

CHRISTOPHER BURK

City compositions



Now on view at George Billis Gallery in New York City are new works by painter Christopher Burk, who examines smaller sections of immense cityscapes to create a focused view of things often overlooked by residents and pedestrians. His subjects include billboard signs, ordinary views from elevated expressways and rooftop water towers.

"The quest for something new, distinctive forms and compositions, found in our exterior environments are the themes that are consistently sought after as the major components to my work," Burk says. "The main emphasis focuses on transforming the often overlooked elements, for example, the poetry that happens in the sweeping utility lines along the backdrop of a morning or evening sky with the pinnacles of structures, treetops, telephone poles, and how each interacts with one another within the composition. Taking something so utilitarian, for example, like that of a telephone pole with all of its components, on average would be, and usually are, looked upon as something that is less than visually



desirable, yet when presented in a unique way this provides one with the tools needed to visually tune into not only their personal environments but also that of the world, therefore, giving viewers the capabilities to find beauty in the simplest of things."

Works in the show include *Long Island City Windows at Night*, with its single lit window shining out over a dimly lit night, a deep blue sky stretching out over the scene from above. The piece has an almost Edward Hopper kind of presence in which the city feels alive, but also very lonely and forlorn. Other works include *Water Tower 3*, its composition highlighting the height and dominance

of a simple water tower that reigns over this vantage point. In *Queens Billboard*, Burk can paint the smooth, tiled surface of a billboard, as well as the metal gridlike structure on the billboard's wedge-shaped interior.

Burk says, "American writer Henry Miller's following quote embodies my personal philosophy, and to what drives me to be an artist: 'What the painter sees he is duty-bound to share. Usually, he makes us see and feel what ordinarily we ignore or are immune to. His manner of approaching the world tells us, in effect, that nothing is hideous, nothing is stale, flat and unpalatable unless it be our own power of vision.'" ●



- 1 *Bronx Tenement*, oil on panel, 24 x 18"
- 2 *Water Tower 3*, oil on panel, 8 x 8"
- 3 *Queens Billboard*, oil on panel, 8 x 8"
- 4 *Long Island City Windows at Night*, oil on panel, 10 x 8"
- 5 *From the BQE*, oil on panel, 20 x 16"