

Review: Scott Wolniak/65Grand & Andrew Rafacz Gallery

FEBRUARY 22, 2010 AT 11:57 PM BY [ART EDITOR](#)

RECOMMENDED

Scott Wolniak, with concurrent shows at 65Grand and Andrew Rafacz Gallery, says his work is “an investigation into how art-making can be a template for examining everyday occurrences and experiences.” It’s about elevating the everyday to aesthetic significance.

For “You Can Lose Your Balance” at 65Grand, Wolniak contorts, tears and twists canvases painted all white. He slices canvas and hangs a brick in a tear to create a ‘balanced’ composition. He punctures the rippling, white surface of a Little River in acrylic using a twig. The paintings, he explains, consist of “dumb acts of wrestling and sabotage” that “occur in lieu of anything remotely resembling technique.” So he splinters the canvases’ wooden frames. He has you believe that the paintings in this show leave more to chance than to the artist’s touch. In the words of Argentine canvas-slasher Lucio Fontana, punctured canvases like Wolniak’s reveal “a dimension beyond the painting” that illustrates “the freedom to conceive art through any means.” But Wolniak takes this a step further when, in “Flash Art (Circles and Rectangles),” the image of a lightbulb going

on and off paired with the switch click, click, clicking on and off becomes mesmeric. The sound takes on a meditative repetition like listening to tap-dancing, typewriting, rain falling on a tin roof and a stream of flighty, illuminating, then extinguished ideas enter and exit the viewer's mind.

“Afterimage,” on display at Andrew Rafacz Gallery, builds off of Wolniak’s “Simulated Sunprints” from 2009 through the application of everyday materials like bleach, ink and folds to paper. Each paper sheet resembles a photogram—one of those prints made by placing objects on light-sensitive paper. Wolniak blends splatters, streaks and geometry into a paper product that explains the process of its construction. The saturated splotches in technicolor lend the work an expressive quality, like action-paintings. Each is a window that sets the viewer adrift on a psycho-chromatic plane where the everyday occurrence of perception becomes an experience of wandering.

In both shows, Wolniak bends materials as mundane as pencils, pine planks, projectors or paper into expressive aesthetic experiences that are alternatively playful and beautiful.

(Ian Epstein)

Scott Wolniak shows at 65Grand, 1378 W. Grand, through March 20, and at Andrew Rafacz Gallery, 835 W. Washington, through March 13.

Share this: