

British artist David Shrigley (b. 1968 in Macclesfield, United Kingdom) had his first exhibition in a New Zealand gallery when he was Two Rooms' artist in residence in 2015. "Sixteen oil paintings in sixteen days" was the challenging task he set for himself during the residency. Local audiences fell in love with Shrigley's charmingly awkward drawings and cack-handed paintings, which are often accompanied by hand-drawn text, giving them the raw energy and immediacy of telephone doodles and swiftly sketched cartoons. Tapping into the raw aesthetics of children's drawings and the socially and politically critical sensibility of Punk, Shrigley draws inspiration from the banal details of everyday life and the existential angst of the human condition. His badly drawn texts operate like extended captions – sometimes wistful and tender; other times stating the blindingly obvious. In his major, mid-career retrospective exhibition *Brain Activity* at the Hayward Gallery, London, in 2012 a taxidermied Jack Russell stood on its hind legs holding up a placard stating "I'm Dead"; a brass bell was accompanied by a sign which instructed "Not to be rung again until Jesus returns": a drawing of a tombstone engraved with a shopping list begged the question: at the end of a life is that all there is?

Although he tackles serious subjects, such as the United Kingdom's 2016 decision to leave the European Union, Shrigley's art is always tempered by a wicked sense of humour and a playful lightness of touch. For example, his sculpture *Really Good* – a monumental fist making a thumbs up in Trafalgar Square (made for the Fourth Plinth Commission in 2016) can be read as an ironic response to Brexit.

Drawing is Shrigley's main medium and his work has appeared in broadsheet newspapers, books, magazines and galleries. He also works in sculpture, painting, animation and music. His practice extends far beyond the gallery's walls, and his collaborative projects include the 2023 project *Pulped Fiction*, which saw him upcycling thousands of unwanted copies of Dan Brown's 2003 novel *The Da Vinci Code*. Shrigley produced a limited run of 1250 copies of George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* – made entirely from the pulped remains of Brown's novels. In 2022 Shrigley entered into a playful collaboration with his audience when he made an installation titled *Mayfair Tennis Ball Exchange*. The walls of Stephen Friedman Gallery in London were lined with orderly rows of tennis balls installed on narrow wooden shelves and the artist invited gallery visitors to help themselves to the new balls and replace them with used ones. Through the course of the exhibition the pristine, green balls were replaced with worn-out balls in a variety of colours – many of them with hand-drawn texts on them.

Shrigley graduated from the Glasgow School of Art in 1991, was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2013. He was awarded the decoration of Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in 2020. He lives and works in Brighton and Devon in the United Kingdom.