn as 'the finest realization I have ever seen of Schikaneder's impossible final scene demand: turn the stage into a sun'.[774]

### 6.1. Hockney's engagement with the music and libretto

Hockney's distinctive imagery for this opera prompts a deeper investigation of his creative engagement with the work's originators. Mozart, in his personal correspondence of 1781, had argued the supremacy of music over the operatic libretto, stressing that 'it is essential that in an opera poetry should be the obedient daughter of the music' and that the libretto should merely provide 'a well-constructed plot, and the words should be written with the purpose of serving the music'.[775] Whilst he made no mention of design in this context (presumably deeming it still lower on the creative hierarchal ladder), a succession of theatre artists have nonetheless acknowledged the primacy of the music within opera creativity and taken their cue from the operatic score.

[773] Hockney quoted by Lambert, in *Glyndebourne 1978,* Caplat, p. 98
[774] Littlejohn, p. 274
[775] Mozart quoted by Liebner, p. 13

Jun Kaneko, for example, who designed 'The Flute' in 2009, listened to the music 'hundreds of times, over and over for months'.[776] In this regard, Hockney is no exception: 'I do everything from the music. Because the music is primary'.[777]

Mozart's composition, with its lyricism and classical harmonies, was immediately accessible to the artist - much more so than Stravinsky's avant-garde pastiche - and he has claimed it to have been a major source of inspiration, an audible stimulus within his creative process, and with the precision and clarity of his sets drawn from the composer's score:

> While I was doing the designs, trying this and trying that, I played the music all the time. And I thought 'Well, Mozart's music comes out crisp and clear, the pictures should come out crisp and clear too, in focus, no haze, not too many shadows, reduce chiaroscuro'.[778]

Director John Cox has verified this engagement ('David really listens to the music and tries to do the music'), illustrating his point by recounting their dialogue concerning the scene of Pamina's imprisonment, which to the director's eyes, had no sense of being a prison.[779] When questioned as to why he had designed the setting that way, the artist allegedly sang the first few bars and said 'That's what I saw when I heard that music'.[780]

My research into the works and working practices of both Hockney and Mozart suggests several connective threads, and particularly with regards to *The Magic Flute*. In the first instance, there is a simplicity yet innovation in their respective creativity. Mozart's score is uncluttered; it is melodically direct, harmonically pure, uncomplicated in terms of form and style; yet, it also reveals oddities of rhythm, texture, harmony and instrumentation which render

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[776] Kaneko quoted by Bob Fischbach, "The Magic Flute' is all Kaneko', *Omaha World-Herald*, 17 February 2013 <https://www.omaha.com/living/the-magic-flute-is-all-kaneko/article_7e7be84d-0386-54e8-9ed7-c6daa0f61b1a.html> [accessed 6 November 2017]
[777] Hockney quoted by Patrick O'Connor, 'Hard nights working at the opera', *Daily Telegraph*, 31 October 1992
[778] Hockney quoted by Lambert, in *Glyndebourne 1978,* Caplat, p. 98
[779] Author's interview with Cox
[780] Hockney quoted by Cox, ibid.

it experimental.[781] Hockney's imagery in the foremath of his design - on canvas and the stage - is likewise uncluttered, formed of clean lines, clear colours, and with nothing depicted other than the necessary. *Looking at Pictures on a Screen*, *My Parents* and *Model with Unfinished Self-Portrait* (all of 1977, immediately prior to his preparations for the opera) illustrate this connection. Yet each of this trio of works reveals visual correspondences to Mozart's idiosyncrasies in the form of unusually presented metapictures: the first features four prints of identifiable masterpieces adhered with tape to a screen; the second (*fig. 51*) shows a partial reflection of one of these images (Piero della Francesca's *The Baptism of Christ*) and a corner of the 'Fra Angelico curtain' in a mirror; and the third (*fig. 80*) includes an unfinished painting (*Self-Portrait with Blue Guitar*) affording a *trompe l'oeil* effect behind the sleeping figure.

In the second instance, the composer's sources were truly heterogeneous, encompassing the comedy of *opera buffa*, Italian *bravura* arias, sacred hymns, chorale and fugue, and stereotypical themes of Viennese vernacular theatre.[782] As musicologist David Cairns has noted:

> [Mozart] takes his models from what he finds around him, the conventional art of the day, but uses them to create something personal to himself, unique and coherent. Nowhere more so than in *The Magic Flute*.[783]

An analogy could certainly be applied to the studio creativity of Hockney, as further exemplified by *Model with Unfinished Self-Portrait* (*fig. 80*), a painting which draws on real contemporary elements and earlier works by Hockney and other artists. As noted previously in this thesis, its depicted unfinished homage to Picasso (*Self-Portrait with Blue Guitar*) replicates the curtain of *What Is This Picasso?*, which itself was inspired by that in *Still Life with Flowers* by Adrian van der Spelt. Hence, the artist, like Mozart, has extracted his sources and rearranged them into a fresh, uniquely personal, entity. Equally, the diverse resources (to be later discussed) on which Hockney drew for *The Magic Flute* would be synthesised into a visual unity (according to

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[781] David Cairns, 'A Vision of Reconciliation', in *English National Opera Guide 3: The Magic Flute,* John, p. 17; Mann, p. 640
[782] Cairns, in *English National Opera Guide 3: The Magic Flute,* John, p. 18
[783] Ibid., p. 17

Cox, 'the unity of David Hockney's style').[784] This correlates with Cairns' observation that, in Mozart's music, 'there is a single 'Magic Flute' style, a synthesis, like the drama itself, of widely differing elements'.[785]

In the third instance, Mozart's music, even when poignant, is emotionally uplifting. This is partially explained by a letter to his father (26th September 1781) in which the composer described his employment of tempo and key modulations to express the anger of Osmin's first aria in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1781). As he expounded:

> [...] the passions, whether violent or not, must never be expressed in such a way as to cause distaste, and music should never, even in the most terrible situations, hurt the human ear; even then, it should give delight - in other words, it should always remain *music*.[786]

Hockney's art, with its embedded humour, vibrant hues and conceptual quirkiness, is itself innately heartening. His imagery is cheerful; it makes us smile. This important facet has been noted by art critic Jon Stock, who wrote of Hockney that 'he is fundamentally an optimist [...] and enjoys putting 'the pleasure principal', as he calls it, back into art'.[787] Director Cox, in his assessment of the artist's interpretation of *The Magic Flute*, further observed that 'it had to give delight - and that's a very important thing with David's work'.[788]

As an extension of this theme, I suggest that the artist was particularly drawn to Mozart's creativity on account of a mutual affinity with the world of make-believe. According to musicologist and stage director Sándor Hevesi (1873-1939):

> Among the various composers of the world, Mozart is the only one who introduced every musical subject into the charm of a fairy-tale - in whom the rejuvenating strength of fairy-tale lives so vividly, that every sorrow, every pain turns into pure beauty that enchants the audience.[789]

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[784] Author's interview with Cox
[785] Cairns, in *English National Opera Guide 3: The Magic Flute,* John, p. 18
[786] Mozart quoted by Liebner, p. 13
[787] Jon Stock, 'A Dog's Life', *Independent*, 25 June 1995
[788] Author's interview with Cox
[789] Hevesi quoted by Liebner, p. 252

Hockney's optimism and childlike sense of wonder, and the hints of pantomime and comic book humour with which his work is imbued (examined later in this chapter and elsewhere in this thesis) afford patent visual parallels; and it is noteworthy that fairy tales were amongst his early literary sources (*Mirror, Mirror on the Wall*, 1961; *Illustrations for Six Fairy Tales from the Brothers Grimm,* 1969).

Despite his connection with these German *Märchen*, a facet of *The Magic Flute* with which Hockney failed to engage was its inherent Austro-German sensibility. Mozart, fulfilling a longstanding ambition, had fully intended this work to be a 'German' opera.[790] Its structure, with its inclusions of spoken dialogue (as opposed to sung recitative), is akin to the *Singspiel* form of popular entertainment; and the role of Papageno - to which a Viennese dialect is traditionally ascribed - may be likened to the traditional comic characters of Hanswurst and Kasperle (a Mr. Punch variation).[791] The musical themes associated with this character ('*Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja*', Act I, sc. 2; and '*Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen*', Act II, sc. 23) - are redolent of regional folk-song, the latter actually employing, to quote musicologist William Mann, 'a tune older than Mozart'.[792] The opera's virtues have been deemed 'typically German'.[793] Yet, Hockney's design did not in any circumstance engage with these aspects. Rather, his pantomime touches and topical humour lent a 'Britishness' that was quite removed from the intended 'German' opera.

The artist's connection with Mozart's score was clearly intertwined with his engagement with the narrative; and several factors in this regard are worthy of specific mention. Firstly, whilst the plot of *The Magic Flute* is complex, the libretto itself is not. As Mann observed:

> Schikaneder was not a sophisticated poet: his diction was extremely simple, short on polysyllables and elaborate images, free from the sophisticated

[790] Mann, p. 640
[791] Ibid., pp. 606-7
[792] Ibid., pp. 607, 631
[793] Ibid., p. 640

> poet's ideals of varied metres which hamper a composer's musical invention.[794]

The simplicity of Hockney's designs, both in their concept (unfussy, cleanly drafted images) and their execution (painted two-dimemsional backdrops and flats) was thus visually compatible. Moreover, whilst the text infers the setting to be Egypt, the historical period is unspecified. The artist's interpretation, based on his research in the British Museum, focused loosely on the imagery of the Old Kingdom, yet as often-erroneously viewed from the standpoint of the eighteenth-century Western European.[795] It thus directly linked with Mozart and Schikaneder's era. The amalgamation of other pre-eighteenth century imagery (medieval interpretations of fantastical animals and allusions to established Renaissance artists) would, of course, have also been familiar to the audience of the Freihaus.

Hockney has further revealed his consideration of the narrative by his focus on its sense of progession. This he achieved through a series of noticeably different geographical settings, in keeping with the text, and as opposed to a single, more abstract, representation. He explained:

> I've seen many Magic Flutes. If it is performed in a fixed state you never get the sense of journey which is so important in Act II. It can even seem static, something we wanted to avoid. [...] [By] emphasizing definite scene changes, you would understand that Tamino and Pamina were on a great symbolic journey. The idea was to show them always moving to some higher plane.[796]

Ultimately, the artist strove to adhere to, and accentuate, Schikaneder's instructions. 'I tried to stay close to the text. When the libretto requires a big room, I decided, let's make it a great big room; if it says a garden, let's clearly make it a garden'.[797] He has claimed to have seen 'maybe ten productions', none of which had followed the directives.[798] It should be noted, however, that a version staged in 1975 by the English National Opera (of which the artist

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[794] Ibid., p. 639
[795] Friedman, p. 114
[796] Hockney quoted by Friedman, p. 117
[797] Ibid.
[798] Hockney quoted by Lambert, in *Glyndebourne 1978,* Caplat, p. 98

was surely aware) certainly bowed to the librettist's demands, receiving the following commendation from opera critic Rodney Milnes:

> Admirable attention is paid to the stage directions, right down to flaming helmets for the Armed Men and pyramid lamps for the priests. [...] John Stoddart's decor, also following the directions with Egyptian temples and a Japanese Tamino, is as helpful as it is pleasing to the eye.[799]

Whilst Hockney stayed close to many aspects of the text - his own pyramidal lanterns being a memorable feature (*fig. 279*) - some notable disparities nonetheless prevailed between the original instructions and the artist's design. The elevated temple (Act I, sc. 1) through which the Three Ladies should have entered was replaced by the central rock (they emerged from behind it); the stipulated horseshoe formation of the garden trees was omitted (Act 2, sc. 7); and the three temples of Hockney's design (Act I, sc. 15) were initially free-standing rather than 'joined by colonnades', and thus lacked the suggestion of interconnectivity between 'wisdom', 'reason' and 'nature' (this issue was caused by the need to expose the hinterland vista, and was amended by a low conjoining wall in the New York revival).[800] The specified serpent was transformed into a dragon (Act I, sc. 1); Sarastro's chariot was pulled by two, rather than six, lions (Act I, sc. 18); neither the Three Boys nor the priests carried the stipulated silver palm fronds (Act I, sc. 15; Act II, sc. 1); and, in Act II, sc. 20, the priests did not form an equilateral triangle but, rather, stood in rows. Moreover, Schikaneder's detailed instruction (Act II, sc. 1) for '18 seats, covered with golden palm leaves, on each of which a pyramid and a large black horn, bound with gold, have been placed' was more simply rendered without stage props and the chorus sat in a circle on the floor.[801] These departures - whether for practical or conceptual reasons - are significant in their disregard for the opera's underlying semiotics.

