

Title: Evening Standard

Date: 23/02/2001

Edition: A

Page: 60

Opie Land in a Blur

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JULIAN OPIE: (GOOD) at Lisson Gallery

WELCOME to Opie Land - a world where everything is simple, flat and has a price on its head. Opie has long produced sculptural and conceptual work that has explored the banal. He once, for example, made an air vent that looked identical to an air vent and baffled hordes of visitors to the (then) Tate. Recently, however, he has taken to creating images on computer.

Consequently, his work has become less serious and more like ultramodern pop art. So much so, in fact, that he recently produced the album cover for Blur, best of.

The portraits of Damon et al are exhibited here. Features are marked out in heavy, black lines. Nostrils and eyes become dots, mouths simple, gently undulating lines. Block colours fill the shapes. White, pink and brown for flesh, a variety of solid colours for backgrounds. This stark, computer-rendered simplicity informs every piece on display.

Huge, motorway-style signs reduce human figures, in various poses, to pictograms heads have been replaced with perfect circles. Elsewhere the same simple circle-headed human forms appear on heavy slate tiles on the floor and on life-size, bright, primary coloured, vinyl painted wood blocks.

Upstairs, Opie's fetish for motorways finds new form in small, computer-generated scenes of flat blocky cars passing flat blocky houses and trees.

Into this sea of unremitting simplicity Opie has thrown the hot potato of commerciality. Accompanying the exhibition is an IKEA-style catalogue, deliberately produced on cheap, glossy paper. Inside we find a startling array of Opie pieces presented as consumer durables (which in a sense they are), available in a number of sizes, colours and configurations. The prices are provocatively high. A Blur-style

painting will set you back £18,000 for the largest size, and bear in mind that there are more than 54 different paintings, each available in a variety of sizes. Meanwhile Opie's near life-size wooden car sculptures cost more than the cars they ape.

As bland and banal as the work is, in situ it impresses, the consistently dumbed-down aesthetic creating an atmosphere of unreality. Divided and separated, however, one wonders how powerful these pieces remain.

Until 17 March, Lisson Gallery, 52-54 Bell Street NW1. Tel 020 7724 2739.