

Scott Wolniak

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Chicago Tribune, Alan Artner

Ungray: Color, Light and Other Balms:

Humor often has been an element in Scott Wolniak's video, sculpture and installation work, and it's hard to know whether if it's again at the center of his multimedia piece at the Chicago Cultural Center. If it's not, the work aspires to a realm seldom approached by serious contemporary artists; if it is, the piece is a subtle, straight-faced send-up.

The component to tip the argument is a 29-minute video called "Musical Notes in Harmony with the Attuned Healing Colors." It presents a sequence of soft geometric abstractions set to a New-Age inspired soundtrack by Jim Dorling. The progression of the colors is said to be "specified by energy chakras to create a functional guided meditation."

Much 20th Century art and early abstraction in particular, came out of alignments with spiritual programs. Many art historians are uncomfortable with such links, but that doesn't prevent them from being forged, and it's possible that healing through art in a dark time of year really is what Wolniak is up to.

But we can't tell for certain. Another untitled video plus a row of "weed" sculptures suggest a wryness that does not coexist easily with humorless New-Age motives.

**1/2 At 78 E. Washington St., through April 5. 312-744-6630.

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