

# Curtis Holder

## The Makers

Portraits from Backstage



***The Makers: Portraits from Backstage*** is an exhibition by the National Theatre's first ever Artist in Residence, Curtis Holder. The artworks are a love letter to the dynamic creative forces that exist behind the scenes of theatre. The Sky Arts Portrait Artist of the Year for 2020, Holder's multi-layered pencil portraits capture a range of 'makers' at the National Theatre including; wigs, hair and make-up assistants, prop and puppet makers, stage technicians, and a stage door supervisor who has been in post for 48 years. The exhibition highlights all corners of the National Theatre's vast backstage areas, celebrating the incredible craftspeople, creatives and individuals that make all the productions possible.

Holder was originally invited to observe and sketch the rehearsal room for *The Corn is Green* in 2022 and fell under the spell of the theatre. He subsequently became the National Theatre's Artist in Residence. After months of observation and quick sketches, Holder selected a small number of sitters from across the National Theatre to focus upon. At once dynamic and tender, Holder's portraits bring the backstage to the foreground and provide an uncanny psychological insight into his subjects. The works are a testament of the artist's remarkable facility to go beyond the surface and transform the humble pencil into a symphony of feeling. Holder manages to present portraits full of specificity whilst also making artworks that transcend their subject and convey the wider themes of passion, concentration, commitment and fulfilment.

*The Makers: Portraits from Backstage* is curated by Kate Bryan.

**FOR ENQUIRIES**  
[CONTACT@CURTISHOLDER.CO.UK](mailto:CONTACT@CURTISHOLDER.CO.UK)





### **The Tailor**

Coloured pencil and acrylic gouache on paper  
150 x 120 cm unframed  
158 x 128 cm framed  
2022

