



## I'm Popeye the Painterman

### Date

1992

### Primary Maker

Michael Cullen

### Medium

Oil on canvas

### Dimensions

223 x 228 cm

### Description

Michael Cullen had become a painter before he began studying at art schools in London and Dublin. He won a series of Arts Council bursaries from 1977-1984 and has exhibited internationally from this time. Disenchanted by perceived limitations in Irish art of the 1960s, Cullen moved abroad after art college and has spent extended periods in Spain, Germany, Morocco and France. I'm Popeye the Painterman, one of a series of depicting the artist at work, exemplifies Cullen's continuing investigation of the activity of painting itself. The painting references 'high art' conventions, for example the widely explored motif of the artist and model in the studio, and Van Gogh's self-portraits on his way to work which inform Cullen's own self-portrayal, yet it simultaneously undermines such traditions. The title and cartoon-like handling introduce self-mocking notes, and Cullen's studio is a riot of colour and form. The paraphernalia from which paintings are, literally, manufactured is actively emphasised and, freed from traditional rules of perspective, compositional elements appear to float incongruously. Cullen has remarked, 'there are no lace ruffs in a Rembrandt', and by loading the canvas with thick peaks of paint and pigment Cullen deliberately stresses the physicality of his 'ingredients'.