Kevin Zucker,
Encyclopedia, 2006,
acrylic and transfer ink
on canvas, 8' x 13' 4".

Kevin Zucker
GREENBERG VAN DOREN GALLERY

Between Kevin Zucker's May 2001 debut at LFL Gallery and his second solo exhibition at Mary Boone Gallery in September 2003, his finely crafted paintings seemed to be everywhere. The artist created ambitious conceptual frameworks for his canvases, often having to do with the mistranslations inherent in the visual representation of objects, but their ubiquity and easy-to-swallow imagery—banal, derelict institutional interiors; limply decorative parlor rooms; and still lifes, all leached of color—produced a disconnect between the rhetoric surrounding his practice and its visual impact. This exhibition, titled "Search Within Results," heralded the two elements' unification. In attempting to represent the ways in which we archive information today, Zucker created a sequence of busy, fragmented compositions featuring images gathered largely from the Web's nether regions. These were accompanied by fourteen small drawings and, for the first time in his career, photographs (depicting casual arrangements of the items found in three universities' still-life prop storage closets).

What remains of the earlier work is the artist's fastidious process—and its resultant sobriety. To create the medium- to large-scale paintings exhibited here, Zucker first draws a composition using CAD software, then transfers the image onto the work's surface (employing a process that leaves patchy imperfections) and paints and sands the canvas after applying the image. To make the two paintings here, *Red, Yellow, Blue (error type 108)* and *CMYK (error type 25)* (both 2006), Zucker applied acrylic paste to sheets of plastic and transferred the computer-generated images onto the resultant surface. He then cut out the fragments and stuck them to the surface of the paintings, further shattering the cohesion of what he was ostensibly rendering. The result is smooth, uninflected surfaces in which the various steps taken to create them are individually intelligible (or, less charitably, disconnected).

All five paintings depict industrial metal shelving units, perhaps an attempt to symbolize the intangible archives that house our contemporary image bank (and increasingly bolster human memory). In one of these works, *404 Not Found*, 2006, the shelves are arranged in inward-facing circles, an allusion, maybe, to feedback loops; elsewhere they form long rows that recede toward a vanishing point, indicating their endlessness, or are torn into fragments, perhaps a metaphor for the piecemeal way in which much of our information now comes to us. (The drawings depict similar shelves laden with images drawn from a Google image search for the word "tragedy." One doesn't realize the pathos of the phrase "Results 1–83 of about 110,000" until one considers attempting to re-create each of those 110,000 images.)

CMYK (error type 25) was the most splintered composition on view. Its dozens of pieces, each printed with an image of shelves, are overpainted with a wash in wide, smoky brushstrokes and a series of broken rectangles in cyan, magenta, yellow, and black—the inks used in the four-color printing process. Narrow slices of unprimed canvas run between these pieces like a street grid, calling to mind Gerhard Richter's ash-gray cityscapes; the patches of bright color echo Mondrian. Gallery stablemate Benjamin Edwards, who often depicts streams of digital information interwoven with the built environment, is likewise contiguous with this tradition. But whereas the urban environment is a clear reference point for Mondrian and Edwards, in Zucker's canvases, the agora is entirely virtual, endlessly proliferating, and, to use artist and catalogue essayist Daniel Lefcourt's apt term, "anaesthetic." There is no *there* there.

To communicate this complex gambit visually is a considerable step forward for an artist who, a few short years ago, made paintings that felt merely decorative. It's possible that Zucker sees the literal display of fragmentation in "Search Within Results" as a concession to those who weren't able or willing to divine the complexities he built into those earlier works. But the clarification is welcome.

—*Brian Sholis*