DE MUSSON

RUPERT SHRIVE
GIANTS

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There are moments in an artist's career when a new body of work does more than extend an existing practice; it redefines it.

For more than four decades, Rupert Shrive has developed a distinctive visual language shaped by painting, collage and an enduring fascination with mythology, literature and the human condition. Throughout that time, collage has remained central to his practice, not simply as a technique, but as a way of thinking: dismantling images in order to discover new possibilities within them.

GIANTS marks the most ambitious expression of that language to date.

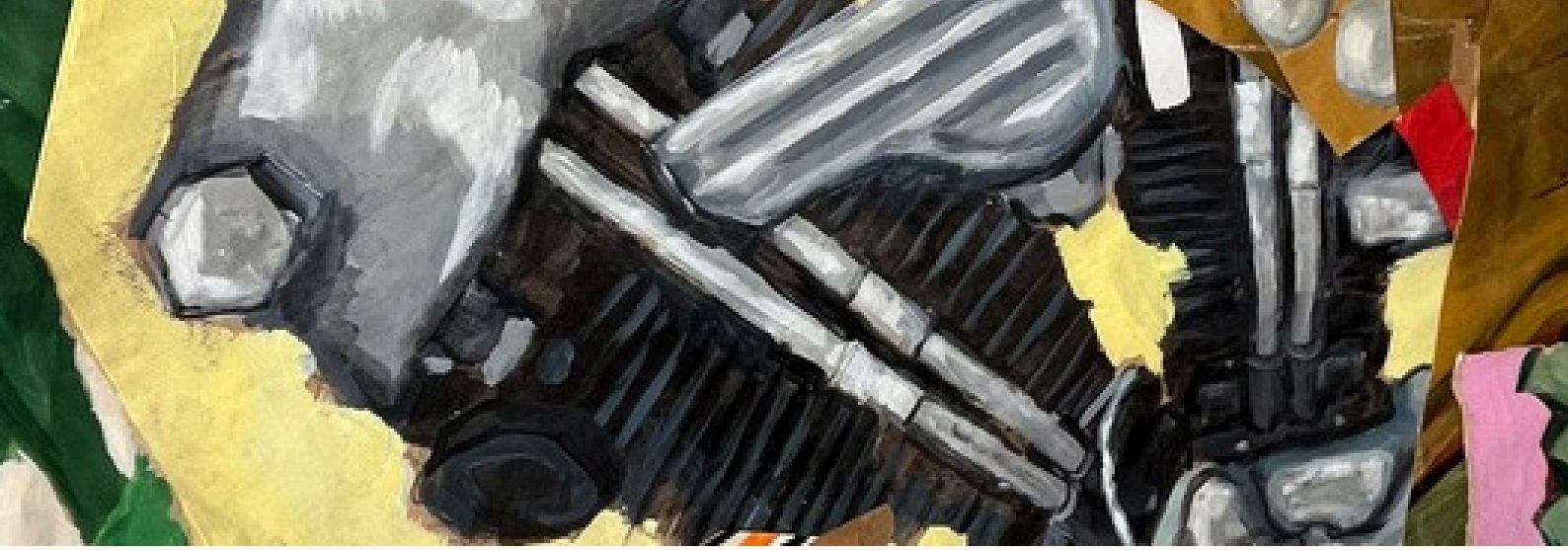
Standing over three metres high, these monumental figures transform the intimacy of collage into works of architectural scale. Constructed from fragments of earlier paintings alongside newly created imagery, they possess an extraordinary physical presence while retaining the richness, wit and complexity that have long distinguished Shrive's work.

What is particularly striking is that these works were never conceived as isolated paintings. From the outset, GIANTS has been imagined as a complete environment, a gathering of monumental figures whose relationships emerge only when experienced together. It is this ambition that has led us to present the series as an exhibition proposal as much as a collector's catalogue.

At De Musson, our role is to identify artists whose practice has reached a significant moment of development and to help create the opportunities that allow that work to be seen in its fullest context. We believe GIANTS represents such a moment.

This publication is an invitation to collectors, curators and institutions to encounter a remarkable new body of work and to participate in its first public presentation.

Clementine Perrins
Founder & Director
De Musson



FRAGMENTS OF POWER
RUPERT SHRIVE'S GIANTS AND THE REINVENTION OF COLLAGE

Collage has always been an art of transformation.

Since the early twentieth century, artists have dismantled familiar images in order to create new ways of seeing. From the Cubist experiments of Picasso and Braque, through the political photomontages of Hannah Höch and John Heartfield, to the surreal juxtapositions of Max Ernst, collage has repeatedly challenged the assumption that images should remain fixed and complete. It is a medium built upon disruption, inviting fragments to acquire new meaning through unexpected relationships.

Rupert Shrive's GIANTS belongs to this rich tradition, yet it also departs from it in significant ways.

Where much twentieth-century collage relied upon found photography or printed material, Shrive begins with painting itself. Every fragment originates within his own studio, carrying the traces of earlier works before being cut apart, displaced and meticulously reconstructed. Rather than appropriating existing imagery, he dismantles his own painted history, allowing each work to contain echoes of previous compositions while becoming something entirely new.This distinction is more than technical. It fundamentally changes the emotional character of the work.

Photomontage often derives its power from contrast, irony and visual collision. The sharp edges of photography lend themselves to critique, satire and the fragmentation of modern life. Shrive's collages, by contrast, retain the tactile richness of paint. Every torn edge reveals another painted surface; every layer carries the texture, gesture and material presence of the artist's hand. The resulting figures possess a warmth and visual depth that photography alone cannot achieve. They feel accumulated rather than assembled, grown rather than manufactured.

This painterly quality places GIANTS within a different lineage. Arcimboldo's fantastical composite portraits provide an obvious historical echo, transforming disparate elements into unified identities, while Matisse's late cut-outs demonstrate how cutting can become an extension of drawing itself. Shrive draws upon both

traditions, yet his process is distinguished by the continual dialogue between destruction and renewal. Cutting is never an act of erasure but one of rediscovery, allowing forgotten passages of paint to acquire fresh significance within an entirely different composition.

There is also an unmistakable theatricality to these figures. Standing more than three metres high, they exceed the scale of conventional portraiture and instead occupy the territory of monuments, guardians and mythological beings. Their physical presence recalls the giants of folklore, Goya's Colossus or the ancient Cerne Abbas giant carved into the Dorset hillside. Yet unlike these singular icons, Shrive's protagonists are constructed from countless visual memories, their identities emerging not from certainty but from accumulation.

This process reflects something deeply contemporary. We increasingly understand identity itself as layered rather than fixed, composed from inherited histories, cultural references and personal experience. Shrive's giants embody this condition. Their fragmented construction never appears fractured; instead, it becomes the very source of their strength. Unity emerges not through uniformity but through the careful reconciliation of difference.

What makes GIANTS particularly compelling is the tension it sustains between intimacy and monumentality. From a distance the works read as commanding figures that dominate architectural space. Up close, however, they dissolve into hundreds of individual painted decisions, each fragment retaining its own history while contributing to a larger whole. The viewer moves constantly between these two experiences, oscillating between the figure and its making.

GIANTS responds to a contemporary world that feels increasingly fractured: socially, politically, spiritually and environmentally. At a time when traditional figures of authority appear inadequate or unreliable, the series begins with a fundamental human desire: the need for figures we can look up to.

Rising from floor to ceiling, each three-metre figure recalls the way a child draws an adult, filling the page from bottom to top. Yet these monumental forms are assembled from approximately twenty torn and conflicting fragments, drawn from both old and new paintings. Inspired by the creative constraints of the Oulipo movement, this method disrupts habitual ways of working and allows unexpected forms to emerge.

The resulting figures appear powerful, but remain visibly fragile, unstable and contradictory. Built from the visual disorder of a chaotic world, they are not perfect heroes. Instead, GIANTS asks what strength and leadership might look like now, and what kinds of figures we might still choose to believe in.

In GIANTS, Rupert Shrive reminds us that images, like cultures and identities themselves, are rarely made from a single source. They are constructed through memory, revision and reinvention. The giant becomes not only a mythological figure, but a metaphor for painting itself: monumental because it carries within it the accumulated traces of everything that came before.

GIANTS
2026

Giant No. 1 (Semper Augustus)
2026
Mixed media collage and painting on laminated card, composed entirely of individually hand-painted elements
300 × 150 × 5 cm (118.1 × 59.1 × 2.0 in.)

Giant No. 2 (KC)
2026
Mixed media collage and painting on laminated card, composed entirely of individually hand-painted elements
300 × 200 × 5 cm (118.1 × 78.7 × 2.0 in.)

Giant No. 3 (Pa)
2026
Mixed media collage and painting on laminated card, composed entirely of individually hand-painted elements
300 × 130 × 5 cm (118.1 × 51.2 × 2.0 in.)

Giant No. 4 (Knucklehead)
2026
Mixed media collage and painting on laminated card, composed entirely of individually hand-painted elements
300 × 200 × 5 cm (118.1 × 78.7 × 2.0 in.)

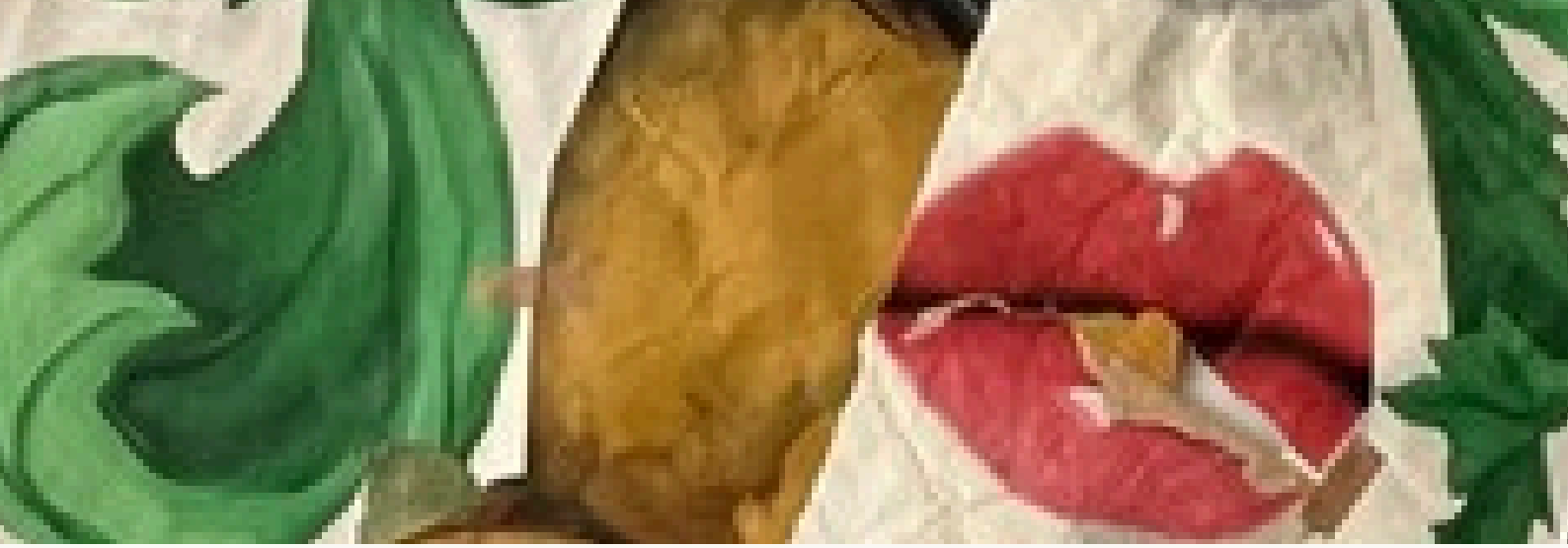
Giant No. 5 (Butterfly)
2026
Mixed media collage and painting on laminated card, composed entirely of individually hand-painted elements
300 × 210 × 5 cm (118.1 × 82.7 × 2.0 in.)

Giant No. 6 (Caterpillar)
2026
Mixed media collage and painting on laminated card, composed entirely of individually hand-painted elements
300 × 170 × 5 cm (118.1 × 66.9 × 2.0 in.)

Giant No. 7 (Minotaur)
2026
Mixed media collage and painting on laminated card, each element individually hand-painted
300 × 160 × 5 cm (118.1 × 63.0 × 2.0 in.)

Giant No. 8 (Demigod)
2026
Mixed media collage and painting on laminated card
300 × 100 × 5 cm (118.1 × 39.4 × 2.0 in.)

EXHIBITION CONCEPT



DE MUSSON IS SEEKING A GALLERY OR INSTITUTIONAL PARTNER TO PRESENT THE INAUGURAL EXHIBITION OF GIANTS, A SIGNIFICANT NEW BODY OF WORK BY RUPERT SHRIVE.

GIANTS has been conceived from the outset as a complete exhibition rather than a collection of individual works. Bringing together a series of monumental collaged figures, each standing over three metres high, the exhibition transforms the gallery into an immersive environment where painting, collage and installation converge.

Installed as a unified body of work, the figures create a remarkable physical presence. Visitors move amongst towering protagonists whose individuality and scale establish a dialogue across the gallery. The experience is intentionally theatrical, inviting audiences to encounter the works not simply as paintings on a wall, but as a gathering of contemporary mythological figures occupying the same space as the viewer.

The exhibition marks an important development in Rupert Shrive's practice. While collage has remained central to his work for more than four decades, GIANTS extends this language to an architectural scale, resulting in his most ambitious and immersive project to date.

The inaugural presentation offers a unique opportunity for a partner gallery or institution to introduce this new body of work in its entirety. Exhibiting the figures together allows the conceptual and visual relationships between the works to unfold, creating an experience that cannot be achieved through the display of individual pieces alone.

GIANTS has the potential to engage audiences on multiple levels. Collectors encounter an important new direction in the artist's practice, while institutions are offered an exhibition that combines visual impact with rich historical and cultural references. The project also lends itself to a wider programme of talks, educational events, catalogue publication and public engagement.

As the first public presentation of this body of work, the exhibition represents a rare opportunity to establish the context through which GIANTS will first be understood by audiences, collectors and the wider contemporary art world.

Exhibition Requirements
The exhibition is designed for a gallery or museum capable of accommodating works measuring approximately three metres in height, allowing visitors sufficient space to move between the figures and experience them as a collective installation.
The proposed exhibition includes:
8–10 monumental collaged paintings
Preparatory studies and selected works on paper
Documentary material illustrating the making of the series
A fully illustrated catalogue (if funding found)
Artist talk and public programme (where appropriate)

Why Present GIANTS?
The first exhibition of a major new body of work by Rupert Shrive.
Monumental works conceived specifically to be experienced together.
An exhibition combining painting, collage and installation.
Strong opportunities for public programming, education and collector engagement.
A visually compelling exhibition with significant editorial and press potential.

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Rupert Shrive studied at Norwich School of Art before continuing his education at St Martin's School of Art in London. There he was taught by John Stezaker, whose encouragement of collage greatly influenced Shrive's practice. While still a student, Shrive exhibited alongside Stezaker, marking the beginning of a career distinguished by an inventive approach to painting, drawing and collage that continues to evolve today.

Over four decades, Shrive has developed an unmistakable visual language in which literature, mythology, history and contemporary life converge. His paintings and collages are rich with symbolism, humour and theatricality, inviting viewers into complex narratives that reward sustained looking. Giants marks a significant new direction in this practice, extending his long-standing exploration of collage into works of architectural scale.

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

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Partner with a major new exhibition exploring mythology, leadership and the power of contemporary painting. Giants offers organisations, foundations and private patrons the opportunity to become part of the development and presentation of one of Rupert Shrive's most ambitious bodies of work to date.
As the project develops towards its first public exhibition, we are seeking a small number of carefully selected partners who share a commitment to supporting ambitious contemporary art and engaging audiences through meaningful cultural experiences.
Partnerships are developed individually, ensuring each collaboration reflects the objectives of both the exhibition and the supporting organisation.

Why Partner?

Giants represents a significant new chapter in Rupert Shrive's practice. The exhibition combines monumental contemporary painting with themes drawn from mythology, history and collective imagination, creating an experience designed to engage collectors, curators, institutions and the wider public alike.
Partnership enables organisations and individuals to contribute directly to the realisation of this ambitious project while aligning themselves with a major new artistic commission.

Contact
For partnership discussions, sponsorship enquiries or exhibition collaborations, please contact:

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clementine@demusson.com

GIANTS
Rupert Shrive
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