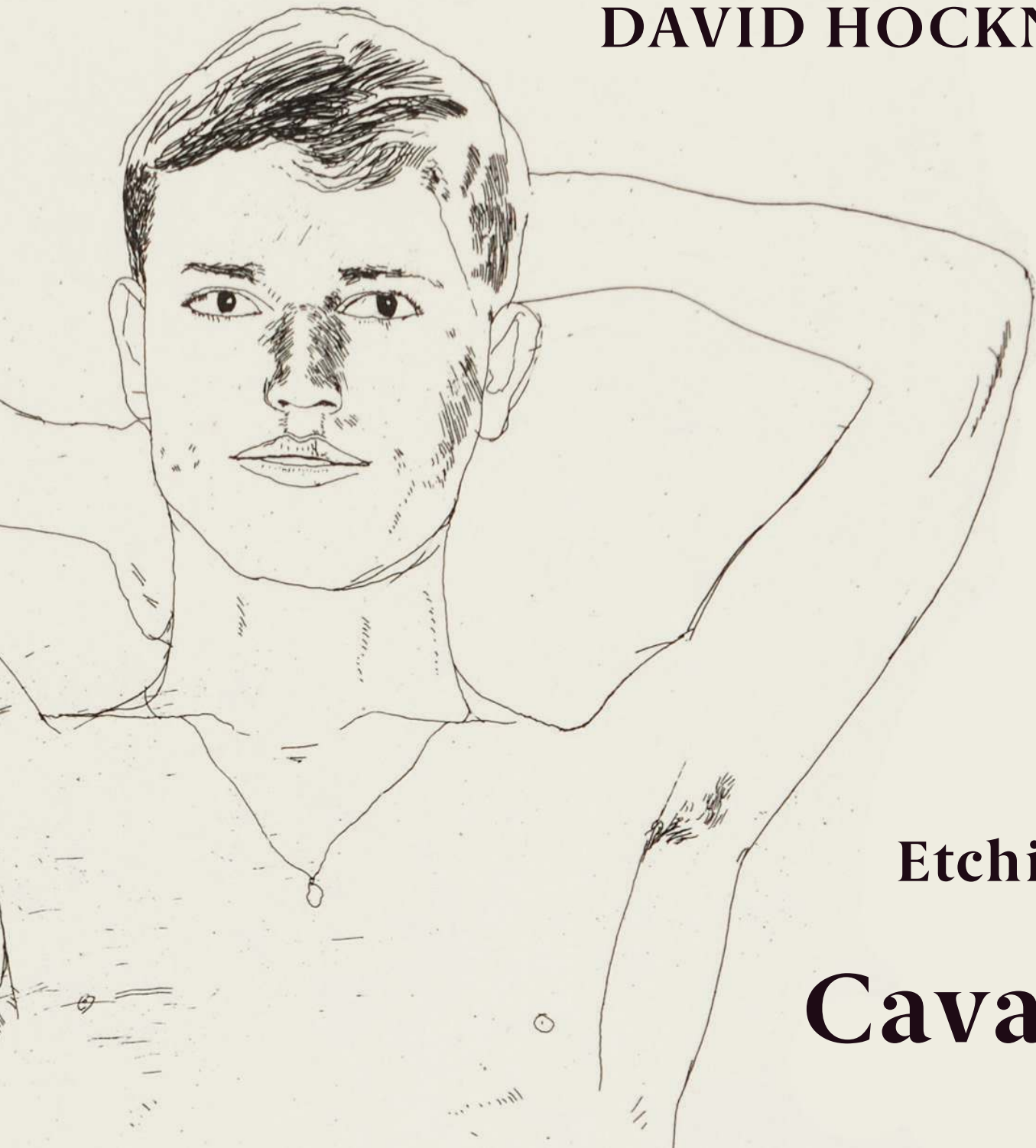


DAVID HOCKNEY



**Etchings
for
Cavafy**

“Of course they are about gay love, and I was quite boldly using that subject then. I was aware that it was illegal, but I didn’t really think much about that at the time. I was living in a bohemian world, where we just did what we pleased. I wasn’t speaking for anybody else. I was defending my way of living.”

David Hockney

**'Illustrations for Fourteen Poems
for Constantine Cavafy'**

by DAVID HOCKNEY

1966-67

Gerrish Fine Art is delighted to present a catalogue of the rare set of all thirteen etchings for Hockney's 'Cavafy' suite, one of only 25 sets on large sheets of vellum paper, along with two unpublished preparatory proofs.

This was the first major series of etchings by Hockney since 'The Rake's Progress'. They hold a particular social significance given the fact that the UK parliament only passed the Sexual Offences Act, which finally decriminalised homosexuality, in 1967, the year they were published.

Hockney was first introduced to the writings of Constantine Cavafy (1863-1933), widely considered to be the most distinguished Greek poet of the 20th Century, while at art school. In the Summer of 1960, on a trip home, Hockney tracked

down a book of Cavafy's poems in the Bradford library:

"I read it from cover to cover, many times, and I thought it was incredible, marvellous".

The intimate poems of desire and sensual pleasure between men, tender contemplations of love, loss and passion, struck a chord with the young artist; his exposure to writers, such as Whitman and Cavafy, who dealt with explicitly homosexual themes proved instrumental in making Hockney feel more at ease with expressing his own sexuality in his work. Hockney recalled of this fertile period of self-discovery:

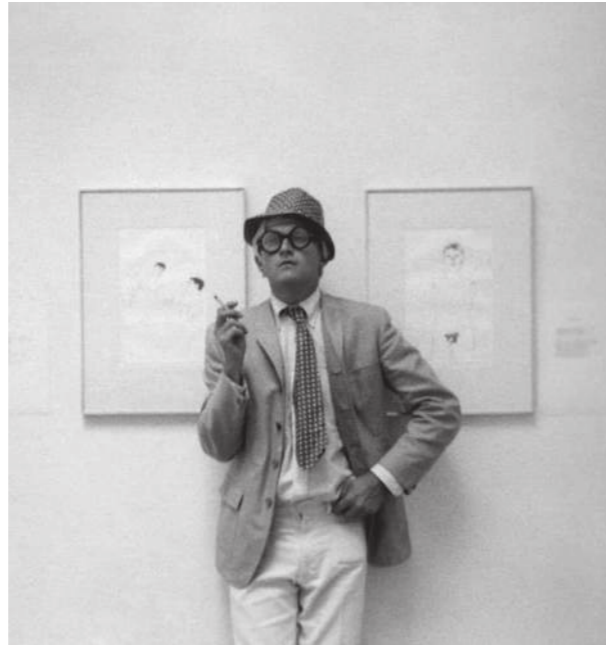
"I suddenly felt part of a bohemian world, a world about art, poetry and music. I felt a deep part of



it rather than any other kind of life. I finally felt I belonged. I met kindred spirits and the first homosexuals who weren't afraid to admit what they were. Adrian Berg lived in a free world, and fuck the rest of it. I thought, "I like that. That's the way I want to live. Forget Bradford." Once I accepted all this, it gave me a great sense of freedom, and I started to paint homosexual subjects."

