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Rowan Wood pretends at minimalist abstraction, but his works quickly give away their sources in the observed world, or at least in the kind of shape modification that constantly catches our eye when we're looking at desks, notebooks, and other banal, intimate devices. The shapes and compositions in Wood's larger paintings pick up on the visual buzz of repeated horizontal scoring, for instance, or the rounded corners of an iPad or backlit photographic frame. In a series of small works Wood plays more overtly with "real-world" images, games and doodles such as those made by tracing one's hand, the ludic quality contrasting with the compartmented starkness of the works overall. Wood's abstraction, then, is not abstract art as we know it at all, but a highly deracinated kind of pop art effacing itself into a condition of conceptual self-reflection. Still, its prime impact is formal, hitting the eye with immensely powerful shapes that stand on their own even as they suggest or even imitate various actual things. This work does not fall between the cracks, but sprawls across them with uncanny grace.

(Steve Turner, 6026 Wilshire Blvd., LA; closed. www.steveturnercontemporary.com)

- Peter Frank

ROWAN WOOD, Left From Center 1, 2011, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 48 x 36 inches