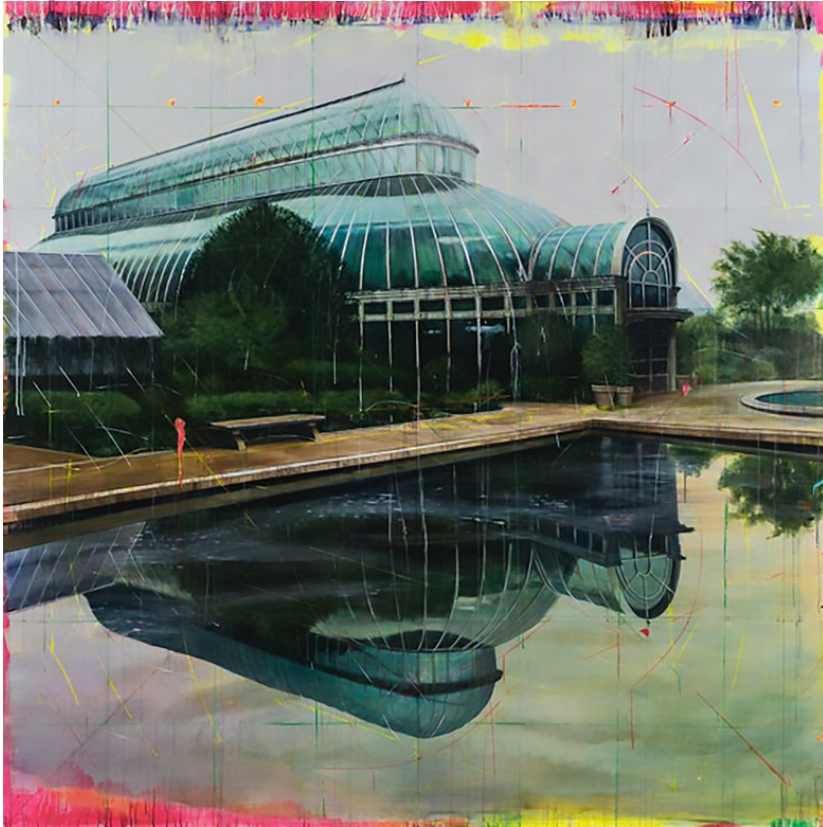


February gallery shows ponder architectural possibilities

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Peter Waite, "Greenhouses" (2016), acrylic on panels (Courtesy of Winston/Wächter Fine Art)

By [Michael Upchurch](#)

Peter Waite: "Thresholds"

Swimming pools, train stations, gymnasiums, a bank vault ...

Connecticut-based painter Peter Waite's knockout show at Winston Wächter Fine Art finds a fraying grandeur in all these locales. His acrylics on panels are usually large-scale works that combine tour-de-force technique with deliberate paint-splotch sabotage. Their coloring resembles that of hand-tinted postcards, with something sickly and fluorescent seeping in from the margins.

Waite prefers his vistas to be empty of visitors, and he apparently has the charm and persistence to talk his way into any venue that grabs his attention. He then creates his paintings in the studio, working from photographs he takes, sketches he makes and memory. His focus, he says on his website, is "sites of the built environment that

embody public sentiment or ideological concerns. ... My interest lies in the intersection of personal and social memory.”

The results can be spectacular.

“Greenhouses,” an 8-foot-by-8-foot rendering of the Brooklyn Botanical Garden’s glass pavilions and the ponds in front of them, is a highlight of the show. The crystalline structures of the pavilions and the skies above them are artfully reflected in the placid water below. Meanwhile, a busy “static” of lurid hues — bright magenta, lemon yellow — infringes upon its upper and lower peripheries. An orange smear of paint disfigures the walkway next to a garden bench. A faint grid in crayon red and green attempts to impose its own geometry on the architectural angles already present.

The resulting image suggests a magnificent edifice trying to hold its own against crude erosions and incursions. Waite’s blend of photorealism and blatant visual disruption makes for some feisty compositional verve and drama.

In “Bank/Cincinnati,” a massive steel bank-vault door looks threatened by bright colors invading it from all sides. In “Old School Boys Pool/Cincinnati,” the graffiti in an empty pool and Waite’s own vivid paint-blemishes seem to work in anarchic alliance with each other.

These gripping paintings are both elegiac and subversive.

10 a.m.-5 p.m. Mondays-Saturdays through March 7. Winston Wächter Fine Art, 203 Dexter Ave. N., Seattle (206-652-5855 or www.winstonwachter.com).