

Press Release

Barnaby Furnas
The Intimates

25 February – 9 April, 2011

Private view 24 February, 6-8pm

Stuart Shave/Modern Art is delighted to announce an exhibition of new paintings by Barnaby Furnas. This is the American painter's third solo show with Modern Art.

Over the course of the last decade, Barnaby Furnas' paintings have become embroiled in explosive and spectacular imagery, tapped from the giddy sensations of gloried depictions of violence throughout American history and contemporary culture. His subjects draw on latent and fully expressed aggression in scenes of war, rock concerts, and portraits of martyrs and military personages. What Furnas' paintings unerringly communicate is an immediate sense of dynamic energy, forcefully professing their subject matter and rendering action as an image both in and of the act of painting.

Furnas' paintings thrive on notions of time captured. In a painting, the events of even a linear narrative unfold simultaneously, happening all-at-once in a single moment of comprehensible experience. Furnas accesses art history for techniques and processes that reveal a preoccupation with the temporal subtext of painting, and these borrowings of stylistic precedents richly embed themselves in Furnas' technique. In Furnas' figurative paintings there is a flattened, fractured visual space and hard-edged arrested animation of dynamic movement that owes nods as much to the analytic phases of Cubism and Futurism as to the motion blurred effects of psychoactive drug-taking and cinema. In their ready, economical, and knowing forms, Furnas' figures relay a sense of characterisation drawn from American fine art, folk and naïve painting; entirely enmeshing his content with its cultural heritage and place within a historical lineage.

In these new paintings at Modern Art, Furnas' subject turns to intimate portraits of figures inhabiting an anachronistic world of cultured self-destruction. In *Smoking Man* and *The Twins* (both 2011), bearded parlour-dwellers and bourgeois aficionados smoke cigarettes, relentlessly. These are personas whose consumption has accelerated beyond control. Their smoking arms are frozen in action again and again, strobing across the surface, using movement as a means to depict a new pictorial space. There is the sudden, machine-gunned feel of an old film projected at too many frames per second, or of an animator's working undone into a single image. Furnas gives us an entire evening's smoking, neither certainly slow-motion nor rapidly accelerated, but present and instant. The seated old man of *Street Musician (Venice Beach)* (2011) inhabits the lurid sunset glow of conventional US counter-culture, smoking and strumming his guitar with manic mechanical energy.

Barnaby Furnas was born in Philadelphia in 1973, and lives and works in New York. Furnas completed his MFA at Columbia University, New York in 2000, and BFA at the School of Visual Arts, New York in 1995. Barnaby Furnas has staged solo museum exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, USA (2009); the Museum of Modern Art Fort Worth, Dallas, USA (2007); and Baltic Centre of Contemporary Art, Gateshead (2005). Furnas' work has been included in group exhibitions *The Old, Weird America*, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Houston, travelling to DeCordova, Lincoln; Frye Art Museum, Seattle, USA (2009); *True Romance. Allegories of Love from the Renaissance to the Present*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, traveling to Museum Villa Stuck, Munich, Kunsthalle Zu Kiel, Kiel, Germany (2009); *Dream & Trauma. Works from the Dakis Joannou collection*, Athens, MUMOK, Vienna, Austria (2007); *Imagination Becomes Reality*, Museum of Contemporary Art at ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany (2007); *Art in America: Now*, Museum of Contemporary Art Shanghai, China (2007); *USA Today*, Royal Academy of Arts, London (2006); *The Whitney Biennial*, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA (2004); *Go Johnny Go*, Kunsthalle Wien, Austria (2003); *War (What Is It Good For?)*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, USA (2003).

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