

Arts

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CONNER CONTEMPORARY ART

Dean Kessman's up-close-and-personal Target shopping bag.

ART

NEW WORKS BY Dean Kessman, who coordinates fine-art photography at George Washington University, look like the latest in medical imaging. In one of them, an amorphous field of gray smudges gives way, here and there, to a tangle of darker marks the color of clotting blood — hinting at the presence of a hideous growth, maybe, or a very bad case of stomach knots. Look closer, and you see it's even worse than that: Revealed among the colored smudges is half the red bull's-eye that makes up the Target logo, with a telltale "TM" just barely visible beside it. Kessman, it turns out, is giving us a close look into the guts of our consumer culture. The image is part of a series of works, luscious and disturbing at the same time, for which Kessman simply crumpled plastic shopping bags on the bed of his digital scanner, then output the results as ultra-high-resolution inkjet prints. The show closes Wednesday, so you've only a few days left to see Kessman's penetrating visions.

— **Blake Gopnik**

At Conner Contemporary Art,
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