

# SAM FOLEY THE GREEN BELT



*Maori Rd*, Oil on canvas, 1400 x 1256mm



*Newington Ave*, Oil on canvas, 1697 x 1501mm

*The Town Belt*

By Richard Reeves

To go 'left'—that is, to pass there as  
every morning, and hear, no religion

but the camaraderie of birdsong.  
The city below, snuffling through

undergrowth. I listen, and many a time  
have been half in love with rotted twigs.

New Zealand breaking out of the tar.  
And then Cargill, severing the mist.

## THE GREEN BELT – SAM FOLEY

By Pennie Hunt

Travels on foot through the Dunedin town belt by day and by night are depicted in the verdant paintings that make up Sam Foley's exhibition *The Green Belt*. Like Arcadian greenhouses, these landscapes lend the viewer a feeling of being shrouded amidst nature, enclosed beneath an umbrella of foliage through which light is distilled and filtered. To create this sense of envelopment, Foley uses a plethora of small daub-like brushstrokes that stretch out and around the edges of the canvas. Viewed at close range these strokes convey a palette of graduated colour, but when viewed at length the calculated colour fields morph into a miasma of leaves, twigs and branches, each wrought in lush layers of oil.

Foley's depiction of ever-shifting light is enhanced by his medium. Oil paint is light reflective, its hues and textures are rich and compelling and Foley uses these properties to full advantage in paintings from *The Green Belt*. In *'To Stonelaw Terrace, Queens Drive'* an electric bulb is switched on above the trees like a moon, hovering above the scene as radiant golden orb. Also in other night works such as *'Pathway off Maori Road'* and *'Corner of Queens Drive and Duncan St'* streetlamps provide the light source, searing the flora with their arcs of illumination.

There is not a human to be found in any one of these paintings. By night the streets are empty, and so too are they by day. When you try to place yourself in the picture, you can only imagine yourself alone and in silence and you realise that you have in fact entered Foley's world. Despite locating these works so exactly in the titles he ascribes the paintings, there is a sense that these landscapes are not quite literal. Rather they are embellished with a sense of wonder, each conveying a kind of magnetism that is indicative of an inner vision and as if being lead directly into this re-created world, each work gives us a way in via a pathway that stretches toward us like an invitation.



*Path Between Littlebourne Road and Melrose St*, Oil on canvas, 1503 x 1251mm



*Queens Drive, Near Prospect Park*, Oil on canvas, 1495 x 1255mm

The paintings are constructed from senses and memories as much as they are re-creations of an actual place. Foley's aid-memoir is the digital camera which he uses to track the many vantage points of the town belt and the city as he has walked along its pathways. These views he later pieces together, adding and detracting elements as he sees fit. Attuning the elements of composition and colour to achieve the artist's desired effect is simply part of the long tradition of landscape painting which has always tended toward a cultivation of the ideal. Foley achieves this by adjusting the work's composition as well as modifying the scene's colour. Sepia tones are

washed over the night works to suggest retrospection - in their yellowing tones there is a slight sense of menace, whilst the clear light that infuses daytime works such as *'Path Between Wallace Street and Queens Drive'* seems impossibly clear, rather too cool and airy.

More than simply renditions, these paintings are infused with a subtle tenor, not quite harmonious in its key. The result is paintings that are at once beautifully rich and starkly silent depicting sites that have been knitted together with layers of observation and nostalgia.





*To Stonelaw Terrace, Queens Drive, Oil on canvas, 1250 x 1606mm*



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- 1. *Corner of Queens Drive and Duchess Ave*, Oil on canvas, 1195 x 1069mm
- 2. *Cosy Dell Rd*, Oil on canvas, 1014 x 847mm
- 3. *Full Moon, Queens Drive*, Oil on canvas, 1116 x 1017
- 4. *Path off Maori Rd*, Oil on canvas, 796 x 923mm
- 5. *Path Between Queens Drive and Wallace St (Queens Drive Entrance)*, Oil on canvas, 734 x 945mm
- 6. *Path Between Ross St and Queens Drive*, Oil on canvas, 1015 x 839mm
- 7. *Corner of Queens Drive and Duncan St*, Oil on canvas, 1300 x 968
- 8. *Path Between Wallace St and Queens Drive (Wallace St Entrance)*, Oil on canvas, 1034 x 805mm

## SAM FOLEY

POB: Wellington, New Zealand DATE: 31/5/1977

### QUALIFICATIONS:

Tertiary level: 1995-1998, Bachelor of Fine Art, Otago School of Art, Dunedin

Bursary level: 1993, Painting (A), Printmaking (A), Art History (B), Graphics and Design (B), English (B)

