

## David Hockney joins immersive art trend with new London show

**Four-storey-high space in King's Cross to merge physical and digital worlds to let visitors 'see the world through his eyes'**



📷 David Hockney, in front of his painting *A Year in Normandy* in 2021, has had a 'lifelong fascination with the possibilities of new media'. Photograph: Thomas Coex/AFP/Getty

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A [David Hockney](#) immersive experience is to open in London with the launch of a new, four-storey-high space that aspires to be “visually astonishing, alive with sound and rich in new perspectives”.

Hockney, one of the world's most acclaimed and popular living artists, has collaborated for three years with the team behind the new venue, Lightroom, which opens in King's Cross in January. He is the latest artist whose work will receive the immersive treatment, as installation art – which uses augmented and virtual reality – continues to grow in popularity in the UK.

The show, *David Hockney: Bigger & Closer (Not Smaller & Further Away)*, will allow audiences to travel through Hockney's iconic work, rarely seen pieces and some newly created material. According to a press release, the artist's "life-long fascination with the possibilities of new media is given vibrant expression in a show that invites visitors to see the world through his eyes".

The show will be made up of six themed chapters, with a specially composed score by the American composer Nico Muhly, and commentary by Hockney himself. Visitors will listen to his voice as they watch the artist experimenting with perspective, using photography as a way of "drawing with a camera", capturing the passing of time in his Polaroid collages and using paint to evoke the vastness of the Grand Canyon.

It reflects a recent trend for venues and galleries to merge the physical world with the digital experience. From an exhibition of the French artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster at the Serpentine Gallery, to a number of Van Gogh immersive experiences, more shows of this kind are being produced.

Recently, [Frameless in Marble Arch](#), which boasted Britain's biggest immersive art experience "where art breaks free" took this concept even further – the entire art show did not contain any actual art. Instead, it offered 90 minutes of Instagram-friendly experiences across a space of 30,000 sq feet.

"The world is very very beautiful if you look at it, but most people don't look very much," Hockney says in the soundtrack to the show. "They scan the ground in front of them so they can walk, they don't really look at things incredibly well, with an intensity. I do."

*Bigger & Closer*, which runs from 25 January-23 April, will be the first in a repertoire of original shows at Lightroom made with leading artists and innovators.

The show's director, Mark Grimmer of 59 Productions, said: "We have worked with David to bring together large-scale projected images, animation, archival and bespoke interviews and a commissioned score to create a new kind of show which owes as much to Hockney's theatrical design as to his painting, drawing and photography.

"It's been thrilling to work with David over the last three years and we hope the show will introduce a whole new audience to his art."

Lightroom was designed by Haworth Tompkins as a sister space to the Bridge theatre. The executive producer, Nicholas Hytner (artistic director of the Bridge and co-founder of Lightroom), said the Hockney show suggested how "potent" the immersive medium would be for other creators and artists.

“What’s so exciting about this show is how authentically Hockney it is. Listening to his voice in this astonishing new space while seeing artworks unfurl around the four walls is going to be both an experience and an education,” he said.

Hockney, 85, became the most highly valued artist in 2018 when one of his paintings, [Portrait of an Artist \(Pool with Two Figures\)](#), sold for \$90.3m (£81m) in a New York auction. The signature work depicted a turquoise swimming pool under bright blue California skies, as did another of his most famous paintings, A Bigger Splash.

Hockney also recently unveiled a series of digital drawings of flowers, 20 Flowers and Some Bigger Pictures, that are part of a major new exhibition. They are currently on display at the artist’s London gallery, [Annely Juda](#) Fine Art, one of five galleries in five cities worldwide, in an unprecedented collaboration.

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2022/nov/16/david-hockney-joins-immersive-art-trend-with-new-london-exhibition>