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[799] Rodney Milnes, 'Magic Mozart', *Spectator Archive*, 25 Jan 1975, p. 17 <http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/25th-january-1975/17/magic-mozart> [accessed 23 Aug 2017]
[800] Friedman, p. 87
[801] Emanuel Schikaneder, and Carl Ludwig Giesecke, *The Magic Flute* (libretto), trans. by Michael Geliot (lyrics) and Anthony Besch (dialogue), in *English National Opera Guide 3: The Magic Flute*, John, p. 91

A much-noted facet of *The Magic Flute* is its association with Freemasonry. Both Mozart and Schikaneder were Masons, and Masonic ideologies and allegory - as explained by the established texts of Mackey, Buck and Percival - infuse the opera.[802] They include specific numbers (notably trinities), shapes and symbols, empowering gifts, initiation rites with the inclusion of blindfolds and hoods, aspects of Egyptology (temples, pyramids, the worship of Isis and Osiris), the observation of secrecy, and the quest for light and enlightenment. These widely-acknowledged threads have been thoroughly documented by musicologist Jacques Chailley.[803] Masonic implications have also been deduced within the score itself, including the opera's base key of Eb major: a tonality almost exclusively reserved by Mozart for Masonic compositions and which - significantly, considering the Masonic semiotics of trinities - has a signature of three flats.[804] As musicologist Mann declared: 'It would be foolish to pretend that there are no allusions to Freemasonry in the libretto and in the music of *Die Zauberflöte*, and that Schikaneder and Mozart did not introduce them in a spirit of commitment'.[805] Director Besch has nonetheless noted that modern designers have mostly eschewed an overtly Masonic approach 'partly because only a small proportion of any audience can be alive to the full Masonic significance of the work'; and that the strength of the opera lies 'in its universal appeal to spectators who have no knowledge of Freemasonry, even though it exerts a special appeal to the Mason'.[806] Hockney, for his part, has been dismissive of such connotations:

> Then there's all that Masonic business. I did some research in the British Museum on eighteenth-century Masonic imagery, but apart from bearing in mind the number 3 and its multiples, which are in the opera anyway, I haven't made much use of all that.[807]

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[802] Albert G. Mackey, *The Symbolism of Freemasonry* (New York: Clark and Maynard, 1882); J. D. Buck, *Mystic Masonry* (Chicago: Indo-American Book Company, 1911); Harold W. Percival, *Masonry and its Symbols* (Rochester: The Word Foundation, 1980)
[803] Jacques Chailley, *The Magic Flute: Masonic Opera*, trans. by Herbert Weinstock (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971)
[804] Liebner, p. 246
[805] Mann, p. 639
[806] Besch, in *W. A. Mozart: Die Zauberflöte,* Branscombe, p. 180
[807] Hockney quoted by Lambert, in *Glyndebourne 1978,* Caplat, p. 98

Whether knowingly or not, the artist's decision to modify or omit features specified by the text served to diminish the work's Masonic associations. Chailley's research revealed, for example, that in the eighteenth century, females could be initiated into women's Lodges and that their ritual items included veils, a serpent and a golden padlock.[808] This information, whilst justifying the initiation of Pamina, also lends Masonic relevance to the headwear and actions of the Three Ladies*.* By substituting their lock for a fruit and the serpent for a dragon, Hockney failed to communicate the underlying semantics. He did, however, supplement suggestions of Masonic cyphers on the doors of the three temples and the stoles of the priests' robes. The aprons and tools borne by members of the chorus (Act 1, sc.19) likewise engaged with those of Masonic ritual; the radial beams of the final sun (Act II, sc. 30) evoked the rays of the Masonic Eye of Providence; and the pool and its surrounding verdure (Act I, sc. 15 and Act II, sc. 1 respectively) were notably T-shaped, indicative of a Masonic level (tor). Moreover, his perception of Sarastro as 'the builder, the man of light, order and proportion' linked with the Masonic concept of the Master Mason as a master builder, symbolically proficient in his use of gauge and gavel; and it is noteworthy, considering the pertinence of right angles, parallel horizontals and perpendiculars to Freemasonry, that Hockney has claimed of Sarastro that 'he makes me think of straight lines'.[809]

For the initiation scene (Act II, sc. 21), the artist both added and omitted Masonic references: he attired the prince in a suitably humble tunic that was not specified by the text; yet Pamina retained her signature costume, and despite the directive that she should wear 'the sack reserved for the Initiates'.[810] The inconsistency of this example illustrates an underpinning argument of this chapter that *The Magic Flute* lacked the clarity and unity of the previous Hockney-Cox collaboration - and despite the director's rebuttal that 'we were not seeking the same kind of unity [as 'The Rake']' and that *'The*

[808] Milnes, in *English National Opera Guide 3: The Magic Flute*, John, pp. 14-15
[809] Hockney quoted by Lambert, in *Glyndebourne 1978,* Caplat, p. 98
[810] Schikaneder and Giesecke, in *English National Opera Guide 3: The Magic Flute*, John, p. 111

*Magic Flute* is a multifarious work, and David was absolutely right to decide that the only unity you can give it is the unity of diversity'.[811]

### 6.2. Hockney's interpretation and correlations within his broader creativity

In part, the lack of cohesion of this production stems from the nature of the opera itself. With its miscellany of scenes and potentially confusing plot, *The Magic Flute* is structurally more complex than *The Rake's Progress*; and, as Cox has acknowledged, has 'a more fragmentary nature to it'.[812] It is also, according to Mozart's own notes, 'a German opera', intended for an eighteenth-century German-speaking audience, yet set in a timeless Egypt; and whilst its spoken dialogue renders it *Singspiel* and its comedy connects with Viennese popular theatre, its message is nonetheless lofty and its score surpasses populist musical forms.[813] Hence, the vehicle itself lacks consistency. Hockney's design heightened the obfuscation, however, through the additional blurring of time and place.

His opening scene (*fig. 280*) acknowledged the Italian Renaissance, its palm trees evoking those of Andrea del Verrocchio in *The Baptism of Christ* (c. 1475); and its boulders, hills and trees reminiscent of Giotto di Bondone's *The Flight into Egypt* (Scrovegni Chapel, Padua, 1304-6; *fig. 281*) and Benozzo Gozzoli's *The Journey of the Magi* (Chapel of the Medici, Florence, c. 1459). The fantastical beasts (*fig. 282*) derived from medieval imagery which Hockney had perused in the archives of the British Museum.[814] The dragon was based on that of Paolo Uccello (*St George and the Dragon,* c. 1470; *figs. 283, 294*); and the Three Ladies - with high foreheads and attired in fifteenth-century drapery - were a consequence of this (Cox: 'He wanted the Uccello dragon, so the Three Ladies had to be from Uccello as well').[815] Yet the rounded arbour of the garden (*fig. 274*) and the three German-inscribed

[811] Author's interview with Cox; Cox quoted by Webb, p. 172
[812] Author's interview with Cox
[813] Mann, pp. 592, 606, 640; Milnes, in *English National Opera Guide 3: The Magic Flute*, John, pp. 11-12
[814] Friedman, p. 114
[815] Author's interview with Cox

temples (*fig. 269*) drew on the elegant neo-Classicism of Mozart and Schikaneder's era; whilst the illusional temple brickwork inferred the pyramid constructions of the Pharoahs.[816] Overarching these disparate themes and time frames was a clarity of line and blocks of flat colour that smacked of Pop Art and thus embedded this production within its own age. The final scene, in particular (*fig. 278*), in which the sun's beams radiated the length and breadth of the backdrop, implied the vibrant, contemporary imagery of 1970s posters or the 'Rock musicals' *Hair* (1967) and *Godspell* (1970), both of which had been revived on Broadway just prior to the opera's staging (1976 and 1977 respectively).

The anachronism of Hockney's interpretation was noticeably prevalent in the costuming. The attire of the priests was neo-Ottoman whilst that of the slaves matched stripe-banded hats with Mozartian dress coats and voluminous striped pantaloons, suggestive of *Aladdin* (*fig. 284*). Such legwear lent exoticism, but also - as a concurrent fashion feature - a contemporaneity that would further ascribe this production to the 1970s. Indeed, pop star David Bowie had sported an extreme variation (designed by Kensai Yanamoto, *fig. 285*) for his *Aladdin Sane* tour of 1973, of which Hockney was possibly aware. The slaves' hats were particularly indeterminate, suggestive of the Ottoman fez, seventeenth-century capotains and the brightly-banded 'toppers' of the stereotypical 'blackface' singers of *The Black and White Minstrel Show* (BBC television, 1958-1978). This modern-day-Ottoman-*Aladdin mélange* was underscored by the shoes of all those in Sarastro's domain, which comprised turned-up toes offset by chunky, contemporary heels. Of course, the consequence of this overriding incongruity - and presumably a conceptual motivation - was an accentuation of the opera's non-reality.

An evocation of Egypt - as dictated by the libretto - afforded a unifying, albeit equally anachronistic, thread. Sarastro's realm implied the Old Kingdom (c. 2575 - c. 2134 BC), with its clustered pyramids and encasing wall of the pool referencing the structural traditions of the burial grounds of the pharoahs (*fig.*

[816] The temple inscriptions - as stipulated by the libretto - were *'Vernunft'* ('Reason'), *'Weissheit'* ('Knowlege') and *'Natur'* ('Nature')

*286*).[817] The distant band of water further suggested the riverside location of these pyramidal complexes, located as they had been on the left bank of the Nile to be closer to the West, the 'land of the dead'. Pamina's prison (*fig. 268*) - likened by Silver to 'an art deco movie auditorium' - was drawn from ancient tomb paintings and *The Book of the Dead*, whilst its jackal-headed deities were based on those in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.[818] This imagery belonged to Egyptian history's New Kingdom, however - an era which began in the sixteenth century BC and was thus several centuries after the pyramidal age. In a further leap of time, the said museum's imposing, nineteenth-century staircase inspired that of the temple's mighty hall (*fig. 272*).[819]

Hockney's earlier artwork *Great Pyramid at Giza with Broken Head from Thebes* (1963, *fig. 287*) visibly informed the background monument and foreground relic of Act II, sc. 2 (*fig. 271*). This painting, which resulted from a personal trip to Egypt in 1963, related to his 'Flute' designs not only in its subject matter but, likewise, in its contradictions: its juxtaposition of incongruous features and blending of opposing time frames. The pyramid was at Giza, yet the broken head - presumably that of Rameses II without its *nemes* headdress - was from Thebes; and the modern waterpipe was as central to the artwork as the ancient monument. On the stage set, Hockney paired a notably similar pyramid and head with a second item of statuary, which was clearly inspired by the figure of Rameses II at Memphis, as photographed by the artist during a later trip to Egypt during his preparatory work on this opera project (*fig. 288*).[820] The inclusion of the two relics of the

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[817] Scholars have failed to agree in delineating Ancient Egypt's timeline. The given dates are those advocated by archeologist Mark Lehner, as cited by J. Hill, 'When did the Old Kingdom start and finish?', *Ancient Egypt Online*, publ. 2010 <https://ancientegyptonline.co.uk/oldkingdomdates/> [accessed 5 June 2016]

[818] Silver, in *David Hockney: A Retrospective,* Tuchman, p. 68; Friedman, p. 115; Boris Kehrmann, 'David Hockney to invent The Magic Flute', in *Die Zauberflöte*, accompanying booklet to DVD of Glyndebourne 1978 production (Halle: Monarda Publishing House, 2013), p. 13

[819] Friedman, p. 115

[820] Studies of Hockney's work give conflicting dates for his second trip to Egypt, Friedman (p. 117) claiming 1977 and Livingstone (p. 194), 1978. According to Sykes (2014, pp. 68-9), the opera designs were still unfinished on 11th January (as per Laura Hockney's diary) and the trip took place after they had been completed, which

same pharoah, yet from Thebes (Upper Egypt) and Memphis (Lower Egypt) respectively, would lend a further, albeit subtle, incongruity to the scene. Other works from Hockney's Egyptian travels (notably *Shell Garage, Luxor*, 1963) reveal a similar focus on disparity and overlying time frames, and these may be considered a collective catalyst for his theatre interpretation. As musicologist Boris Kehrmann observed:

> In 1963, invited by the Sunday Times, [Hockney] went to the country on the Nile, and he described the co-existence of past and present in countless drawings and paintings. This experience of the simultaneity of different epochs has turned into the starting point for *The Magic Flute* designs.[821]

Beyond its Egyptian associations, Hockney's vision of Sarastro's realm engaged with the Persian concept of an enclosed, cultivated 'Paradise' garden (likewise inferred by its water features, palms and geometric plots of vegetation).[822] It additionally connoted Mughal and Moorish landscaped gardens and those of the European Baroque - notably Versailles - all of which evolved from the Persian model. Indeed, Hockney's concept has been described (by Silver) as 'a cross between Giza and Versailles'.[823] The gardens of the Hanoverian palace at Herrenhausen - which, from the early 1680s, had been developed by Martin Charbonnier in the style of Versailles and constitute the most significant example of German Baroque design - were a possible resource for the artist; and a widely-reproduced depiction from c.1708 is comparable, in both composition and perspective, to Hockney's backdrop imagery (*figs. 289-90*).

