



## Galleries - Kenneth Baker

### Kyle Reicher, Barnaby Furnas

Kenneth Baker

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**Furnas semi-hot:** Philadelphia native Barnaby Furnas, now based in New York, has created a buzz in recent years with paintings that dart among subjects and manners, always touching extremes.

Anthony Meier gives the Bay Area a rare look at Furnas' work with a show of new pieces that dwell on metal band concerts and the Philadelphia Mummers.

A renegade graffiti artist before his emergence in the "legitimate" art world, Furnas stylizes his images like a man still on the run.

Splatters, pours and streaks of paint render frequently explosions of violence in his work. In several pieces on view, such propulsive execution seeks pictorial equivalents of live concert sonics.

The big canvas "My Bloody Valentine" (2009) renders the pit view of a Motörhead concert in very stylized fashion. Beams of stage lighting crisscross the vast space, looking like anti-aircraft searchlights. The fruity colors may bring Andy Warhol to mind, as does the "O" motif that blazons the framing curtains, its type style possibly lifted from American currency.

The visual intensities of the works on canvas never approach equivalence to sonic impact, but Furnas' manner, and details such as the battery of speakers suggestive of a multiple rocket launcher, hint at heavy metal as the entertainment appropriate to a culture that styles itself perpetually at war.

Furnas' watercolors of Philadelphia Mummers make a subtler impression. They commemorate the ancient ritual, formally revived and practiced in Philadelphia for more than a century, of ordinary folk wearing extraordinary costumes to revel in the new year.

The watercolor "Mummers Day II" (2009) has the compositional kinetics of Furnas' best work compressed into a - for him - small page. The mummer's costume evokes the flamboyance of the event and participants' involvement in it. Bottles of rotgut litter the street, but the mummer's costume, mask and headdress cram the picture space until it brings to mind the impaction of a Tibetan thangka. With that association comes a newly overt hint of spiritual yearning, even desperation.

**Barnaby Furnas: The Lesser Light:** Paintings and works on paper. Through Fri. By appointment only. Anthony Meier Fine Arts, 1969 California St., San Francisco. (415) 351-1400, [www.anthonymeierfinearts.com](http://www.anthonymeierfinearts.com).

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