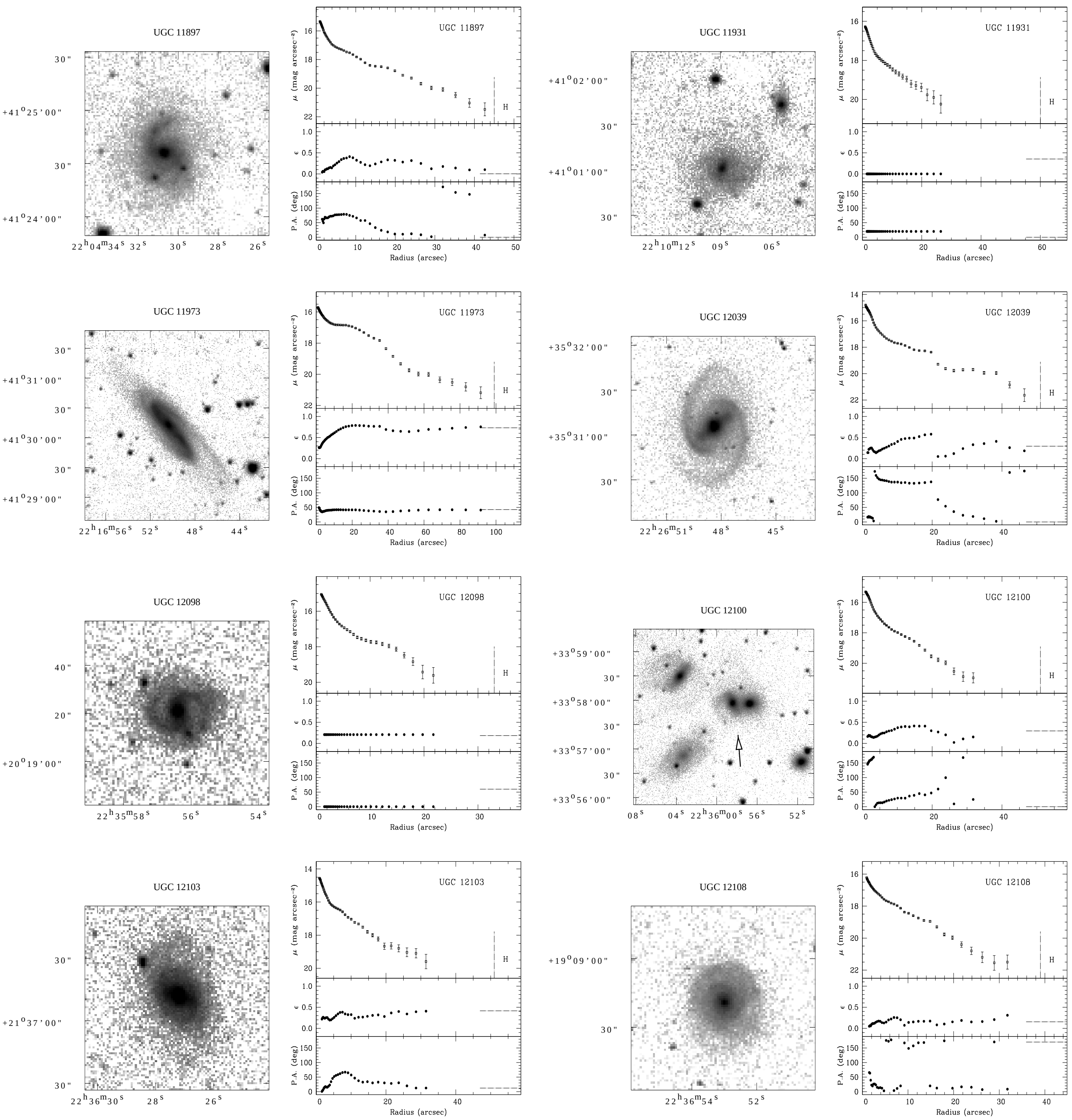


**Fig. 4.** Images and profiles of the sample galaxies. There are two panels for each object: the left panel is the broad-band image, the right panel contains the relative radial profiles. Images are labelled in J2000 equatorial coordinates. Their grey scale is linear with surface brightness, it is the same for all the images and extends from 21 (lightest) to 16 (darkest) $H$-mag arcsec$^{-2}$. In case of possible confusion in the image, the galaxy is identified by an arrow. Radial profiles, obtained by averaging within elliptical annuli, represent the run of the surface brightness $\mu$ (top panel), of the ellipticity $\epsilon$ (middle panel), and position angle P.A. (bottom panel) of the adopted annuli vs. their major semiaxis. The bandpass ($H$) is indicated in the bottom right corner of the top panel. The vertical dashed segment in the top panel ccorresponds to the $B$-band $D_{25}$ diameter. The horizontal dashed segments in the lower panels indicate the $\epsilon$ and P.A. values reported in the optical catalogs.