**£5,000 framed**





### **The Make-up Artist**

Coloured pencil and acrylic gouache on paper

150 x 120 cm unframed

158 x 128 cm framed

2022

**£5,000 framed**





### **The Puppet Maker**

Coloured pencil and acrylic gouache on paper

150 x 120 cm unframed

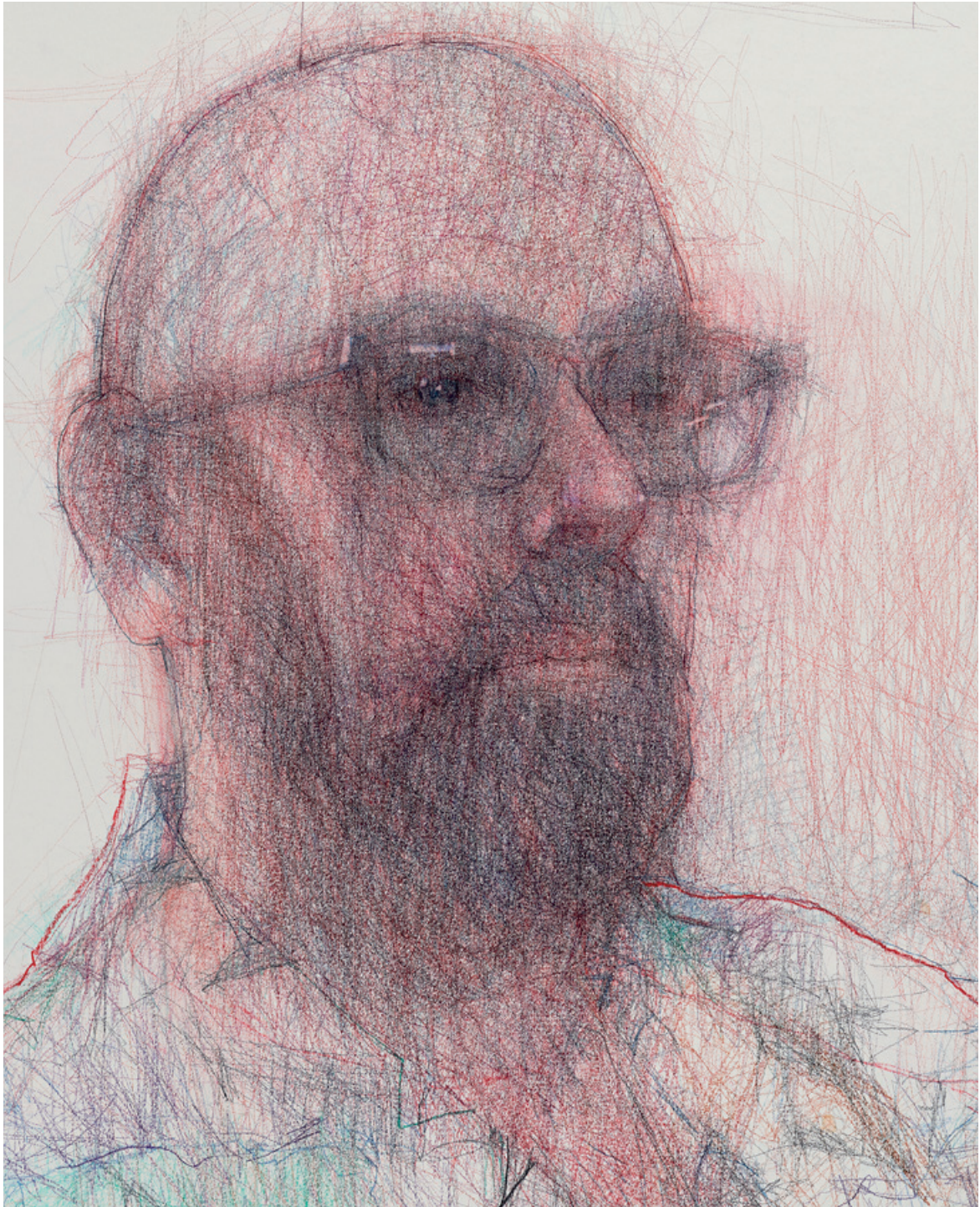
158 x 128 cm framed

2022

**£5,000 framed**







### **The Costume-Prop Maker**

Coloured pencil and acrylic gouache on paper

