

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2007

### **Scottish born artist's colourful emotional journey cuts to the heart of Ukraine**

In *Open*, the first exhibition of artist Michael Murphenko's works in the UK, to be held at Mayfair's The Arts Club from 12-24 November, through vibrant colours and unsettling forms, the painter explores natural themes influenced by the countryside in the vicinity of Kyiv.



Growing up in Australia with Scottish parents, studying in Belgium and subsequently falling in love and moving to Ukraine, Michael Murphenko's current vivid, expressive, vibrant art is informed by the vicissitudes in feelings of national, cultural and personal identity. His work, informed as much by English symbolism as Chinese ink drawing, is a truly global art, and in his most recent paintings, the influential monochrome tones of Carrière have given way to a surge of colour that dominates form in lyrical pieces full of meaning that engage the viewer to share in the artist's inner battles and his quest to create a living art that speaks at once of place and self.

#### **A knife that cuts**

According to Murphenko, art is an outlet for emotional states but above has to be the expression of a positive energy that shows a way forward. Making sense of confusion through uplifting journeys in colour that echo situations, there is little wonder that, after an initial cold reaction, the artist is gaining popularity in his adopted home of Ukraine, a country that itself is going through an intense period of growth and making important decisions about its future. Rejecting at once a modernism that surrenders poetry to form and a post-modernism that fails to display sincerity and human warmth, the paintings, full of electric energy and tonal depth, form a living art, integral wholes that strive for values such as truth, love and freedom.



Murphenko describes his painting technique in terms of 'hitting the canvas', and defines art as 'a knife that cuts'. The works in *Open* are rivers formed from streams, full of an asymmetrical, dramatic lyrical energy that captures the at times painful moments of the inner drive to create, realised on a large scale with all the physicality and electricity of Pollock's drip painting, yet also expressing something of the simplicity and depth of Rothko's plasticity. A compulsive painter, who works intensely in euphoric bursts of cathartic energy until the emotion is spent, the resulting works are indubitably honest, an opening up of a visual art that, although steeped in conflicts to which there are no easy answers, and occasionally driven by fear, abjures above all else a dead art, and celebrates the right, moreover the need, for us to live life as we see fit.

Danusha Fine Arts is delighted to celebrate its 15th anniversary of promoting art from Ukraine with its first exhibition of this inspirational painter. Director Tamara Demydenko commented:

"Displaying the openness and freedom at the heart of Michael's art is a perfect way to celebrate the myriad of artistic styles old and new, from socialist realism, to folk art and post-impressionism, in which Ukraine is so rich."

The exhibition, enigmatically titled *Open*, will be held at The Arts Club, 40 Dover Street, Mayfair, London from 12th November until 24th November with a private view on Tuesday 13th November.

For more information contact Tamara Demydenko on 02072864832 or visit the press centre at [www.danusha-fine-arts.co.uk](http://www.danusha-fine-arts.co.uk) where high resolution images are available. For background information on the artist visit [www.murphenko.com](http://www.murphenko.com)