



Tom Deakins
Windmill Hill Allotments, Saffron Walden
oil on canvas panel, 2014
40 x 30 cm

Tom Deakins 'Quiet Places' Small Oils 1-30 November, 2014 open every day 10-5

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I first encountered Tom Deakins's work about ten years ago – the small oil painting on sale was a meticulously rendered image of Great Dunmow's roofline and pond, that was astonishing in its detail and soft autumn coloring, and which put me in mind of Vermeer's famous view of his home town of Delft, so lovingly was it painted. It is this intensity of feeling for a particular place that Deakins manages to capture in his work - not just how something looks, but also how he, as an artist, has experienced it; the crunch of snow underfoot, or the smell of summer rain on tarmac, or the warmth of sunlight on a brick wall.

Tom Deakins's landscapes deserve to be more widely known, and this exhibition will go some way towards addressing that omission. Although seven of his paintings are in public collections, including the Hatton Gallery in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the Fry Art Gallery in Saffron Walden, most are dispersed amongst his ardent admirers who recognize something unique in his style and chosen subjects, whether a patch of scrubby snow-covered field with bare trees on the horizon silhouetted against a winter evening sky, or a large cloud formation turbulently moving across a cultivated Essex landscape of cornfields and hedgerows. His artistic vision is imbued with the sense of place that other artists - such as John Constable, Samuel Palmer and Paul Nash - have written about at length, and indeed Deakins himself has said that his home in Great Dunmow and its surroundings have been at the heart of his inspiration for over 40 years. His paintings all bear signs of the human activity that has shaped the local environment, whether by agriculture or building, accident or design, and whilst being devoid of human figures, are saturated with human presence and meaning. These are not landscapes in the picturesque sense, but all carry a quiet hint of the poetic, or the mysterious, the unexplained. Educated at Newport Grammar School near Saffron Walden in Essex, Deakins went on to complete a BA in Fine Art at Newcastle-upon-Tyne University in 1980. Since then he has been teaching and painting subjects that are dear to him, the vast majority of which are located within a few miles of his home, but occasionally venturing further afield to Suffolk, Wales and the Lake District. This exhibition of more than forty paintings, completed over the last decade or so, is a testament to his enduring vision.

Lesley Nolan A Trustee of the Fry Gallery