The earlier Renaissance references in the rocky landscape of the opening scene afforded a means of introducing perspective as a 'theme' within his

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implies early 1978. In either case, the second relic must have been a late addition to the scene. A further amendment concerned its position on the stage, with a model (seemingly also erroneously dated by Friedman, p. 117) depicting it stage right (to the left as viewed from the audience), and the performance photographs, stage left (to the right as viewed from the audience)

[821] Kehrmann, in *Die Zauberflöte*, accompanying booklet to DVD of Glyndebourne 1978 production, p. 8

[822] The features of the Persian garden are explained by Penelope Hobhouse in *Gardens of Persia* (London: Cassell Illustrated, 2006), pp. 6-13

[823] Silver, in *David Hockney: A Retrospective,* Tuchman, p. 68

interpretation, and specifically, in relation to visual perceptions of chaos and order. The artist has devoted much study to the techniques employed by earlier creators (as described in *Secret Knowledge* of 2001), and has observed that medieval masters routinely used isometric perspective, which comprised multiple vanishing points, citing Giotto's chancel frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel of Padua (c. 1305) as an example of this.[824] The 'chaotic' realm of the Queen of the Night can be seen to belong to this isometric interpretation of the world. In contrast, the exaggerated linear (one-point) perspectives utilised by Hockney for Sarastro's more orderly domain drew on the later, fifteenth-century linear perspective of Filippo Brunelleschi, which became the accepted standard within western art. These perspectival *leitmotifs* underscored the protagonists' literal and metaphorical journey from chaos to order, confusion to enlightenment. The ultimate scene, in which extremes of linear perspective were combined with graphic modernity, additionally inferred a chronological advancement, culminating in the 'light' of the modern age.

Of course, an inherent implication of this theme is the superiority of linear perspective over its isometric counterpart; yet Hockney has elsewhere voiced objection to this assumption, insisting that 'there is no such thing as 'right' perspective':

> You could say that isometric perspective is more real, since that is closer to how we actually see. Because we have two eyes, which are constantly moving, perspectives are constantly shifting. I preferred it, and I still do in a way.[825]

In the light of this suggestion (that isometric perspective is 'more real'), I argue that Hockney's exaggerated use of *linear* perspective is a further manifestation of his intention to stress the non-reality of the scene. This is underscored by his recurrent treatment of the performance space as a 'model theatre', which identifies with the method of Renaissance artist Leon Battista Alberti of approaching the setting as a 'window'; and despite his insistence

[824] Hockney, 2001; Hockney and Gayford, p. 88
[825] Hockney and Gayford, p. 88

that 'with Alberti's perspective we're reduced to a mathematical point. No actual person - literally, no *body* - ever saw the world that way'.[826]

The exploration of perspective had been integral to Hockney's creativity before his work on the opera. *Le Parc des Sources, Vichy* and his portrait of Henry Geldzahler and Christopher Scott had already demonstrated this focus. Yet these 'Flute' designs, with their acute angles and extreme linear depths, reveal an increased interest in exploring illusory space from uncommon viewpoints: a tangent possibly promoted by his working awareness of the varying degrees at which the scenery itself is viewed by an audience (with those in the stalls looking slightly upwards and those in the balconies looking down). Moreover, as if flipping these viewpoints upside down, the vaults and pillars of the pyramid ceiling horizontally mirror the symmetrical landscapes (*figs. 290-1*). Such explorations would punctuate his post-Glyndebourne creativity, the vaulted ceiling ushering a series of upward perspectives that included the receding beams of his design for *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* (*fig. 292*), the dappled canopy of *Terrace with Shadows, 1983* (*fig. 293*) and the underside of the wooden roof of *A Walk Around the Hotel Courtyard Acatlán* (1985). Certainly, the artist's perspectival explorations followed new trajectories after 'The Flute', to also include the isometric movement that the fixed perspectives of the stage scenery had lacked. *Santa Monica Blvd.* (1978-80), *Mulholland Drive: The Road to the Studio* (1980, *fig. 181*) and the subsequent composite poloroids and photograph 'joiners' (1982-6) illustrate these departures.

That Hockney's designs for *The Magic Flute* closely engaged with his studio endeavour is evident. The static depictions of elements with motion (clouds, flames and smoke; *figs. 274-5*) - which, like the 'cardboard cut-out' temples, stressed the non-reality of the set - identified with comparable elements of his earlier artworks, particularly those of the mid-1960s (*Rocky Mountains and Tired Indians, fig.34; Monochrome Landscape with Lettering,* 1965), and of his earlier and later stage designs (*Septentrion*, *fig. 167*; *Les Mamelles de*

[826] Ibid., pp. 102-3

*Tirésias*, *fig. 299*). The costumes of the slaves engaged with his youthful paintings (*A Man Stood in Front of his House with Rain Descending*) in their deliberate incongruity for comedic effect; and the 'waterfall' (*fig. 276*) connected with much of Hockney's oeuvre through the unlikely nature of its source material - in this case, an advertisement for menthol cigarettes.[827] Moreover, the dragon (*fig. 294*) and the stylised sunburst (*fig. 277*) bore visual correlations with the sharp-toothed beast (*Cast Aside, fig. 295*) and the radiant sun (*The Start of the Spending Spree and the Door Opening for a Blonde, fig. 296)* of his series of etchings *A Rake's Progress* (1961-3).

The exchanges between his theatrical and personal creativity informed Hockney's work practically as well as inspirationally. In painting the *maquettes* for this opera, the artist first made extensive use of gouache; and this medium, with its ease of application and intensity of hue, would direct him to a freer, more spontaneous means of working, in which line was subordinate to colour.[828] It fed naturally into his *Paper Pools* series (1978) for which coloured pulp was poured onto wet paper and pressed into a fusion, the saturation creating an almost volumetric intensity.[829] It also provoked an avid return to acrylic within his artwork. Curator Andrew Wilson noted this change (together with the renewed focus on perspective) in his consideration of Hockney's subsequent gallery creation, *Santa Monica Blvd.*:

> [The painting's] hot colours derived both from the new acrylic paints he had started to use (they had originally been intended for film animation) and from the experience of designing *The Magic Flute* in 1977-8.[830]

Such use of concentrated colour engages with the art of children and the arts *for* children, such as circus and pantomime. The discernibly two-dimensional stage sets may also be likened to a child's pop-up picture book or, as observed, a model theatre. Indeed, the fantastical world of childhood has been a constant thread within Hockney's creativity, as demonstrated by his previous etchings on themes of fairy tales, and his subsequent stage designs

[827] Author's interview with Cox
[828] Clothier, p. 59
[829] Livingstone, p. 200
[830] Andrew Wilson, in *David Hockney,* Stephens and Wilson, p. 142

for the 'Parade' triple bill and *Le Rossignol*, which sustained the two-dimensional forms, vibrant tones and innocent optimism of *The Magic Flute*. Much comment has been made of the childhood-evoking qualities of these designs. Those for 'The Flute' were described by David Baker as 'richly colored, playfully conceived', and caused Donal Henahan to write, 'Mr. Hockney's selection of hues and playful ways of juxtaposing them reminded one of a child's first uninhibited experiments with water colors or a box of crayons'.[831] Moreover, even his preliminary illustrations for these works - executed in crayon or gouache on paper - were undertaken in a deliberately juvenile style (*figs. 292, 297*). Sutcliffe has observed that 'Hockney invariably saw his operas as childlike fantasies, not real life' and that his version of 'The Flute' adhered to 'a long tradition of whimsical pantomime-style treatment'.[832] That Hockney and Cox chose to interpret the opera as a child's fable was also discerned by Kehrmann ('they considered this work to be a kind of fairy tale'); and the influence of pantomime has been confirmed by the director:

> Both of us took advantage of the fact that our earliest theatre had been British pantomime. We had people coming through the floor and just a general feeling of villains and heroes - and colour.[833]

A facet of pantomime which strongly transmitted into this production was a joyous, childlike humour. This was conveyed by the 'feather duster' pop guns of the slaves; the cartoonish flames of the inferno; and the 'pantomime horse'-styled costumes of Sarastro's lions and the forest animals (likewise their antics: rolling stupefied with paws in the air or the reptile poking out its tongue). These animals (*fig. 282*) which, as mentioned, derived from the fantastical beasts of medieval books in the British Museum, might have been developed in multifarious ways and it is pertinent that Hockney chose to present them in a comical, cuddly, child-engaging form.[834] The monster too (*fig. 294*) was far from fearsome, its entrance prompting gales of laughter

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[831] David J. Baker, 'Hit Parade', *Opera News*, March 2002, p. 30; Henahan, 12 January 1991
[832] Sutcliffe, p. 89
[833] Kehrmann, in *Die Zauberflöte*, accompanying booklet to DVD of Glyndebourne 1978 production, p. 11; author's interview with Cox
[834] Friedman, p. 114

('more Puff the Magic Dragon than fire-spitting beast').[835] Papageno's feast (Act II, sc. 16) - served, not on a table, but from a Glyndebourne picnic hamper - afforded a topical visual joke of the kind interspersed within 'panto' performances. Moreover, Hockney seemingly approached this work, not as a narrative whole, but as a linked series of individual scenes, in the manner of the music hall 'turns' and pantomime 'skits' of his childhood theatre-going experience. This is suggested by his reported comment in the Glyndebourne festival programme:

> The thing is, with The Magic Flute, not just doing the pictures but working out how to change them all without stopping. It's a kind of panto, actually, and every scene change ought to be a transformation scene.[836]

This statement is telling, not only in its reference to 'panto' but in its mention of the scenes as 'pictures', revealing Hockney's self-identification as an easel artist rather than a scenographer. Other remarks in the same publication that 'it's an opera more for a painter than for an architectural designer' and 'I'm a maker of pictures on the stage, not expressing abstractions' underscore his painterly, figurative approach.[837] The outcome, as Sutcliffe has observed, was that 'like his paintings, Hockney's sets were flat' and the artist's imagination 'stayed within the frame'.[838] Director Cox has countered, however, that it was not an intention of this production for the audience to imagine a world beyond the stage.[839] Indeed, the side pillars of the temple hall and, particularly, the linear-patterned walls of Pamina's prison actually accentuated 'the frame' in their replication of the proscenium; and in so doing, served to augment the sense of confinement. This emphasis on the frame - like the deliberately two-dimensional scenery - has been a constant element within Hockney's stage creativity, underpinning his visualisation of the performance space as the afore-mentioned 'toy theatre'.

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[835] Jason L. Steorts, 'Mozart Makes Magic at the Met', *Harvard Crimson*, 6 April 2001 <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2001/4/6/mozart-makes-magic-at-the-met/> [accessed 12 June 2017]
[836] Hockney quoted by Lambert, in *Glyndebourne 1978,* Caplat, p. 98
[837] Ibid.
[838] Sutcliffe, pp. 88-9
[839] Author's interview with Cox

The themes we have considered which have threaded through this opera - extreme perspectives; incongruities and anachronisms; and childhood associations (including his use of colour) - prompt questions as to why the artist chose to design the opera in this specific way. The allusions to pantomime, the sense of childlike wonder interspersed with schoolboy humour can be viewed as manifestations of his self-confessed optimistic, 'cheeky' personality.[840] The other recurring elements may be deemed a response to issues with which he was dealing in his broader creativity: his desire to escape naturalism without embracing abstraction, and his tussle with the frame. The many incongruities, unnaturally vibrant hues and conspicuously 'flat-pack' scenery served, as previously observed, to stress the non-reality of the performance; whilst the linear perspectives, which lent visual depth by seemingly reaching out towards the auditorium whilst simultaneously receding beyond the stage back wall, can be determined as a bid to 'break the border'. The visual conflict which arose from the amalgamation of the two-dimensional scenery and these linear perspectives with their three-dimensional implications was a literal illustration of his struggle with these issues.

Moreover, I propose that his repeated use of bold patches of intense colour has been a form of visual compensation for the spatial constrictions of his theatre settings. My argument is founded on the dialogue between Hockney and the afore-mentioned synaesthesia analyst Richard E. Cytowic during tests conducted on the artist using coloured chips:

> DH: To make blue bluer you simply add more space to it.
> REC: This chip is red to me whether it's this big or this big. Its physical size doesn't change the color of it.
> DH: If you make it bigger, you make it redder. I know there's more of it, but it makes it *seem* redder. Light and dark is a factor too.
> REC: [...] So color can be used to control the sense of space?

