

Press Release

July 2011

Irish Artist Exhibits at the BP Portrait Awards in London's National Portrait Gallery

Irish painter, Al Freney, was recently selected from over 2,350 international entries as the only Dublin based artist to exhibit at the 32nd annual BP Portrait Award in London – the world's most prestigious portrait competition, which promotes the very best in contemporary portrait painting. Housed in the National Portrait Gallery, Freney's work entitled, 'At This Time of Night', is one of 55 portraits which will be viewed by over 500,000 visitors during the exhibition. 'At This Time of Night' was chosen for the exhibition by some of the UK's leading experts including Iwona Blazwick OBE, Director, Whitechapel Gallery, Rosie Broadley, Associate Contemporary Curator and Sandy Nairne, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, artist, Paul Emsley and Jonathan Jones, Art Critic with The Guardian.

Freney's 'At This Time of Night' is a self-portrait, which conveys the emotions experienced at the end of a relationship and the confusion and sense of abandonment that comes with it. Bringing together poetry, a range of different images styles and well known lyrics from songs such as 'Fool' by Damien Rice, 'Nude' by Radiohead and 'Sugar Baby' by Bob Dylan, each with the musician's support; the work aims to separate the mental presence from the physical.

Commenting on exhibiting at the BP Portrait Award, artist Al Freney said, 'Since launching in 1979, the BP Portrait Award has been associated with many successful portrait artists including Tai-Shan Schierenberg, Phil Hale and Paul Kelly. As well as this, I was honored to have my work hang alongside painters I have admired for years such as Hockney, Sargent and Freud. Since I started painting, these were the people that I've looked to for inspiration and guidance for my own work. The show itself was fantastic; we were surrounded by some of today's strongest contemporary painters and visitors to the show really appreciate the artwork.'

Adding to this, Al Freney said, 'The Brit School of Music also put on a concert during the show – some of the students were asked to pick a painting that inspired them and write a piece of music based on it. Musician, Will Paintin composed a song 'Day in Day Out' inspired by my work. It was so rewarding to see that the work at the exhibition inspired

younger people too. The BP Portrait Award is the highlight of my career to date and a great buzz to take back to the studio.'

Born in Dublin in 1979, Al Freney has exhibited in both solo and groups shows including the Royal Hibernian Gallagher Gallery show, 'Work From the Life Room', 'Expressions and Revelations', a group show in Covent Garden London in 2010 and 'Many Moods' in Connaught House, Dublin, as well as partaking in the Davy Portrait Awards in 2009 and 2010, which travelled from Belfast to Dublin and Cork. Al Freney is represented by Cherrylane Fine Arts and is currently working toward a solo exhibition, which is due to take place in 2012. The solo exhibition will feature Freney's latest figurative works, and will include 'At This Time of Night'. Visit www.alfreney.com for additional works by the artist.

BP Portrait Awards will run until 18th September. Admission free
Open 10.00 -1800, Thursday and Friday 21.00

Touring

Following the exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, the winners and selected entries will subsequently tour to:

Wolverhampton Art Gallery - 24 September - 1 November 2011

Aberdeen Art Gallery - 12 November 2011 - 21 January 2012

- Ends -

For further information and images please contact Claire Feely on 086 803 7549 / feelyc@gmail.com

Notes to Editor

Clearance for the use of lyrics and poetry was secured as follows:

Bob Dylan

Most of the Time(Sony/ATV Music Publishing (UK) Limited)

Boots of Spanish leather(Sony/ATV Music Publishing (UK) Limited)

Not Dark Yet (Sony/ATV Music Publishing (UK) Limited)

Sugar Baby(Sony/ATV Music Publishing (UK) Limited)

Damien Rice

Prague (Warner/Chappell Music Publishing)

Fool (Warner/Chappell Music Publishing)

Mick Flannery

California (Verge Management Ltd.)

Radiohead

Fog (Warner/Chappell Music Publishing)

Nude (Warner/Chappell Music Publishing)

Wendy Cope(poet)

Leaving (United Agents, UK)

Andy Warhol

Self portrait (Artists Rights Society, USA)

About the BP Portrait Award

The BP Portrait Award exhibition will run in the National Portrait Gallery, which houses the world's largest collection of portraits, until 18 September 2011. From intimate and personal images of friends and family, to revealing paintings of celebrity sitters, the exhibition presents a variety of styles and approaches that together illustrate the outstanding and innovative work currently being produced by artists of all ages and nationalities.