ARTS & CULTURE

Must-sees in Philly galleries right now, including Scott Noel's exceptional paintings

Michaela Blaisdell of Grizzly Grizzly and "Writers Making Books" at Arcadia's Sprauve Gallery are other highlights.

Jayson Scott Noel's painting, "Bodegas" (2019), at Grace McCleaf Gallery. Jayson Scott Noel

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Scott Noel's exhibition "The Academy and the Aviaries" at Grace McCleaf Gallery, is more ambitious than previous shows of his I've seen — he's spent years both the Fran and Sarah galleries — and his paintings have a new quality.

His compositions of figures are still studied, but they're more painterly.

Noel's characteristic filtered natural light makes people and places seem exceptionally still and quiet. I'm reminded of her, dry, at ease in a city more Mexico City than humid Philadelphia. And that's still very much vision.

Noel observed paintings by Velasquez at the Prado in Madrid and by a kinship with the 17th-century Spanish painter explaining this latest body of work. Vasconcellos/Sullivan/Gallagher/Pennington/Sandwell/Grimes/Gallagher/Pennington/Sandwell/Grimes/Gallagher/Pennington/Sandwell/Grimes