

# STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



**David HOCKNEY (Bradford Born 1937)**

## **Portrait of Michael Horovitz**

Red and blue-green ink.

Inscribed by the artist, signed and dated Micheal [sic] Horovitz / Drawn by David Hockney / on June 22Nd 1978. in red ink, and in 17 Powis Terrace, / W.11. in blue-green ink at the lower left.  
355 x 433 mm. (14 x 17 in.)

Two years older than his friend Hockney, Michael Horovitz (b.1935) is a jazz poet, literary editor and artist who is best known as the founder of the poetry magazine *New Departures* in 1959. Hockney contributed illustrations to several issues of *New Departures*, as did such contemporaries as Peter Blake and R. B. Kitaj. In 1969 Horovitz appeared at the International Poetry Incarnation at the Royal Albert Hall in London, alongside Allen Ginsberg, and launched the Poetry Olympics in 1980. More recently, in December 2004, Hockney and Horovitz collaborated on the design of a greeting card intended to publicize and challenge the closure of a West London post office.

The present portrait was drawn, as Hockney notes on the sheet, in June 1978 in the artist's studio at 17 Powis Terrace in Notting Hill, West London. Hockney moved into a first-floor flat there in 1962, and was to live there for almost twenty years, eventually coming to own the whole house. A later portrait drawing of Michael Horovitz by Hockney, dated August 5th, 1980 and dedicated to the poet, was used for the cover of Horovitz's book *Wordsounds and Sightlines*, published in 1984. The drawing, in ink and wax crayon and of similar dimensions to the present sheet, later appeared at auction in London in 2004.

The medium of coloured ink was one that Hockney seems only occasionally to have used for drawings in this period of his career, though he was to return to the technique in a series of portrait drawings made in 2002, using red and black ink applied with extensive shading and crosshatching.

## **Provenance:**

Presented by the artist to Michael Horovitz, London and Bisley, Gloucestershire

Fosse Gallery, Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire, in 1988  
Private collection, Ledbury, Herefordshire  
By descent to a private collection.

### **Literature:**

Michael Horovitz, *Growing Up: Selected Poems and Pictures 1951-'79*, London, 1979, illustrated in colour on the cover.

### **Artist description:**

Although David Hockney made his first portraits and self-portraits as a teenager, it was not until the mid-1960's that he began to seriously apply himself to portraiture, inspired by a new relationship with a young lover, Peter Schlesinger. Since that time, he has continued to produce portraits in the form of paintings, drawings, prints and photographs throughout his long and successful career. Portraiture has, indeed, been a central theme in much of his work. His sitters, with few exceptions, have been made up of friends, family, and lovers; people whom he knew well, and with whom he felt comfortable. As he himself has noted, 'Naturally I've always liked drawing people, so one tends to draw one's friends and the people one knows around you – anybody does... I think the way I draw, the more I know and react to people, the more interesting the drawings will be. I don't really like struggling for a likeness. It seems a bit of a waste of effort, in a sense, just doing that. And you'd never know, anyway. If you don't know the person, you don't really know if you've got a likeness at all. You can't really see everything in the face. I think it takes quite a lot of time.' As a recent scholar has written, 'the intensity of drawing meant that Hockney tended only to make portraits of friends who were sufficiently patient and understanding, and with whom he was sufficiently familiar to be able to capture the changes and variation in their appearance.'

Hockney's portraits have been executed in almost every medium in which he has worked, including oil paint and acrylic, pencil, pen and ink, charcoal, coloured crayons, pastel and, more recently, watercolour, as well as in the form of etchings, lithographs, Polaroid photographs and photographic collages. Whatever the medium or technique, however, Hockney's portraiture is invariably characterized by the artist's close observation of his subject. As Marco Livingstone has noted, 'All of the artist's portrait drawings were made in the presence of the sitter, for in Hockney's view a portrait by definition has to be done from life or very soon after. This, however, by no means excludes the possibility of incorporating elements from memory, since previous knowledge of how someone behaves or looks can alter one's apprehension of that person on a later occasion. Hockney is convinced that having recourse to information gathered from past experience, in conjunction with the evidence of the moment, has allowed him to make livelier and more animated faces than might otherwise have been possible.'