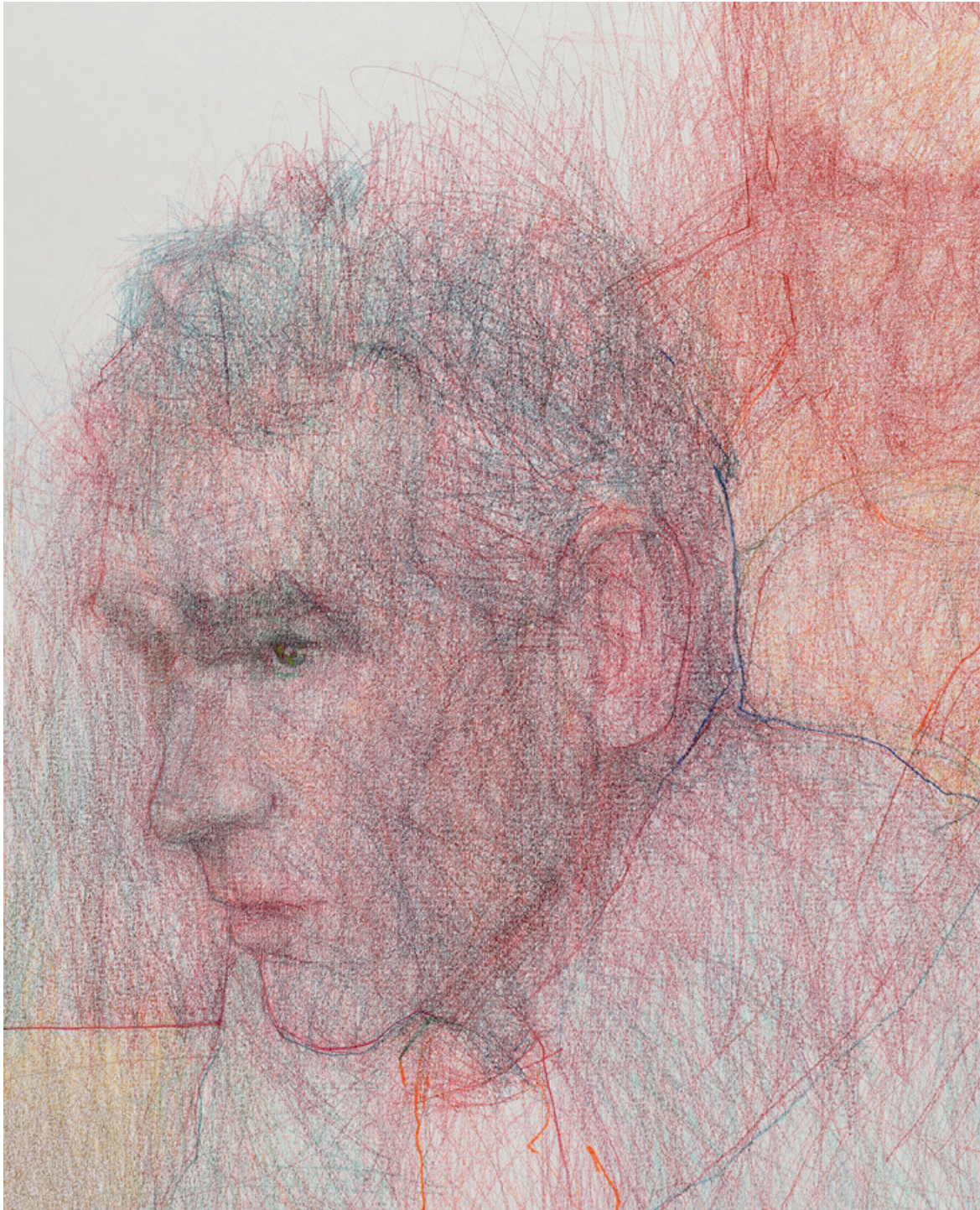
120 x 150 cm unframed

128 x 158 cm framed

2022

**£5,000 framed**





### **The Artistic Director**

Coloured pencil and acrylic gouache on paper

120 x 150 cm unframed

128 x 158 cm framed

2022

**£5,000 framed**





### **The Stage Door Keeper**

Coloured pencil and acrylic gouache on paper  
120 x 150 cm unframed  
128 x 158 cm framed  
2022