A few years later Hockney expressed a desire to create a series of works inspired by Cavafy's poetry to Paul Cornwall-Jones of Editions Alecto. In the film 'Love's Presentation', which documents Hockney working on this series, Hockney says:

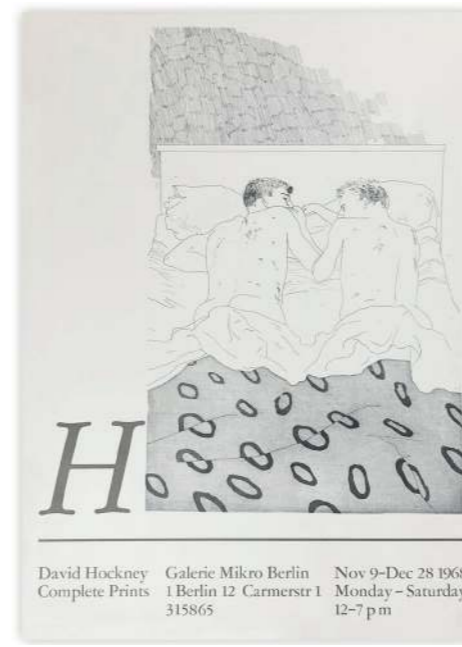
"Cavafy in a way wrote two kinds of poem, one sort of poem about historical Alexandria, the ptolemies,



which he knew from history, and the other poems are about modern Alexandria life, which he knew in modern Alexandria, and they're mostly love poems, I suppose because I know more about love than I do about history I chose to do those".

Cornwall Jones encouraged him to start work immediately. For inspiration Hockney visited Beirut, which he considered the equivalent of a modern day Alexandria - "the Paris of the Middle East" - in January of 1966. On his return he began to work up his plates at his home in Notting Hill, working from his Beirut drawings, photos he had taken or found, or from life, with his acid bath on the balcony.

Hockney's clean lines and use of empty space are



very much intended to visually create an equivalent to the clarity and simplicity of Cavafy's words. His style was strongly informed by the sparse life drawings in pen and ink which he'd been working on for the previous two years.

The series was greatly celebrated upon its release, English writer Edward Lucie-Smith declared:

"I have just seen the first pulls from some of the (Cavafy) plates, and thought them not only the best work I have seen by the artist, but probably the finest prints seen in England since the war".

Gerrish Fine Art are great admirers of Hockney, and these are part of a major group of important early works to have entered our collection.

Illustrations (from left to right)

Undated photographic portrait of Cavafy from the Onassis Cavafy archive.

Portrait of David Hockney as he poses, during his one man show, 'Drawings For Ubu Roi and Cavafy Etchings,' at John Kasmin Gallery, London, England, 1966, by Basil Langton.

Poster for Hockney's exhibition 'David Hockney Complete Prints' at Galerie Mirko, Berlin, November 9 - Dec 28 1968.

The Plates

The complete set of thirteen etchings for 'Illustrations for Fourteen Poems from C. P. Cavafy' (1966-67) plus two rare unpublished preparatory proofs, relating to, but not used in, the final publication.

Portrait of Cavafy in Alexandria

Two boys aged 23 or 24

He enquired after the quality

To remain

According to prescriptions of ancient magicians

In an old book

The shop window of a tobacco store

In the dull village

The beginning

One night

In despair

Beautiful and white flowers

Portrait of Cavafy II

Afternoon

Quartet

The Edition

Signed and dated '66' by the artist in pencil. Numbered in roman numerals from the edition of 25 + 5 APs in Edition

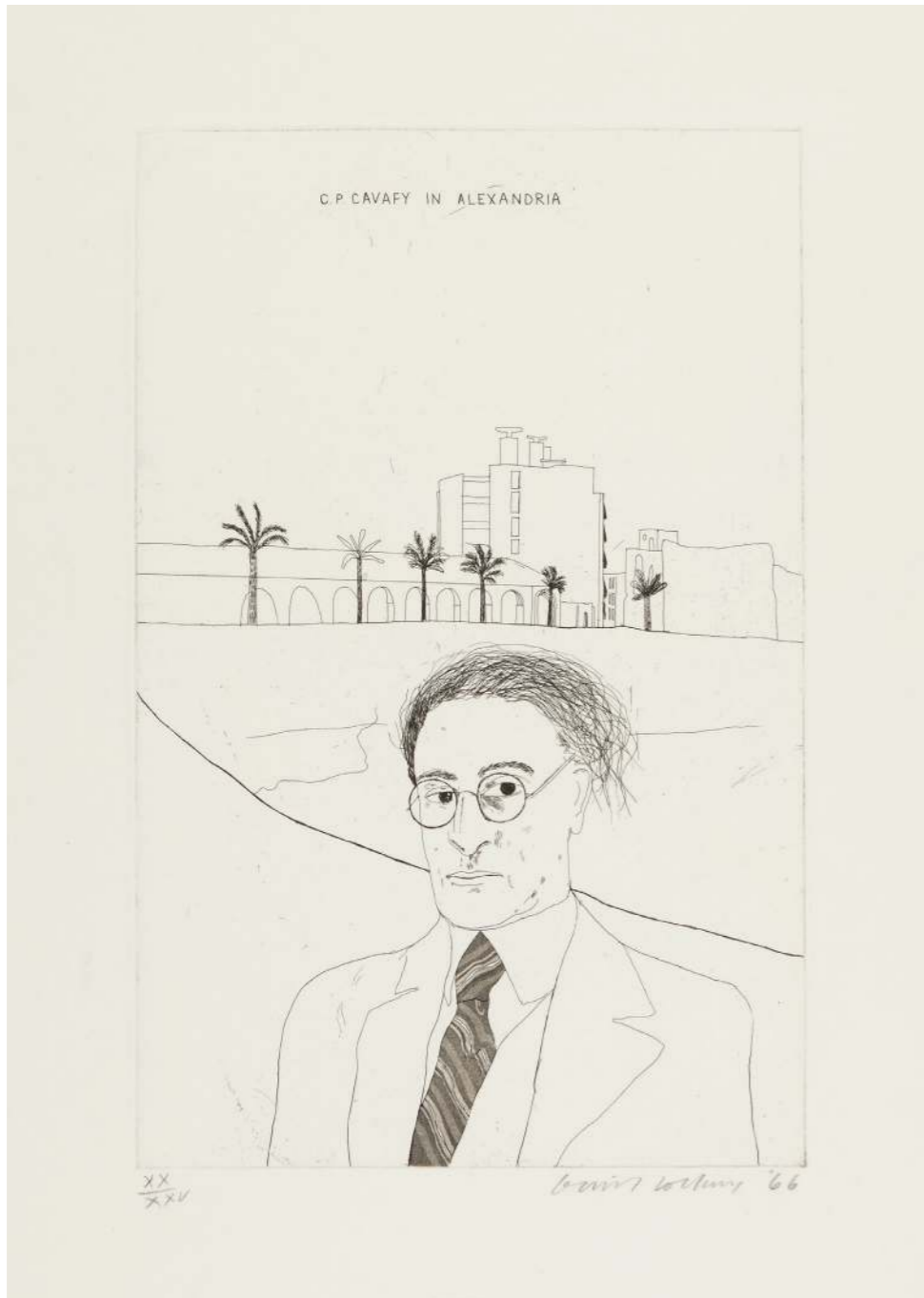
E. Stamped on the reverse with the Editions Alecto publication number. Printed on handmade vellum wove 72 lb Royal paper by J. Barcham Green Ltd. Printed in black ink, from steel-faced copper plates, by Maurice Payne and Danyon Black at the Alecto Studios, London. Published by Editions Alecto in 1967.

The Preparatory Proofs

Signed and annotated "good to pull" in black ink. One of five to ten known impressions, no formal edition. Printed on watermarked wove paper. Printed in black ink, from copper plates, by Maurice Payne and Danyon Black at the Alecto Studios, London. Unpublished.

To be sold as a collection.

PRICE ON APPLICATION



Portrait of Cavafy in Alexandria

Etching & aquatint, 1966-67

This portrait of Cavafy is composed of two elements: The background was taken from a 1966 ink drawing Hockney had made of the Beirut seafront, while the portrait itself was taken from an old photo of Cavafy which Hockney was given. Hockney quite literally places Cavafy directly within the realm of his own contemporary experience of what he imagines Alexandria may have been like, rather than creating a historical stage set for him, creating a direct parallel between the artist and his muse.

This plate was accompanied by the Cavafy poem 'The mirror at the entrance', in which an antique mirror takes great pleasure from being looked in by a handsome delivery boy:

*"The antique mirror that had looked and looked
through its long years of existence
at a thousand things and faces,
this antique mirror now rejoiced
and bragged that it had momentarily received
upon itself such complete beauty."*

The choice of poem is revealing, the mirror - and both Cavafy and Hockney - share the ability to rejoice in and reflect masculine beauty. This could, in a sense, be taken as a metaphor for the entire series of Cavafy etchings. Hockney discusses and works on the copper plate for this etching in the film 'Love's Presentation' (1966) directed by James Scott.

Reference: Tokyo 47

Editions Alecto reference: ea 362

Plate size: 35 x 22.5 cm | Paper size: 64 x 51.5 cm



Two boys aged 23 or 24

Etching and aquatint, 1966-67

This etching is based on a photograph Hockney took of his friends, the artists Mo McDermott and Dale Chisman, in bed in his flat in Notting Hill; there is also a pen and ink drawing of the same composition.

The contented slumber of the two men, facing each other with limbs affectionately touching, suggests a feeling of easy intimacy. It very much echoes the mood of the poem Hockney chose to accompany this etching, which tells the story of two boys having a joyous night out together after a casino win, it ends:

*“And when the expensive drinks were finished,
when it was nearly dawn,
content, they gave themselves to love.”*

Reference: Tokyo 48

Editions Alecto reference: ea 363

Plate size: 35 x 22.5 cm | Paper size: 64 x 51.5 cm



He enquired after the quality

Etching and aquatint, 1966-67

This etching is based on a drawing Hockney made of a man selling bottles in a bazaar, which the artist inscribed 'these bottles should be handkerchiefs'. The etching is closely paired visually to the words of Cavafy's poem, which describes a handsome man entering a shop and browsing the goods, as an excuse for a furtive moment with a shop assistant who had caught his eye:

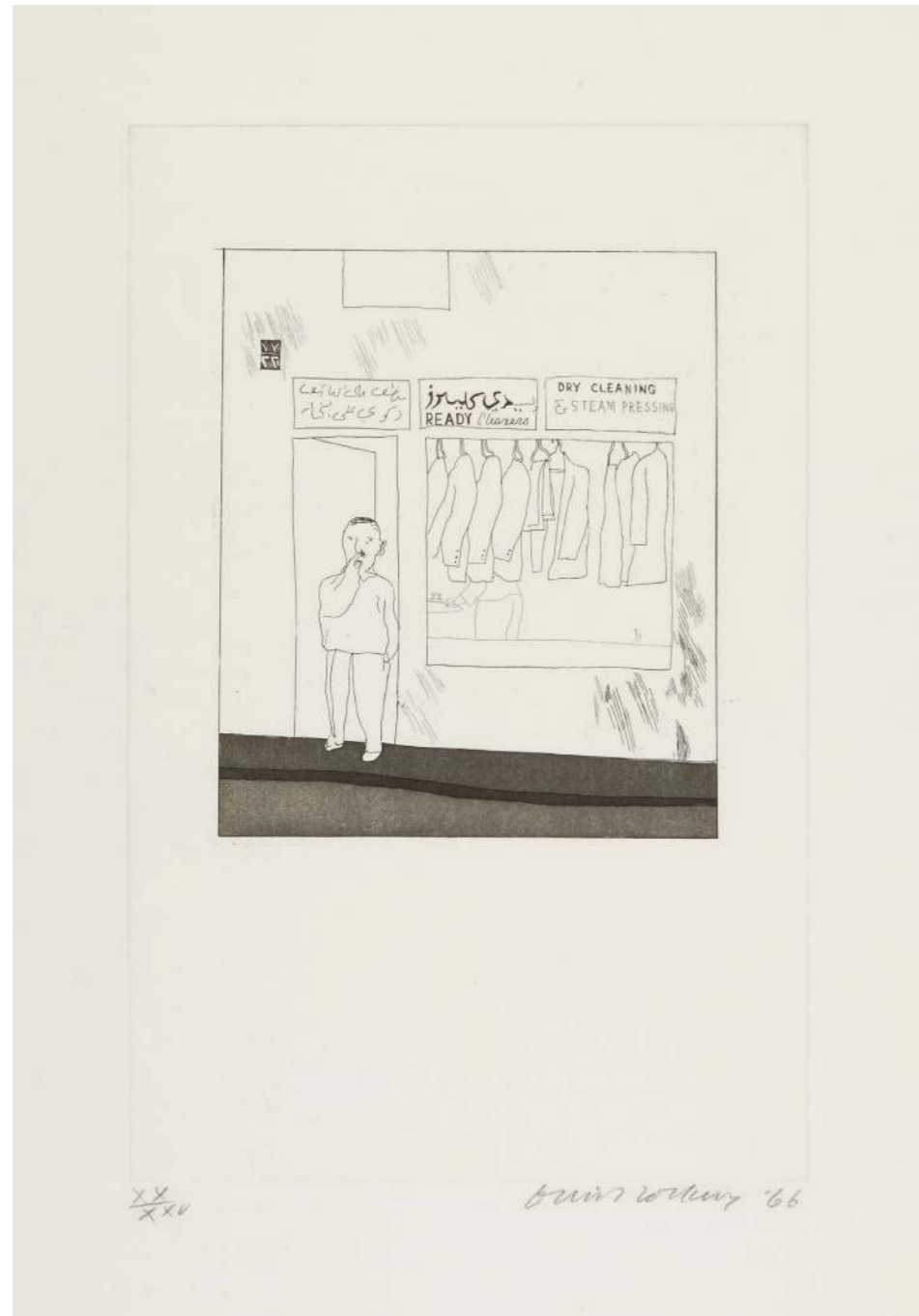
*"He enquired after the quality of the handkerchiefs
and what they cost in a low voice
almost stifled by desire.
And the answers that came followed suit
abstracted, in a choking voice
implying willingness.*

