

NIGHTWORKS

New Paintings by Russell Carey at Rogue Gallery



Above: *Tree Hazard*, oil on composite panel, 2025
Cover: *Flight*, oil on composite panel, 2025



It is hard to fathom what lies inside the heart of Russell Carey. Is he simply a soul intoxicated by the phosphorescent glimmers of a semi-industrial nightscape? A mariner driven mad by the lambent beacon of a lighthouse that he alone can see? Or are these mildly malevolent city portraits the calling card of a killer?

HOW has he witnessed these events, were he not walking the streets with unsettling purpose in his step? What drives him to paint, in such luminescent clarity, these flaming fields around trees, lit from behind like shadow puppets?

These abandoned, floodlit public spaces—WHY are they abandoned?

Are people fleeing Russell Carey?

A discerning individual might ask—is he framing himself? Why has he collected these works together, creating such a crescendo of damnation against him? A pyre of suspicious activity for the police to pick through? Would he not be wiser to sheath them, as he might a knife, from the prying eyes of judicial interest?

“Housefront” shows a domicile seen from without. Because who would dare invite Russell Carey in? Like Sting’s vampire, he stands outside their windows, struggling with his instincts in the pale moonlight, and paints in meticulous, oily detail the boundaries of their sanctuary, which he cannot penetrate without incurring a restraining order.

As a chronicler of barren, lonely, forgotten corners, Russell Carey is unparalleled. The liminal landscape of nighttime construction sites, sinister weeds erupting from jettisoned asbestos, the inexplicable activities of balaclava’d men, parades of lurid orange traffic cones like Fellini’s Vatican Fashion Show—these are the extra-curricular observations of Russell Carey, when he is not lurking outside your homes.

Visually, one might place him among the greats of light—Tintoretto, Caravaggio! But for his almost resolute lack of depiction of biblical matters. Instead, he worships the realm of the hyper-ordinary; Auden’s crack in the teacup through which one glimpses the land of the dead.

A magical undercurrent pours through these dark daubings of a mind possessed, capturing the changeling qualities of lamplit carparks and phantasmagorical factories pulsing with unhealthy energy on the skyline.

Beckoning tunnels, fragile glasslike flowers, mysterious explosions, and above all the luminous glow of buildings whose intimacy he watches from afar—these are his elements. And for all his grave imbalance and grievous insults to the world, he should be cherished and honoured for them.

Any information on the abovementioned criminal should be forwarded to Erskineville Police Department.

A.Valliard

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Housefront, oil on composite panel, 2025

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