

Sir Peter Blake (B 1932, England)

Peter Blake was born in Dartford, Kent. From 1951 to 1953 he served in the Royal Air Force. Following his time in the national service, Blake studied at the Gravesend School of Art, and then the Royal College of Art from 1953 to 1956. He graduated in 1956 and returned to teach from 1964 to 1976.

During the late 1950s, Blake became one of the best known British pop artists. His paintings from this time included imagery from advertisements, music hall entertainment, and wrestlers, often including collaged elements. He first came to public attention when he featured in Ken Russell's film on pop art, *Pop Goes the Easel*, which was broadcast on BBC television.

Blake also painted several notable album sleeves. As well as the sleeve for Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, Blake also made sleeves for the Band Aid single, 'Do They Know It's Christmas?', Paul Weller's *Stanley Road* and the Ian Dury tribute album *Brand New Boots and Panties*.

In the early 1970s, he made a set of watercolours to illustrate Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, and in 1975 was a founder of the Brotherhood of Ruralists.

Blake was made a Royal Academician in 1981, a CBE in 1983, and in 2002 was knighted. In February 2005, the Sir Peter Blake Music Art Gallery, located in the School of Music, University of Leeds, was opened by the artist. The permanent exhibition features 14 examples of Blake's album sleeve art, including the only public showing of a signed print of his famed Sgt. Pepper's artwork.