[840] Simon Hattenstone, 'David Hockney: Just because I'm cheeky doesn't mean I'm not serious', *Guardian*, 9 May 2015

> DH: Blue has this quality to being spatial, which other colors do not. The more of it there is, the more you feel of it.[841]

In terms of 'The Flute', it should nonetheless be mentioned that Hockney has not considered its colouring to be particularly exceptional, explaining - and again revealing his innate perception of specific shades - that:

> Everyone said the production was very colorful, though I did not think of it that way, because it was mostly the colors of the earth, mud and sand in Egypt: red, red ochre, yellow ochres. Even the blues were soft; they were Antwerp blues, not vivid cobalts or ultramarines.[842]

It is pertinent, in terms of creative connectivity, that Hockney's designs for *The Magic Flute* strongly engaged with elements of each of his earlier theatre undertakings. The slaves' voluminous pantaloons specifically connected with the stereotypical 'harem pants' of Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress* (*figs. 297-8*). The bold contours and vibrant colours, the 'model theatre' framework and childlike humour related directly to his sets for *Ubu Roi*. The serene order and classical symmetry of Sarastro's stately gardens had likewise imbued the backdrop of *Septentrion*. Moreover, the one-point perspective of this realm, which draws our gaze beyond receding symmetrical squares to the central rear pyramid, affords visual similarities to the physical rows of boxes and conical backdrop element of the madhouse scene of *The Rake's Progress* (*figs. 290, 243*). Silver observed that 'Hockney's first two operas [*The Rake's Progress* and *The Magic Flute*] recapitulate important aspects of the progression of his artistic persona up to that point: from English to cosmopolitan, from the frankly two-dimensional to the illusionistically volumetric'.[843] Yet the interpretation of Bedlam was the notable exception to 'The Rake''s two-dimensionality, affording a preview glimpse of the linear perspective of its successor. Moreover, 'The Flute' itself was not totally 'volumetric', its 'cardboard cut-out' temples and side-flats still clearly adhering to Hockney's overarching 'model theatre' conception.

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[841] Cytowic, p. 315
[842] Friedman, p. 121
[843] Silver, in *David Hockney: A Retrospective,* Tuchman, p. 68

Rather, I argue that this opera was a connecting bridge within his stage creativity, also housing elements on which his later designs would draw. The conspicuously flat scenery with its painted clouds and staggered, illusional perspectives would be recreated in *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* (*fig. 299*); variants on the comical, pantomime-styled animals re-emerged in *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* (*fig. 300*); and the chorus' lanterns, raised aloft on poles, anticipated the staff-borne masks of *Le Rossignol* (*figs. 279, 301*). The deployment of a painted gauze drop on which the rocky scene was painted (enabling it to be made invisible for the transformation to the starry sky) would likewise reoccur in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (*fig. 316*).[844] More tangentially, yet exemplifying the connective threads between Hockney's life events and his diverse creativity, a photograph of a giant tree taken during the same trip to Egypt that had spawned the temple's horizontal statuary would lend the inspiration for the garden centrepiece of *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* (*fig. 180*).[845]

The artist's use of brilliant colour would course through each of his subsequent theatre designs, culminating in the vibrant imagery of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, for which the stage crew quipped that they needed sunglasses.[846] Moreover, the exaggerated perspectives strongly returned in his latter trio of operas - *Tristan und Isolde*, *Turandot* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten* - all of which featured central elements (the ship's prow and promontory, the winding roofs and paths, and the golden river respectively; *figs. 13, 315-6*) which drew the spectator's eye to the illusory far distance. These designs lent visual depth; the sets themselves had more volume than those of 'The Flute'; and - partly on account of the generous stages of the larger theatres - allowed greater physical space for the performers. Indeed, Cox has acceded that the sets for *Die Frau ohne Schatten* 'felt' considerably more three-dimensional than those of the Glyndebourne operas, claiming that when he had stood on the stage during rehearsals for 'The Flute', he had 'had no sense of being in a 3D world'.[847] Nonetheless, the continued deployment of

[844] Webb, p. 172
[845] Friedman, p. 172
[846] Author's interview with Cox
[847] Ibid.

Hockney's trademark 'pop-up' scenery maintained the inherent conflict of volumetric realism versus two-dimensional artifice within the artist's creativity.

### 6.3. Connections with the work of other creators

As elements of *The Magic Flute* were shaped by - and fed into - further areas of his work, my research suggests an engagement with the interpretations of other practioners. *The Magic Flute* has been a popular vehicle for artists and designers, on account of its potential for fantastical invention; and a succession of creators have been drawn by the challenge, producing distinctive results of which Hockney would have been aware. Ingmar Bergman's 1975 film version for television (*Trollflöjten*) was a dreamlike blend of contemporary cinematic realism and eighteenth-century theatrics that included an open display of the mechanics of stagecraft; and Hockney's concept was comparable in essence to Bergman's realisation ('a witty, rumbustious production saturated with childlike joy').[848] Specific elements of his design - notably the overtly two-dimensional scenery, the comical dragon, and Sarastro's lions and chariot - also connected with, and were possibly informed by, Bergman's model (*figs. 302-3*). The traditionalism of Hockney's approach, his representations of Egyptian imagery and general adherence to the stipulations of the libretto likewise correlated with the previously-noted creation of Stoddart for the Anthony Besch-directed, English National Opera production, also of 1975.

Two previous versions of this opera had been staged at Glyndebourne, designed by Oliver Messel (1956) and Emanuele Luzzati (1963) respectively. Whilst neither appear to have directly informed that of Hockney, the latter is particularly notable for its modernity. In a variation on the previously-noted 'Thousand Scenes in One Scene' of Edward Gordon Craig, Luzzati's abstract scenery comprised ten triangular frames, manipulated by stagehands concealed within them wearing early wireless headsets (*fig. 304*). Each side

[848] Peter Cowie, 'Ingmar Bergman does Mozart with gusto', *Sight and Sound*, Summer 1975 <https://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/sight-sound-magazine/reviews-recommendations/magic-flute-mozart-gusto-ingmar-bergman> [accessed 20 April 2018]

of each frame was of a different colour and theme, thus affording a diversity of imagery (trees, golden pillars, the night sky) as the units were turned. In terms both of abstraction and technical innovation, this design was far removed from the version by Hockney which succeeded it.

Indeed, Hockney's interpretation connected less with the works of near-contemporaries than with those of much earlier creators. His costume for the bird-catcher Papageno clearly drew on an early illustration - possibly of Nesslthaler's design for the original Vienna production of 1791 - to include tail feathers (ultimately omitted) with identical markings; yet with a more comic and current form of headwear, suggestive of a baseball cap with a birdlike beak as its peak (*figs. 305-6*). The neo-classical forms of his three temples and garden arbour (*figs. 269, 274*) engaged with structures depicted in engravings by F. John of the Prague staging of 1792, and by the Schaffers of the revised Vienna production of 1795 (*figs. 307, 264-5*).[849] His star-spangled backdrop for the Queen of the Night referenced the iconic imagery of Karl Friedrich Schinkel for the Berlin production of 1816, albeit with the stars in disarray on account of the identification of the queen's realm with disorder (*figs. 308-9*). Moreover, the rock from which she emerged (*figs. 266-7*) bore correlations with the design of Oskar Kokoschka for the Salzburg Festival of 1955 (a surviving sketch by the Austrian artist similarly depicts the rocky scene with a central boulder encompassing the female figure; *fig. 310*).

A notable facet of Kokoschka's design was his innovative use of lighting to create *leitmotifs* and changes of mood, as documented by Wolfang Storch:

> *The colored light changed the scene: yellow to red for the appearances of Sarastro, blue and violet for the Queen of the Night; during the finale the sun rose. The spaciousness and the play of colors created a fairytale world. There was much to wonder at*.[850]

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[849] John's engraving is the earliest known illustration of the opera in production, no visual record having survived of the Vienna premiere of 1791

[850] Wolfgang Storch, 'Barlach, Kokoschka, Masereel', in *Art and the Stage in the Twentieth Century: Painters and Sculptors Works for the Theater*, Rieschbieter, p. 208

Hockney, having chosen Kokoschka as a subject of study whilst at the Bradford School of Art, would surely have known of these bold illuminations; so it is pertinent that he did not engage with such effects, opting within his own intepretation for drop scenery with *trompe l'oeil* perspectives, and the flicker of water and fire suggested by paint rather than technology.[851]

This approach was retrograde even for its era, and draws our attention to a specific paradox of Hockney's creativity: that an artist who has so embraced technology - cameras, fax machines, iPads - in other areas of his life and work should eschew modernity in his engagement with the theatre (his experiments with 'Vari-Lites' for the 1987 production of *Tristan und Isolde* were a notable exception in this regard). I propose that the traditionalism of his methodology has stemmed in part from his innate aversion to abstraction ('It was too barren for me') and his inexperience and possible underlying lack of confidence as a designer for performance.[852] Hockney had no formal training in stagecraft, so he inevitably drew on his expertise as a visual artist and his experience as a theatre spectator (with childhood recollections of pantomime and variety to the fore), and this is evident in his designs for *The Magic Flute*. The conventionality of his method is pronounced in comparison with later interpretations of the work: the abstract rendition of Robert Wilson (Opéra national de Paris, 1991); the Broadway-styled spectacle of Julie Taymor (New York Metropolitan Opera, 2004); and the video-amalgamations of Jun Kaneko (San Francisco Opera, 2009) and Barrie Kosky (in collaboration with animation company 1927, Komische Oper Berlin, 2012). Taymor, whose creation superseded Hockney's version at the 'Met', has noted the contrast: 'Hockney used all these painted drops, the way it might have been in Mozart's day. We use a very different approach'.[853]

Conceptually, the Hockney-Cox interpretation was particularly removed from that of director Jonathan Miller and designer Philip Prowse, which was staged

[851] Hockney, 1976, p. 34
[852] Ibid., p. 41
[853] Taymor quoted by David Cote, 'The Alchemist: stage and screen sorceress Julie Taymor reveals the secrets of her dark and mysterious *Die Zauberflöte*, due at the Met in October', *Opera News,* September 2004, p. 40

by Scottish Opera in 1983 (and by English National Opera in 1986). Their production, set against the background of the Enlightenment, saw the Queen of the Night as the Austrian Empress Maria Theresa with her entourage of bishops and choirboys; and Sarastro and his retinue as bewigged aristocratic Freemasons.[854] The set took the form of a monumental period library which, according to Prowse:

> ... epitomised the mood of the late eighteenth century, that reassessment of the classical experience, set against rather Gothic Catholicism. The enlightenment setting enabled us to avoid the usual representation of ancient Egypt, but we were still able to retain its essence by having bas-reliefs, sphinxes and a pyramid on stage as ancient artefacts in the context of the reinterpretation of the ancient world by the late eighteenth century.[855]

The library framework, Miller noted, 'automatically eliminated the world of pyramids and sand dunes'; and allowed them to avoid the usual 'solemn, boring processions of people dressed in robes'.[856] Moreover, it enabled them 'to escape from that awful tradition where [the Queen of the Night] appears as if at Aztec Night at the Copacabana'; and to 'emancipate the absurd figure of Papageno, who is so often represented as Tweety-Pie', in favour of a realistic non-feathered costume based on eighteenth-century Meissenware figurines.[857] What is striking, in the context of this thesis, is that the very elements that Miller strove to avoid were key inclusions of Hockney's interpretation. The two creators were clearly on very different wavelengths. Yet, in 1987, at the request of Peter Hemmings (founding director of the recently-formed Los Angeles Opera), they would be brought together to work on Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*: a project that tells us much about Hockney as a collaborator.

### 6.4. Collaborative and technical issues

The Hockney-Miller partnership was a failure - the most apparent collaborative failure of the artist's theatre career. Miller's approach was more

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[854] Romain, p. 122
[855] Prowse quoted by Romain, p. 121
[856] Jonathan Miller, *Subsequent Performances* (London: Faber & Faber, 1986), p. 175
[857] Ibid., pp. 178-9

subtle than that of the artist, his style more cinematic, his colours more muted; Hockney was offended that he declined to listen to the music with him ('The story isn't the words [...] - *it's the music*. It's *in* the music'); whilst Miller decried the project as 'An Occasion' for the display of Hockney's design with no inherent directorial possibilities ('it was an unfortunate circumstance, something I shouldn't have done').[858] Miller's later recollection of Hockney's sets for 'Tristan' as 'a pop-up book, thunderously over-colored, and it had nothing to do with me' underscores two issues.[859] Firstly, the childlike, 'model theatre' approach which had manifested itself in the artist's designs for *Ubu Roi* and *The Magic Flute* had continued to thread through the *Parade* triple bill and into Wagner's epic opera. In other words, whatever the music, and despite its effect on his forms and colours, the vibrant, storybook essence of Hockney's approach has remained a constant within his stage creativity. Secondly, his distinctive conceptions were capable of dominating, even saturating, those productions in which he engaged. Creative balance can be a particular challenge in collaborations between theatre professionals and eminent visual artists; and a potential pitfall is that the originality and distinction for which the artist is famed should override other elements of the performance. *The Magic Flute* designs by Marc Chagall for the New York Metropolitan Opera (1967) have provided a case in point, being widely considered to have smothered that production and, according to David Littlejohn, 'simply imposed on the opera the artist's established and well-known style'.[860] Hockney's determination to project his personal vision in the manner of his self-contained studio creativity allowed sparse room for negotiation or compromise, and this issue comes through in all accounts of his opera undertakings. The afore-mentioned comment by Miller that his role in *Tristan und Isolde* was 'nothing more than an estate agent showing people around the premises' was effectively a reiteration of a remark made by Cox concerning *The Magic Flute* and his realisation that he 'would have to people 'his' [Hockney's] Flute rather than direct 'ours''.[861]

