



REUBEN COLLEY

THE CORK STREET COLLECTION

HAYHILLGALLERY

Front Cover
Piccadilly Night
Oil on Canvas
112 x 153 cm

R E U B E N C O L L E Y

THE CORK STREET COLLECTION

7th March – 3rd April 2011

HAYHILLGALLERY

5a Cork Street, London, W1S 3NY

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www.hayhillgallery.com



The urban landscape has been a constant theme in the work of Reuben Colley.

Growing up in the West Midlands, Reuben was immediately drawn to the industrial landscape that surrounded him, capturing the essence of everyday working life through his uncompromising depictions of the barren, often cheerless spaces. Yet whilst Reuben has always overwhelmingly been driven by achieving truth and integrity in the scenes he represents, he also consistently strives to realize the intangible beauty he perceives in desolation. His paintings unfailingly evoke a sense of romanticism in the mundane that other artists readily overlook.

Documenting the urban landscape is a natural pursuit for Reuben. The artist is continually looking for new places to capture his imagination, absorbing every detail from the ever-changing tumult of city life. The act of painting for Reuben however holds even greater exploratory potential, in the fluid and vigorous application of paint and the bold gestural brushwork and expert mark making, setting up an exhilarating yet ambiguous exchange between viewer and canvas.

Over the thirteen years that Reuben has been working as a professional landscape painter his unique talent and whole-hearted commitment to advancing the discipline of landscape painting have earned him wide recognition within the British art scene. Through numerous sell-out shows, prestigious commission projects and recent donations of paintings to raise money and awareness for The Meningitis Trust and Help for Heroes, Reuben has built enormous support from a network of loyal collectors.



Le Café De Jardin

Oil on Canvas

61 x 81cm

Reuben Colley is a real painter. He is also a painter evolving before our very eyes. He has the crucial eye for an image, without which any amount of technique is worthless; a sponge like capacity to absorb the lessons of other artists and from his own experience (and at an astonishing rate); and a natural gift for composition.

Already, within the space of just a few years he has moved on from the Hopper inspired cityscapes that he first showed, through more subtle responses to his native Birmingham and London exploring the darker side of the city, a tradition that reaches back to Dore and Whistler and runs through Monet and Sickert to Kossoff and Auerbach. Here are frankly gritty, uncompromising, unblinking explorations of the elusive glamour that characterises the city in rain, fog and dusk, often in the twilight zones of back street garages abandoned power stations, and beside the railway tracks. Yet the paintings are anything but gloomy; atmospheric, yes, and exquisitely painted.

The flickering light effects, a sensitive paint surface of half tones, are dramatised by fleeting moments of colour, all the more powerful in their effect for being so sparingly deployed.

Paintings of this kind, full of quality and technically so sound, can be 'laid down', as it were, like an excellent vintage. Like well-made wine, Colley's canvases will only improve with age: the structure is there, the balance, the blend, ready for appreciation now, but improving with age and deeper acquaintance. These are pictures to live with, to enjoy, and endlessly to explore. This is what real painting is about. These are not trivial works, offering flashy frisson of a smart gimmick, or a sensation which is over as soon as felt, the visual equivalent of a smart remark.

Paintings of this depth, while easy enough on the eye, offer up their secrets slowly, in the course of prolonged contemplation or; best of all, with the long familiarity of daily companionship.

The great Eighteenth Century landscape painter Richard Wilson used to prevent his pupils from using colour for at least a year: He insisted that they should first learn how to construct a picture using tonal values alone, which remains, ultimately, the basis of all successful painting. Colley seems always to have understood this crucial lesson. If his earlier paintings indulged in local colour to a degree that could prove a little destabilizing, he is now rigorously on track, and is hugely rewarding to look at these present pictures for the sheer toughness of mind that they display, in addition to their more obvious attractions. Unusually for a young painter, he has always been comfortable working on a large scale, and he handles it with great assurance.

There is a real pleasure in trying to identify those artists who, through Colley's evident process of looking and studying have made an impression on his way of painting. I have mentioned Hopper, but now, whether the result of direct influence or not, there are echoes of Kossoff and even Turner. None the less, the pictures are distinctly Colley's own and - an important point - these canvases reveal that he is as interested in the process of painting as in the subjects he depicts. Again, this is a characteristic of what I have been calling real painting. Reuben Colley's paintings are serious but far from solemn; indeed, they are full of a sense of wonder; even of joy, at the very act of artistic creation. They are the real thing.

Robin Simon Editor, The British Art Journal



Embankment
Oil on Canvas
107 x 142cm



Covent Garden
Oil on Canvas
102 x 138 cm



Covent Garden Evening

Oil on Canvas

61 x 81 cm



Westminster Winter

Oil on Canvas

56 x 41 cm



Underground Reflections

Oil on Canvas

56 x 41 cm



Tower Bridge
Oil on Canvas
112 x 153 cm



Covent Garden Underground Rain

Oil on Canvas

61 x 76 cm



Battersea Evening

Oil on Canvas

61 x 81cm



Embankment at Night

Oil on Canvas

61 x 81cm





Oxford Street
Oil on Canvas
107 x 137 cm



Westminster Sunset

Oil on Canvas

152 x 201cm



Piccadilly Night II

Oil on Canvas

112 x 153cm



River Thames Evening

Oil on Canvas

76 x 102cm



London Underground

Oil on Canvas

46 x 61cm



Embankment Dusk

Oil on Canvas

56 x 41 cm



Covent Garden Night Fall

Oil on Canvas

61 x 81cm



Embankment Pier Night

Oil on Canvas

112 x 153cm



London Underground II

Oil on Canvas

61 x 76cm



Piccadilly Underground

Oil on Canvas

152 x 201cm



Piccadilly Rain
Oil on Canvas
61 x 81cm



Exhibitions

- 2010 Help For Heroes Auction. Hilton Birmingham Metropole
- 2010 Arts & Childhood Memories Exhibition in aid of The Meningitis Trust
- 2010 City of Culture Exhibition in conjunction with Birmingham City Council. RCFA, Birmingham.
- 2009 Birmingham Seen. Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.
- 2008 The Art Of Birmingham 1940 to the Millennium. Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.
- 2008 Reuben Colley Exhibition. ICC, Birmingham.
- 2007 Birmingham Open. Gas Hall, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.
- 2007 Urban Landscapes. New Bond Street, London.
- 2005 Venice. ICC, Birmingham.
- 2005 California. Bruton Street, London.
- 2003 Forward. ICC, Birmingham.
- 2002 Impressions of London. Harrods, London.
- 2002 Streetlife. ICC, Birmingham.
- 2001 Impressions of Birmingham. ICC, Birmingham.

Awards

- 2007 Best Work on Paper - Birmingham Open
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.
- 2002 Best Up & Coming Published Artist
Fine Art Trade Guild.

Acquisitions

- 2006 Vitol Oil – London
Acquired by Vitol Oil
- 2003 Brindley Light
Acquired by Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.
- 2002 Council House
Acquired by Birmingham City Council.



Hyde Park Winter

Oil on Canvas

152 x 201cm

"These are pictures to live with, to enjoy, and endlessly to explore. This is what real painting is about."

Robin Simon



Back Cover
Green Park
Oil on Canvas
92 x 122cm



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