

— For Immediate Release

Contact:  
Anne Wehr  
Public Art Fund  
212.980.4575  
awehr@publicartfund.org

**Public Art Fund presents...**



**JULIAN OPIE**

***Animals, Buildings, Cars and People***

**AT CITY HALL PARK**

***October 28, 2004 – October 14, 2005***

On October 28, City Hall Park in Lower Manhattan will be transformed by *Animals, Buildings, Cars, and People*, an exhibition of sculptures by contemporary British artist Julian Opie. This will be the artist's most comprehensive U.S. solo show to date, featuring new commissions alongside some of his best-known works. Opie's cool, graphic depictions of modern life will be on view in all areas of the historic 19<sup>th</sup>-century park—on its lawns and sidewalks, and even on the steps of the Tweed Courthouse. *Julian Opie: Animals, Buildings, Cars, and People* is sponsored by Forest City Ratner Companies. Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg said, "We are honored to host Julian Opie's first major exhibition in the United States and welcome the Public Art Fund's third show to City Hall Park. We have had a tremendous response to the first two shows and expect that our latest collaboration will complement our City's thriving public art program throughout the five boroughs. I encourage everyone to come visit us in Lower Manhattan as Julian Opie's works are sure to inspire New Yorkers and visitors to New York City from around the globe."

*Animals, Buildings, Cars, and People* will be Julian Opie's first U.S. sculpture survey, featuring fourteen works from nine different series made between 1997 and the present. Succinct, colorful, and seductive, Opie's iconic imagery portrays the familiar physical world, from fashion models to farm animals, from skyscrapers to village churches. His work has been seen all over the world, in museums, galleries, corporate atriums, shops, airports, and even in a parking garage and a hospital cafeteria. He has rarely shown his sculptures in the United States, though his singular graphic sensibility, as seen on his recent album cover design for *The Best of Blur*, is familiar to many.

-more-

Opie, who has said that he sees his sculptures functioning like objects in an IKEA catalogue, mixes and matches icons of the city, small town, and countryside in City Hall Park. At the northern end of the exhibition will be two light-emitting diode (L.E.D.) sculptures, Bruce Walking (2004) and Sara Walking (2003), installed on the steps of the Department of Education's headquarters at the Tweed Courthouse on Chambers Street. These two full-length portraits depict two figures in constant motion as they appear to walk forward. Around the corner on Broadway, along the western side of City Hall Park, will be two life-size, three-dimensional sculptures of cars: Imagine you are driving a red Volkswagen and Imagine you are driving a white Honda (both 2004) portray, respectively, a hatchback and a four-door sedan. Nearby will be a trio of enamel-on-glass sculptures—This is Kiera, This is Monique, and This is Bijou (all 2004)—each depicting a glamorous female figure. Also along Broadway, near the southern end of the park, will be a group of painted wooden animals called Sheep Cow Deer Dog Chicken Cat Goat (1997) and two light-box sculptures, Nantra, pool attendant (2003) and Bijou, model (2004), which feature close-up portraits of two individuals.

On the other side of the park, along Centre Street and Park Row, will be four more groups of sculpture. My Aunt's Sheep (1997) is an installation of six enamel-painted aluminum signs of white sheep, which will graze on a small grassy area at the northern end of the park. City? (2004), a cluster of three-dimensional aluminum modernist skyscrapers, will stand near the subway entrance, facing the Brooklyn Bridge. Village? (2004), a group of plywood buildings, will stand near 6 escaped animals (2001), an installation of street signs with animals painted on them.

Julian Opie distills his images from the world around him, rendering them in the universally recognizable style of commercial graphics. He reduces the thing at hand to its most essential lines and color planes, flattening surfaces, and omitting all idiosyncratic details like dents on a car or spots on a cow. The resulting images—straightforward pictograms with bold lines, clean edges, and bright surfaces—read as clearly as traffic signs. "I am always referring to the world, to things that seem poignant to me" he has said, "and then I try to synthesize or make my own version of these things." Scale is important in Opie's work, and many of the things he depicts are made at nearly a one-to-one scale with their real counterparts, like My Aunt's Sheep or the compact cars of Imagine you are driving a red Volkswagen and Imagine you are driving a white Honda. No matter what the subject, however, the objects he creates always relate to human proportions. City? is diminutive compared to actual skyscrapers, but at almost ten feet tall is still taller than any person.

Julian Opie was born in 1958 in London, where he currently lives and works. He attended Goldsmith's School of Art in London from 1979-82. His first solo exhibition was at Lisson Gallery in London in 1983, where he continues to show his work.

City Hall Park is located in Lower Manhattan, and is bordered by Broadway, Chambers Street, Centre Street, and Park Row. The Department of Education's headquarters at the Tweed Courthouse is located at 52 Chambers Street. Tours of City Hall and Tweed Courthouse are available; for reservations and more information please call 311. The nearest subway stations are A, C, E to Chambers Street; 4, 5,6, J, M, Z to Brooklyn Bridge-City Hall; N, R to City Hall; 2, 3 to Park Place.

Julian Opie: *Animals, Buildings, Cars, and People* is the third exhibition that the Public Art Fund has organized in City Hall Park since 2003. *MetroSpective*, a group exhibition with works by Art Domantay, Brian Tolle, Walter Martin & Paloma Muñoz, Peter Rostovsky, Do-ho Suh, and Ken Landauer, was on view from January - October 2003. Roy Lichtenstein at City Hall opened in November 2003, featuring four sculptures by the Pop artist.

Julian Opie: *Animals, Buildings, Cars, and People* is sponsored by Forest City Ratner Companies.

This exhibition is made possible through the cooperation of the City of New York, Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor; City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation, Adrian Benepe, Commissioner; City of New York Department of Education, Joel I. Klein, Chancellor; and City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs, Kate D. Levin, Commissioner.

Special thanks to Lisson Gallery, London, and BEYER, New York City.

Public Art Fund is New York's leading presenter of artists' projects, new commissions, installations and exhibitions in public spaces. For more than 25 years, the Public Art Fund has been committed to working with emerging and established artists to produce innovative exhibitions of contemporary art throughout New York City. By bringing artworks outside the traditional context of museums and galleries, the Public Art Fund provides a unique platform for an unparalleled public encounter with the art of our time.

Public Art Fund is a non-profit arts organization supported by generous gifts from individuals, foundations, and corporations, and with public funds from The New York State Agency, and the City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs.

###