*They kept on murmuring things about the goods - but
their sole intent: to touch each other's hands
across the handkerchiefs; to bring their faces
and their lips close together, as if by chance;
a momentary contact of their limbs.
Quickly and stealthily so that the owner of the shop
sitting at the far end should not notice."*

Reference: Tokyo 49

Editions Alecto reference: ea 364

Plate size: 35 x 22.5 cm | Paper size: 64 x 51.5 cm



To Remain

Etching and aquatint, 1966-67

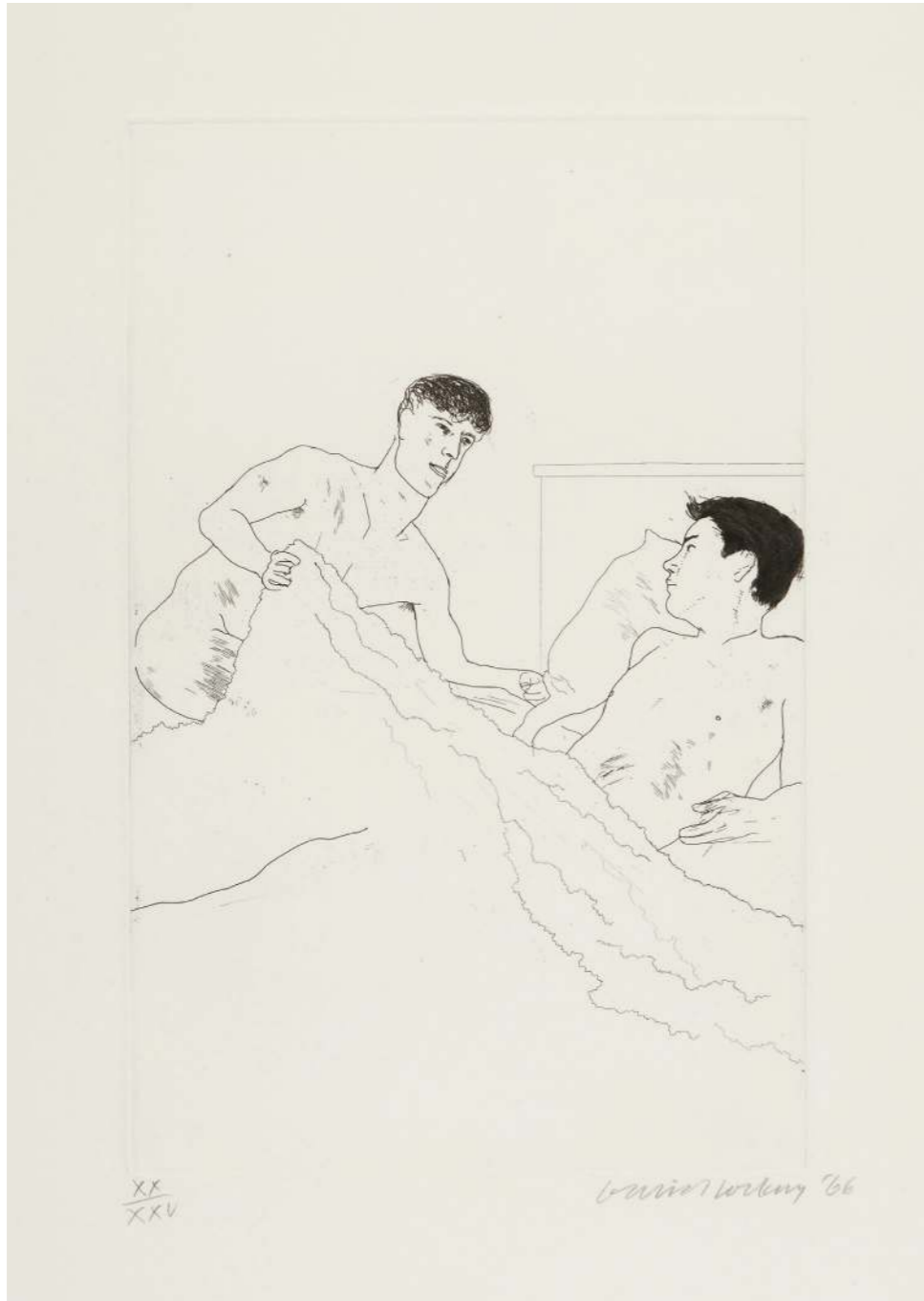
The setting for this etching was taken from a drawing of a dry cleaning shop that Hockney made in Beirut. The object of the man's affection is tellingly reduced to just a glimpse of his lower half, his face obscured behind a row of men's jackets.

The poem that accompanies it describes the memory of a heady sexual encounter between two men in a wine shop. Although a different scenario to the etching, they both share the exciting atmosphere of clandestine encounters in public places. Perhaps the words 'ready', 'steam' and 'pressing' although entirely fitting for a dry-cleaner, are intended to humorously reinforce the mood.

Reference: Tokyo 50

Editions Alecto reference: ea 365

Plate size: 35 x 22.5 cm | Paper size: 64 x 51.5 cm



According to prescriptions of ancient magicians

Etching, 1966-67

This etching takes its composition from an ink drawing, 'Boys in Bed, Beirut', that Hockney made in London using his friends as models. The scene is one of relaxed intimacy, almost as if the pair have been caught mid-conversation. There is an air of eagerness between the two boys, eyes locked on each other. In this piece Hockney truly captures the innocence of young love and desire.

