

DIANE ROSENSTEIN

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Review Clare Grill Paintings: Muted bits of memory, melancholy, by Leah Ollman (November 28, 2014)



Clare Grill, *Kettle*, 2014, Oil on canvas, courtesy DIANE ROSENSTEIN.

A bittersweetness wafts through Clare Grill's work, a tenderness toward the irrecoverable past. The most affecting of her paintings at the Diane Rosenstein gallery seem worn by time, their textures and tones at a remove from the here and now.

"Kettle," for instance, might be read as an abstracted portrait of a common, humble object. The small canvas, just 12 inches square, bears an endearing

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jumble of irregular shapes melded together as in a mosaic. Grill's short, patchy brushstrokes have an earnest functionality about them. Her palette of soiled aqua, rust, brown and sallow green has the quality of something lovingly used.

Paul Klee's delicately built compositions come to mind throughout, as do the jazzy, jaunty rhythms of Stuart Davis and the spirited patterns of Gee's Bend quilts. Grill, based in New York, draws inspiration for a series of oil paintings on paper from early American needlework samplers. Their familiar patterns and the letters of the alphabet float on these pages as if in viscous memory, emerging then receding, unfixed and incomplete.

The flickering planes of Grill's paintings and their muted, sometimes distressed surfaces strike a distinctive tone – vibrant, but tinged with melancholy. A few works feel half-hearted, unseasoned, but most leave a deeply soulful impression.