

Crean & Company open its first solo artist show on British figurative painter Rupert Shrive



Rupert Shrive, Petrol Station Ficus 5 (with Dog), 2021. Oil on linen, 97 x 130 cm.

LONDON.- [Crean & Company](#) announce its first solo artist show on British figurative painter Rupert Shrive. Entitled *Soho to Montmartre: Observations on Life*, this recent collection of works reflects on Shrive's artistic trajectory and the influence of his time spent living in London, Paris and Valencia. The show features a diverse range of 35 artworks, from his cross-genre paintings and landscape compositions to his new series of 'Lockdown Lives' – still lives animated with unusual objects – which together illustrate the evolution of the artist's unique figurative style.

At the heart of Shrive's practice is an interest in abstracting human form. His work is influenced by the School of London of the 1970s: a group of figurative painters that included David Hockney, Lucian Freud and Francis Bacon, with whom Shrive became acquainted in the pubs of Soho while a St Martins student in the 1980s. From Freud's intense observation and Hockney's technical experimentation, to Bacon's breaking up and rebuilding of the subject, Shrive's inspirations culminate in his own distinctive body of work.

Primarily a painter, Shrive's practice encompasses sculpture and collage. For his 'cross-genre paintings' – first created in London in the 2000s – the artist crushes paintings into sculptures, before re-supposing them as collages or repainting them. As shown in artworks such as *Self-Portrait* (2020), by this process of deconstruction and reconstruction and introducing chaos to order, Shrive challenges traditional concepts of form and perspective.

'I'm interested in taking things further than might be expected,' Shrive says. 'My practice is much more about blurring the lines between genres.' Where the School of London artists traditionally painted human form, Shrive's recent subjects

have included trees and urban landscapes inspired by his surroundings: 'But even those I see as portraits,' he says. The show features a series from Valencia (where the artist has lived on and off for several years) of fig trees threatened by the proximity of a petrol station: potent symbols of the constant struggle between nature and man.

The show also includes Shrive's most recent body of work, painted from his studio in Montmartre where the artist is now based. Entitled 'Lockdown Lives', these works were created during spring 2020 and depict vegetables in theatrical or absurd mise-en-scènes. 'The regulations in France were strict, and buying vegetables became a significant part of the day,' Shrive explains. 'I saw them in a new light: there suddenly seemed something extraordinary in them, that chimed with the strangeness of the times.'

Rupert Shrive

Rupert Shrive was born in Norfolk in 1965 and trained at Norwich and St Martin's. The figurative style of his art has been influenced by artists ranging from Francis Bacon and Michael Andrews, to Auguste Rodin and Paula Rego. He divides his time between the UK, France and Spain, and has exhibited widely in Europe as well as in Hong Kong. This has included numerous solo shows at Serena Morton, London (2007-2017); an installation at the Courtauld East Wing (2011-2012), which was inspired by Goya's Sleep of Reason; and a monumental rendition of the seven deadly sins at the Grand Palais Paris in 2010. He is currently preparing for his first solo museum show at the Maison de Balzac, Paris, in 2021.