

## Portrait Analysis – Portrait Collage for Visual narrative

### My Parents by David Hockney

My Parents is a painting of David Hockney's mother and father, I chose this image to analyse because I really like colours used in it and the way the two people are placed in relation to each other, at first it seems like quite a simple painting but there are a lot of small details that suggest a deeper meaning. It has a lonely feel to it, the mother seems lonely as she's sat far apart from both the father and the cabinet, neither of them look very happy. However, I also find it very calming to look at, I think because of the colour pallet.

Even though the colours are bright the piece has an overall feeling of sadness, there is a lot of cool toned colours, blues, greens, purples. Even the brown suit has blue shadows. The emotion of the piece is mainly coming from the way the subjects are sat, his mother looks sad while the dad is distracted and there is a noticeable gap between the two of them. Hockney has purposely chosen to not include himself in the painting, i.e., as a reflection in the mirror, this is a painting about his parent's relationship to each other and not him. The whole scene feels very set up, everything in the painting is placed there purposefully and the people have been posed, it's not a candid snapshot of their lives everything has been considered carefully. The one book with a discernible name is a Chardin book, this is in reference to Jean-Baptiste-Simeon Chardin an 18<sup>th</sup> century French painter who is considered a 'master of still life' and is famous for painting a lot of domestic activities.

The technique used for this painting is oil paint on canvas, oil painting is a slow process so they would have had to pose for this painting for a long time, this could be a reason for their chosen poses. However, the way they're posed could be indicative of Hockney's relationship with them- the mother sits facing him, she is posed formally with her hands on her lap and sat up straight whereas the father is slouching, intent on the book in his lap, facing away from the painter. There are shadows but they're not strong and there isn't an obvious light source; this gives the painting a flat appearance. His father's suit has the most detail while the tulips and the cabinet look 2-dimensional. Even though the subjects of the painting are real due to the style of painting and the colour pallet at no point does it not look like a painting, the viewers are very aware they are looking at something set up for them. It doesn't feel like a natural scene- the chairs aren't comfortable, the room set-up doesn't look like an actual room but there is something soft about the style of painting and the colour choices. The pinks and reds used to paint the faces are in stark contrast with the cool blue of the wall, I think this makes the parents almost glow. A lot of time and effort has been put into this painting, I think you can tell he loves them.

I would recommend it to someone, I think Hockney sometimes gets a bad rep as he's so popular, which seems to be a bad thing in the fine art world, and in my opinion his more recent work is a lot worse, but I think his early paintings (pre late 1990s/2000s) are beautiful and crazy. It's thought-provoking as I think painting a relationship as big and important as your parents is always going to convey emotions.