

# ARTNEWS



Barnaby Furnas, *The First Morning (Fire Toads)*, 2015,  
mixed media, 99½" x 104".

## BARNABY FURNAS

MARIANNE BOESKY  
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Barnaby Furnas's abrupt turn to landscape in this dynamic six-painting show was by no means an abandonment of his signature narrative and graffiti work. Furnas channeled Cézanne's transformation of Mont Sainte-Victoire and in so doing took the master's geometric harnessing of nature one step further. Where Cézanne used a traditional horizon line to guide the viewer's gaze, Furnas transformed the line into a division between image and reflection. In all six paintings the upper section of the canvas is replicated in the lower, as if in a reflecting pool.

In, for example, the large, 99-by-104-inch *The First Morning (Fire Toads)*, 2015, this semblance of mirroring creates the effect of art contemplating itself. Precisely the point: the artist Narcissus fixes his gaze and imposes his vision on nature. Furnas did that while replicating the act of self-reflection within the painting. Thus the Loch Ness Monster-like form that rears its head up on the right side of the canvas contemplates its own reflection directly below.

A third section that reappeared in all six paintings was a thin white band at the very bottom. There, Furnas inscribed his name, a date, and geometric shapes painted in the colors he used above. This self-inscription together with a flattened perspective that nevertheless hints at depth reminds us that every painting, even landscape, is a self-portrait.

ALFRED MAC ADAM