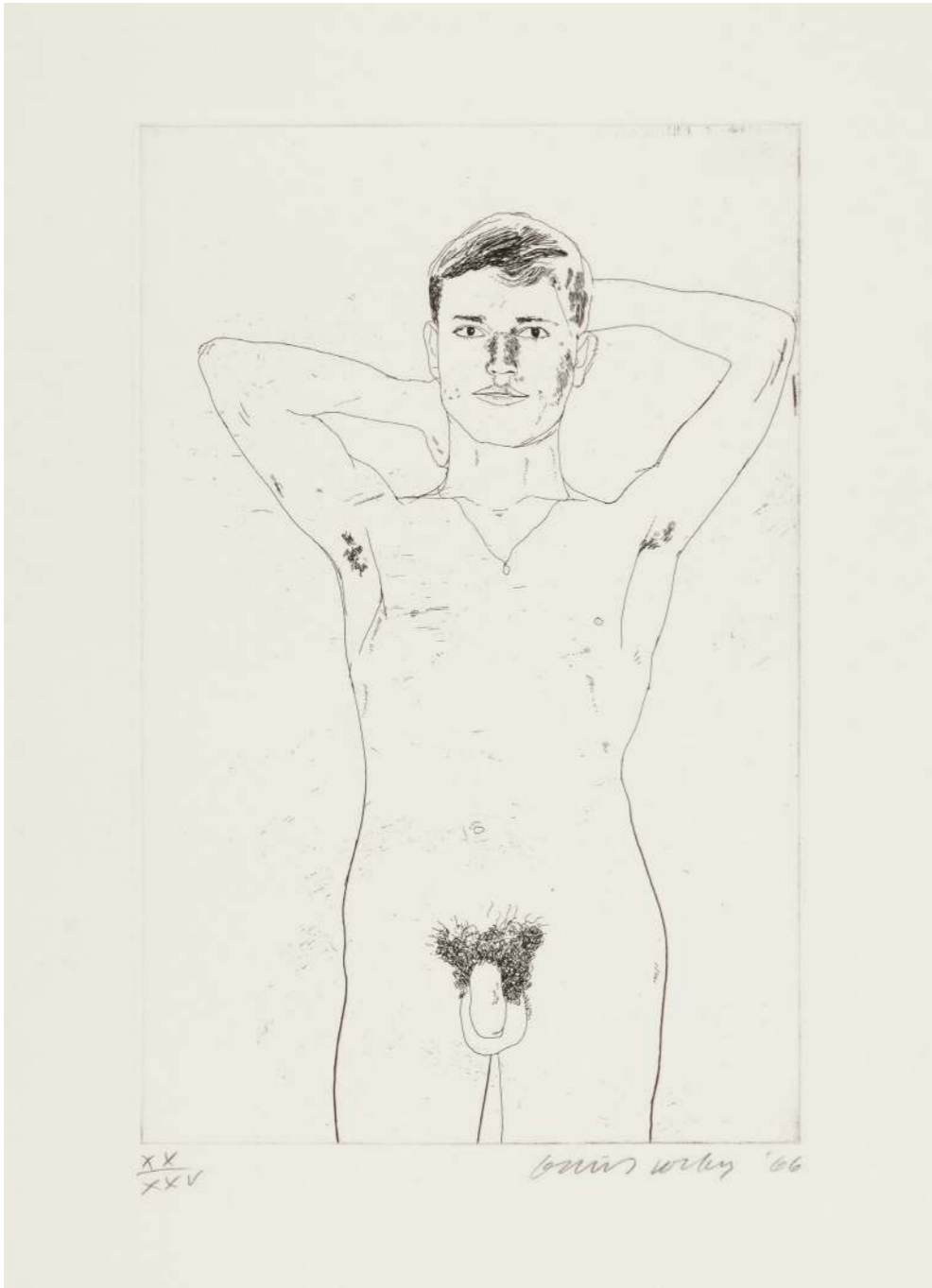
In Cavafy's poem a man wishes for a quintessence that could take him back in time to a lover from his youth, one that:

*"could bring me back my twenty-third year;
could bring my lover back to me
in his twenty-second year - his love, his beauty."*

Reference: Tokyo 51

Editions Alecto reference: ea 366

Plate size: 35 x 22.5 cm | Paper size: 64 x 51.5 cm



In an old book

Etching, 1966-67

The source for this etching was a photo from an American 'beefcake' magazine. In the 50s and 60s such publications, like 'Physique Pictorial' and 'The Young Physique', enabled the distribution of erotic photos of naked, or scantily-clad men under the guise of an interest in body building or fitness; a clever way to escape censorship before the gay liberation movement. Hockney was fascinated by the magazines and even visited the offices of Physique Pictorial in a seedy area of downtown LA - where he explicitly relates this home of contemporary underground gay culture to his literary hero. He recalled, "It's run by a wonderful complete madman and he has this tacky swimming pool surrounded by Hollywood Greek plaster statues. It was marvellous! To me it had the air of Cavafy in the tackiness of things."

The poem chosen to accompany this etching describes a watercolour found pressed between the pages of an old book:

