

SAM FOLEY



Alleyway off Bond St II, Dunedin, oil on canvas, 150 x 110

graffit6

1. Graff -

Short for graffiti,

'There is mad graff in Brooklyn.'



Fig 1. *Teufels Tür, Teufelsberg, Berlin,*
oil on canvas, 160 x 110 cm



Fig 2. *revmonkey* (Michael Greaves),
acrylic on linen, 34 x 34 cm

If you asked me to trace the genesis of this collection, this is how the story would go.

I returned to Berlin for the summer of 2017. Being in the habit of splitting my practice between Dunedin and Europe for the last decade (mostly Berlin, Switzerland also, with some Norway), this trip was markedly shorter with only 6 weeks instead of the usual 4 to 5 months. Part of this trip was with two old friends and fellow artists Pete Wheeler (my man in Berlin) and Michael Greaves (Otago School of Art). First up we caught the 'Old World' train over to Prague to check on fellow painter Greg Lewis. Following Prague, we were on to Kassel in Germany for Documenta, an International art fair that takes place every 5 years. A couple of days later we were back in Berlin for Michael's exhibition opening, of which we made quite the event and where I purchased one of his small canvases (fig 2.) that now hangs at home.

Whilst back in Berlin and feeling like more of a tourist with this shorter trip, I cycled deeper into West Berlin and up to Teufelsberg. The literal translation of the place name means Devil's Hill and the

hill itself was erected from the rubble of Berlin's decimation during WWII. The complex was a Cold War listening post built and run by the Yanks to listen in on the East. Following the fall of the wall it fell into disrepair and essentially became a squat for punks and anarchists of which Berlin historically boasts a large population. The place now operates as a museum with wall to wall, floor to ceiling graffiti and art sprayed liberally across the rambling, overgrown, falling down compound, complete with two enormous but decrepit geodesic domes atop.

Back at Pete's studio and running through the source material I had gathered I was immediately drawn to one image in particular, painting it on my return to Dunedin later that year (fig 1.). Looking at this painting there's nothing that identifies it as being in Berlin or even Germany. Interestingly, it could be anywhere, even though there is a written visual language in use. I was also intrigued by the build-up of layers of line and colour in the seemingly random manner of many artists working the same wall or canvas over a long period of time.

Looking back in retrospect it occurs that Michael's exhibition in Berlin was relevant to this collection as the way I see it, his approach is a kind of automatic painting, building up layers randomly, but in response to the previous mark made or layer added. There is a comparison to be made between my gathering of these many artists and their mark making into a singular composition as the painting of Teufelsberg (fig 1.) does and Michael's painting method.

Although graffiti and street-art has often appeared in my work, in the past it has been incidental to environment, whereas now this subject has taken front and centre. The new collection explores the language of graff in multiple international and local urban environments, highlighting many similarities and contrasting the differences.



Alleyway off Police St, Dunedin, oil on canvas, 150 x 110cm



Gorlitzer Park, Berlin, oil on canvas, 150 x 110 cm



Alleyway off Bond St I, Dunedin, oil on canvas, 150 x 110 cm



Wall, Mauerpark, Berlin, oil on canvas, 150 x 110 cm



Alleyway off Bond St II, Dunedin, oil on canvas, 150 x 110 cm



Exarcheia, Athens, oil on canvas, 150 x 110 cm



Steps to Canongate from Rattray St, Dunedin, oil on canvas, 180 x 130 cm



Dead Chicken Alley, Mitte, Berlin, oil on canvas, 180 x 130 cm



Water of Leith, Dunedin, oil on canvas, 200 x 112 cm



Attisholz Infra AG, Solothurn, Switzerland, oil on canvas, 200 x 112 cm



Alleyway around from Foley St, Darlinghurst, Sydney, oil on canvas, 150 x 110 cm



Car park off George St, Dunedin, oil on canvas, 150 x 110 cm

About the Artist

Sam Foley was born in Wellington in 1977. He grew up in Dunedin, where he attended Otago School of Art, receiving a Bachelor of Fine Art in 1998.

Over the last decade, he has split his practice between Dunedin, Berlin, Switzerland and Norway.

In 2013 he was the recipient of the Kaipara Foundation Wallace Arts Trust Award, which included a four month residency at the cultural centre Altes Spital in Solothurn, Switzerland.

Selected Solo Exhibitions:

- 2019 - *Nocturne*, The Wallace Arts Centre, Auckland, NZ
- 2019 - *Graff*, The Artist's Room and Dowling St Studios, Dunedin, NZ
- 2017 - *Dowling St*, The Artist's Room and Dowling St Studios, Dunedin, NZ
- 2016 - *LAKE*, Artbay Gallery, Queenstown, NZ
- 2016 - *Rennande Vatn* (Running Water), S9 Galeri, Oslo, Norway
- 2015 - *Moving Image Paintings*, Pataka Art + Museum, Porirua, NZ
- 2015 - *Something About the Water*, Galerie 9, Solothurn, Switzerland
- 2014 - *Harbour*, The Artist's Room and Dowling St Studios, Dunedin, NZ
- 2014 - *Kontraste*, Galerie 9, Solothurn, Switzerland
- 2012/14 - *Rennande Vatn*, Tours various locations around Norway
- 2013 - *Into the Deep*, Whitespace, Auckland
- 2012 - *Running Water*, Dowling St Studios, Dunedin
- 2011 - *Tiefschwarz*, The Artist's Room, Dunedin
- 2011 - *Tiefschwarz*, Atelier Bar-Am, 2 Goethestr, Berlin, Germany
- 2011 - *Domain*, Whitespace, Auckland
- 2010 - *Otira*, Centre of Contemporary Art, Christchurch
- 2010 - *Detour*, Ashburton Art Gallery

Prizes and Awards:

- 2013 - The Kaipara Wallace Arts Trust Award
- 2010 - People's Choice Award, The Wallace Art Awards, Auckland
- 2009 - People's Choice Award, The Wallace Art Awards, Auckland
- 2009 - People's Choice Award, Norfolk House Realist Invitational, Dunedin
- 2008 - People's Choice Award, Norfolk House Realist Invitational, Dunedin
- 2007 - Merit Award (1st equal), Parklane Art Awards, Auckland
- 2006 - Highly commended, Park Lane Art Awards, Auckland
- 2005 - The Downie Stewart People's Choice Award, Cleveland Art Awards, Dunedin
- 2003 - People's Choice Award, Cleveland Art Awards, Dunedin
- 1998 - Merit Award, Oil on Canvas, Southland Young Contemporaries, Invercargill