

Kes Zapkus (Paula Cooper Gallery, 155 Wooster Street): In the back room and upstairs at Paula Cooper's there are some new paintings by Kes Zapkus, which are well worth seeking out. They have to do with the interaction of color and sign. Each starts from a one-color ground on which one or more grids is laid down. These grids, though regular, are not bossy. They are subject, moreover, to sudden whims and caprices, in which elements the length and thickness of a matchstick careen this way and that, thereby setting up a whole system of counterrhythms.

Into all this there then intrudes the element of the sign: the mark that owes something (but not much) to geometry, something (but not much) to the alphabet and something (but not much) to the standardized signals that help us make our way about the world. If they look to have been made at random, they weren't. (In the diptych called "Duo," for instance, they are exactly twinned, as between one canvas and its mate.)

The result of all this is both brainy and sensuous. The range of feeling is remarkably wide, each painting helps the others, and we walk out feeling that a grand design has been carried through to fulfillment. Through May 28.