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[858] Hockney quoted by Sykes, p. 244; Miller quoted by Romain, pp. 37, 71
[859] Miller quoted by Bernard Holland, 'A restrained Miller with a successful 'Katja', *New York Times*, 14 March 1991
[860] Littlejohn, p. 268
[861] Miller quoted by Romain, p. 71; Cox quoted by Friedman, p. 85

In considering the artist's creative assertion, it is notable that, in 1992, distinguished director Lotfi Mansouri would relinquish *Turandot* in the early production stage on account of Hockney's 'strong ideas about the piece'; and that the artist officially took over as director of 'Tristan' (with 'additional staging' by Stephen Pickover), when that production was revived by the Los Angeles Opera in 1997.[862] It is likewise pertinent that, as his stage involvement progressed, he increasingly involved personal friends and subordinates as assistants (Ian Falconer designed the costumes for *Turandot* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, both of 1992, and Richard Schmidt and Gregory Evans assisted with technical and staging aspects of the latter).[863] These partnerships ensured the artist's creative control. Indeed, when once asked what he considered to be his worst quality, Hockney replied, 'I wish to be in control all the time about my work, my friends, my time'.[864] Music critic Patrick O'Connor has suggested that:

> with a designer as strong and as innovative and opinionated as Hockney, the operas need a stage director of comparable authority. Hockney's most successful work has been with John Cox at Glyndebourne, and with John Dexter at the Met.[865]

*The Magic Flute* was the second of three Hockney-designed projects to be directed by Cox, and it was surely advantageous to the flow of its development that Glyndebourne, its staff and workings, were now familiar to the artist. Yet this production failed to reach the unity of the earlier 'Rake', partly on account of collaborative issues. In the first instance, the sets were constructed before the costumes, rather than being developed in tandem. This, according to the director, was due to the artist's tardy submission of the costume designs, a factor that also resulted in the costumes being 'a curious hybrid of styles and in the wrong fabrics, because David did them after the model with his [set] designs had gone to the scene painters'.[866] Head of

[862] Mansouri quoted by Sykes, 2014, p. 301
[863] Sykes, 2014, p. 307
[864] Hockney quoted by Adam, p. 128
[865] O'Connor, November 1992, p. 19
[866] Author's interview with Cox; Cox quoted by Webb, p. 172

Wardrobe Tony Ledell corroborated that '[the costume designs] did not arrive until about two weeks before the opening'.[867] Moreover, since Hockney was unable to produce accurately-measured drawings, he simply provided the workshops with guide sketches, from which the costumes were made and altered in tandem until a passable solution was achieved.[868] Cox recalled that Hockney particularly wrestled with the attire of the chorus, not wishing to evoke 'a Mormon Tabernacle Church choir'; and was ultimately dissatisfied with the result, but that it was unfeasible to make amendments in the limited time frame (the artist has since countered that, with hindsight, their robes were satisfactory).[869] His tardiness in this respect, particularly following the purported costume omissions of the earlier 'Rake', infers that he assessed the sets to be of greater importance; and this I suggest was because, as a visual artist, he considered the scenery to be the essence of 'the picture'.

An additional factor in the general lack of cohesion was the lesser degree of initial contact between creators than in the previous collaboration, partly because Cox was working on a different project in Australia whilst Hockney was based in New York. Moreover, Cox's personal vision - which had been a guiding force of 'The Rake' - was, as he explained, less pre-determined:

> I wrote my analysis of each scene for David before he started, but my notes were looser [than for 'The Rake']. I said, if you want to reference California, and the idealism of that, or the idealism of a kibbutz in Israel when we're talking about Sarastro's realm, by all means do; and if you want a swimming pool, put a swiming pool - and so we have pools. I wanted him to feel very free to use his humour, so the sources of 'The Flute' were multifarious.[870]

That Hockney's original concepts were likewise mutable is indicated by the director's revelation that the artist initially presented him with three completely different sets of working models.[871] They were not comparable or interchangeable, and the one ultimately selected was chosen because 'the

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[867] Author's telephone conversation with Ledell
[868] Livingstone, p. 199
[869] Author's interview with Cox; author's interview with Hockney
[870] Author's interview with Cox. N.b. Kibbutz-styled vegetable plots and a T-shaped pool do indeed feature on the backdrop (Act I, sc. 15)
[871] Author's interview with Cox

comic elements were easy to deploy' and 'none of it was pompous'.[872] The offer of three very different choices, however, suggests that Hockney did not have a decisive preliminary vision.

The cohesion of the project was further impaired by the differing perceptions of director and designer. As discussed, and in keeping with Masonic ideology, the central theme of Hockney's conception was the progression from chaos to order, with the realm of the Queen of the Night as an untamed wilderness and that of Sarastro as a geometrically balanced and harmonious domain.[873] The director's vision, however, additionally centred on the communal aspects of Sarastro's realm, with allusions to contemporary socialist idealism.[874] This concept was notably realised in Act I, sc. 19, by the costumes of the priests - specifically 'worker priests' - with their large aprons, rolled shirtsleeves and cotton headscarves evoking the iconography of twentieth-century Soviet propaganda and its associations of communal labour. Yet distinctions between Hockney's desire for symmetry and the societal emphasis of Cox created stylistic tensions that had not been apparent during their previous collaboration. These are suggested by Hockney's admission concerning the opening scene of Act II, which he described as 'a symmetrical view of a palace garden that extends into deep space':

> I suppose if I had directed it, Sarastro and his followers would have been placed formally within that framework to emphasize the set's perspective. But John actually wanted them seated in a circle on the floor, because his vision of Sarastro's kingdom was a kind of democracy.[875]

A further anomaly concerns The Queen of the Night. This character had been conceived by Mozart and Schikaneder as hailing from the heavens, as determined by her designation of *'sternflammende Königin'* ('starblazing queen') and the instruction of thunder to accompany her entrance (Act I, sc. 5); yet in Hockney's design, she emerges from the earth, as in a volcanic eruption and with the stars as fiery sparks. This conception originated with

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[872] Ibid.
[873] Friedman, p. 117
[874] Author's interview with Cox
[875] Hockney quoted by Friedman, p. 115

Cox, who explained, '[Hockney] made it so the rock could split apart and reveal the Queen. I didn't want her to come down on a chariot. I wanted her to come from inside a volcano'.[876] The shift of origin from sky to earth, however, denied the symbolic balance between the mystical, celestial world of the Queen and the logical, earthly domain of Sarastro; whilst the artist's adherence to the cool tones of the night sky - as opposed to the fiery hues of exploding magma (the rock's inner wall was also blue, *fig. 267*) - omitted to illustrate the director's volcanic concept and imposed ambiguity in terms of the depicted elements.

This was one of a series of creative issues. *The Magic Flute* made many more technical demands than 'The Rake' had done, and the challenges were compounded by Glyndebourne's limited facilities, some collaborative miscommunication and the artist's lack of experience as a designer for the theatre, especially with regards to lighting. A notable compromise was that the Three Boys had to be wheeled onto the stage in a cloud-decorated cart rather than flown in a gondola, on account of all the available hoists being used for other pieces of scenery.[877] This was a divergence from the libretto's demand for 'a flying machine' (which also identified in Masonic terms with the element of air); and was a creative frustration to Hockney, who claimed that he had been misinformed regarding the hoist availability and that the scenery 'got squashed up' as a result ('I was disturbed by all that and disappointed. I thought it was very important that these little boys should fly').[878] The problem was allayed when the production was reprised in the larger theatres of La Scala, Milan (1985), San Francisco Opera (1987-2004) and the Metropolitan Opera, New York (1991-2001). Indeed, comparative video recordings of performances at Glyndebourne (1978) and New York (1991) serve to validate Cox's claim that 'the chariot issue or number of drops so close together that they couldn't be well-lit was resolved by the greater facilities of the bigger

[876] Author's interview with Cox
[877] Kehrmann, in *Die Zauberflöte*, accompanying booklet to DVD of Glyndebourne 1978 production, p. 12
[878] Besch, in *W. A. Mozart: Die Zauberflöte,* Branscombe, p. 184; Hockney, 1993, pp. 39-40

theatres'.[879] Hockney has concurred, recalling the display of the sets on the stage of La Scala as 'stunning'.[880]

The greatest single challenge was illumination, with the artist conceding that his succession of flat, painted drops was 'rather old-fashioned' and 'difficult to light' on account of its lack of shadows.[881] Cox clarified that, because the material aspect of production had become more three-dimensional, 'there just weren't the old-style lamps in the grid to just give a light wash to a two-dimensional coloured surface' and 'because space was so restricted, we couldn't get lamps in because there was so much scenery'.[882] A solution, according to Hockney, was for the backstage crew to position lamps manually, by 'running around putting lights in terribly awkward places'.[883] Moreover, the available technology was still in transition, as revealed by Keith Benson's account that the Queen of the Night's sky was 'backlit', because 'RGB fluorescent or LED batons were not available at the time'.[884] Yet a conflict of recollection has emerged from my research: Hockney recalled Bob Bryan 'pondering over the models and then saying, 'It will be very difficult to light''; Cox declared that 'lighting 'The Flute' was a nightmare'; yet Bryan reported that '[Lighting] *The Magic Flute* was less of a challenge [than 'The Rake'] because we had done one or two things together by then, and the lighting process was much easier'.[885] Hockney nonetheless acknowleged that 'in the future I must consider the lighting properly'.[886]

The artist's awareness of previous issues and his desire to avert their recurrence is revealed by his temporal improvement to scene changes since those of *The Rake's Progress*. Acknowledging that 'you cannot have even a two-minute interval between [scenes]. That's too long in the theater', Hockney

[879] Author's interview with Cox
[880] Author's interview with Hockney
[881] Hockney, 1993, p. 39
[882] Cox quoted by Sykes, 2014, p. 70
[883] Hockney, 1993, p. 40
[884] Author's interview with Benson
[885] Hockney, 1993, p. 39; author's interview with Cox; Bryan, e-mail to the author, 14 March 2017
[886] Hockney, 1993, p. 40

achieved rapid transitions for *The Magic Flute* through intricate combinations of full and partial drop scenery.[887] He conceived these combinations using scale *maquettes* from which the scenery would be copied by theatre technicians (a method he had instigated during his work on 'The Rake'), yet using a larger scale (1:12) than that usually favoured by theatre professionals, allowing him, as Livingstone has proposed, to 'maintain complete control over every detail he painted'.[888] Of course, this method of working would have served to reinforce the 'toy theatre' aspect of his concept, with the added irony that, whilst the working models were three-dimensional, the resulting scenery was notably 'flat'.

An insight into the variety of staging issues to be resolved and the collaborative time expended on them can be gleaned from the Glyndebourne festival programme of 1978, in which J. W. Lambert recounted the following excerpt from one particular six-hour production meeting:

> *Cox:* What about a ramp?
> *Hockney:* Well, I'd only really like it in the second act. Can it be put in during the long interval?
> *All:* H'm, H'm, difficult.
> *Cox:* And we must avoid noise as much as possible. A ramp'll make it difficult. Whatever's there in the wings'll have to stay there.
> *Hockney:* There aren't any wings.
> *Cox:* There'll have to be, or the audience will see the singers waiting. We could have the ramp inside the wings. But that'll make the traps difficult to use. On the other hand the ramp is important for the big chorus scenes.
> *Hockney:* Why not put the back chorus into platform shoes? *(laughter in court).* But then of course if you've got a ramp you can't push anything on to the stage, and we must go for fast scene changes.
> *[Scenery] Constructor:* From past experience, if you've got a ramp on the stage *and* want quick changes you've got trouble ...[889]

This dialogue is pertinent because it reveals the type of issues with which Hockney, as designer, was expected to engage and his active participation in

[887] Hockney quoted by Friedman, p. 117-9
[888] Livingstone, p. 195
[889] Lambert, in *Glyndebourne 1978,* Caplat, p. 99

the problem-solving process. It also exposes his ignorance of basic stagecraft ('there aren't any wings'), the importance of his colleagues' expertise, and the fresh logic and humour that he brought to the table. It is unclear whether his suggestion of platform shoes was made in seriousness or as a joke, but the laughter it provoked clearly lightened a potentially tedious meeting.

*The Magic Flute* would occupy Hockney for over six months and, whilst he showed commitment to the project and was willing to work through the many challenges it presented, surviving items of correspondence reveal both frustration and resentment. In a letter to fellow artist R. B. Kitaj he disclosed:

> I long to get away. *The Magic Flute* just dragged on too long, I have done very little painting this last year, so I've decided to get tough. I've refused all other 'offers' etc. and told everybody I don't want to do anything but paint for at least two years. [...] *The Magic Flute* was made much of here [in England] - most theatre design is so dull that the moment anyone puts a little more into his efforts than average they can't stop writing about it - most of it rather silly. [...] The theatre is interesting to work in but frustrating - waiting for this, adjusting that, compared to painting where you do it all yourself.[890]

This correspondence is likewise relevant as it highlights two issues with which visual artists engaged in the theatre invariably struggle: the necessity for creative compromise and the forfeit of their personal studio time. For Hockney - and however well-received the production - the price was high.