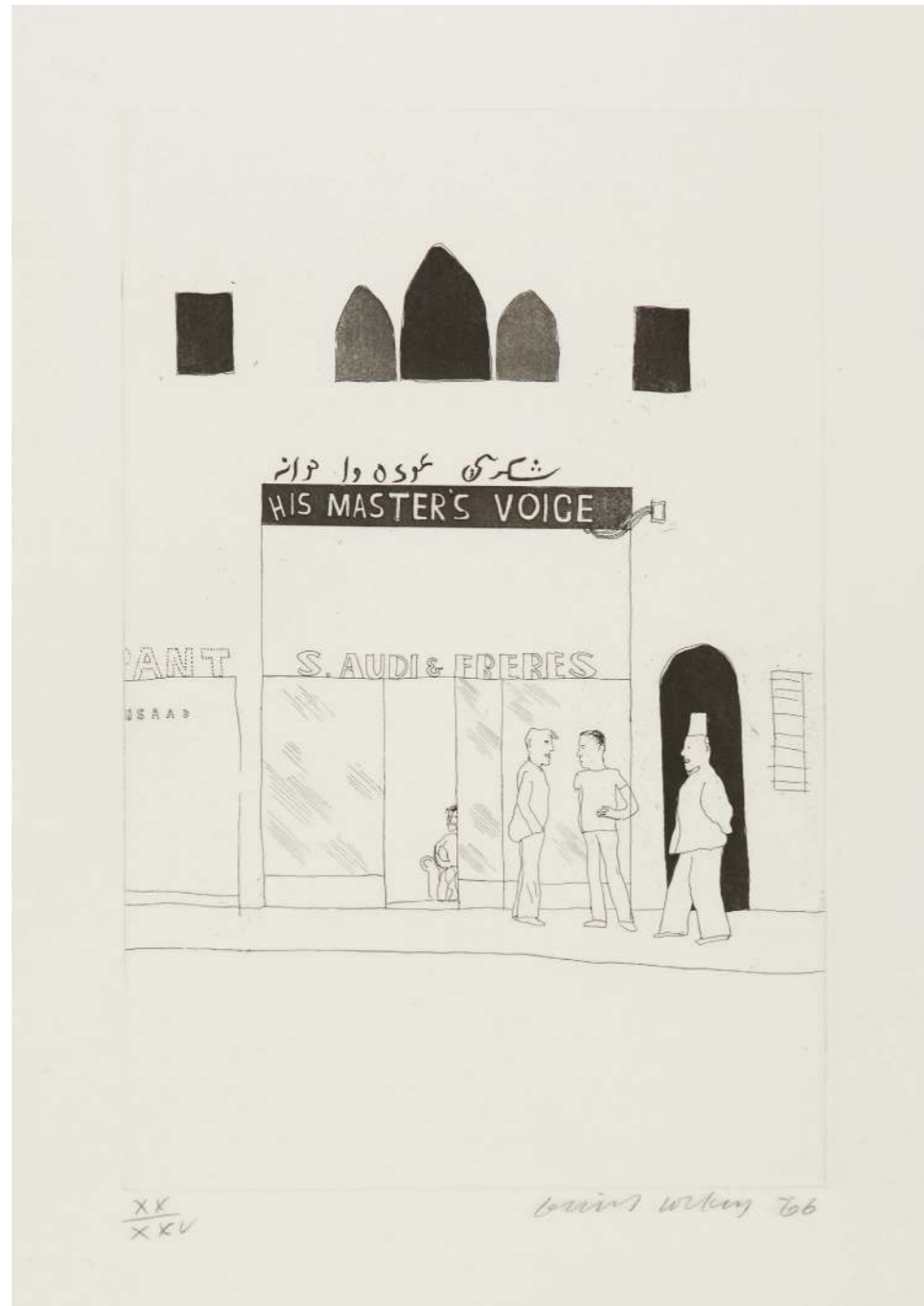
*"with chestnut brown deep coloured eyes
with the unique beauty of his face
the beauty of fascination with the abnormal
with ideal lips for bringing the loved body pleasure
with ideal limbs made for those beds
that current morality would call shameless."*

In his essay 'Orientalism and David Hockney's Cavafy Etchings: Exploring a Male-positive Imaginative Geography', Dennis Gouws discusses the way in which this etching confronts the viewer by looking them direct in the eye, "Rather than frustrating the gaze, the full-frontal figure challenges the viewer to imagine what participating in an intimate homoerotic relationship would be like. Like the unsettling gaze of the reclining nude courtesan who frankly appraises the viewer in Manet's Olympia (1863), Hockney's nude challenges conventional heteronormative scrutiny."

Reference: Tokyo 52

Editions Alecto reference: ea 367

Plate size: 35 x 22.5 cm | Paper size: 64 x 51.5 cm



The shop window of a tobacco store

Etching and aquatint, 1966-67

Hockney again used one of his Beirut drawings as the architectural setting for this scene, rather than the tobacco shop of Cavafy's poem. However, both etching and poem describe a chance encounter between two men in the street; the beginnings of a sexual pick up as they subtly signal their mutual interest in each other.

*"Their glances met by chance
and hesitantly, timidly revealed
the unlawful longings of their bodies.
A few uncertain steps then on the pavement -
until they smiled, and slightly nodded."*

This etching, as with all the etchings in the Cavafy series, shows a male-only space. Hockney cleverly reinforces this gendered environment with the adverts and shop signs, 'His Master's Voice' and 'S.Audi & Frères' (S.Audi and Brothers).

Reference: Tokyo 53

Editions Alecto reference: ea 368

Plate size: 35 x 22.5 cm | Paper size: 64 x 51.5 cm



XX
XXV

David Hockney '66

In the dull village

Etching, 1966-67

This etching depicts the same couple seen in 'Two boys aged 23 and 24', Hockney's friends the artists Mo McDermott and Dale Chisman, in bed in his flat in Notting Hill. One of the boys contentedly slumbers while his partner tenderly gazes at his resting lover.

The poem Hockney chose to accompany this piece recounts a youth aching for an escape from his dull life, but finding satisfaction in his dreams:

*"in the dull village where he waits -
he went to bed love-sick tonight
his whole youth afire with fleshly passion,
beautiful youth beautiful in intensity.
And pleasure came to him in sleep; he sees
and has the body he desires in his sleep..."*

Reference: Tokyo 54

Editions Alecto reference: ea 369

Plate size: 35 x 22.5 cm | Paper size: 64 x 51.5 cm



The beginning

Etching and aquatint, 1966-67

This etching takes its composition from a photograph Hockney took of his friends in bed - they confidently engage with the viewer, relaxed and at ease, handsome and unashamed. The mood of the etching is quite different to that of the poem that accompanies it, which poignantly addresses the dichotomy between the beauty of a pleasure that alters your existence and the fear that it cannot be exposed in public.

*“Having fulfilled their lawless pleasure,
they get up out of bed
and dress in silence, hurriedly.
Furtively, separately, they leave the house
and walk uneasily along the street
as in fear of something that betrays
how, a short while ago, they’d lain together.”*

Reference: Tokyo 55

Editions Alecto reference: ea 370

Plate size: 35 x 22.5 cm | Paper size: 64 x 51.5 cm



One Night

Etching and aquatint, 1966-67

Hockney's etching depicts a couple, late at night, one of whom, inebriated, is supported by his partner. The crumpled bed sheets in the foreground, slatted window blind and bare light bulb recall the "cheap and common" room of Cavafy's poem. Both poem and etching draw a parallel between the intoxication of alcohol and the intoxication of a love affair:

*"There, on the common, humble bed
I had the body of love, I had the sensual
red lips - intoxication -
red lips - intoxication - so that even now
as I write, after so many years,
in my solitary home, I feel again the intoxication."*

Perhaps this image could be read as an updated version of the wounded soldier saved by his comrade on the battlefield, a mainstay of art history; creating a visual analogy between the battle for political freedom men fought for at war and the struggle for sexual acceptance that Hockney and other gay men faced at this time.

Reference: Tokyo 56
Editions Alecto reference: ea 371
Plate size: 35 x 22.5 cm | Paper size: 64 x 51.5 cm



In despair

Etching, 1966-67

Hockney depicts a couple side by side in bed, hands behind their heads, laid-back and calmly looking out at the viewer without any sense of intrusion. The soft bed covers almost float across their naked bodies like clouds.

