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Toby Ziegler

3 November 2007 – 6 January 2008

**Toby Ziegler** is rapidly developing a reputation for innovative paintings and sculptures that explore the relationship between the computer-generated and the handmade, sophistication and clumsiness, the exotic and the commonplace. This is the first exhibition to focus entirely on Ziegler's sculpture. This installation presents new and recent works from the artist's studio alongside *Portrait of C.L. (third version)* (2006) – an enormous sculpture of a pineapple, acquired by the Arts Council Collection last year.

Ziegler uses computer-aided design to render unique forms as geometric line drawings. He then works from these drawings to build forms, binding pieces of cardboard, paper or plywood together using PVA, gesso or dark, oozing resin. The resulting sculptures appear familiar yet unknown, and in some cases made stranger through the deliberate fragmentation and contortion of the surface. There is a collision between the schematic origins of the process and more random gestures where idiosyncrasy and chance come into play.

Ziegler is drawn to motifs that have become divorced from their previous contexts: the pineapple, a status symbol during 17th and 18th centuries, has been relegated to the position of supermarket staple; the meaning of the sphinx has become obscured over time; and woolly mammoths are now lost to us altogether through extinction. Loss of meaning and fragmentation also underpin

Ziegler's approach to the human form. The head in *Totem 4* references an ancient Iberian statue stolen to order from the Louvre in 1907 for Pablo Picasso and then allegedly reworked in his studio. *Reverse Cowboy* and *Wagon Wheel* refer to the sexually explicit *I-modi* drawings, which the artist Giulio Romano inscribed on the walls of the Sala di Constantino in the Vatican in 1523 in protest over late payment for a commission. The drawings were quickly erased, but not before a series of engravings was able to enter circulation. These were subsequently destroyed by the Pope and only scant fragments survive.

Hybrid forms also recur in Ziegler's sculpture. The two Staffordshire pottery dogs, reconstructed and reinterpreted by Ziegler on a monstrous scale in cardboard, highlight the grotesque stylisation involved in the transition from animal to ornament. The title of one of Ziegler's sculptures references *Pitldown Man* – the 'missing link' found in Pitldown, East Sussex, in 1912, which was proved some forty years later to be a bogus mix of human and animal bones. In addition, Ziegler's *Totems* present incongruous forms in stacked Perspex vitrines, echoing and subverting museological displays.

The collisions in Ziegler's work are exaggerated by the tight space allocated to each sculpture in the gallery, a method of presentation perhaps inspired by the Arts Council Collection's sculpture stores. Ziegler's elusive and fragmentary sculptures have been positioned in the gallery with a randomness which prompts viewers to make their own associations.

## List of works

Unless otherwise stated, all works:  
Courtesy of Simon Lee Gallery, London

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| <b>1</b> <i>Piltdown Man</i><br>2005<br>Paper, PVA, gesso<br>and ink  | <b>4</b> <i>The Liberals</i><br>2007<br>Cardboard, gesso<br>and glue |
| <b>2</b> <i>Portrait of C.L.<br/>(3rd Version)</i><br>2006<br>Plywood, gesso<br>and resin<br>Arts Council<br>Collection,<br>Southbank Centre,<br>London | <b>5</b> <i>Totem 1</i><br>2007<br>Paper and PVA                     |
| <b>3</b> <i>Reverse Cowboy<br/>(2nd Part)</i><br>2007<br>Plywood, resin<br>and gesso  | <b>6</b> <i>Totem 2</i><br>2007<br>Paper and PVA                     |
|   | <b>7</b> <i>Totem 4</i><br>2007<br>Paper and PVA                     |
|   | <b>8</b> <i>Wagon Wheel</i><br>2007<br>Paper and PVA                 |



## About the artist

**Toby Ziegler** was born in 1972. He studied at Central St Martin's in London (1991–1994) and held a residency at Delfina Studios (2004–2006). A solo exhibition of Ziegler's work was held at the Chisenhale Gallery in London in 2005. His work has featured in various group shows in the UK and abroad, and is represented in various public collections including the British Council Collection and Tate. Toby Ziegler currently lives and works in London.

## About the Arts Council Collection

The Arts Council Collection is the largest loan collection of modern and contemporary British art in the world. It is lent to public buildings throughout Britain and to exhibitions nationally and internationally. Since its foundation in 1946 the Collection has acquired over 7,500 works including sculptures, paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, videos and installations. The aim of the Collection is to acquire innovative work by artists living in Britain and to achieve this it actively seeks work by emerging artists. The Arts Council Collection team works with a changing acquisitions panel of artists, writers or curators, who are appointed for eighteen months at a time, visiting exhibitions and studios. To find out more about the Arts Council Collection and to search the Collection online, visit [www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk](http://www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk)