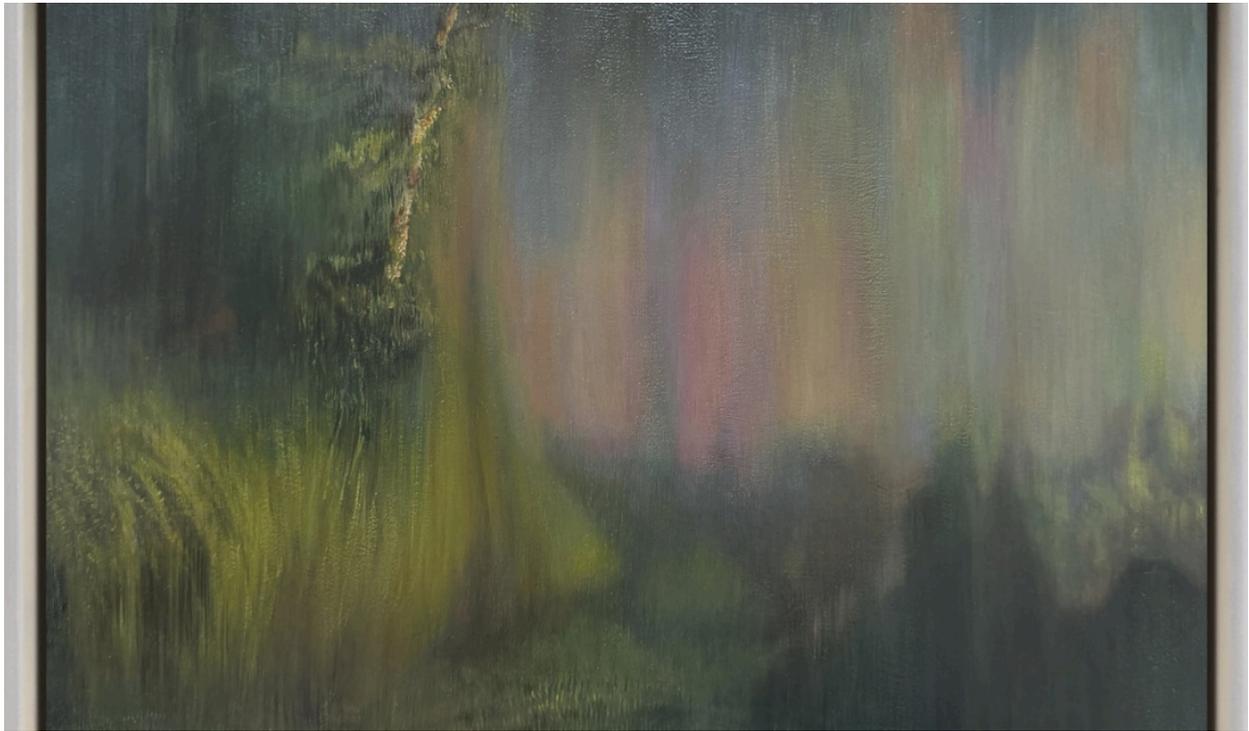


# G L A D S T O N E

Victoria Pokovba, Rachel Rose Reimagines the Biblical Flight into Egypt in Landscapes at Gladstone Gallery", " March 24, 2026

## whitewall



### Rachel Rose Reimagines the Biblical Flight into Egypt in Landscapes at Gladstone Gallery

A new series of paintings reframes a canonical story through atmosphere, memory, and the psychology of motherhood.

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VICTORIA POKOVBA

MARCH 24, 2026

Multimedia artist **Rachel Rose** expands her practice with “*The Rest*,” a new series of 14 oil paintings on wood presented at **Gladstone Gallery**’s Upper East Side space now through April 25, 2026. Known for her video work, here, Rose turns to painting with a sense of continuity rather than departure, extending her interest in perception, history, and emotional states into a slower, more tactile medium.

The shift began several years ago, during her time as a docent at the Yale Center for British Art. Surrounded by pastoral landscapes, Rose became interested in how pre-industrial worlds were constructed through painting—idealized and shaped by social and political change. That inquiry informed her 2022 exhibition “*Enclosure*,” which explored

the English Enclosure Acts and their psychological and ecological consequences. The seeds of her painting practice took hold there, later emerging more fully in subsequent exhibitions, and now culminating in this series.