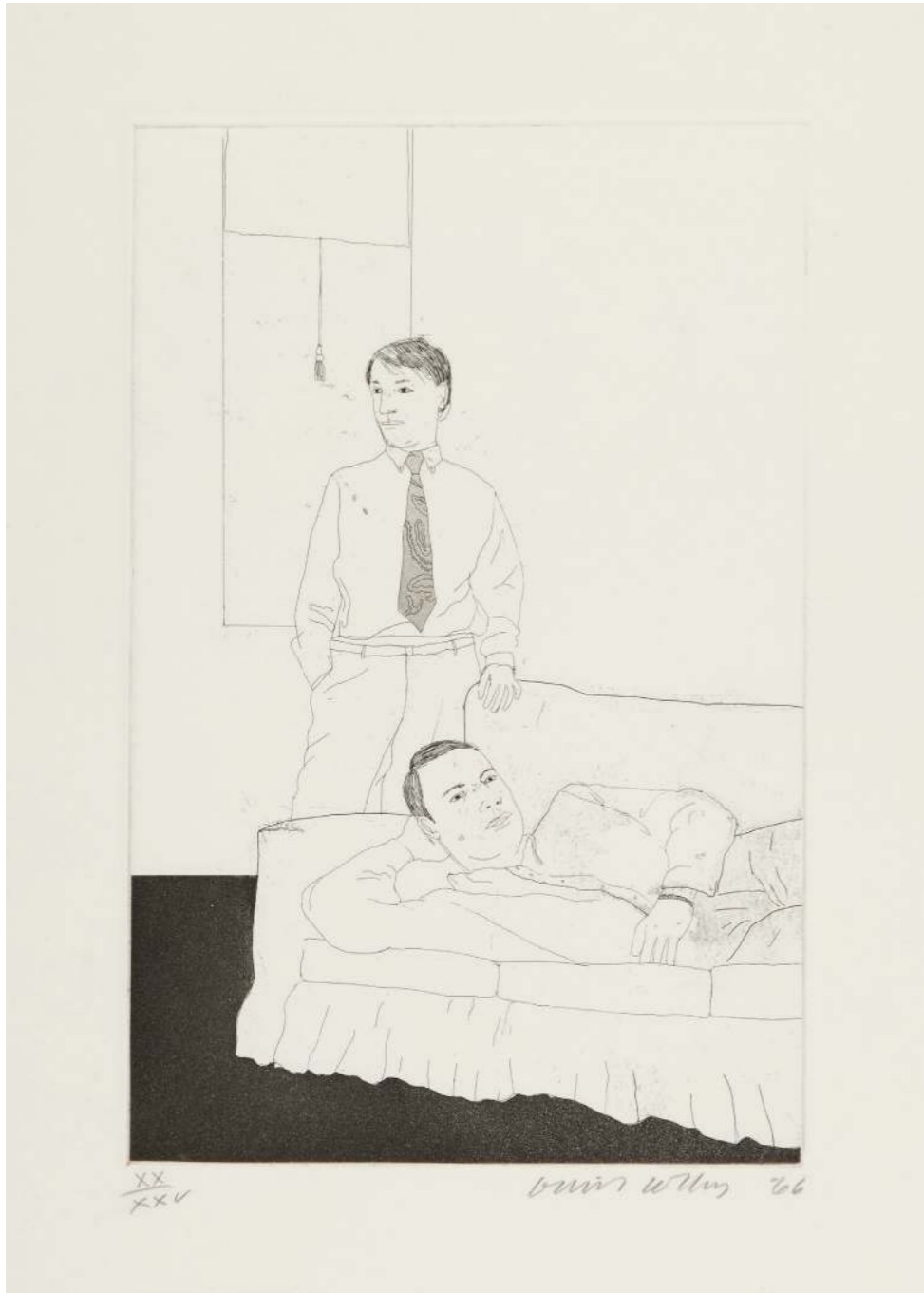
This etching has a quite different mood to the quite melancholy poem that Hockney chose to pair it with, in which a man yearns for a lost love who has abandoned him “to save himself from condemned and perverse pleasure”:

*“He has lost him forever as if he had never existed.
He tries to find his lips on lips of other boys;
in fantasy, in illusion
he tries to feel again his love.”*

Reference: Tokyo 57

Editions Alecto reference: ea 372

Plate size: 35 x 22.5 cm | Paper size: 64 x 51.5 cm



Beautiful and white flowers

Etching and aquatint, 1966-67

In this etching Hockney shows a couple in a comfortable domestic interior, replete with tasselled blind and skirted sofa; they look perfectly at home with one another. One man lounges languorously on the sofa, collar unbuttoned, while his partner stands above him, hand casually resting on the sofa back. Hockney made an alternative design for this etching which exists as a proof, with the same couple sitting side by side on the sofa, the final design however is more finely composed with a delicate use of empty white space in the upper right section to finely balance the solid darkness of the aquatinted carpet.

The poem which accompanies this piece certainly evokes the closeness and ease of longstanding relationships, the regular rituals of a couple, but unlike the etching is tinged with the sadness of death:

*“He placed some flowers on his poor coffin,
Beautiful and white flowers as befitted
his beauty and his twenty-two years.
When he went out in the evening (as it happened
he had to get something to eat) to the coffee house where
they often went together: the squalid coffee house
where they often went together - a knife in his heart.”*

Reference: Tokyo 58

Editions Alecto reference: ea 373

Plate size: 35 x 22.5 cm | Paper size: 64 x 51.5 cm



XX
XXV

David Hockney 66

Portrait of Cavafy II

Etching and aquatint, 1966-67

Like the first Cavafy portrait, this plate is composed of two parts. The architectural setting seen in the background of this portrait was taken from a drawing, 'Police Building, Beirut', Hockney made on his visit in 1966. As in the first portrait in this series, Hockney places Cavafy firmly in the contemporary sphere, complete with modern car, Hockney believed that contemporary Beirut was more in-line with how Alexandria would have been in Cavafy's day. The portrait was copied from a photo of Cavafy in his forties.

