

Ørnulf Opdahl

7 May – 18 June 2011

Purdy Hicks Gallery is delighted to announce an exhibition of new paintings by the Norwegian artist, **Ørnulf Opdahl**: one of the most important painters working in Scandinavia today. These new works explore the vast and majestic landscapes of the west coast of Norway, where the artist lives and works.

Moving between observation and abstraction, Opdahl employs strong elements of colour and shape to build up compositions that highlight the scale of his environment. Dark masses of towering mountains, often draped in fog or snow, are offset by pin pricks of man made light shining in the black; signs of humanity's small existence amongst these epic proportions of nature. The sheer cliff faces of the deep fjords, impenetrable but for a few solitary rays of sunlight merge with the darkening skies. The interplay between dark and light against such backdrops suggest a sense of both the ancient and the eternal.

The new paintings and prints take the landscape as a starting point and refine it into a less tangible image, evoking a powerful sense of the atmosphere. Opdahl's distinctive depictions of his surroundings have become synonymous with our vision of that remote and beautiful land.

Ornulf Opdahl was born in 1944. He studied at the Norwegian Art Academy from 1962 to 1965. By the 1970s he had established his reputation as one of the leading painters of his generation and was exhibiting regularly in Oslo. His early figurative paintings of the 1960s and early 1970s gradually evolved towards a large-scale painting format in which colouristic highlights became more dominant. By the mid-1980s Opdahl had developed his own distinctly personal approach to his painting, which he has evolved since returning to the west coast of Norway where he continues to live and work. His work is held in many public collections including the National Gallery of Norway; Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art; British Museum