As Gladstone Gallery director **Alissa Bennett** notes, Rose's work has long been concerned with moments of formation and transformation. Reflecting on "Enclosure," she recalls "these moments of things coalescing"—a sensibility that carries through to the surfaces of the new paintings, where forms appear to gather, dissolve, and reconfigure in a continuous state of flux.

## Rachel Rose Painting Without Figures



Rachel Rose, "The Rest, 2:05am," 2026. Oil on wood panel. 11 1/2 x 15 inches (29.2 x 38.1 cm) / 11 5/8 x 15 1/8 x 1/2 inches (29.5 x 38.4 x 1.3 cm) framed. © Rachel Rose. Courtesy of the artist and Gladstone.

“*Flight into Egypt*” draws loosely from the ***biblical*** story of Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus fleeing King Herod. Yet in Rose’s interpretation, the figures themselves are entirely absent. Instead, the paintings focus on the ***pauses*** within the journey—the moments of rest and vulnerability that unfold between movement and escape.

What emerges is a landscape charged with presence but emptied of narrative certainty. The threat is no longer a singular antagonist, but something more diffuse: the natural world itself, expansive and unknowable. In *The Rest, 8:00am*, for instance, the viewer occupies Mary’s implied perspective. The scene is blurred and refracted—branches bending toward the ground, light scattering across a sky where time feels suspended.

This sense of suspension becomes central to the series. The paintings linger in a state of heightened awareness, where instinct and perception converge. Rose reframes Mary as a subject within a specific moment—nourishing and existing within a fragile balance between care and danger. The result is less a retelling, shifting attention from action to experience.

## Allegory as Structure



Rachel Rose, “The Rest, 8:00am,” 2026. Oil on wood panel. 11 1/2 x 15 inches (29.2 x 38.1 cm) / 11 5/8 x 15 1/8 x 1/2 inches (29.5 x 38.4 x 1.3 cm) framed. © Rachel Rose. Courtesy of the artist and Gladstone.

While the series is rooted in biblical allegory, it does not function as a devotional painting. Instead, Rose approaches the narrative as a framework for how meaning is constructed through symbols, landscapes, and inherited visual language.

Bennett emphasizes this distinction, saying “These are not religious paintings. She’s interested in how those canonical works used natural symbolism to support the story—rocks, water, the moon—and how painting itself builds our understanding of history and *identity*.”

That interest extends to the way belief systems are formed through images. In traditional depictions of the *Flight into Egypt*, the landscape often serves as a backdrop. Here, it becomes the primary subject, carrying both emotional and symbolic weight. Elements such as birds, water, and shifting light recur throughout the series, functioning less as narrative clues and more as atmospheric signals.

At the same time, Rose’s own experience of motherhood shapes the work. Rather than illustrating a biblical scene, she uses it as a lens through which to explore maternal instinct and perception. As Bennett notes, Rose is drawn to Mary and Jesus not as fixed religious figures, but as “a symbolic representative of mother and child,” where the world narrows and intensifies within that relationship.

## A Contemporary Reframing by Rachel Rose



Rachel Rose, “The Rest, 6:05pm,” 2026. Oil on wood panel. 11 1/2 x 15 inches (29.2 x 38.1 cm) / 12 1/2 x 16 x 1 inches (31.8 x 40.6 x 2.5 cm) framed. © Rachel Rose. Courtesy of the artist and Gladstone.

The artist's approach reflects a broader shift within contemporary art, where artists revisit canonical narratives not to reaffirm them, but to reframe their relevance. Historically, much of the Western canon has been shaped by male perspectives, with women often positioned as subjects rather than agents. In this show, that dynamic is quietly reconfigured.

The absence of figures becomes a form of presence. Mary is not depicted, yet her perspective structures the work. The psychological dimension—her awareness, her instinct, her vulnerability—takes precedence over representation. The result is a series that feels both intimate and expansive, grounded in personal experience while resonating across time.

The starkness of the gallery space further amplifies this effect. Without distraction, the paintings hold attention through subtle shifts in color, texture, and composition. Blues and greens dominate, creating a tonal continuity that reinforces the sense of immersion. Edges blur, forms overlap, and surfaces carry traces of revision, suggesting a process that is as much about searching as it is about resolution.

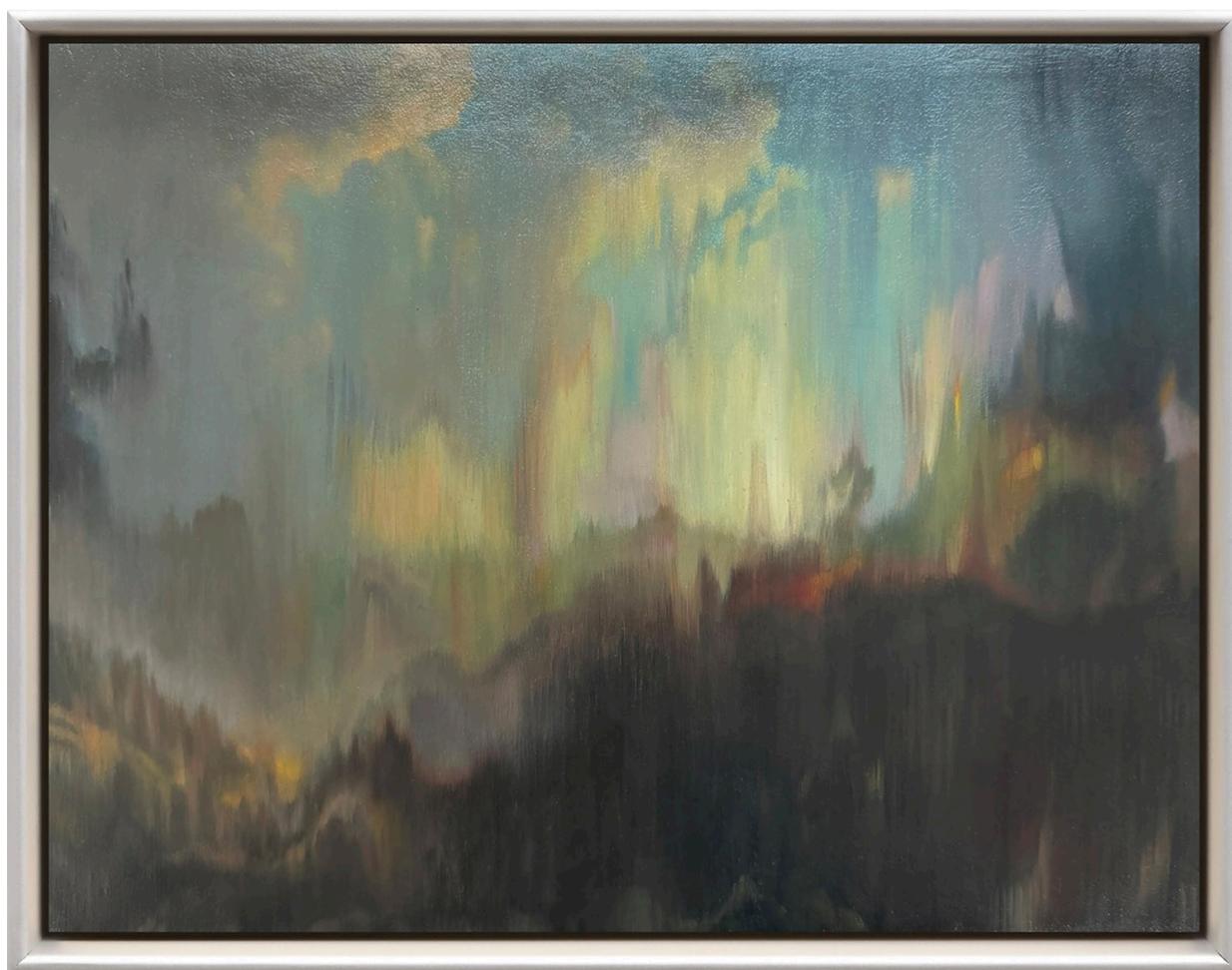
## What We See Now



Rachel Rose, "The Rest, 10:20pm," 2026. Oil on wood panel. 11 1/2 x 15 inches (29.2 x 38.1 cm) / 11 5/8 x 15 1/8 x 1/2 inches (29.5 x 38.4 x 1.3 cm) framed. © Rachel Rose. Courtesy of the artist and Gladstone.

In removing the figures and loosening the narrative from its biblical origin, Rachel Rose opens the work to a different kind of engagement. These are not images to be decoded, but environments to move through—spaces where perception slows, and attention deepens.

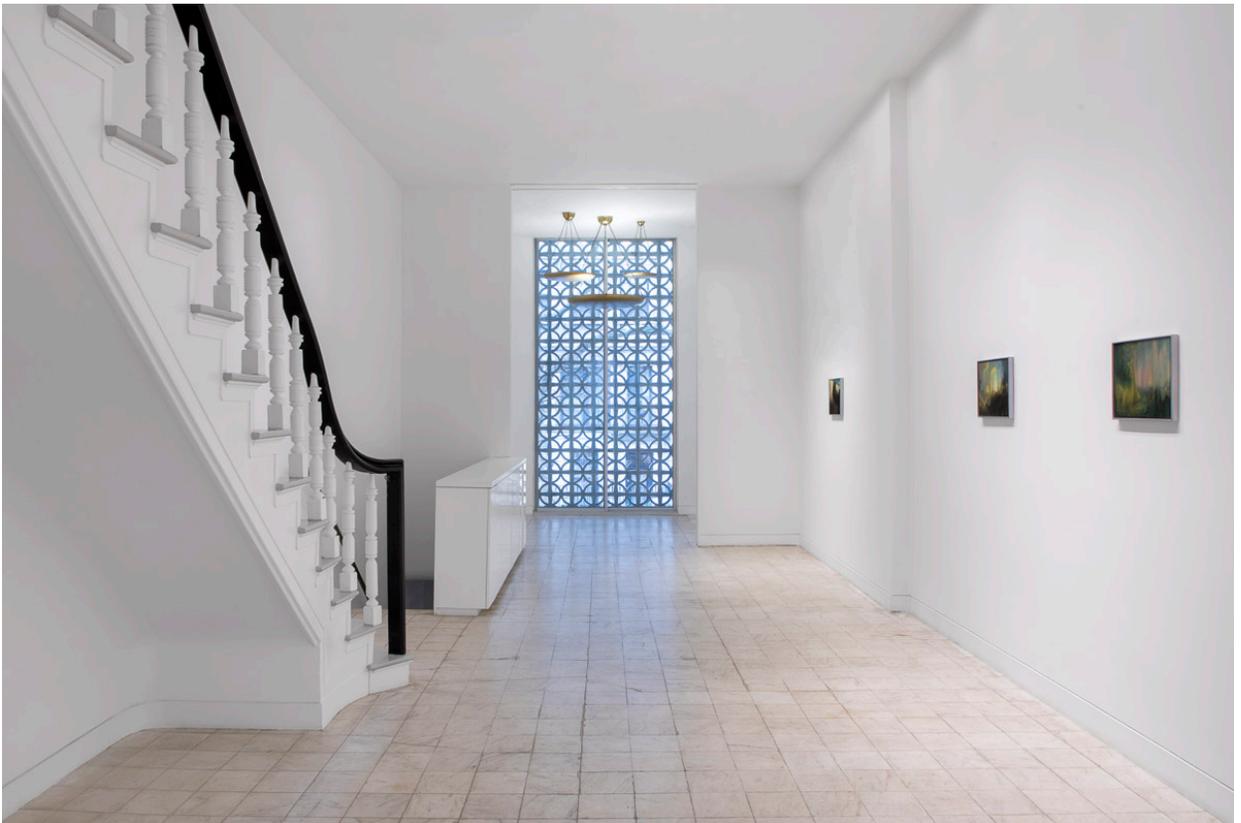
A single bird appears in one of the paintings, a rare sign of life within an otherwise human-less world. It is a quiet gesture, but a telling one. Here, life is not centered on human action, but dispersed across the landscape itself. Nature becomes both setting and subject, reflecting a contemporary awareness shaped as much by environmental anxiety as by spiritual inquiry.



Rachel Rose, "The Rest, 3:30pm," 2026. Oil on wood panel. 11 1/2 x 15 inches (29.2 x 38.1 cm) / 11 5/8 x 15 1/8 x 1/2 inches (29.5 x 38.4 x 1.3 cm) framed. © Rachel Rose. Courtesy of the artist and Gladstone.



Installation View of "Flight into Egypt," 2026. Courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery.



Installation View of "Flight into Egypt," 2026. Courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery.