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ARTS & CULTURE

Soft light

Scott Wolniak's hallucinatory, layered paintings

by **Alan Pocaro**

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Installation view, Scott Wolniak "Crosscurrents" at Goldfinch, 2023

Credit: Ryan Edmund

Painter Scott Wolniak's delightful new exhibition "Crosscurrents" at Goldfinch is a lot to take in. With nearly 20 works of various sizes hung close together in the modest space, the exhibition is like a salon-style dive into the visual deep.

Viewers used to sparse white walls and serious square footage between works might find the scale and volume of the artist's colorful and inviting abstractions similar to an eye exam. My advice: look closely, squint, step back, repeat.

Wolniak's touch is spare and light-handed despite regularly combing three or more materials on his work's surfaces. Even when teeming with pumice, oil, acrylic, and dry pastel, his paintings never rise up into garish moments of easy impasto. And when they do break the fourth wall, it's subtle and subdued, like the eerie flicker of firefly yellow in the noctilucous *Seeing with Eyes Closed*.



Credit: Ryan Edmund

One of the most compelling aspects of Wolniak's painting is the beguiling way in which his all-over compositions (a formal strategy that typically affirms the surface of the support) seem to stretch out, open up wide, and fall back into space. The peach-hued *Listening* ripples, radiates, and respire, shimmering with air that is dappled with the transcendental light of the Pacific Northwest or Lake Michigan just after dawn. A spectral realm between dreaming and waking, these crosscurrents are worlds to wander and lose yourself in.

▣ "Crosscurrents"

Through 10/21: Fri-Sat noon-4 PM, Goldfinch, 319 N. Albany, goldfinch-gallery.com