

# ArtPic: Tony Baker's Gib, at Parade Gallery

BY FISH GRIWKOWSKY, EDMONTON JOURNAL MAY 1, 2015



Gib, by Tony Baker, is in the window of Parade Gallery on 101st Street through May 31.

**Photograph by:** Fish Griwkowsky, Edmonton Journal

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**ArtPic artist:** Tony Baker

**Artwork:** Gib, four-by-five-foot, mixed media on panel

**Show:** There's Bugs, There's Gibs, and Some Other Weirdos, running through May 31 at Parade Gallery (Edmonton City Centre Mall, 101st Street exterior-facing window)

**Description:** While the under-pedway bus stop on 101st Street has its share of personalities, none are as wild as the interstellar mutants found in the nearby Parade Gallery window.

Just a hint at the range of galactic taxonomy found in Tony Baker's lifelong fantasy-universe-as-art, the monstrous Gib is a scourge of his cluttered, infected-with-life galaxy. Known as The Expanse, it's a place of countless worlds embroiled in a million-year war that suddenly, mysteriously stopped.

But that doesn't mean it's a peaceful place. Baker explains his art: "The Parade Gallery is sort of weapons free, so I wanted to do a big Gib, with lots of teeth, super morbid, and has nothing to do with a commercial piece of art at all.

"And then there's another piece, it's got more Bugs in it. They're having a good time — it sort of looks

like a night-city scene, and I was thinking about that bus stop that's pretty crazy — so the two are talking to each other.”

Born in Winnipeg, Baker lived in Edmonton for years, but has since moved to Toronto and, most recently, Boston. The entire time, he's kept up a presence here through Front Gallery, where his gorgeous sci-fi can also be currently found.

“My wife is doing a post-doc at Harvard in classical languages, and it's been amazing. I'd stay there forever if I could afford to pay the rent, but as it stands we might be loading up the U-Haul and the dog and slinking back to Canada.”

He laughs, “Wait, it's not slinking!”

No matter where he lives on this crowded planet, The Expanse provides Baker a bottomless muse. “It's a vessel to draw inspiration from and it's really fun to make nerdy stuff and put it into fancy galleries ... make portraits of weirdos and” — he switches to a goofy voice — “say ‘This is high art!’ ”

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