### 6.5. Post-premiere

The Hockney-Cox production was repeated only once at Glyndebourne (in 1980), on account of the previously-discussed technical issues.[891] The original scenery was sold to La Scala, Milan, where it was presented in 1985, before being purchased by San Francisco Opera.[892] The latter repeatedly staged the production (in 1987, 1991, 2000-1, 2003-4) and also loaned it to other

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[890] Hockney, letter to R. B. Kitaj, dated 11 July 1978, folder 18, box 059, Kitaj archive, Special Collections, Young Library, University of California, Los Angeles

[891] Author's interview with Cox. N.b. The Glyndebourne theatre during this period was considerably smaller and less-equipped than the current building, which was inaugurated in 1994 on the site of its predecessor

[892] Author's interview with Cox; Martin Bernheimer, "Die Zauberflote' [sic] According to Hockney', *Los Angeles Times*, 19 June 1991

companies, including the New York Metropolitan Opera which presented the work in 1991, 1993, 1995, 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001.[893]

With every airing, the production predictably evolved; and my comparative consideration of the two commercially-produced video recordings, filmed respectively in 1978 (Glyndebourne Festival Opera) and 1991 (New York Metropolitan Opera), has revealed pertinent variations.[894] Some relate to production rather than design (real boys replacing women as the Three Boys); some were minor changes of little significance (the colour of the slaves' shoes) and some were minor changes which nonetheless impacted the production. The facial expressions of Sarastro's lions, for example, were transformed from passively smiling to ferociously snarling (*fig. 303*), thus contributing to a markedly different first impression of the leader himself. Changes of headwear conferred further implications: turbans were supplanted by hats and coronets; a simple crown replaced Sarastro's entry helmet and breastplate; and Monastatos sported a small powdered wig - a prominent allusion to the classical era - which, although a feature of preliminary sketches (*fig. 297*), had failed to materialise in the original staging. These amendments subtly minimised the pantomime-styled Orientalism of the Glyndebourne production, which was perhaps considered to have less resonance with American opera-goers. The Soviet-style aprons and headscarves were also notably absent in the later version, which simplified the priests' costuming and reduced the obfuscation of their role. It is to be presumed that these amendments were instigated by practioners who were not involved in the original collaboration (Guus Mostart is credited as Cox's successor on the 1991 staging); and, whether instigated with or without Hockney's authority, their inclusion underscores the mutative aspect of stage design and the inevitable surrender of the designer's autonomy.

[893] Bernheimer, 19 June 1991
[894] *Die Zauberflöte,* dir. Dave Heather, 1978, DVD; *Die Zauberflöte*, dir. Brian Large, 1991, DVD

The most conspicuous amendment to the later staging - of which the artist most certainly approved - was the materialisation of the 'flying machine' in which the Three Boys navigated, as per the libretto, over the stage (*fig. 311*). This replaced the somewhat kitsch wheeled cart that had been imposed - to Hockney's chagrin - on account of the previously-noted lack of hoists. The introduction of the suspended gondola lent renewed visual interest. Moreover, it facilitated the fleeting use of the empty space above the stage which, considering Hockney's natural tendency to maintain the action at floor level, was a significant gesture within his theatre engagement. Space itself, or spaciousness, was more positively apparent in the 1991 recording, and the visual improvements afforded by the lighting and grid facilities of the larger house were evident. The exaggerated perspectives, their lines transcending the backdrop and downstage scenery, were more effective when observed from further afield within the bigger auditorium and when filmed from a directly central viewpoint. As critic Martin Bernheimer observed: 'his sets benefit from the flattering perspective imposed by the long shot'.[895]

'Hockney's Flute' has proved universally popular with audiences and critics, as illustrated by its mostly-positive reviews: 'a spontaneous burst of applause greeted the magical sequence of stage designs'; 'the real champion of the evening is David Hockney'; 'his stage pictures unerringly worked their magic'.[896] A notable exception was the critique of Peter Conrad, which engaged with Sutcliffe's verdict on the artist's earlier interpretation of 'The Rake'.[897] Conrad described these designs as:

> beautiful but irrelevant. Rather than explaining *Die Zauberflöte*, they annex it, assigning it a place in Hockney's private pictorial world and begging every question about character and meaning as they do. [...] it is not a panto for grown-ups, as the Glyndebourne staging implies.[898]

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[895] Bernheimer, 19 June 1991
[896] Robert Henderson, 'Glyndebourne Opens with Hockney Spell', *Daily Telegraph*, 30 May 1978; Philip Hope-Wallace, 'Glyndebourne' (review), *Guardian*, 29 May 1978; Henahan, 12 January 1991
[897] Peter Conrad, 'The Magic Flute' (review), *New Statesman*, 16 June 1978
[898] Ibid.

I would counter this criticism by reminding that, as this study has revealed, Hockney's rendition does bear relevance to the clarity of the music, the simplicity of the libretto, and the anomalies of Mozart and Schikaneder's resources, which - in keeping with the populist arts of which pantomime is a part - included *opera buffa* and ditties in the Viennese vernacular. The vehicle itself is notoriously abstruse, yet the thread of Hockney's interpretation - the progression from chaos to order - does succeed in shining through. Moreover, it could be argued that it is not the role of the designer to 'explain' the nature of the work. Yet Conrad's denunciation prompts a pertinent question concerning his own review: namely, would he have made reference to a 'private pictorial world' had the designer not been a celebrity painter? In other words, do the stage designs of well-known visual artists provoke different expectations and more rigorous appraisals than those of 'regular' theatre professionals? This realm of enquiry - the scope of which extends beyond this thesis - is certainly worthy of debate.

Hockney's engagement with this opera, as previously discussed, would inspire fresh directions in his own studio creativity, and elements of these designs would also feed into his subsequent theatre projects. Moreover, and despite the conservatism of his stagecraft, his bold deployment of colour and childlike sense of fun have engaged with - and possibly inspired - the 'Flute' designs of successive artists, irrespective of their methodology. Emanuele Luzzati would notably exchange the abstraction of his Glyndebourne rendition for brightly coloured, representational, two-dimensional settings more akin to those of Hockney for his fresh interpretation of 2001 (Teatro Carlo Felice, Genoa); and cartoonists Maurice Sendak (Houston Grand Opera, 1980) and Gerald Scarfe (Los Angeles Opera, 1993), and the afore-mentioned Julie Taymor and Jun Kaneko are amongst those creators whose vibrant, stylised and humour-laden versions have likewise nodded to Hockney's legacy.

### 6.6. Conclusion

This chapter has considered Hockney's approach to *The Magic Flute*, observing his emphasis on the progression from chaos to order, as represented by the respective realms of the Queen of the Night and Sarastro.

Connections have been noted between the music of Mozart and the artist's creativity in their shared simplicity yet innovation; their bringing together of heterogeneous sources into a personal expression; and their mutual affinity with the joyous world of make-believe. Hockney's engagement with Schikaneder has likewise been considered, revealing creative parallels with the librettist, and an intent to follow his directions, yet with a focus on the narrative over the underlying Masonic semantics.

Prominent themes within Hockney's designs for this opera have been assessed by this chapter: most notably the overlay of incongruous and anachronistic elements, particularly in his evocations of Egypt; his exaggerated treatment of perspective; and childhood associations, especially pantomime, visual humour, the cheerful use of colour, and the blatant two-dimensionality of his sets (which conveyed the overriding impression of a pop-up story book or cut-out theatre). In these regards, correlations have been made with the artist's wider body of work in the studio and the theatre, both prior to and after the production of this opera. Moreover, this chapter has sought to assess the reasons for this approach, concluding these themes to be a response to issues with which Hockney was dealing in his broader creativity: specifically, his desire to break free from naturalism without embracing abstraction, and his struggle with the frame.

Comparisons and correlations have been made with the productions of other creators, and particularly with those of earlier designers (Nesslthaler, Schinkel, Kokoschka). The artist's conceptual opposition to the version of Jonathan Miller has prompted an introduction to aspects of his later collaboration with that director as well as an assessment of collaborative issues within *The Magic Flute*. My most significant conclusions in this regard were that Hockney's 'model theatre' approach was a constant throughout his stage involvement; and that his conceptions ran the risk of overwhelming those productions in which he was engaged and of which he sought creative control.

The lack of cohesion noted by this chapter has been ascertained to have stemmed from the nature of the work itself, from Hockney's tardiness in dealing with the costumes, insufficient collaborative engagement, and the differing conceptions of designer and director. Technical concerns, notably of illumination, and the artist's methodology have also been assessed, drawing the conclusion that inexperience and the limitations of Glyndebourne's facilities were underpinning factors in various challenges. Issues of collaborative compromise and time allocation, pertinent to all visual artists working in the theatre, were additionally brought to light by my research. The retrogression of Hockney's approach in terms of stagecraft; the modernity of his design almost entirely resting on his vibrant, stylised 'poster' imagery, has likewise been observed. Yet, as this chapter has revealed, elements of this 'Magic Flute' - his joyous childlike sense of fun and use of colour - have nonetheless been precursors to the creativity of the current theatre avant-garde.

## 7. Conclusion

Hockney's theatre career, embracing eleven productions and three different art forms (opera, drama, dance), presents a particularly cogent paradigm of the visual artist as stage designer, and the advantages and challenges inherent to that role. My research - drawing on archives, interviews and personal correspondences - has considered the strengths and weaknesses of his collaborations, thus demonstrating issues of possible pertinence to other visual artists working in the theatre and their professional associates. It has shown that, whilst the involvement of a well-known painter may bring fresh ideas and enhanced media interest to the project, there is increased potential for the design to overshadow other elements of the production, as inferred by Sutcliffe's double-handed review of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1992): 'Hockney's opera sets upstage the work of career set designers. But they also upstage the music'.[899] Moreover, there is the personal sacrifice to the artist in terms of time, creative autonomy, and the possible vexations of the collaborative environment. As Hockney explained of the same opera (staged by the Royal Opera at Covent Garden):

> I must have spent seven months preparing it, and we gave them a three-and-a-half-hour videotape of a model we had done with all the lighting changes and all the music cues. I sent it to them saying 'This is what it should be like', but then they didn't give us time to light it, they took time away. In the end, I just felt, 'Oh, I can't be bothered to do this anymore'.[900]

This statement conveys a strong sense of frustration at the loss of creative control and the perceived ineptitude of associates; and it is noteworthy that Hockney has not undertaken another theatre project since that endeavour. Whilst his increasing deafness is an acknowledged factor in this eventuality ('I could no longer hear the music clearly'), the negative aspects of such intensive collaborations would have surely been a contribution.[901] Moreover, the effect on his art and his personal well-being was double-edged. On the

[899] Tom Sutcliffe, 'Die Frau ohne Schatten' (review), *Guardian*, 16 November 1992
[900] Sykes, 2014, p. 314
[901] Author's interview with Hockney

one hand, he was inspired and rejuvenated by his theatre ventures, Livingstone noting 'the renewed sense of purpose' and 'great burst of energy' that emerged in his artwork following these engagements.[902] On the other, he would be depleted by the involvement, explaining in the wake of his final opera that 'after working with other people and compromising decisions', he wished to retreat by the sea and simply paint alone.[903]

In my interview with the artist, he disclosed that he had always given careful consideration to accepting opera commissions because of the enormous commitment involved and that he had latterly declined several such offers.[904] I construed from his reflections that he deemed the personal cost to have sometimes been excessive: a notion supported by his comment to William Hardie that the massive stage model (*fig. 312*) that he had used to create his last two operas had occupied his studio for nearly two years, 'taking up painting space really'.[905] The implication of this remark is that he considers himself to be first and foremost an easel painter and that his theatre engagement had somewhat encroached on that priority.

Hockney's painterly approach to stage design and his lack of consideration of theatrical lighting as an integral component have been recurring themes of this thesis. He explained to Martin Gayford that he had not considered the lighting during *The Rake's Progress* (1975), that he had merely crudely lit a stage model during his work on *The Magic Flute* (1978), and that his design for the 'Parade' triple bill of 1981 was the first to truly integrate illumination.[906] Lighting designer Gil Wechsler, who worked with Hockney on the latter production, nonetheless observed that:

> David designed sets to be seen from edge to edge, like a painting, and created atmosphere with color rather than with other theatrical techniques, such as texture, light or shadow.[907]

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[902] Livingstone, pp. 177, 220
[903] Hockney quoted by Geordie Greig, 'Mind Expanding', *Sunday Times*, 24 January 1993
[904] Author's interview with Hockney
[905] Hardie, 1993, unpaginated (first page of 'A Conversation')
[906] Gayford, p. 218
[907] Wechsler quoted by Friedman, p. 207

Colour has been a particularly identifying feature of Hockney's designs, the 'Parade' triple bill and its immediate successor, the 'Stravinsky' triple bill of the same year, both incorporating bold blocks of vivid hues. Colour would continue to be the dominant element of his stage innovations, the brilliant tones of *Turandot* and *Die Frau Ohne Schatten* (both 1992) being a particularly memorable feature of those latter creations. Indeed, I reiterate my proposal of the previous chapter that the intensity of Hockney's hues was a form of compensation for the two-dimensionality of his sets, colour having the capacity, according to the artist, to create space in the viewer's eye.[908] The vibrant strokes of his first expressions in the design process of the 'Parade' triple bill were inspired by the 'beautiful marks' of Picasso, Matisse and Dufy, which were applied whilst listening to the scores of the works' composers (Satie, Poulenc and Ravel).[909] As the artist himself has explained: 'I did a number of drawings using brushes, letting my arm flow free, exploring ways of bringing together French painting and music'.[910] These experiments serve to illustrate a further theme explored by this thesis: the inter-connectivity of his theatre ingenuity with the work of other creators and across related disciplines.

Wechsler's comment that he designed the sets 'to be seen from edge to edge, like a painting' also supports my argument that Hockney, for all his inventiveness, is a traditionalist in his methodology; and his stage endeavours have essentially followed the time-honoured format of painted scenery, 'framed' like an image by the proscenium. In *Ubu Roi* (1966) and the 'Parade' triple bill (1981) this was further emphasised by additional frames within the frame. The apparent priority generally afforded to the sets over other production elements (notably the costumes) underscores his treatment of the stage space as a series of 'pictures' in the manner of a child's story book. All his stage designs prior to *Paid on Both Sides* (1983) would follow this structure, and even those for his ultimate operas, though more sculptural,

[908] Cytowic, p. 315
[909] Hockney, 1993, p. 53
[910] Ibid.

were still conventional in terms of conception and realisation. Hockney's studio work, whilst imaginative and explorative, has been similarly traditional in its method, with his celebrated use of technology (cameras, I-pads, fax machines, video screens) nonetheless adhering to established principles of depiction on a flat surface. A single three-dimensional exception is the large installation *Snails Space with Vari-lites, 'Painting as Performance'* (1995-6, *fig. 313*): a sculptural composite of coloured shapes lit by constantly changing computer-controlled lighting, which the artist has described as 'theatre and painting combined'.[911]

He had first employed this style of lighting whilst working on Wagner's epic opera *Tristan und Isolde* (1987, *fig. 314*). A lengthy *'Gesamtkunstwerk'* in three acts, it lacks the relieving humour of *The Rake's Progress* or *The Magic Flute*, and its rich tapestry of interweaving melody lines is texturally far heavier. Hockney's engagement with this project - technically, artistically and in terms of the intensity of his participation - marked the apogee of his theatre involvement, and the production was generally positively received. I maintain, however, that in Mozart he had found a musical counterpart that was naturally closer to his own visual style, an argument supported by the assessment of opera critic David Littlejohn:

> In December 1987, Hockney displayed the results of his greatest challenge so far - a new *Tristan und Isolde* for the Los Angeles Music Center Opera - a leap into musical drama deeper and more tragic than anything he had dealt with before. Despite some intentionally dazzling color combinations, a few provocative cartoonlike shapes (the sails of Isolde's ship, the steeply raked and regular 'forest' outside her castle), and a transcendentally moving 'light show' for the final scene, some observers - including me - felt that with *Tristan*, Hockney had ventured out of his depth.[912]

*Tristan und Isolde*, together with *Turandot* and *Die Frau Ohne Schatten* would comprise the last cluster of operas to be designed by Hockney, and these were notably connected by his evolved awareness of theatrical space and the

[911] Hockney and Joyce, p. 194
[912] Littlejohn, p. 275

possibilities of lighting in relation to the music. More abstract and sculptural than his previous endeavours, yet building on the perspectives introduced in *The Magic Flute*, each would comprise design elements (the ship's prow and promontory of 'Tristan', and the zig-zagging lines of the latter two works; *figs. 315-6*) which direct the viewer's eye beyond the performance space and into the illusory far distance. These later projects would particularly reveal the closeness of the creative exchange with his work in the studio, the sets for *Die Frau ohne Schatten* bearing clear affinities in terms of shape, colour and texture with the 'Very New (or V.N.) Paintings' series (1992, *fig. 317*) that was executed in its immediate aftermath.[913] As Hardie has observed, the nature of the relationship between Hockney's studio and theatre creativity had now evolved to the point that specific content - not just concepts and forms - from these operas fed directly into his artwork, as exemplified by the cluster of canvases of 1987 depicting scenes from 'Tristan' (this degree of exchange can actually be seen as early as 1981, when scenes from the 'Parade' triple bill were transposed as paintings).[914]

This thesis has repeatedly shown that Hockney's theatre and studio endeavours have indeed been interwoven, with both facets of his career instigating creative developments in the other. It has also demonstrated that theatricality, in its broadest sense, had engaged the artist and permeated his work long before his practical involvement with performance. Indeed, it has continued to feed into his creativity, *A Picture of a Lion* of 2017 (*fig. 318*) serving to remind of his performance scenes, shaped canvases and railed curtains of the 1960s and 70s. Nonetheless - and despite Webb's claim that the theatre was 'one of the most important aspects of Hockney's career' - my investigation into the available literature and the nature of significant exhibitions of the artist's work indicates that his stage involvement has been marginalised by curators, historians and others in the art world.[915] My suggestion to Hockney that these individuals have deemed his theatre

[913] Hardie, 1993, unpaginated (first page of 'A Conversation')
[914] Hardie, in *David Hockney*, Melia, pp. 139-40
[915] Webb, p. 76

projects to be entirely separate from his studio activity was met by the rejoinder:

> Whereas *I* never did. I didn't regard the theatre as just a sideline at all. I mean I realised it was a big piece of my work; not seen by that many people because you have to go to the opera house to see it, but I always thought of it as part of my work.[916]

Of equal significance are the indications that this internationally-renowned visual artist has not been fully accepted within theatrical circles. Despite the resonance of his designs with opera-goers, he has received solely one award for his creativity for performance (the San Francisco Opera Medal in 2017); and, whilst his work for the stage has garnered little coverage in texts on visual art, it has drawn even less mention in prominent literature on stage design and theatre.[917] Moreover, successive interpreters, despite engaging with the humour, childlike sensibility and bold use of colour of Hockney's stage designs, have not identifiably alluded to his theatre ingenuity. Rather, his own interpretations have looked back to those of much earlier creators: Hogarth's 'Rake' (1735), Nesslthaler's 'Flute' (1791), and Picasso's *Parade* (1917). I propose that part of the reason for the lack of deference has been Hockney's retrogressive use of painted drops and flats, which was considered *passé* even at the time of their conception; combined with the distinctive visual originality of his designs, which has tended to promulgate contrast rather than similarity in the versions of successors. The cross-hatching employed for *The Rake's Progress*, for example, has become so closely identified with the artist that no subsequent designer would be likely to emulate it. Indeed, this thesis, in considering how his work has engaged and compared with that of others has also allowed us to contextualise Hockney's status as a designer for the stage: an area unexplored by other literature on the artist.

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[916] Author's interview with Hockney

[917] 'San Francisco Opera Medal Awarded to David Hockney', *San Francisco Opera*, publ. 4 December 2017 <https://sfopera.com/about-us/press-room/press-releases/Opera-Medal-David-Hockney/> [accessed 5 January 2018]

His creative influence is most noticeably demonstrated through his paintings, where his idiosyncratic conceptions lend themselves to re-interpretation. Of the artworks of others which can be seen to connect with Hockney's originals, *Pool in the Mountains* (1998) by Axel Krause points to *Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures),* in both mood and composition (*figs. 319, 163)*; the clean, American portrayals of Hiroshi Nagai clearly relate to Hockney's earlier visions of California (even though Nagai has insisted that he was unaware of these works at the time); and numerous depictions by Ramiro Gomez, including *No Splash* of 2013 (*fig. 320*), are a deliberate pastiche of his celebrated imagery, with the figures of Hispanic workers inserted for political comment.[918]

This brings us to the subject of Hockney's legacy. It is no exaggeration that some of his paintings - particularly those of the 1960s and early 70s - have become international icons. *The Bigger Splash* has, for some time, been one of the five best-selling images on postcards in the Tate Modern gift shop; and the sale of the said *Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)* broke all records for a work sold at auction by a living artist when, in 2018, it fetched $90.3 million (£70.2 million) at Christie's in New York.[919] In the media coverage surrounding the sale, both artist and painting were universally lauded, with the auction house describing the work as 'one of the great masterpieces of the modern era'.[920] Christie's executive Alex Rotter claimed that the sale rightly placed Hockney alongside fellow post-war titans such as Cy Twombly and Mark Rothko; whilst art dealer Stephen Howes proclaimed that it 'galvanizes the piece's rightful place as a true masterpiece and further cements Hockney's place in the highest echelons of art history'.[921]

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[918] Thomas Venker, 'My heart is dedicated to soul music' (interview with Hiroshi Nagai), *Kaput Magazin für Insolvenz und Pop*, 19 March 2015 <http://www.kaput-mag.com/stories_en/hiroshi-nagai> [accessed 13 April 2018]
[919] Deyan Sudjic, 'Power point', *Guardian*, 1 May 2005; 'Hockney masterpiece breaks world record in New York', *Christie's,* publ. 16 November 2018 <https://www.christies.com/features/New-York-Post-War-results-November-2018-9555-3.aspx> [accessed 25 November 2018]
[920] 'Hockney masterpiece breaks world record in New York', *Christie's*
[921] Nate Freeman, 'Why this painting will make David Hockney the most expensive living artist', *Artsy*, published 5 November 2018 < https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-painting-will-david-hockney-expensive-living-artist> [accessed 18 November

Now in his early eighties, there is much to suggest that this 'national treasure' and 'greatest living British painter' is, in the way of his earlier self-fashioning, actively seeking to secure his position in the annals of western art.[922] In 2008, he established the David Hockney Foundation with its mission to 'advance appreciation and understanding of visual art and culture through the exhibition, preservation, and publication of David Hockney's work'.[923] In the same year, he donated his giant landscape *Bigger Trees Near Warter* (2007) to Tate Britain in a much-publicised gesture that prompted Tate director Nicholas Serota to declare Hockney's astonishing generosity ('notwithstanding its size, this painting could have been sold to many buyers around the world').[924] In 2017, he donated the slightly smaller *The Arrival of Spring in Woldgate, East Yorkshire* (2011) to the Centre Pompidou in Paris: 'an extraordinary gift' for which museum president Serge Lasvignes likewise expressed 'deep gratitude'.[925] The imposing dimensions of these works (approx. 4.6m x 12.2m (15' x 40') and 3.7m x 9.8m (12' x 32') respectively), their high monetary value ('[*Bigger Trees Near Warter*] would sell for millions on the open market'), and the prominence of the institutions to which they were bestowed are pertinent factors in the contribution of these bequests to the artist's personal legacy.[926] Moreover, in 2018, the unveiling of the new Hockney-designed stained glass window in London's Westminster Abbey (a

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2018]; Howes quoted in 'Hockney painting breaks auction record for living artist', *BBC News*: Entertainment & Arts, publ. 16 November 2018 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-46232870> [accessed 25 November 2018]

[922] Bagehot's notebook, 'David Hockney, national treasure', *Economist*, 17 January 2012 <https://www.economist.com/bagehots-notebook/2012/01/17/david-hockney-national-treasure> [accessed 14 March 2016]; Annalisa d'Alessio, 'David Hockney Exhibition: the life of a British Icon', *Arts & Collections* <https://www.artsandcollections.com/article/david-hockney-exhibition-the-life-of-a-british-icon/> [accessed 18 March 2018]

[923] 'Mission', *The David Hockney Foundation* <https://thedavidhockneyfoundation.org/foundation> [accessed 16 June 2018]

[924] Serota quoted by Simon Crerar, 'David Hockney donates Bigger Trees Near Warter to Tate', *The Times*, 7 April 2008

[925] Lasvignes quoted in 'Press release: David Hockney donates an outstanding work', *Centre Pompidou*, publ. 26 September 2017 <https://www.centrepompidou.fr/en/content/download/79313/977025/version/3/file/PRESS+RELEASE+DAVID+HOCKNEY+au+27.09.pdf> [accessed 24 October 2018]

[926] Crerar, 7 April 2008

commission to celebrate the reign of Queen Elizabeth II) prompted his telling comments: 'It'll be there for years'; and 'this is a historic place and I know it's going to last'.[927]

During my recent interview with the artist, I asked him to share his views on his legacy, both as a designer for the stage and, more broadly, as a visual artist:

> DH: The theatre is ephemeral. I know that, I've always known that. So I assume the theatre work will slowly get forgotten, maybe. Theatre is now, performance is now. It's OK having ephemeral art, but painting isn't ephemeral. I have painted some memorable pictures. I know artists who haven't painted one, and they get forgotten. Most artists get forgotten. Most.
> SB: You're probably best known for works like *The Bigger Splash* or the large double portraits, but are those the ones that *you* consider to be your most seminal creations?
> DH: I always think it's the now.
> SB: The now. Whatever you're working on at the moment is the most important?
> DH: (laughs) And I've always thought that.[928]

Bearing in mind that twenty-seven years have elapsed since he last created for the stage (twenty-two since he reworked - as director - *Tristan und Isolde*), it is apparent that, for Hockney, the theatre is no longer 'the now'. It is also apparent that his minor performance projects are deemed by the artist to be less consequential, even aberrations, compared to the opera designs of which he is understandably proud. Yet all of these endeavours have had bearing on the interplay of ideas and developments that have imbued his creativity; and I consider my research of his ballets and plays to be as pertinent as that

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[927] Hockney interviewed in 'David Hockney speaks about The Queen's Window', *YouTube*, publ. by Westminster Abbey, 26 September 2018 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yUIj4QSuLk> [accessed 8 October 2018}; Hockney quoted by Mark Brown, 'David Hockney unveils iPad-designed window at Westminster Abbey', *Guardian*, 26 September 2018 <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/sep/26/david-hockney-unveils-ipad-designed-queens-window-westminster-abbey> [accessed 8 October 2018]
[928] Author's interview with Hockney

concerning his operas, in the insights that it has garnered as the first sustained study of these lesser-known ventures.

