

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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**Howard Hodgkin's last painting takes centre-stage in National Portrait
Gallery show**

The celebrated artist died this month at the age of 84

Robert Dex



In the frame: Howard Hodgkin with his Portrait Of The Artist Listening To Music Courtesy Gagosian. Photo: Miriam Perez

Howard Hodgkin's last major painting — a self-portrait — is going on show in a new exhibition.

The artist, who died this month aged 84, completed the work towards the end of last year for the National Portrait Gallery. It will be part of the major new show, Howard Hodgkin: Absent Friends, that he planned with the gallery before his death.

The huge oil painting, called Portrait Of The Artist Listening To Music, is more than six feet by eight feet and was created while he listened to two of his favourite pieces — Jerome Kern's The Last Time I Saw Paris and the theme to the film The Third Man.

The gallery's director Dr Nicholas Cullinan said: "We are indebted to Howard for creating this extraordinary and very moving new painting to be included in our exhibition of his portraits, the first ever to be devoted to this overlooked aspect of his work."

“Howard’s painting has always resisted classification and easy explanation. His work often appears entirely abstract, yet over the course of 65 years a principle concern of his art has been to evoke a human presence, making a significant contribution to our understanding of what a portrait can be.” He added that he hoped the exhibition, which will include sketches from his art student days, would be a fitting tribute to the artist. London-born Hodgkin studied at Camberwell School of Art and has been the subject of exhibitions at Tate Britain and New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Howard Hodgkin: Absent Friends runs from March 23 to June 18 at the National Portrait Gallery