

As part of its series “Sculpture 21<sup>st</sup>,” the Lehmbruck Museum is presenting the famous *Walking Figures* of British artist Julian Opie in its impressive glass hall. They correspond with the luminous LED sculpture *Sam, Amelia, Jeremy, Teresa* in the museum’s forecourt which is presented as a world premiere in Duisburg. The constant, fluid movement of the “Runners”, their tireless walk around a square pedestal is hypnotic, creating a moment of pause in our everyday routines.

“Julian Opie’s works bring a smile to our face, endowing our pictorial world, which is shaped by the media and advertising, with a contemporary human grace,” Dr. Söke Dinkla, director of the Lehmbruck Museum, says of the London-based artist’s works. For the Lehmbruck Museum, Opie has designed a site-specific ensemble which creates a unique connection between the glass hall and the surrounding park.

“I have chosen to create a small urban crowd of metal statues on the raised plinth of the gallery floor and combine this with a four sided monument of moving figures just outside the glass facade. The collection focuses on the body as sculpture and I hope to continue this tradition in the language of the modern city using the technology of vehicles and signage.” – Julian Opie

*High waist shorts* and *Daisy print*, two of the seven larger-than-life metal statues exhibited in the glass hall are presented to the public for the first time in Duisburg. Their clear, simple forms, reminiscent of cartoon characters, can be caught by passers-by in a flash and leave a lasting impression in our memories. With the unparalleled precision of his lines and colouring, Opie draws our attention to the urban phenomena of our age and finds a memorable form to express their essence. Animated by individuality, his sculptures reveal signs of anonymity and haste – the typical symptoms of the big city. They play with the forms of urban society and at the same time hold up a mirror up to it.

Opie’s sculptures and installations are frequently found in public spaces, where they correspond with their surroundings and the people and establish connections. A similar effect is achieved by the ensemble that Opie designed for the Lehmbruck Museum: the *Walking Figures* have an effect that reaches out through the transparent facade of the glass hall into the public space of the surrounding park. Their stride across the glass hall is accelerated by the running movement of *Amelia, Jeremy, Theresa, Sam*. The artist comments on his concept:

“The beautiful and classic modernist gallery space of the Lehmbruck Museum requires a very special response and allows for a dramatic and open display of works. The optimistic and refreshing architecture turns the park outside into the backdrop to any installation and creates a dynamic relationship with the passing people.”

#### About the artist

Julian Opie, born in London in 1958, is one of the key representatives of the New British Sculpture today. After graduating from the renowned Goldsmith School of Art, he started his artistic career in the early 1980s. He first attracted the attention of an international audience when he participated in documenta 8.

Julian Opie's works have been presented by numerous museums around the world, including Hayward Gallery and Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London, Lehnbachhaus in Munich, K21 in Düsseldorf, MAK in Vienna or Mitwo Tower in Tokyo. In addition to participating in documenta in 1987, his works were also presented at the Venice Biennals of 1993, 2015 and 2017.

Opie's works can be found in many internationally renowned collections, for example The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Tate Britain, London, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, Kunsthaus Zürich, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Israel Museum, Jerusalem, and the National Museum of Art, Osaka.

In 1995/96, Julian Opie was Sargent Fellow at the British School in Rome and resident at the Atelier Sache in France. He received a special and unusual award in 2001 when he won the Music Week CADS Award for the design of a CD cover for the British band Blur.

Julian Opie lives and works in London.

#### Supporters

The exhibition "Sculpture 21<sup>st</sup>: Julian Opie" is supported by the Stiftung Kunst, Kultur und Soziales of Sparda-Bank West. It is the second presentation on the subject of the "Postdigital" realized with the support of the Sparda-Bank West foundation.