

Exhibition: Julian Opie

**Institut Valencià d'Art Modern
1st June – 18th July 2010**

**Organizers: IVAM Institut Valencià d'Art Modern
MÁRIO SEQUEIRA GALLERY
BRAGA - PORTUGAL**

Opie is considered as the current representative of modern portrait. He applies ultimate technologies painting and, as well as the computer art works, he incorporates vinyls with inside light, LED panels or liquid glass screens in his sculptures and installations.

This exhibition gathers 31 paintings, four sculptures (one of them placed in the open area at the entrance of the museum), four art interventions on the front windows and banners in the hall.

All of these works reproduce exclusively human figures. For that reason, the round-headed characters and figures through which he has achieved international fame are the subject of this exhibition. They are based on specific models, people from his environment, who he usually represents carrying out some daily activity and he personifies with the aid of schematism and the power of line. These premises show the significant pop influence, associated with light colors, as well as the use of illustration and publicity in his work.

A catalogue has been published on the occasion of the exhibition. It includes the exhibited works and texts by Ami Barak and the director of the IVAM, Consuelo Císcar.

Julian Opie (London, 1958), is one of the most acknowledged personalities in the contemporary artistic world. His training is linked to the city of Oxford, since 1979 to 1982 he studied in Dragon School, Magdalen College and finally the Golsmintns College, were he graduated.

In 1982 he organized his first solo exhibition at Lissan Gallery. During this period he found inspiration from the work of Patrick Caulfield and Michael Craig Martin. Within the prizes he has been awarded we could mention the following

ones: Music Week CADS, Best Illustration for "Best of Blur" ; Residency at the Atelier Calder in Saché, France and Sargent Fellowship at the British School in Rome.

His artistic production could be separated into three sections:

Painting, which is usually figurative: Human figure pours out his whole work, models appear carrying out daily activities. This people is part of his everyday life, but it could also fit in our own daily routine. His painting is defined by the use of squematism and light colors, as well as the power of line. This particular use of lines in order to accentuate and define figures is inherited from the Belgian comic writer Hergé.

Sculpture: Within this field he works with metal and daily tools or wood and white paint. He breaks boundaries between painting and sculpture, that is not new within the artistic panorama, as synthetic cubism developed by Picasso and Bracque since 1912 to 1914 had already gone beyond that border.

Video installation and LED panels: Video installations are based on the link between the bidimensional nature of electronic image and the tridimensional nature of the installation where that image is placed.

Opie does not deny the existence of a connection with pop art, though not when it has to do with the link between pop art and mass culture. Pop art is the plastic manifestation of a popular culture determined by technology, capitalism, fashion and communism, where objects are not unique anymore, but thought to be mass produced. However, pop art relieves the artwork from the anti-art Dada philosophy and finds way to create new objects from everyday scenes, as Duchamp did with his ready-mades. Thus, we may find a connection between everyday life scenes with the pop art tendency to represent popular culture aspects, as well as its link with illustration and publicity.

His last works are influenced by traditional Japanese art, especially ukiyo-e engravings ("Floating World" paintings or Japanese embossing). The artist shows us his particular and contemporary vision of the landscape through original "motion paintings" where we can gaze at some typical Japanese landscapes, including the Fuji mount, which immediately reminds us of Hokusai's or Hiroshige's works.