

PITZHANGER

MANOR & GALLERY

JULIAN OPIE

25 June – 24 October 2021



Julian Opie. *Vic Fezensac 1*. 2021

Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery presents a new body of work by contemporary British artist Julian Opie.

For Opie's solo exhibition at Pitzhanger – his first in a London public gallery in four years - he has created new sculptures, LED animations, light box paintings and film that focus on people, buildings and animals. The works create their own landscape, a walk-through environment like a computer game or a journey through a city. Some of the images are animated and others animate as visitors wander around or through them.

The centrepiece of the exhibition is a new work, *French village 1*, an immersive, three-dimensional installation created especially for the exhibition at Pitzhanger. Based on a region of southwestern France, the work invites visitors to explore its empty streets and circulate through imaginary spaces from multiple viewpoints. In the adjoining gallery, *French Town* and *Vic Fezensac 1* and *2*, explore similar vistas through lightbox paintings and animation on LED screen.

The exhibition features fourteen works, including eight metal sculptures; *Deer 2*, *Dog 4* and three of Opie's distinctive walking figures. Three new sculptures, produced last year after his visit to Portugal, draw the Baroque buildings of *Basilica da Estrela*, *Universidade* and the *Sé Catedral de Aveiro*.

Opie is recognisable for his distinctive and refined drawing style, distilling the visual information of our everyday reality to a universal language of symbols and signs. Like Sir John Soane, architect and designer of Pitzhanger, Opie reflects a wide range of diverse influences and art historical references within his work.

The exhibition incorporates works outside, both in front of the Manor and in Walpole Park at the rear. Opie's animated sculpture *Crows*, five monochrome birds on LED screens, are installed outside as public art for the first time in the UK. It is accompanied by a new LED monolith titled *Curly hair*.

Julian Opie says: "*Pitzhanger gallery immediately struck me as a beautiful and unique space. The grand house faces a standard busy contemporary London high street and backs onto a large public park with a pond and long vista.*

"I have tried to straddle these experiences and use all the possibilities provided. There will be buildings, people and animals to wander past, laid out as statues and paintings in a museum.

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"It's the first time I have shown in London for a long while and I wanted to exhibit a varied group of works that makes a compact and coherent story, but uses a full range of the things I have been working on in recent years."

Clare Gough, Director of Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery, says: *"Julian's striking and playful installations and graphic artworks at Pitzhanger brings a fresh perspective to Soane's architecture in dialogue with its surrounding parkland in Ealing."*

"I am delighted that this exhibition, for the first time, includes installations outside Pitzhanger in the surrounding grounds of Walpole Park: we hope these engage and draw in new visitors."

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

For all media enquiries related to *Julian Opie* at Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery, please contact Olivia Rickman | olivia@oliviarickman.com | +44 (0)777 9727 073

For all other enquiries, please contact pitzhanger@pitzhanger.org.uk

To be kept up to date with the latest news, sign-up to the Pitzhanger newsletter at pitzhanger.org.uk

Instagram | Twitter | Facebook: @pitzhanger

Listings Information

- Address: Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery, Walpole Park, Ealing, London, W5 5EQ
- Nearest Station: Ealing Broadway (Central & District lines, plus Great Western Main Line from Paddington. Elizabeth line tba.)
- Open Wednesday to Sunday 10am-5pm (late opening Thursday: 10am-7pm)
- Advance booking recommended at pitzhanger.org.uk. Tickets allow access to Pitzhanger Manor and the exhibition. Full price £7, concessions (including visitors with access needs and students) £4.50; National Art Pass £3.50; free entry for under 18s; Pitzhanger Members; Ealing residents (Wed + Sun mornings); and students after 5pm on Thursdays
- Some Covid-19 precautions will apply to visits. Full details are set out on the website [here](#)
- Also on display to visit with entry ticket is *Soane Restored* (until 5 June 2022) reveals the fascinating story of how Pitzhanger was restored to Soane's original vision, brought to life with photos and objects

ABOUT JULIAN OPIE

With public commissions from Seoul to New York, Luxembourg to Zurich and a steady flow of large museum exhibitions internationally, the work of Julian Opie is known throughout the world. Opie's distinctive formal language is instantly recognisable and reflects his artistic preoccupation with the idea of representation, and the means by which images are perceived and understood.

Always exploring different techniques both cutting edge and ancient, Opie plays with ways of seeing through reinterpreting the vocabulary of everyday life; his reductive style evokes both a visual and spatial experience of the world around us. Taking influence from classical portraiture, Egyptian hieroglyphs and Japanese woodblock prints, as well as public signage, information boards and traffic signs, the artist connects the clean visual language of modern life, with the fundamentals of art history.

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Opie has exhibited widely in the UK and internationally, with major museum exhibitions including shows at Kunstverein in Cologne; Hayward Gallery and ICA in London; Lehnbachhaus in Munich; K21 in Dusseldorf; MAK in Vienna; Mito Tower in Japan; CAC in Malaga and IVAM in Valencia; MoCAK in Krakow; Tidehalle in Helsinki and Fosun Foundation in Shanghai; Suwon IPark Museum of Art in Korea; National Gallery of Victoria, Australia and Berardo Museum, Portugal, as well as the Delhi Triennial, Venice Biennial and Documenta.

Julian Opie was born in 1958 in London and graduated in 1983 from Goldsmiths School of Art, where he was taught by Michael Craig-Martin. He lives and works in London.

ABOUT PITZHANGER MANOR & GALLERY

Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery's objective is to promote Sir John Soane's legacy, inspiring visitors with art, architecture and design and nurturing creativity for all within an extensive outreach and events programme. It celebrates Sir John Soane's genius and influence as a designer, juxtaposing his architecture with a programme of ambitious contemporary art exhibitions. Pitzhanger reopened in spring 2019 following a major £12-million conservation and restoration project to return the Manor to his original design, with support from HLF, ACE, Ealing Council and other generous donors.

ABOUT SIR JOHN SOANE

Sir John Soane (1753-1837) is one of Britain's most visionary architects, celebrated for his idiosyncratic take on the neoclassical style and mastery of natural light. Soane bought Pitzhanger in 1800. He demolished most of the existing manor house apart from the Dance Wing and from 1800-1804, designed and built a new house as his country estate sitting in 28 acres of parkland. The legacy of Soane's distinctive buildings, teachings and collections has influenced generations of artists, architects and designers.

ABOUT ART FUND

Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art. It provides millions of pounds every year to help museums to acquire and share works of art across the UK, further the professional development of their curators, and inspire more people to visit and enjoy their public programmes. In response to Covid-19 Art Fund has made £2 million in adapted funding available to support museums through reopening and beyond, including Respond and Reimagine grants to help meet immediate need and reimagine future ways of working. Art Fund is independently funded, supported by the 130,000 members who buy the National Art Pass, who enjoy free entry to over 240 museums, galleries and historic places, 50% off major exhibitions, and receive Art Quarterly magazine. Art Fund also supports museums through its annual prize, Art Fund Museum of the Year.

With Art Fund support

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