The poem 'Painted' that Hockney chose to accompany this final plate seems especially fitting for the close of the series, creating a circularity between writer, artist and their subject:

*"I care about my writing, love it.
Just now, though, I'm discouraged at my slowness.
The day depresses me. It seems
ever to get darker, darker.
The wind blows. All the time it rains.
Now I'd rather look than write
at this picture of a boy, reclined
beside a fountain, tired from running.
How beautiful he is; what a divine noon
enraptured him, to lull him so to sleep.
I sit and gaze like this for a long time,
so from art's toil, I rest again in art."*

Reference: Tokyo 59

Editions Alecto reference: ea 431

Plate size: 35 x 22.5 cm | Paper size: 64 x 51.5 cm



Afternoon

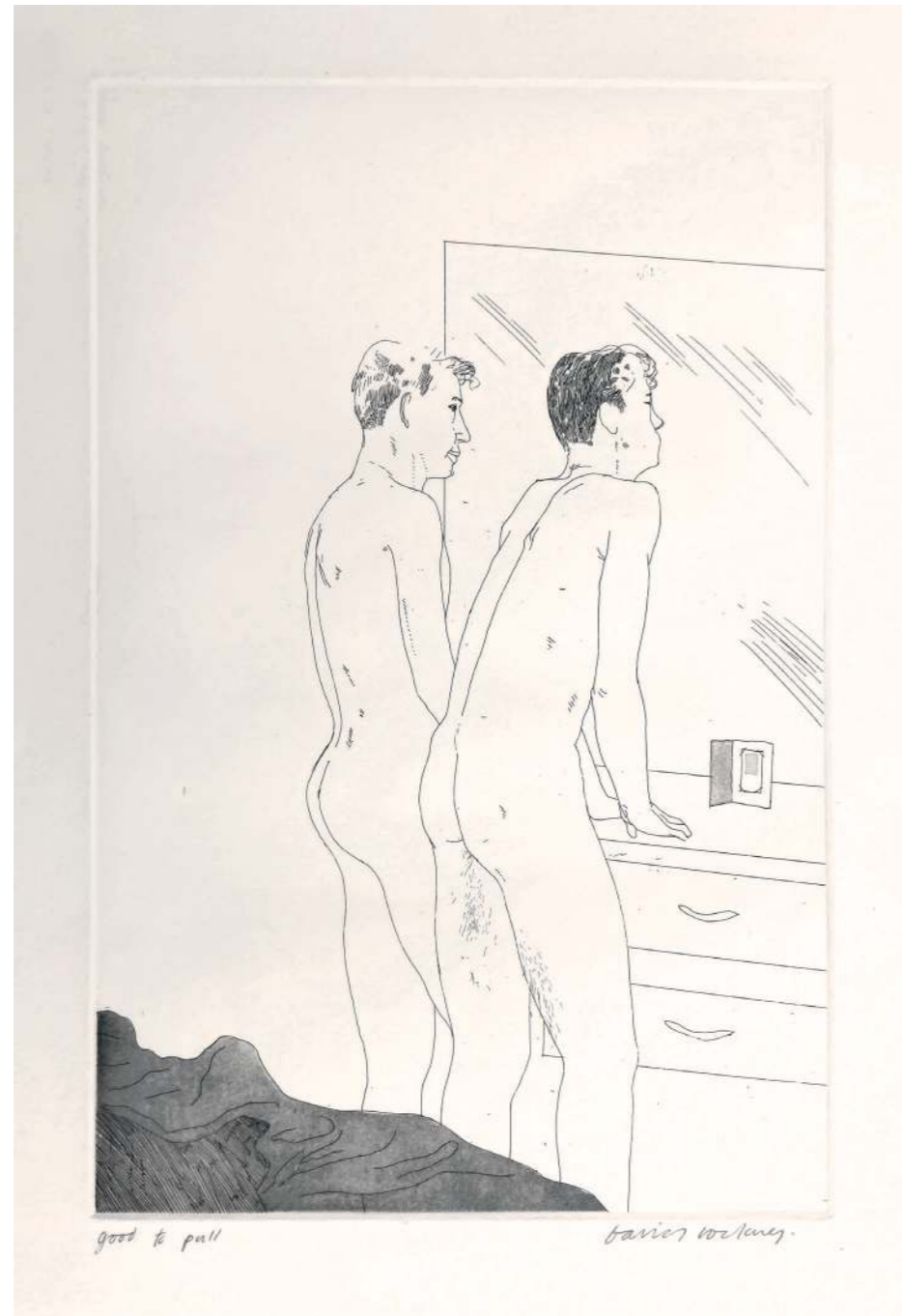
Etching, 1966-67

One of four known alternative designs which Hockney etched for the Cavafy series, yet didn't include in the final publication. This is the 'good to pull' or 'bon à tirer' impression.

This etching appears to depict the same couple seen in 'Two boys aged 23 and 24' and 'In the dull village', Hockney's friends the artists Mo McDermott and Dale Chisman. The two boys hurriedly get dressed, perhaps recalling the passage in Cavafy's poem 'The beginning' quoted earlier in this catalogue.

Literature: Ed. Lloyd, Richard, 'Hockney Printmaker', Scala, 2014, p. 61

Plate size: 35 x 23 cm | Paper size: 79.5 x 56.5 cm



Quartet

Etching and aquatint, 1966-67

One of four known alternative designs which Hockney etched for the Cavafy series, yet didn't include in the final publication. This is the 'good to pull' or 'bon à tirer' impression.

This etching appears to depict the same couple seen in 'Two boys aged 23 and 24' and 'In the dull village', Hockney's friends the artists Mo McDermott and Dale Chisman. The two boys gaze at each other in a mirror, judging by the photo on the chest of drawers, this is a domestic space.

Literature: Ed. Lloyd, Richard, 'Hockney Printmaker', Scala, 2014, p. 61

Plate size: 35 x 23 cm | Paper size: 79.5 x 56.5 cm

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Gerrish Fine Art have an international reputation as specialists in British art, with a focus on 19th and 20th century printmaking. We also deal in American and European works, including prints, drawings, paintings, photography and sculpture. Gerrish Fine Art is now predominantly an online gallery, though customers can be met, on a 'by appointment' basis, at our domestic viewing space in the heart of London's St. James's. We present monthly online exhibitions on our website and publish physical catalogues on occasion for special collections.

Hilary Gerrish started his career in art dealing in 1972, as a partner in N.W. Lott and H.J. Gerrish. He worked from their gallery in St. James's until 1985, at which point he went independent and created Gerrish Fine Art. The company has since developed into a family business; first with the addition of his daughter Georgie in 2008 (MA Art History, The Courtauld Institute of Art) and subsequently of his son Henry in 2010 (MA Art History, St Andrews).

Gerrish Fine Art has placed numerous works of outstanding quality and rarity into the permanent collections of over 50 international museums and institutions. We further work directly with many of the world's leading private collectors in our field. We have exhibited at the London Original Print Fair every year since its foundation over 30 years ago, and have participated in other fairs including the IFPDA Fine Art Print Fair (New York), The 20/21 British Art Fair and The Drawing and Watercolour Fair (London). We regularly lend works of art from our collection to museum and gallery exhibitions, and have curated several group and solo shows of our own over the years.

Gerrish Fine Art is a member of both the IFPDA (International Fine Print Dealers Association) and CINOA (International Federation of Art and Antique Dealer Associations).

*“Then you couldn’t be gay, but you could smoke
everywhere. Now, it’s the other way around. I
mean . . . the story of my life, that!”*

David Hockney

