

SELF DEFENCE

This morning there was a knock at my front door. Two knocks actually. A very definite double-bang of the knocker. It is a very distinct tinny kind of metal on metal sound. I was upstairs in the studio room doing a bit of drawing. I had no trousers on, as is the case on most days in the studio of an early morning. I often just wake up and wander into the next room and start working on whatever I left the night before.

I scrambled to put on some jeans and ran down to answer the door to find no one there. I looked around to see if there was a missed delivery notice or maybe a package or mail on the doorstep. There wasn't. However, I did find a small yellow, circular piece of thin plastic with the image of a white empty shield on it. It was worn with torn edges. I picked it up, contemplating its origins. I often encounter such things in my every day. Occurrences which make me think. Little triggers which point me in some direction. Small signs and symbols. Not in the 'It's a sign from the Almighty' kind of way. But I see or encounter certain things of interest that suggest an avenue of research. I enjoy things that arrive mysteriously.

These new paintings have done just that. They kind of just work themselves out and slowly shift and develop to a point of arrival. There is a long period of silence, contemplation and stillness before a loud knock at the door. Upon waking and opening the door the paintings are there. Before I know it I have made a whole new series and moved away from anything I have done previously. As if the dream studio period of producing never happened and the work and final outcome and only record of countless hours lives trapped in these things. This strange icon of existence possesses me and all the memories of life up to the point of its completion.

I found the symbol of the empty shield delivered to my door to be fitting. Shields were used as heraldic signs to proudly identifying clans in battle. They were symbols to stand up with and fight, owning your name and history. They were an object of defence from potential ensuing violence. A blank canvas holds this same energy and expectation. Maybe the paintings for me are some kind of shield to hide behind. To protect me from the realities of passing time and ageing life. A distracting pastime used to deflect the inevitable.

Or they are symbolic offerings to the future, proudly leaving my name, gestures and records of a life lived. Records of a daily struggle to just exist and leave a trace on someone else's doorstep.

David Turley, 2016

