

COLOGNE

Kevin Zucker at Jablonka Lühn

In each of the five drawings in this show, Zucker acknowledges a strain of picture-making that presents a landscape or building as its subject and incorporates people only to show scale, circulation, or potential use. He works with images from old master paintings, popular illustrations, and architectural renderings, keeping the figures but replacing the rest of the composition with abstract, simplified pictorial conventions. In doing so, Zucker poses the question: how much information is necessary to maintain believable illusionistic space and, more important, an emotional connection with the viewer? The forms of abstraction that make up the new grounds in the drawings borrow from both the language of modernist painting and from digital 3-D modeling software: a stand of trees floats in a featureless, patterned landscape; a ship from a sepia drawing by Canaletto finds itself moored in the doldrums of an endless digital wire-frame ocean; Victorian Londoners from an illustration depicting the opening ceremony of Joseph Paxton's 1851 Crystal Palace survey a vast room defined only by a horizon line; Pieter Saenredam's promenading burghers, stripped of the complex architectural interior in which they once served primarily to indicate scale, march forward through either infinite depth or total flatness; a temporary stage is relocated from Venice's Piazza San Marco into a vague setting in which the roller marks of a botched house-painting job double as descending night or a menacing weather condition.



Kevin Zucker, *Untitled*, acrylic and transfers on paper (41 x 64 in.), 2004. Courtesy Jablonka Lühn.

The process used to make the drawings involves both the hyper-rational world of computer-aided design and the less ordered material realities of a traditional painting practice. Each composition is mapped out in the computer, transferred manually to the paper, and then painted and glazed.

Intended as neither critical nor ironic—though not without a sense of humor—these drawings attempt to reaffirm, perhaps even enhance or update, the mood of quiet solitude and sense of the sublime intended in the original source material.

—Amanda Coulson