

ROWAN WOOD

STEVE TURNER CONTEMPORARY - LOS ANGELES



ROWAN WOOD, *Bubble Solution 08*, 2010. Oil on linen, 91 x 91 cm. Courtesy the artist and Steve Turner Contemporary, Los Angeles.

It's hard to resist reading Rowan Wood's past into his paintings. After all, the gallery has posted a video of the charismatic, youngish artist on its website. What I got from it is that his unorthodox route to

becoming an artist and self-imposed bouts of solitude could explain a highly disciplined, yet intuitive, approach.

Wood experiments with figure-ground relationships in paintings that look simple but are highly sophisticated. The newest series — square canvases collectively entitled “Bubble Solution” — represent exercises in which compositions are identical, but build upon one another through slight variations. In *Bubble Solution 07* some shapes are black and gray, creating an illusion of asymmetry, while *Bubble Solution 08* hints at three-dimensional depth (like looking into a rocky cave) as central shapes are replaced with black, and the ovals along one side gain colorful pop-shadows.

“Copy,” an earlier series, hangs in the next room. Essentially, thin lines emanate from a central point, with dots arranged around. The abstractions have a primitive feel because of their hand-drawn aesthetic and spare palette. They might evoke domino blocks, stars in a night sky, spiderwebs in a dark corner, a map made by aliens, a cave drawing or a Paul Klee painting. At first you may read them as

painted lines on solid ground. But the eye is fooled because the backgrounds are filled in and the lines are bare canvas.

Copy 13, a visual transition between older and new paintings, is an almost-square canvas with a black, symmetrical design on a white ground. Out of a central diamond sprout four symmetrical arches that curve into the canvas' corners. A dot pattern and the design's proximity to the painting's edge play optical tricks that entirely seduce the viewer.

Anne Martens

ROWAN WOOD, *For the Benefit of Humanity*, 2010. Installation view at Steve Turner Contemporary, Los Angeles. Courtesy the artist and Steve Turner Contemporary, Los Angeles.

