

Return to the 'Valley of Vision'



Samuel Palmer,

Described by the artist Samuel Palmer as the 'Valley of Vision' the magic of the Darenth Valley is still casting its spell today....

With its gnarled, ancient oaks, sparkling clear river and glorious golden light, it is no wonder that the Darenth Valley represented to the visionary, Samuel Palmer a rural paradise, an ideal landscape, touched by a divine presence. The seven years he spent in Shoreham became the happiest and most creative period of his life, and it was here that his art was at its most powerful and original.



Sean Jefferson—*Falling Leaves in the Silence*

The artist Sean Jefferson felt this same calling after leaving his native Kent behind for a nine year spell in Cornwall. He met with Graham and Annie Ovenden, co-founders of the Brotherhood of Ruralists and struck an immediate artistic rapport. He had always been more interested in Folklore and Mythology than the art world, but the Ovendens introduced him to along tradition of British Artists who shared their artistic sensibilities, particularly Samuel Palmer and 'the Ancients'.



Sean Jefferson—*Field above the Darenth Valley*

Reminiscing of that period, Jefferson explains "my new Cornish friends sense of place opened my mind to my own culture, the history of Kent and the power and beauty of the Darenth Valley. On moving back here to Farningham, I discovered Hilary Harding's book 'On Farningham and its Mill' which has given me a real sense of rootedness and appreciation of this precious landscape. Graham Suterland, one of the artists considered as part of the English Pastoral tradition lived for a time in a house a few yards from my new studio."

The Ovendens also introduced Jefferson to contacts including fellow established artists providing the kind of company and networking he had missed out on being an entirely self-taught artist. He recalls discussing the merits of rural and urban art with Graham Ovenden and Peter Blake over breakfast at the Blakes on a trip to deliver painting to London.

The new studio is in the Old Forge Farningham. For his kind of work you need some magic in the air and the huge old bellows which remain in studio the old atmosphere still pervades the place, the magic of the smith manipulating iron from the earth with fire air and water.



Sean Jefferson—*In the Shadow of the Plough*

Over the last year Jefferson has been concentrating on fairy paintings following last years 'The Truth about Fairies' exhibition at Southampton City Art Gallery. He was one of a handful of contemporary artists chosen to go alongside all the great fairy painters of the past and is part of an ongoing project to re-establish this as a serious artistic genre. Jefferson look on the Victorian Fairy painters as pioneer surrealists achieving direct contact with the unconscious in a way rarely achieved since. He also feels working in this genre has infused a greater sense of romance and mystery into his more conventional landscape and wildlife based work. Jefferson now exhibits with Clerkenwell Fine Art in London where he has exhibited.

For more information about the ruralists, the ancients and Clerkenwell Fine Art please visit www.clerkenwellfineart.com

