



RURAL DRIFT

A storm is coming

New works by

SAM FOLEY



Shed, Near Oamaru (ERG), oil on canvas, 111 x 84cm

Look to the sky.

To put it simply, this body of work picks up the thread from my 2019 show 'Graff'. That series drew inspiration from the urban environs of Dunedin, Berlin and other overseas cities, where I have dwelt. Over the years since, I began to notice how graffiti seemed to be leaking out of the city-centres of the South Island and into the surrounding countryside. Hence the title of this new collection 'Rural Drift'. The starting point had to be Christchurch, with the painting, 'Pilgrim's Place'.

Earlier in the year I made my own pilgrimage to the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, for the centenary celebration of the great Australian artist, Jeffrey Smart—an individual I have long admired. The exhibition comprised the biggest retrospective of his paintings to date, and I've always been attracted by his composition, an angular sort of abstraction within the genre of realism. Another element of his picture-making spoke directly to me on this distanced encounter—his darkly dramatic skies contrasting with the sharpened bright primary colours of arranged urban scenes. Although I'm known somewhat for my own painted blue-bird skies, at that moment I was inspired to investigate the inverse in my upcoming series.

On the many lengthy drives through the rural hinterland of our Deep South, I found myself sympathising with our farmers. In my mind and in the context of my own search for the subject, they are arguably getting hit on all sides. Heavier regulations soon to be implemented, climate change of which they are absolutely bearing the brunt, and then someone trespasses on their property to scratch something inane on the side of a barn. This is what the subtitle, 'A storm is coming', speaks to, and with these paintings I sought to capture a fringe social history.

A nod has to be made to Sir Grahame Sydney. For decades he has popularised the lonely farm shed, set against the sparse landscape of the Mānīatoto, and his work has spawned countless imitators. For that reason, I have long stayed away from that landscape and region. However, nearing the end of this series, it became apparent that this subject draws a comparison. Although wrought with my own aesthetic, and with the included graffiti of contemporary culture, there's still something owed. I dedicate the final work of the series, 'Wedderburn Station (We----burn)' to Sydney; my own reinterpretation of his sublimely iconic masterpiece.

Look once more to the sky and tell me what you see.

Sam Foley
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Pilgrim's Place, Christchurch, oil on canvas, 170 x 100cm



Railway Shed, Ashburton (Hey, I love you), oil on canvas, 160 x 110cm



Old Barn, Near Ashburton, oil on canvas, 160 x 110cm



Water Tank, Near Timaru, oil on canvas, 150 x 110cm



Motu Rimu Rd, Woodend (Helms), oil on canvas, 160 x 110cm



P30, Bluff, oil on canvas, 160 x 110cm



Southland Sheds (Berlin Remix), oil on canvas, 160 x 110cm

Water Tank, Ettrick, oil on canvas, 110 x 150cm



Poindimie, New Caledonia, oil on canvas, 150 x 110cm

Wedderburn Station (We---burn), oil on canvas, 190 x 110cm





*Railway Shed, Ashburton (I love you too),
oil on board, 30 x 23.9cm*



*Old Barn, Near Ashburton II,
oil on board, 30 x 23.8cm*



*Water Tank, Near Timaru II,
oil on board, 29.7 x 23.8cm*



*Main Drag, Bluff,
oil on board, 29.8 x 23.8cm*



*Lion Beer, Bluff,
oil on board, 29.8 x 23cm*



*Southland Woolshed,
oil on board, 30 x 23.8cm*



For more information about the artist visit: www.samfoley.co.nz