

TREVOR YOUNG

Open Spaces

The Spanish non-objective painter Joan Miró wrote, "The spectacle of the sky overwhelms me. I am overwhelmed when I see a crescent moon or the sun in an immense sky. In my paintings there are often tiny forms in vast empty spaces. Empty spaces, empty horizons, empty plains—everything that has been stripped bare has always made a strong impression on me."

In his early paintings, Trevor Young put "tiny forms in vast empty spaces" and soon realized they were a distraction. "I was a street painter with my teacher, and one day he said, 'Paint a man with a necktie.' I did, and a guy in a necktie came up and bought it. He probably thought, 'That's a guy like me in this guy's painting.' I did include people for a while as dark silhouettes but decided to take them out. People break up the beauty of architecture. A person creates a narrative. I like the feeling of isolation in my work—being comfortable and at peace but alone."

Young's unpeopled landscapes will be shown in an exhibition at George Billis Gallery in New York September 5 through 29.

"Space is everything," he asserts. "When I was in college my teacher asked me what my favorite thing was. I said, 'I like the horizontal.' In luminist paintings, the horizon can sit so far back, and at other times it's very present. I like to dissolve the horizon and don't want to work with deep space. I enjoy the middle space."

In a painting like *Crude Conveyor*, the eye is attracted to the round end of the rail car where it continues to return after traveling under the bridge with the train and over the bridge to the light-flooded background.

Growing up in near Washington, D.C., he frequented the city's museums. He saw many classic American paintings literally in a new light when the collection of the Corcoran Museum was transferred to the National Gallery.

"I love Thomas Moran's paintings, and his were some of the paintings I saw in a new way at the National Gallery," he observes. *Passing Protrusion* is a more atmospheric painting than *Crude Conveyor* and is inspired by Moran.

"I decided I wanted a grandiose cloud," he says, "and I wanted it looking down on the city." His looming cloud rises above a city at night, seemingly resting on its own lower atmosphere stretching horizontally across the image. "I love being at the cloud level," he observes.

"I've just started teaching again," he explains, "and I want to teach spatial relations. A picture is an illustration, but painting at its best is emboldened with mystery. I want my students to learn how little they have to show to capture our imagination." ●

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

1
Passing Protrusion,
oil on canvas,
30 x 54"

2
Crude Conveyor, oil
on canvas, 24 x 28"

3
Departure Beat, oil
on canvas, 60 x 40"

4
*Meadowland
Erections*, oil on
canvas, 48 x 54"

