

Man of our Time

A 2.7 metre-high metal sculpture by John Ravera

Made in 2003

Located in front of the Circa office block behind Bracknell Post Office, 2a High Street, Bracknell



First impressions

Man of our Time is a towering sculpture of a man whose upper body is surrounded by a sweeping, circular shape. It is located at the entrance to a new office block.

What kind of sculpture is it?

Since it clearly resembles a man, it can be classified as a representational, or 'figurative' piece. However, there are elements that aren't immediately recognizable and which are therefore 'abstract'.

Is this unusual?

Not entirely. When figuration and abstraction are combined, an artwork is referred to as being 'semi-figurative'.

John Ravera, who created the sculpture, tended to make recognizable (or figurative) sculptures of people for public locations, and more abstract sculptures for his more personal work that he sold to individuals. *Man of our Time* is a merging of the figurative and abstract strands of his art.

How can the figure in *Man of our Time* be interpreted?

A lone figure of a man stands pinned to the spot. His hairstyle – a stiff and upright quiff held in place with styling gel, perhaps – would suggest that he is young. His face, however, is lived-in and lined. He is turning to one side and his head and eyes are bowed and downcast. He has a pensive look and seems to be biting his lower lip.

There's the suggestion of a collar, and the jacket and trousers of a business suit. He could be intended to resemble an individual – or perhaps more generally the type of person – who works inside the building.

What do the freer, more abstract forms mean?

The dramatic shape that loops around the man could simply be an over-sized scarf caught in the wind. Or it could serve to suggest the feeling of grey clouds looming over and swirling round him. It could represent an experience of actual weather, or be a symbol of his inner emotions.

Alternatively, the shape that envelops him also gives the impression of raised and outstretched wings. There's the suggestion, even, of a halo above his head (there are 'rays of light'). He's perhaps a twenty-first century angel?

The sculpture seems to be an artist's view of the pressures of the workplace, and also an homage to the unsung office worker who, as the title suggests, is a *man of our time*.

However, as with all art (and abstract and semi-figurative art in particular), it's up to each viewer to decide what the piece means to him or her, and there will be many other possible interpretations.

Information about the artist

John Ravera (1941-2006) trained at Camberwell School of Art in London and worked mainly in clay or bronze. He was a Past President of the Royal Society of British Sculptors and his public monuments can be seen throughout London and the South East, and in Hong Kong and Tokyo.