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2005- *The Green Belt*, Temple Gallery, Dunedin
- 2004- *The Litoral Tourist*, SoHo Galleries Sydney
- 2001- *Tracing The Remains*, Grantham Galleries, Auckland
- 2000- *New Works*, Chiaroscuro Gallery, Auckland
- 1999- *Sanctuary*, Chiaroscuro Gallery, Auckland

### GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2005- *A Group Show*, Dowling St Studios, Dunedin
- 2005- *Large Art*, Cleveland Living Arts Centre, Dunedin
- 2004- *Cleveland Art Awards*, Dunedin
- 2004- *The Sydney Affordable Art Show*
- 2004- *The Melbourne Affordable Art Show*
- 2004- *Large Art*, Cleveland Living Arts Centre, Dunedin
- 2003- *Cleveland Art Awards*, Dunedin
- 2003- *Summer Catalogue*, Milford Galleries Dunedin
- 2002- *Private Art Showing*, University College, Dunedin
- 2002- *Cleveland Art Awards*, Dunedin
- 2002- *Group Exhibition*, Gallery 33, Wanaka
- 2001- *Eight Is Enough*, Cite Gallery, Auckland
- 2001- *Miniatures Exhibition*, Grantham Galleries, Auckland
- 2001- *Cite Christmas Sell Out*, Cite Gallery, Auckland
- 2001- *Cleveland Art Awards*, Dunedin
- 2001- *One Year Later*, Cite Gallery, Auckland
- 2000- *Group Exhibition*, Cite Gallery, Auckland
- 2000- *Fine Art By Design*, Greenlane Event Centre, Auckland
- 1998- *Peep Show, a selected preview of fourth year painters*, The Temple Gallery, Dunedin
- 1998- *Cleveland Art Awards*, Dunedin
- 1998- *Southland Young Contemporaries*, Invercargill
- 1997- *Cleveland Art Awards*, Dunedin

### PRIZES AND AWARDS:

- 2003- Peoples Choice Award, *Cleveland Art Awards*, Dunedin
- 1998- Merit Award, Oil on Canvas, *Southland Young Contemporaries*, Invercargill
- 1994- Excellence in Painting, Excellence in Printmaking, Damlier Club Prize for Best Overall Graphics and Design Student, Merit in Art History - Logan Park High School, Dunedin

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

- 2005- Technical Assistant, Dunedin Public Art Gallery
- 2003- Invitational Judge, Salmon Hall Art Competition
- 2001- Gallery Director, Cite Gallery, Ponsonby Rd, Auckland
- 2001- Artist in Residence, Diorama Painting, Puzzling World, Wanaka
- 2000- Formative member of CITE Artists Collective, Ponsonby, Auckland
- 1998- Visiting Artist, Logan Park High School, Dunedin, New Zealand
- 1994- Art Department Technician, Logan Park High School, Dunedin

### COLLECTIONS:

- Dunedin Public Hospital (on loan from a private collector)
- Historic Places Trust of New South Wales, Australia
- The Wallace Trust, Auckland
- Central Library, University of Otago
- University College, University of Otago
- Salmon Hall, University of Otago
- Knox College, University of Otago
- Otago Realestate, 1st Floor Moray Chambers, 30 Moray Place, Dunedin
- Private collections in New Zealand, Australia, and the U.S.A.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- 2005- James Dignan, *Simple works impact in elegiac display*, Otago Daily Times, April 7<sup>th</sup>, pg 30
- 2004- James Dignan, *Wide-ranging show of southern talent*, Otago Daily Times, Oct 1<sup>st</sup>, pg19
- 2004- *Gallery goes big, very big*, Otago Daily Times, Feb 5<sup>th</sup>, pg 23
- 2004- *In lieu of a chapel...*, The Southland Times, Mar 12<sup>th</sup>, pg 1
- 2003- Jane Smith, *Art work admired*, Otago Daily Times, Oct 22nd
- 2003- Jane Smith, *Art works drift north*, Otago Daily Times, Oct 11th
- 2002- T.J. McNamara, *What the critics say*, New Zealand Herald
- 2002- Victoria Warman, *Puzzling Passion*, North and South, May
- 2001- *Best Cite in Town*, Art News, Summer Issue
- 2001- Brenda Harwood, *Cleveland works on show*, The Star, Oct 14
- 2001- Chris Johnston, *Toilet diorama set to turn a few heads*, The Mirror, 9 Jan
- 2001- Dave Smith, *Mural latest il-lu-sion in a Puzzling Place*, Otago Daily Times, 3 Jan
- 1999- T.J. Macnamara, *Spot the talent*, New Zealand Herald