

# DAVID SHRIGLEY

## From a Macclesfield of Dreams

by Colin Martin a.k.a The Lonely Piper

### Exhibition Events

**Saturday 18 November 2006**

**Meeting Room, 2pm**

David Shrigley presents an illustrated talk about his work  
SOLD OUT

**Thursday 18 January 2007**

**Gallery 1, 7pm**

John Calcutt, art critic and senior lecturer on the MFA course, Glasgow School of Art.

### Dundee Contemporary Arts

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[www.dca.org.uk](http://www.dca.org.uk)

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Many years ago whilst an art student, I happened to be absent-mindedly leafing through a well-thumbed copy of Art Monthly in the library at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design. My listless and uninspired eyes clumsily stumbled upon a photographic reproduction of David Shrigley's now seminal 'Lost Pigeon Poster'. I underwent what I now recognise as being a minor epiphany, with major ramifications. It amused me very much and it still does in fact, a seminal doorway into his world had been opened by this piece of work, and I walked straight through it.

It gave me hope: not hope that the mangy looking pidgeon (sic) with grey bits would be found and returned to its concerned owner like a lost filofax. But the realisation that there was someone out there who shunned the norm and was succeeding on his own terms, a self-publisher (The Armpit Press) and artistic comedy mind at odds with the machinations of accepted convention. A singular scribbled vision soon to be

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– 21 January 2007**

embraced by the world at large, Planet Earth and its Shrigley-Eyed inhabitants were about to be Daved!

David Shrigley, a man born of mercurial Macclesfield, walking tall amongst us mortals with a loping Larry David gait. A veritable combine harvester of a man, striding through Glasgow winnowing ideas randomly from all manner of possible sources and scenarios. Most of which it has to be said, pass the general populace by, as they are simply not hot-wired in such a creative manner, and are in fact blinkered to the everyday surreal that surrounds us. Alleyways are peered down and newspaper hoardings become soap boxes for Shrigleyesque public comment, ('Youth Vomits On Street', being a particular classic). Retiring to his studio he ritually dares to don an oversized pair of Freudian Slippers, gets himself comfortable and starts out on a diligent days work; he's a hard worker not a shirker (a nine to fiver, not a skiver). A prolific pen is applied to paper and his imagination starts to run its own inimitable riot of idea.

He's a man who sees a darkness and is able to articulate this through his unique and transformative thought process. An artist who's willing to acknowledge and utilise things that most people willingly choose to ignore in a brushing of disturbed dust under

rug. Taboos are there to be tinkered with, and he takes us on a magical mystery tour of the darker and lighter recesses of the human psyche. A king of quirks, scribbled characters act out his one line, one page plays on paper, irreverent, archaic and at times ruder than Gordon Ramsay.

A troubadour of tangent, his freeform ideas are executed in a carefully engineered style he has made all his own, a kind of hyper adept form of ineptness where involuntary musings are ghost written from a black pen that just happens to be in his hand and can't stop doodling, in that 'instantly recognisable' black ink scrawl. At times teasingly tranquil yet at others a kind of pictorial and literal tourettes where bad language abounds; an unembarrassed and uncensored scrawl that can't help but to utter such profanity.

Then there's his own peculiar form of artistic spell-check, which misspells deliberately, crossing out letters, words and whole sentences once his mind has made a final decision, leaving us with tantalising omissions and glimpses of what could have been. Tippex is shunned in Shrigley's world and is a redundant abomination of invention that doesn't even figure in his way of thinking and execution. The childlike mess, I have to confess, is where it's at.

For a long time now I have been hopelessly encumbered with an all consuming compulsion to purchase any new Shrigley book I chance to see on the market (both for myself and lucky friends), an ailment I'm more than happy to be stricken with. Any new purchase will be read, laughed at and rested on my special and reinforced Shrigley shelf in my artist's garret.

I like to think that when I buy a new book, I am (with a moderation of coin) in some small way contributing towards the purchase perchance of a large pair of functional trainers or maybe help to bolster a waning stock of high quality cartridge and biro. You almost feel whilst flicking through his many pages as if you are leafing through a marvellous mind made into paper, as opposed to the book which you are in fact holding in your hands, dog-eared yet of the highest pedigree. Published artefacts that are as precious as any two-bit porcelain figurine found on a mantel, you can't chip them, but you can bend them.

Born in Macclesfield in 1968, David Shrigley has been based in Glasgow since 1988, when he moved to the city to study at Glasgow School of Art. His work has been exhibited and published the world over. A group of his drawings was recently acquired for the Tate collection, including several of those selected for this exhibition.

There is a display of Shrigley's books in the Information Room, adjacent to the gallery entrance, courtesy of Dundee-based artist, Colin Martin, a.k.a The Lonely Piper.

All works are courtesy of the artist and the following galleries, unless otherwise indicated:  
Stephen Friedman Gallery, London;  
Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris;  
Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen;  
Anton Kern Gallery, New York  
and BQ, Cologne.

In conjunction with the exhibition DCA has produced a special limited edition, spoken-word 7" vinyl record, *Ding Dong*, available from DCA shop from 1 December, priced £7.50.