

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE



Squeak Carnwath:

Here Is

June 7 to July 7, 2012

Opening Reception

Thursday, June 7, 6 – 8pm

Gallery hours are:

Thurs. - Sat. 11:00am - 5:00pm

Tuesday & Wednesday by appointment

Additional images are available upon request

Left:

Is Here There, 2012

Oil and Alkyd on Canvas over Panel

70" x 60"

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present our third solo exhibition by Squeak Carnwath. The artist continues to develop a highly individualized visual language that derives from the history of art and personal associations, molding a dialogue that is at once static and ever changing. *Here Is* is an exhibition that explores our collective and individual responses to representation and memory. Carnwath employs words, object images, pattern, and stunning color to speak about the body and mind in a metaphysical ablation of paint.

In keeping with the artist's well-established practice, Carnwath proceeds with familiar imagery and expands into new territory. Notably, a particular image stands out as a new development in these paintings: the sinking ship. While icons like her candelabras pose as nostalgic beacons, her ships emerge as precarious symbols. Heavy plumes of steam rise from their smokestacks, signaling effort and human struggle. In smaller works, and as vignettes within her larger canvases, the rough sea waters extend to the picture's edge, reinforcing the beguiling futility of each ship's course. Crudely blended and steadily repetitive, these new themes address grim notions of passage, failed voyage, empathy, and death with a tangible sense of humor.

As implicitly iconic as her candelabras and vinyl records, Carnwath's ships speak to a rich history, both painted and real, that she has stripped down to its most immediate signifiers. In the same way that her candelabras annotate the obsessive relationship between artists and light, her ships comment on a fascination with the nautical and an affinity for catastrophe, conjuring associations to artists like Malcolm Morley. In *Get Good*, Carnwath's candelabra and sinking ship appear in tandem, resulting in a composition that is unified and balanced without overtly delineating just how or why. Daubs of paint tickle the surface like emotive punctuation marks, and square patches of color shimmy down the side of the canvas, all in a psychological dance that is playfully restrained, thought-provoking, and iconically Carnwath.