

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Jack Pierson**

#### *Miss Otis Regrets*

August 19 - September 14, 2022

Opening reception: Friday, August 19, 7 - 9 pm / Friday, September 2, 6 - 8 pm

*Miss Otis Regrets* was written by Cole Porter 1934, allegedly at a party after hearing a “bad cowboy lament” on the radio, and challenged to write a lyric to fit the title “Miss Otis Regrets” by his long time friend Monte Woolley, it became a standard at high society parties, especially those of Elsa Maxwell. The lyric tells a story of a “society lady’s” downfall after a romantic fling goes bad, and she takes out a gun and shoots her no-good lover dead.

The scenario of an upper class white woman being lynched by a mob for killing her lover stood in stark contrast to the thousands of lynchings of black men that had been carried out throughout the South. Its embrace and mockery of social values brought the issue to the fore. The lyric is framed as Miss Otis’ butler announcing in an extremely dry manner the reasons why Miss Otis will not be able to attend lunch today. Specifically that she was jilted and dumped, tracked down her lover, killed him, was then arrested and jailed, and at the point of being hauled off to be lynched by a mob made sure to make an apology about not being able to make her lunch date.

Jack Pierson creating this work and using this as the title piece of the exhibition further expresses and incorporates his attraction to the lust, glamour, desire, rejection, revenge and attitude that would have been so familiar to Cole Porter and his friends and that thrives in the gay consciousness of our contemporary life.

The defiant attitude and self-ownership of propriety reflects the hard-won attitude and self-ownership of identity and pride in the gay community, especially among those who are considered the underclass or on the outskirts of society. It turns the whole premise on its head once again.

This exhibition is a first for our gallery - it is the first time in our 35 years that we have given the entire gallery space over to one artist to do as they please. We have known Jack and represented his work for 30 years, so we felt that it was the right thing to do. The fact that the exhibition is primarily word pieces is especially fitting considering that the first one person show that Jack had at our gallery in 1993 consisted of hand painted signs (*ROSES; Hi! Who me? I’m a “LACE-CAPPED HYDRANGEA”*) that echoed actual signs found in Provincetown. In 2006 his exhibition here consisted of actual word pieces along with profoundly personal and intimate pencil drawings.

Now recognized as being perhaps the most iconic of Jack’s body of work, the word pieces began in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s when he had a studio in Times Square, NY. The old theater marquees and storefronts were being “cleaned up” and demolished by the city. Jack eventually paid \$40. for 4 letters which he used to create

his first piece: *STAY*. At a time when gay men and other friends were dying of AIDS, it served as a poetic, heartfelt plea.

Today, all these many years later, the poetry and poignancy of these works resonate in ways both familiar and brand new. In some cases, the repetition of the word throughout the exhibition adds an element of chant or exhortation: *STAY STAY STAY / BECAUSE BECAUSE BECAUSE*. Others evoke that failed Hollywood glamour that has infused so much of his work : *BLONDE & BLUE*, or *STAR*. Regardless of the piece, they are all rich in layered meaning and interpretation.

## **Jack Pierson**

### *Remnants*

August 19 - September 14, 2022

Opening in-person event: Friday, September 2, 6 - 8 pm

In concurrence with the opening of *Miss Otis Regrets*, we will be presenting a special event - *Remnants* - an exhibition of Jack Pierson's test prints, proofs, slivers and other photographs from his studio that the artist hand stamps with his signature, and will range between \$100. and \$500. In addition there are a number of special framed photographs that are hand signed and dated that will also be available for sale.

Jack Pierson was born in Plymouth, MA in 1960.

He is associated with the Boston School, a group of artists and photographers that includes Nan Goldin, Philip-Lorca diCorcia, and the late Mark Morrisroe and David Armstrong. Some of his early exhibitions in New York were with Pat Hearn Gallery, White Columns and Tom Cugliani.

His work is in countless public and private collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; Graphische Sammlung der ETH, Zürich, Switzerland; and many others.