Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)

David Hockney (b. 1937)
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*Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)*

acrylic on canvas

84 x 120 in. (213.5 x 305 cm.)

Painted in 1972.

Provenance

André Emmerich Gallery, New York

Mr. and Mrs. James Astor, London

William Beadleston, Inc., New York

Stephen Mazoh & Co., New York

David Geffen, Los Angeles, 1983

Acquired from the above by the present owner, 1995

View *Special Publication: David Hockney's Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)*

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The standing figure was always Peter Schlesinger. According to his official biographer, Christopher Simon Sykes, Hockney painted the swimmer first but then coated the canvas with a preparatory gesso, which prevented him from altering the position of the pool or the standing figure. It was a mistake. Rare Da Vinci painting smashes world records with $450 million sale. He took hundreds of photos of the two. St. Clair, the submerged swimmer, dived into the pool in his white briefs so many times that he eventually cracked his head on the bottom and had to stop. McDermott acted as Schlesinger's stand-in, wearing his reddish pink jacket by the pool.

Back in London, Hockney persuaded Schlesinger to pose for him early one morning in Hyde Park for yet more photos. English artist David Hockney’s ‘Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)’ is displayed during a Christie’s auction preview in Hong Kong on September 27, 2018. Anthony Wallace / AFP/Getty Images. The 1972 painting by Hockney, now 81, is “the holy grail of his paintings, from both the historical and the market perspectives,” Alex Rotter, co-chairman of post-war and contemporary art at Christie’s, said in September. He noted that writers have referred to the swimming pool as being sort of a self-portrait of Hockney, though he never confirmed that, just saying he was fascinated to paint moving water. The painting, whose buyer was not immediately revealed, had been long held by a private collector.