**£5,000 framed**





### **The Costume Maker**

Coloured pencil and acrylic gouache on paper

120 x 150 cm unframed

128 x 158 cm framed

2022

**£5,000 framed**







### **The Wig Stylist**

Coloured pencil and acrylic gouache on paper

150 x 120 cm unframed

158 x 128 cm framed

2022

**£5,000 framed**





### **The Hair Stylist**

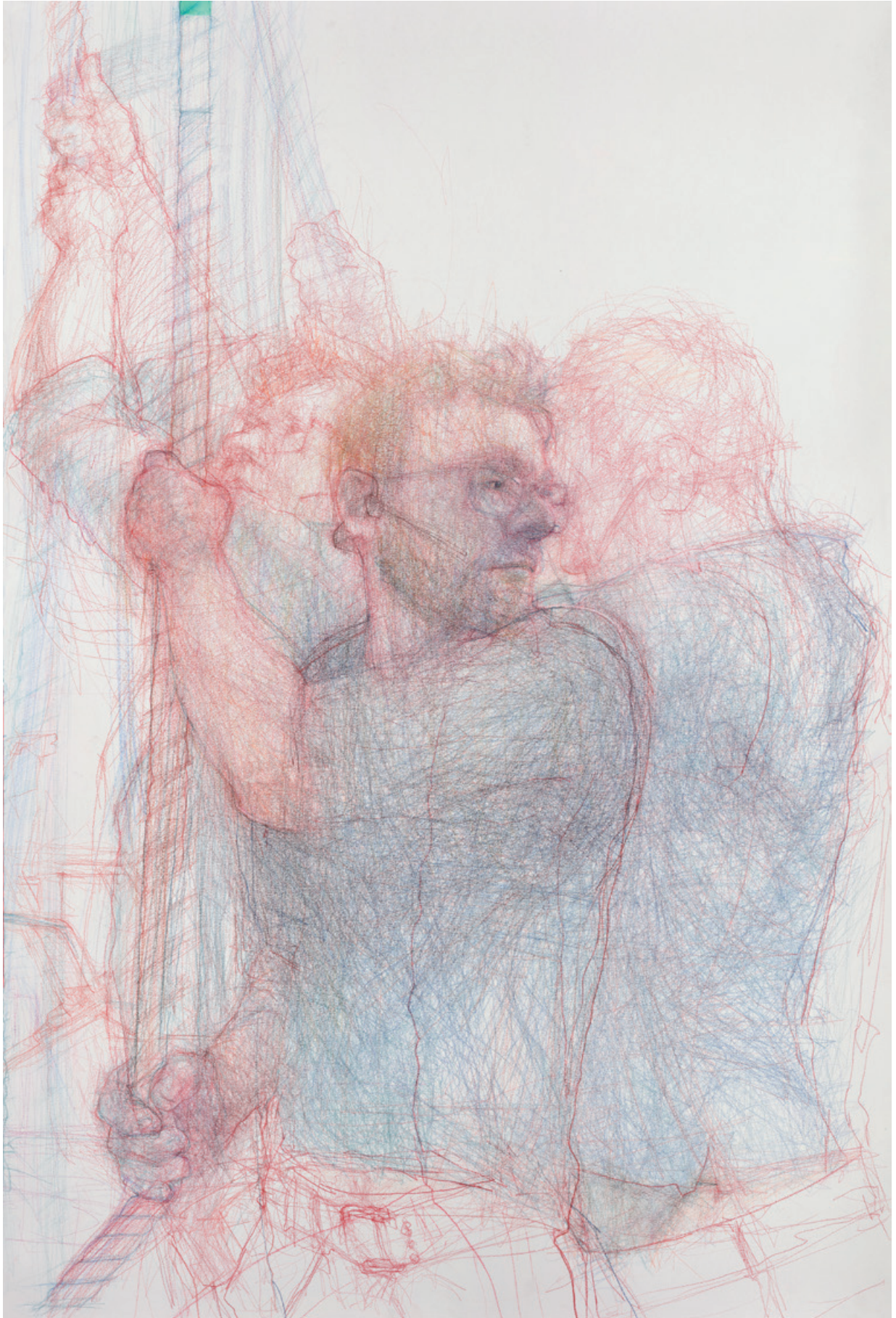
Coloured pencil and acrylic gouache on paper

150 x 120 cm unframed

158 x 128 cm framed

2022

**£5,000 framed**





### **The Stage Technician**

Coloured pencil and acrylic gouache on paper

120 x 80 cm unframed

128 x 88 cm framed

2023

**£3,750 framed**

# ***THE CORN IS GREEN*** IN REHEARSALS

In 2022, the director of *The Corn is Green*, and National Theatre Associate, Dominic Cooke invited Curtis Holder into rehearsals to document the progress of the production. During that time, Holder produced hundreds of rapid gestural drawings capturing the emotion of the actors and the work that goes into making a production. It was from here that the idea of The Makers exhibition was born.



### **Choir rehearsals**

Coloured pencil on paper  
42 x 59 cm unframed  
49 x 67 cm framed  
2022

**£750 framed**





### **Constructing a shirt**

Graphite and coloured pencil on paper

59 x 42 cm unframed

67 x 49 cm framed

2022

**£750 framed**



## **Hemming a skirt**

Graphite and coloured pencil on paper

59 x 42 cm unframed

67 x 49 cm framed

2022

**£750 framed**



### **Reading the script**

Coloured pencil on paper  
42 x 59 cm unframed  
49 x 67 cm framed  
2022

**£750 framed**



### **Dance rehearsals**

Coloured pencil on paper  
42 x 59 cm unframed  
49 x 67 cm framed  
2022

**£750 framed**



### **Making eyebrows**

Graphite and coloured pencil on paper

59 x 42 cm unframed

67 x 49 cm framed

2022

**£750 framed**



### **Setting a wig**

Graphite and coloured pencil on paper

59 x 42 cm unframed

67 x 49 cm framed

2022

**£750 framed**



### **Taking notes**

Coloured pencil on paper  
42 x 59 cm unframed  
49 x 67 cm framed  
2022

**£750 framed**



### **Rehearsing a scene**

Graphite and coloured pencil on paper

59 x 42 cm unframed

67 x 49 cm framed

2022

**£750 framed**





### **Re-upholstering a chair**

Graphite and coloured pencil on paper

59 x 42 cm unframed

67 x 49 cm framed

2022

**£750 framed**



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