



David Hockney: The Weather Series (1973) – Commentary

The artwork you provided is a commentary on David Hockney's inventive and playful The Weather Series, a suite of six large-scale lithographs created in 1973¹. This series brilliantly merges two of his greatest passions: Japanese art and the sunny landscapes of Los Angeles².

Key Facts & Context:

- Medium: A suite of six large-scale lithographs³.
- Location/Collaboration: Created at Gemini G.E.L. with master printer Ken Tyler⁴⁴⁴⁴⁴.
- Inspiration: The series was inspired by Hockney's 1971 visit to Japan, where he was captivated by the *ukiyo-e* woodblock printing tradition, particularly the work of masters like Hokusai and Hiroshige, who made careers depicting weather and atmospheric effects⁵. Hockney sought to apply this sensibility to his California world⁶.

Technical Innovation in Depicting Weather:

What makes this series remarkable is how Hockney used the lithography medium itself to embody each weather condition⁷.

- Rain: He employed watery dribbles of lithographic *tusche* (a greasy drawing material), letting it run down the stone to create the visual sensation of water⁸.
- Sun: Brilliant strips of golden and lemon yellow pour through a window like actual sunlight, illuminating a bright interior⁹.
- Mist & Snow: These prints are minimal and evocative, feeling very close to the Japanese tradition¹⁰. The *Mist* print features palm trees, a nod to California, while referencing Monet's tree paintings¹¹.

- Wind: The most playful piece, depicting a street sign for Melrose Avenue being buffeted by a gust that is blowing away prints from this very series, including *Snow, Mist, Sun, and Rain*¹². This self-referential image replaces Hokusai's famous Mount Fuji with an LA street sign¹³.
- Lightning: This print stands apart as the only monochrome work in the series, featuring a winding road through hills with a dramatic lightning bolt cutting across the sky¹⁴.

Significance:

The series showcases Hockney's mastery of combining lithography with screen printing. It is ultimately about taking something universal and ephemeral—weather—and finding visual equivalents for it that are both technically innovative and deeply personal. The series represents Hockney at his most experimental, brilliantly merging East and West, and continuing to push the boundaries of his chosen medium.

