



Galleries - Kenneth Baker

Moffett's outlook on U.S. gay life

David Bonetti
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For several years I kept a postcard by **Donald Moffett** pinned to my cubicle. It read, if I remember correctly, "Call the White House. Tell them we're not all dead yet." It was an angry retort to the amnesiac response of the Reagan-Bush I administrations to the AIDS crisis, then at its height.

With "Mr. Gay in the USA," **Moffett** has continued his exploration of the fragility of gay life in the United States and the dangers gay people face even in the best of times.

The title is a little misleading. The Mr. Gay of the title is Ronald Gay, the man who walked into gay bar in Roanoke, Va., drank a beer and then opened fire, killing one person and wounding six.

Gay said he was tired of jokes made because of his name and resented the fact that the meaning of gay had changed from "happy" to "homosexual." His response was similar to Peter Finch's in "Network," who was "mad as hell and not going to take it anymore," only more violent.

Moffett made 17 sketches during Gay's sentencing, and that suite is at the center of the show at Anthony Meier Fine Arts. It is a fine historical record of one of those exercises in absurdity the culture produces periodically.

Moffett is also showing a number of small abstract paintings characterized by passages of netting made from strings of oil pigment that cover monochrome grounds, here primarily silver. Their sensuousness nicely balances the drawings' factual austerity.

GALLERY SHOWS

"MR. GAY IN THE USA": Paintings and drawings by **Donald Moffett**. Through Dec.

14. Anthony Meier Fine Arts, 3007 Jackson St., San Francisco, (415) 351-1400.

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