



Exhibition 8 February – 10 March
Private view Tuesday 7 February, 6 – 8pm

Stephen Friedman Gallery is delighted to announce 'Arms Fayre', a solo exhibition of new work by acclaimed British artist David Shrigley. Presented here for the first time is a group of ceramic sculptures, the artist's most recent taxidermy curiosity and a brand new animation made especially for this exhibition.

David Shrigley graduated from the Glasgow School of Art in 1991. Over the past two decades he has developed a rich and varied practice. Best known for his crudely composed ironic drawings, his work now also encompasses a broad range of media including photography, sculpture, music, animation and taxidermy. What is in common throughout is an appreciation for the absurd; an eye for the overlooked and an ability to convey humour in a myriad of ways. His subtle, yet often darkly witty imaginings provide a welcome counter to the banality of daily life. Likened to a 'playful surrealist,' Shrigley manages to acknowledge the post-war humour of 'Goon' Spike Milligan whilst simultaneously referencing the now iconic disjunction found in the work of artists such as René Magritte.

This exhibition brings together three strands of Shrigley's work. Presented in the front gallery space is an installation of new ceramic sculptures entitled 'Bombs'. These domestically sized objects brilliantly capture the archetypal image of a missile as commonly found in cartoon iconography – an elongated oval placed upright on four supporting feet. The bomb, traditionally an icon of war and destruction is transformed under Shrigley's touch. Here, the glazed, black surfaces conceal a fragile ceramic foundation, a natural material quite at odds with the power of the man-made weapon it is fashioned to resemble. The simplicity of form is key to the success of these objects: instantly recognisable yet not reliant on exact similitude the bombs are at once both alluring and disconcerting.

Such subversion is crucial to Shrigley's canny ability to manipulate his subject matter, a skill further evidenced in the darkened back gallery space. Here, Shrigley's newest animation, 'The Artist' is projected alongside his most recent taxidermy. 'Monkey' is a small, stuffed, headless squirrel monkey, or *Saimiri sciureus*. Standing atop a plinth, spot lit against the flickering black and white animation, the creature's silhouette is caught as if mid-dance. This playful pose is in juxtaposition with the monkey's headless stature. Frozen in time, the small mammal should be an emblem for death. Yet as ever with Shrigley, it is not that simple. In death there is humour; in the farcical there is meaning.

This exhibition highlights the breadth of Shrigley's practice whilst at the same time illustrating the strength in its fluidity. His film work is a natural progression from his drawings, allowing an expansion of narrative that one image cannot achieve. In the same way the ceramics are an apt development of this graphic work, the easily malleable clay responding well to the artist's light and impulsive touch and giving solid form to his shifting thought patterns.

STEPHEN FRIEDMAN GALLERY

In addition to the works in the main gallery space, there will be a presentation of new works on paper at no.11 Old Burlington Street, the majority of which have never been shown before.

This gallery show coincides with Shrigley's first ever mid-career UK survey, running concurrently at the Hayward Gallery, London. Highly anticipated, 'Brain Activity' is the most wide-ranging presentation of the artist's work to date and cements Shrigley's position as one of the UK's foremost cultural figures.

David Shrigley (b.1968, Macclesfield) lives and works in Glasgow. Forthcoming exhibitions include *Brain Activity*, Hayward Gallery, London, UK (2012). Recent notable solo exhibitions include *Animate*, The Turku art Museum, Finland (2011); Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow International Festival of Visual Arts, Glasgow, Scotland (2010); *New Powers*, Kunsthalle Mainz, Germany (2009); *David Shrigley*, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany (2008); BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK (2008); *Everything Must Have a Name*, Konsthall, Malmo, Sweden (2007) and *David Shrigley*, Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee, Scotland (2006).

Forthcoming group shows include *A Perfect Day*, Westergasfabriek, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2012). Recent notable group exhibitions include *Ron Arad's Curtain Call*, The Roundhouse, London (2011); *Rude Britannia*, Tate Britain, London (2010); *Laughing in a Foreign Language*, Hayward Gallery, London, UK (2008); *Momentary Momentum*, Parasol Unit foundation for contemporary art, London; touring to Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, UK (2007-2008); *The Compulsive Line: Etching 1900 to Now*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY (2006) and *State of Play*, Serpentine Gallery, London (2003).

Other projects include *Sort of Opera: Pass the Spoon* (In collaboration with David Fennessy and Nicholas Bone, featuring a live music played by the Red Note Ensemble), The Tramway, Glasgow (2011); touring to The Hayward Gallery, London, UK (2012).

Forthcoming exhibition: **Li Tianbing** 15 March - 21 April 2012

Gallery hours are: Tuesday to Friday, 10am - 6pm and Saturday, 11am - 5pm

For further details please contact Alice Walters on +44 (0)20 7494 1434