The importance of his stage designs to Hockney's creative development is acknowledged by the artist's claim that 'all the work I have done in the theatre has been useful to me and I have never regretted any of the time spent on it'.[929] As this thesis has served to demonstrate, his theatre endeavours have indeed engaged and interacted with his work in the studio, feeding into it, bouncing off of it and propelling it in new directions. Yet a significant reversal has also prevailed between the theatricality of his personal oeuvre and his creativity for the actual theatre. In his paintings he has obliged the viewer to read the text, to 'get' the joke, to actively *engage*. In his stage designs, he has urged the observer to acknowledge the deceit and be *dis*engaged. Ultimately, in his overriding quest to stress the artifice of his creations, he has turned his pictures into theatre and his theatre into pictures.

[929] Hockney quoted by Hardie, in *David Hockney*, Melia, p. 133

## Appendix: chronology of Hockney's theatre projects

1966 (July) ***Ubu Roi*** (*King Ubu*)
Genre: Play
Premiere: Paris, France, 1896
Author: Alfred Jarry
Original designers: 'Les Nabis' collaborators
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Production: English Stage Company
Director: Iain Cuthbertson
Set designer: David Hockney
Costume designer: David Hockney
Lighting designer: Robert Ornbo
Principal performers: Max Wall, Jack Shepherd
Venue: Royal Court Theatre, London, UK
Production revivals: None

1975 (May) ***Septentrion*** (world premiere)
Genre: Ballet
Premiere: Marseilles, France, 1975
Production: Ballets de Marseille
Composer: Marius Constant
Choreographer: Roland Petit
Author: Yves Navarre
Set designer: David Hockney
Costume designer: None
Lighting designer: Uncredited (possibly Jean Fananas)
Principal performer: Rudy Bryans
Venue: L'Opéra de Marseille, Marseilles, France (May 1975)
Production revival: Ballets de Marseille, Théâtre de la Ville, Paris, France (March 1978)

1975 (June) ***The Rake's Progress***
Genre: Opera
Premiere: Venice, Italy, 1951
Composer: Igor Stravinsky
Librettists: W. H. Auden, Chester Kallman
Original designers: Gianni Ratto (sets); Ebe Colciaghi (costumes)
---
Production: Glyndebourne Festival Opera
Director: John Cox
Conductor: Bernard Haitink
Set designer: David Hockney
Costume designer: David Hockney
Lighting designer: Bob Bryan
Principal performers: Leo Goeke, Felicity Lott
Venue: Glyndebourne, Lewes, UK
Production revivals: Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Glyndebourne, Lewes, UK (1977, 1978, 1989, 1994, 2000, 2010, scheduled for 2020); La Scala, Teatro alla Scala, Milan, Italy

(1980); San Francisco Opera, War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco, USA (1982, 1988,1999-2000); Hawaii Opera Theatre, Blaisdell Concert Hall, Honolulu, USA (1986); Opera Australia, Sydney Opera House, Sydney, and Melbourne Arts Centre, Melbourne, Australia (2006); Utah Opera, Janet Quinney Lawson Capitol Theater, Salt Lake City, USA (2015); Pittsburgh Opera, Benedum Center, Pittsburg, USA (2016)

1978 (May) ***Die Zauberflöte*** *(The Magic Flute)*
Genre: Opera
Premiere: Vienna, Austria, 1791
Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Librettist: Emanuel Schikaneder (and, arguably, Carl Ludwig Giesecke)
Original designer: Hr. Nesslthaler (presumed, sets and costumes)
---
Production: Glyndebourne Festival Opera
Director: John Cox
Conductor: Andrew Davis
Set designer: David Hockney
Costume designer: David Hockney
Lighting designers: Bob Bryan, Bill Burgess
Principal performers: Leo Goeke, Felicity Lott, Benjamin Luxon
Venue: Glyndebourne, Lewes, UK
Production revivals: Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Glyndebourne, Lewes, UK (1980); La Scala, Teatro alla Scala, Milan, Italy (1985); San Francisco Opera, War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco, USA (1987, 1991, 2000-1, 2003-4); New York Metropolitan Opera, Metropolitan Opera House, New York, USA (1991, 1993, 1995, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001)

1981 (Feb) '**Parade' triple bill** comprising:
***Parade***
Genre: Ballet
Premiere: Paris, France, 1917
Composer: Erik Satie
Original choreographer: Léonide Massine
Original designer: Pablo Picasso (sets and costumes)
***Les Mamelles de Tirésias*** (*Tirésias' Breasts*)
Genre: Opera
Premiere: Paris, France, 1947
Composer: Francis Poulenc
Librettist: Guillaume Apollinaire
Original designers: Serge Férat (sets); Erté (costumes)
***L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*** (*The Child and the Spells*)
Genre: Opera
Premiere: Monte Carlo, Monaco, 1925
Composer: Maurice Ravel
Librettist: Collette

Original designer: Alphonse Visconti (sets and costumes)
---
Production: New York Metropolitan Opera
Director: John Dexter
Conductor: Manuel Rosenthal
Choreographer: Gray Veredon
Set designer: David Hockney
Costume designer: David Hockney
Lighting designer: Gil Wechsler
Principal performers: Gary Chryst, Catherine Malfitano, David Holloway, Hilda Harris
Venue: Metropolitan Opera House, New York, USA
Production revivals: New York Metropolitan Opera, Metropolitan Opera House, New York, USA (1982, 1985, 2002)

1981 (Dec) **'Stravinsky' triple bill** comprising:
***Le Sacre du Printemps*** (*The Rite of Spring*)
Genre: Ballet
Premiere: Paris, France, 1913
Composer: Igor Stravinsky
Original choreographer: Vaslav Nijinsky
Original designer: Nicholas Roerich (sets and costumes)
***Le Rossignol*** (*The Nightingale*)*
Genre: Opera
Premiere: Paris, France, 1914
Composer: Igor Stravinsky
Librettist: Stepan Mitussov
Original choreographer: Boris Romanov
Original designer: Alexandre Benois (sets and costumes)
***Oedipus Rex*** (*King Oedipus*)
Genre: Opera
Premiere: Paris, France, 1927
Composer: Igor Stravinsky
Librettist: Jean Cocteau
Original designer: None (performed as oratorio)
---
Production: New York Metropolitan Opera
Director: John Dexter
Conductor: James Levine
Choreographers: Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux (*The Rite of Spring*), Frederick Ashton (*The Nightingale* )
Set designer: David Hockney
Costume designer: David Hockney
Lighting designer: Gil Wechsler
Principal performers: Linda Gelinas, Anthony Dowell, Natalia Makarova, Morley Meredith, Richard Cassilly
Venue: Metropolitan Opera House, New York, USA
Production revivals: New York Metropolitan Opera, Metropolitan Opera House, New York, USA (1982, 1984, 2003, 2004)

* The orchestral (symphonic poem) version of Stravinsky's music, entitled *Le Chant du Rossignol* (*The Song of the Nightingale*) was employed for the ballet variation of this work (also named *Le Chant du Rossignol)*, which was premiered in Paris in 1920, with choreography by Léonide Massine and set and costume designs by Henri Matisse.

1983 (April) ***Varii Capricci*** (*Various Moods,* world premiere)
Genre: Ballet
Premiere: New York, USA, 1983
Production: Royal Ballet
Composer: William Walton
Choreographer: Frederick Ashton
Set designer: David Hockney
Costume designer: Ossie Clark
Lighting designer: John B. Read
Principal performers: Antoinette Sibley, Anthony Dowell
Venues: Metropolitan Opera House, New York, USA (April 1983); Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London, UK (July 1983)
Production revivals: None

1983 (May) ***Paid on Both Sides***
Genre: Play
Premiere: New York, USA, 1931
Author: W. H. Auden
Original designer: Uncredited
---
Production: Eye and Ear Theater
Director: Bob Holman
Set designer: David Hockney
Costume designer: David Hockney
Lighting designer: Carol Mullins
Principal performers: David Van Pelt, Don Yorty, Kenneth King
Venue: St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery, New York, USA
Production revivals: None

1987 (Dec) ***Tristan und Isolde***
Genre: Opera
Premiere: Munich, Germany, 1865
Composer: Richard Wagner
Librettist: Richard Wagner
Original designers: Angelo Quaglio, Heinrich Döll (sets); Frantz Seitz (costumes)
---
Production: Los Angeles Opera
Director: Jonathan Miller
Conductor: Zubin Mehta
Set designer: David Hockney
Costume designer: David Hockney
Lighting designer: Duane Schuler
Principal performers: William Johns, Jeannine Altmeyer

Venue: Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles, USA
Production revivals: Opera di Firenze, Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Florence, Italy (1990); Los Angeles Opera, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles, USA (with Hockney as director and additional staging by Stephen Pickover, 1997)*; San Francisco Opera, War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco, USA (2006); Los Angeles Opera, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles, USA (2008); Lyric Opera of Chicago, Lyric Opera House, Chicago, USA ( 2009), Liceu Opera, Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona, Spain (2010)

* Following the Hockney-directed production of 1997, the role of director was assumed by Thor Steingraber (San Francisco, 2006; Los Angeles, 2008; Barcelona, 2010) and José Maria Condemi (Chicago, 2009)

1992 (Jan) ***Turandot***
Genre: Opera
Premiere: Milan, Italy, 1926
Composer: Giacomo Puccini
Librettists: Giuseppe Adami, Renato Simoni
Original designers: Galileo Chini (sets); Caramba (costumes)
---
Co-production: Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera
Director: William Farlow (Chicago) / Peter McClintock (San Francisco)
Conductor: Bruno Bartoletti (Chicago) / Donald Runnicles (San Francisco)
Set designer: David Hockney
Costume designer: Ian Falconer
Lighting designer: Duane Schuler (Chicago) / Thomas J. Munn (San Francisco)
Principal performers: Eva Marton, Lando Bartolini (Chicago) / Eva Marton, Michael Sylvester (San Francisco)
Venues: Lyric Opera House, Chicago, USA (Jan 1992); War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco, USA (Oct 1993)
Production revivals: Lyric Opera of Chicago, Lyric Opera House, Chicago, USA (1997, 2006-7); San Francisco Opera, War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco, USA (1998, 2002, 2011, 2017)

1992 (Nov) ***Die Frau Ohne Schatten*** *(The Woman without a Shadow)*
Genre: Opera
Premiere: Vienna, Austria, 1919
Composer: Richard Strauss
Librettist: Hugo von Hofmannstahl
Original designer: Alfred Roller (sets and costumes)
---
Co-production: Royal Opera, Los Angeles Opera
Director: John Cox
Conductor: Bernard Haitink

Set designer: David Hockney
Costume designer: Ian Falconer
Lighting designer: Craig Miller
Principal performers: Gwyneth Jones, Franz Grundheber
Venues: Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London, UK (Nov 1992); Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles, USA (Oct-Nov 1993)
Production revivals: Royal Opera and Los Angeles Opera, The State Theatre, Melbourne (Melbourne International Arts Festival), Australia (1996); Royal Opera, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London, UK (2001); Los Angeles Opera, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles, USA (2004)

N.b. Hockney's opera designs - and particularly *The Rake's Progress* - have been repeatedly staged around the globe; and this list, whilst referencing all premieres and many revivals, is not exhaustive. It does not, for example, include touring productions by Glyndebourne and other companies (such as the Dutch Nationale Reisoper, which took 'Hockney's Rake' to ten cities in the Netherlands in 2004).

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