

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Fergus McCaffrey
Art Basel in Miami Beach 2014
December 4-7, 2014
Booth L02

Jack Early

Staged presentations by the artist to take place within the booth:

Wednesday, December 3 at 3pm and 5pm
Thursday, December 4 at 3pm and 5pm

(November 24, 2014) – Fergus McCaffrey is pleased to present a new immersive installation of works by Jack Early at Art Basel in Miami Beach 2014.

Jack Early (b. 1962) ascended to fame in the late 1980's as one half of the duo Pruitt-Early. Following their 1992 exhibition *Red, Black, Green, Red, White and Blue* at Leo Castelli Gallery, a critical uproar ensued. While intended as a gesture of identification and alignment of gay culture with the misrepresentation in the mass media's portrayal of black popular culture, critics misread the show as racially insensitive at best or outright racist at worst. The resultant firestorm cost Pruitt-Early their relationship and their career as a collective. After over a decade in self-imposed exile, Early once again began creating works. Many of these relate to or incorporate the songs he had begun writing in the interim.

Early's work, both then and now, challenges societal and cultural orthodoxies and blurs the boundaries between high and low. His imagery is culled largely from American pop culture at the time of Early's youth, growing up in Raleigh, North Carolina. The works resonate with personal and cultural history that is informed by Laugh-In and The Beatles, as much as by the stories from his family's living room.

At its center, the installation created for Art Basel in Miami Beach will feature a lemon yellow Victrola on a stars and stripes platform entitled *Jack Early's Lifestory in Just Under 20 Minutes*, 2014. A spinning yellow record will recount a performance by Early – against the backdrop of a country time band playing a familiar-sounding melody composed by the artist we hear him narrate his story: *"I was born a cute, little redheaded baby in the year 1962 and named after my father. I'm Walter Jackson Early, Jr. They nicknamed me Jack after my granddaddy, Jack. But it wasn't long before everybody was just calling me Jack Rabbit.... Daddy's nickname was Squirrelly. Squirrelly Early, all his friends just called him Squirrelly."*

The performance reveals Early's uncanny ability to spin a tale. The story he tells here is an almost vaudevillian representation of his childhood and coming of age as a young gay man from the South who later moved to New York in the heady 1980's. Both funny and poignant, it not only offers insight into the man, but also serves to bring together the otherwise seemingly disparate elements of the installation. Early juxtaposes two giant yellow puzzle portraits of John Lennon and Paul McCartney with a recreation of his family as beanbag sculptures and large soft-core porn images painted over the wallpaper pattern from Early's boyhood room.

As Glenn O'Brien has described, Early is a "new sort of bluesman... making work that reflects the lonesome road he's been on, a road that goes through Jesus, Jesus Christ Superstar, John and Yoko, protest movements, and the United Federation of Planets."

Jack Early received a BA from Wesleyan College. Recent exhibitions have included *Pop Life: Art in the Material World*, Tate Modern, London, 2009; *Mapping the Studio: Artists from the François Pinault Collection*, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2009–11; *Jack Early: WWJD*, Southfirst, Brooklyn, 2012; and *Jack Early: Bed Peace*, McCaffrey Fine Art, New York, 2012. He lives and works in Brooklyn.

About Fergus McCaffrey

Founded in 2006, Fergus McCaffrey is internationally recognized for its groundbreaking role in promoting the work of post-war Japanese artists, as well as a quality roster of select contemporary European and American artists. Fergus McCaffrey's rigorous, thoughtful approach is marked by a commitment to discovery, often presenting the work of artists previously unrepresented or misrepresented. Dublin-born founder Fergus McCaffrey has been instrumental in introducing post-war Japanese art to a Western market, including Natsuyuki Nakanishi, and Gutai artists Sadamasa Motonaga and Kazuo Shiraga. The gallery also exhibits the work of seminal Western artists, including Andy Warhol, Birgit Jürgenssen, William Scott, Richard Nonas, Gary Rough, Jack Early and Sigmar Polke.

In May 2014 the gallery moved from the Upper East Side to Chelsea, now in a bi-level, 9,000 square foot, light-drenched space on West 26th Street. In celebration of its eighth year, Fergus McCaffrey is opening a second gallery in St. Barth (November 2014) and further expanding its global reach with a third location in Tokyo (2015).

Fergus McCaffrey is located at 514 West 26th Street, New York, NY 10001, 212-988-2200
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Stay connected with the gallery via [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) with the hashtags #FMNewYork and #FMJackEarly.

Images: Jack Early, Jack Early's Lifestory in Just Under 20 Minutes, 2014. Mixed media, 120 x 120 x 83 inches; 304.8 x 304.x 210.8 cm. Copyright Jack Early, courtesy Fergus McCaffrey. Portrait of Jack Early, courtesy Jeremiah Wilson.