

Scott Wolniak: *Crosscurrents*
September 10 – October 21, 2023



"I was always interested in immersive spatial experiences and hope for my paintings to complicate the subject/object relationship. I thought that abstraction might help break down the division between seeing and thinking. I also like the way that a kind of groundless pictorial structure can promote openness. Space is where it's at." – Scott Wolniak

In Gallery 1, Goldfinch is thrilled to present our second solo exhibition with Scott Wolniak. An Artist's Talk will be held at 12pm on Sunday, October 1st, in conjunction with Chicago Exhibition Weekend. *Crosscurrents* is on view through October 21, 2023.

Wolniak's new paintings can be seen as outward projections of interior spaces, manifesting the ways in which abstraction can convey a sense of rhythm, transformation, groundlessness, and internal movement. These lively, densely-layered paintings oscillate between their indexical, physical surfaces and illusory fields of depth, cultivating a non-objective visual language that embodies the energy of natural phenomena without explicitly representing it.

Wolniak's second show at Goldfinch sees a shift from the artist's past engagement with plant forms and botanical motifs (which themselves were always based on the artist's invention, rather than explicit depiction, and were rendered intuitively and involved a free sort of image-making). The paintings in *Crosscurrents* embrace a more abstracted language, steeped as they are in pattern and in rhythmic, expressive mark-making. The forms that emerge still feel tied to the natural world, but importantly, here that natural phenomena also encompasses the realm of the mind and the nature of consciousness itself.

"I find imagery and meaning in my paintings as they are forming," Wolniak says. "They are never predetermined. They can be hallucinatory." Humor, exploration and play, and perhaps most importantly intuition, continue to shape Wolniak's approach. Also providing a bridge between previous and current bodies of work is Wolniak's longstanding interest in material exploration, which continues to provide the artist with strong directional paths. In "Crosscurrents," he again experiments with additive elements such as pumice, paper pulp and saw dust to build up textures on the surface, but now these textural elements "pop up here and there without aligning to a complete shape," Wolniak notes, while also "helping to produce occasional, flickering effects between surface and light, and to interact in surprising ways with pigment."

Image caption: *Trickle-down Consciousness*, 2023, acrylic, oil, and graphite on canvas, 27 x 24 inches (68.6 x 61 cm)