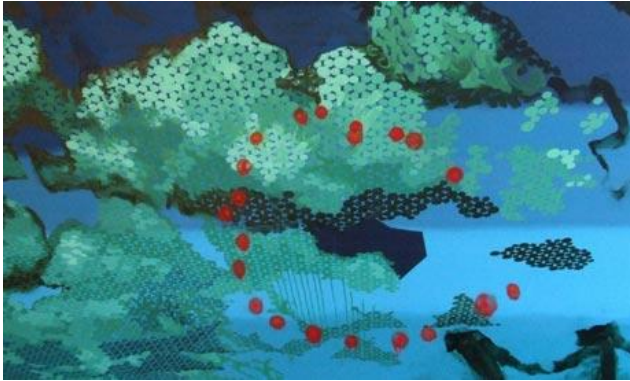


Artist of the week 113: Toby Ziegler

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Informed by a diverse and often subversive array of influences, Ziegler's art blends CGI with Renaissance drawing



Toby Ziegler's *Vitalis*, which juxtaposes replicated cloudbursts with random dots and dashes. Photograph: Simon Lee Gallery, London

In Toby Ziegler's paintings, imagery borrowed from art history is crafted from patterns of identical stars and discs – clouds might be borrowed from Constable, body parts from 16th-century pornography. Yet there's no doubt his visuals originate anywhere other than CGI. Laid out according to exacting laws of perspective, they are 3D-looking vistas with illusory, kaleidoscopic depths. And his sculptures look like virtual blueprints for artworks – from classical busts to mantelpiece ornaments – that are yet to be fleshed out.

Ziegler's 2006 painting, *Study for Euphemism for Something*, captures many of these apparent paradoxes: it features a cloudscape converted into CGI on an inkjet printout, then worked over by hand with correction fluid. More recently, he's been drawing inspiration from collages of computer imagery replete with haphazard rips and tears. Another painting, *Vitalis*, balances cloudbursts of replicating patterns with misbehaving dots and dashes, while his sculptures are regularly doused with expressive splashes of paint.

There's a rebellious streak to his source material too, which has included *I Modi*, the erotic drawings created by Raphael's pupil Giulio Romano, which landed their engraver in jail, and Courbet's crotch-shot painting (Warning: this link contains a sexually explicit image), *The Origin of the World*. These are images with stories of social outrage or political repercussions, but equally their meaning has changed over time.

A bust-like sculpture in Ziegler's current show, *The Alienation of Objects*, takes its cue from the Iberian stone head Picasso stole from the Louvre and then chiselled away at. Unable to see the original, Ziegler created his response to this legendary object from a few old photos. It might seem like the carving's meaning has been watered down, while Picasso's bold gesture is subjected to the unflinching order of computer processes.

Yet as Ziegler draws attention to its translation from tribal art to modernist inspiration and 21st-century technological gambit, he suggests there might be something far more optimistic at the heart of his work. Ziegler carries out his own creative evolution, transforming digital replicas into something personal, hand-rendered and unique.

Why we like him: Ziegler's sculpture *The Liberals* puts a wry spin on notions of art and good taste, translating kitsch Staffordshire pottery dogs into suitably chic, towering geometric forms in scrappy cardboard.

Hard drive: The London-based Ziegler first got into 3D modeling software during a creative crisis he suffered after graduating from Central St Martins art school in the 1990s. Creating schematic pictures and sculptures by hand was initially a way of getting over the disillusionment he'd been feeling about being an artist and the weight of history.

Where can I see him? *The Alienation of Objects* is at 176 gallery, London until December.