

KAREN WOODS

# Cruise



**G**aze out a window on a rainy day and you'll notice the world has succumbed to abstract shapes and effects through the droplets of water that cover the pane. These characteristics have continued to inspire the paintings of Karen Woods, who finds a new sense of wonder or fresh perspective every time it showers.

"I think that's why I continue to get excited by the abstract qualities," says Woods. "It's the way a trickle of water can just completely cut a light post in half and the other visual things that happen [when looking out a window] when it's raining."

She also delves into the two-dimensional space and the three-dimensional depth that the view from the inside looking out creates. Woods' most recognized works in this theme are New York City streetscapes as seen out of a windshield. The pieces depict pedestrian-filled roadways, colorful taillights and streetlamps, as well as soaring skyscrapers. Recently she has begun exploring a new motif in the series that will be paired with her city views in the upcoming solo exhibition *Land & Sea* at George Billis Gallery in New York City.

"When I was getting ready to have another show, I sat down with the idea of looking for something more ethereal with a different kind of space," explains Woods, who often thumbs through boxes of photographs until inspiration strikes. "I was looking to challenge myself, so I set aside 20 pictures I thought might fall into that category, but then around Christmas, a friend of mine began emailing pictures from a harbor cruise. Instead of a windshield, they were looking out of the boat in the rain. There were pictures of the wash behind the boat and pictures looking out to the sea."

The images provided the quality Woods was looking for, as well as posed new artistic undertakings that allowed her to push her art to new levels. She elaborates, "It was a huge challenge in painting the water on top of water. They were really disorienting to paint because a lot of times there were no clear horizons or verticals or horizontals to get visual bearings. It was just an enormous challenge."

*Land & Sea* will be on view through June 6. ●

George Billis Gallery, 525 W. 26<sup>th</sup> Street, Ground Floor, New York, NY 10001 • (212) 645-2621 • www.georgebillis.com

- 1 Cruise #6, oil on linen, 22 x 11"
- 2 Cruise #2, oil on linen, 14 x 14"
- 3 Cruise #4, oil on linen, 14 x 25"
- 4 Cruise #1, oil on linen, 16 x 14"

