

ARTNEWS

ARMORY WEEK 2017

Guitar Center: David Shrigley Rocks It at Independent

BY *John Chiaverina* POSTED 03/02/17

For the start of Independent art fair, British artist David Shrigley had the Anton Kern section of the seventh floor feeling like a booth at a music-instrument trade show. In addition to a selection of drawings in a style more associated with the artist, Shrigley also showed off three custom guitars, a gong, and a series of drum-heads adorned with his classic hand and bearing slogans like "LOOK AT THIS" and "PLEASE LEAVE QUIETLY." The gong had text on it too—in all caps, "GONG."

The black-and-white guitars are connected to small amplifiers and feature twisted shapes that bring to mind a cartoonish, absurd version of classic metal axes like the B.C. Rich Warlock. They also only have one single string, which itself brings to mind the Providence, Rhode Island-based cult band Dynasty, whose members included the visual artist Christopher Forgues. The guitars are a somewhat new development for Shrigley, who, in other guitar-related news, partnered last year with the brand Tiger to create a series of picks. The instruments lie uneasily in a space between experimental music and the kind of cheap plastic faux-instruments popularized by video games like *Guitar Hero* that are now easily found in thrift stores nationwide.

The word "PROBLEM" is set into the neck of each piece. According to reps from the gallery, each guitar is up for sale at the price of \$45,000—slightly more expensive than that Gibson SG you've been eying at Sam Ash. Last night, a jam session led by Sonic Youth member Lee Renaldo was held at the bar Spring Place, which rests on the floor below the Anton Kern booth in Spring Studios. In addition to the guitarists, it also featured three musicians holding it down on percussion. It's anyone's guess what that jam actually sounded like, but I'm guessing it was probably at least somewhat dissonant.



Paul Bright tries his hand on one of David Shrigley's custom guitars.

KATHERINE MCMAHON

I hung out around the guitars to see if anyone would try their hand at the instruments, but beyond a few lackadaisical strums or taps of the gong, the only one person I saw who was brave enough to step up and rock was the art and furniture collector Paul Bright, who also co-runs (with Sonja Radovancevic) the publishing imprint Delema. "Should we jam out?" Bright asked me before strapping on a guitar. After he finished attempting to work the abstract axe, I asked if he was a guitar player. "I don't think that whether you play guitar or not helps," Bright said. "But yeah, they're cool."