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Maychack's objects on the verge, and a vanishing modernism

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Clare Rojas at Anglim: The passages of abstraction in Clare Rojas' narrative paintings always seemed to me the most appealing bits.

She could have gone straight to "pure" abstraction years ago. But her new work at Anglim proves the merit of her having taken her time, whether that was her choice or not.

A painting such as "Untitled (CR1403)" (2014) easily takes its place in a lineage of hard-edged abstraction with roots in Russian constructivism and including painters such as Frederick Hammersley (1919-2009) and Ellsworth Kelly.

But the course Rojas' work has taken seems to have let her sublimate into non-depictive patterns some of the emotional ambiguity and instability that her narrative work sought.

"Untitled (CR1403)" is as flat as you please - flatness having once been a badge of formalist integrity - and its composition visibly takes account of the stretched canvas' edges and real scale.

Yet hints of depiction - of a table corner, a bench, cast shadows - leak from it anyway.

Rojas new work reads as an argument that abstraction can never be pure to the extent of de-psychologizing our vision. It lets us feel a narrative bias apparently inherent in perception, a recognition that strikes like a warning not to believe too quickly what we think we see.