



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.

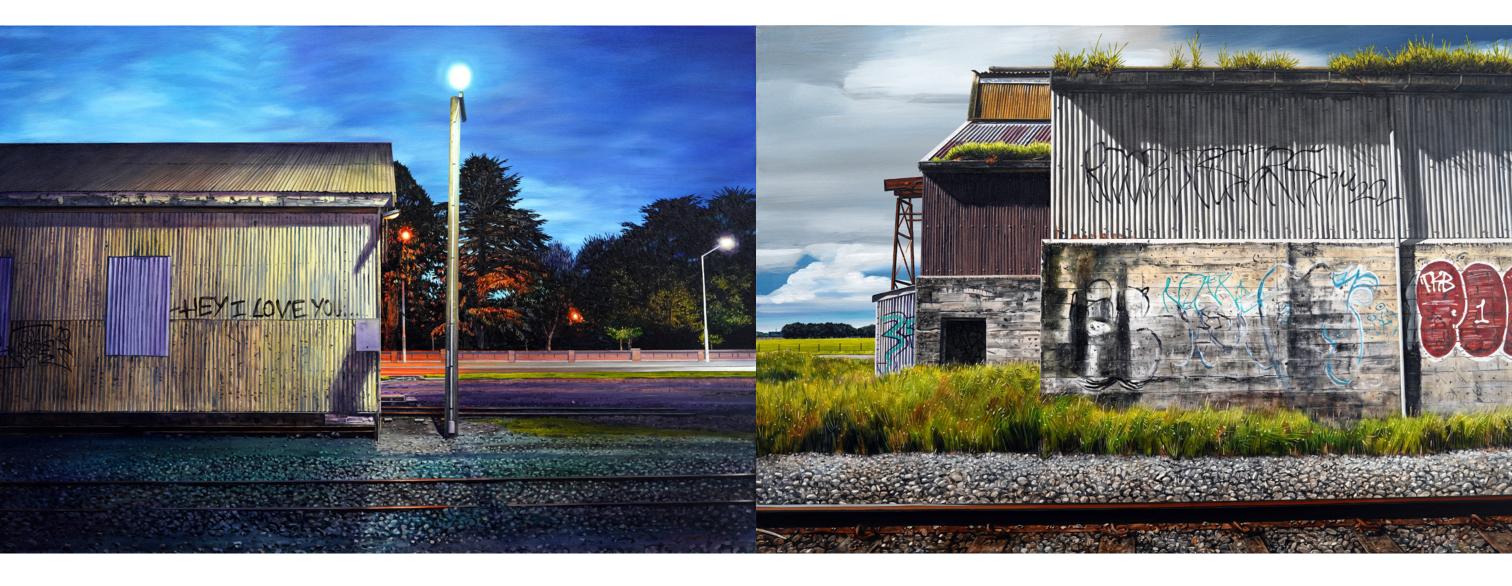
On the many lengthy drives through the rural hinterland of our Deep South, I found myself sympathising with our farmers. In my mind and in the context of my own search for the subject, they are arguably getting hit on all sides. Heavier regulations soon to be implemented, climate change of which they 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 Māniatoto, 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.

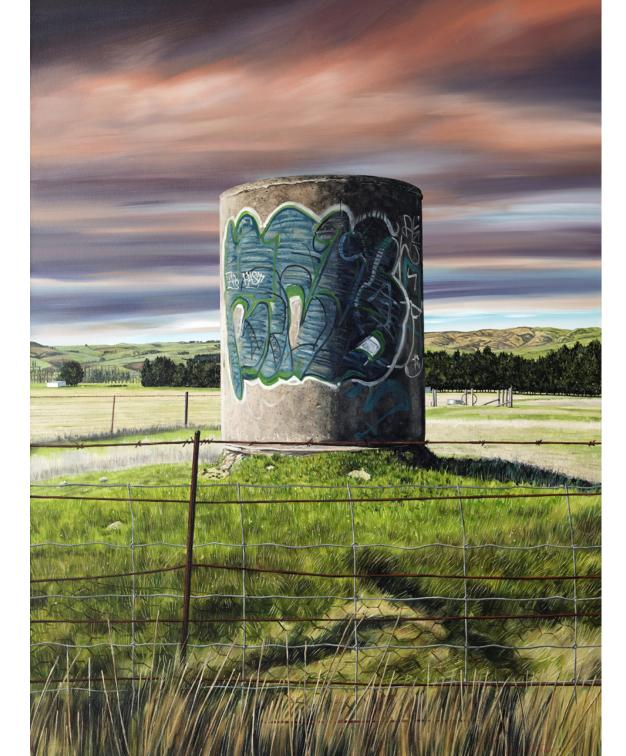
Sam Foley January 2023













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

WEDBERBURN

WEDDERBURN

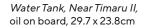






Railway Shed, Ashburton (I love you too), oil on board, 30 x 23.9cm

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





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