

LISSON GALLERY

Press Release

Jack Pierson *Pomegranates*

September 7 – October 14, 2023
504 West 24th Street, New York

In his first exhibition with Lisson Gallery, Jack Pierson presents *Pomegranates*, a magnum opus as it were, featuring work from throughout the artist and photographer's multidisciplinary practice. In this all-encompassing installation, Pierson incorporates photography, assemblage, text, and installation, testing the intricacies of personal and universal narratives. Traversing themes of beauty, identification, and the emotional undercurrents of daily life, Pierson offers a mise-en-scène of his life experiences and gestures towards the possibility of redemption through the creative act.

Photography, in one form or another, has always been at the core of Pierson's output. In this exhibition, he delivers the well-chosen fruit of his endeavors in the studio over the last three years. Known for his lush, saturated color photography, Pierson's new series of work takes on black-and-white studio photography as a means to investigate intimacy. As he states in the upcoming issue of *Cultured Magazine*, "I am figuring out whether it's possible [for me] to create an intimate photograph in a studio context...Can I take a picture that is intimate in the way I'm known for...Can I do that in an empty white space?" In *Lucian* (2023), the model assumes an academic pose, his body's graceful curvature enunciated with a salient luster, his countenance captured in a soft, focused contemplation—even in his composed stasis—as every contour of his physique is transformed into a node of affective possibility. The photograph displays the emotional rigor thriving in Pierson's new series, as the body is seized in an empyrean meditative moment.

Pierson's *Arrays*, in their New York debut at Lisson, anthologize his practice into large-scale optical displays of assembled imagery. Constructed using magazine pages, photographs, drawings, vintage posters, and other memorabilia, the arrangements are layered and fastened to ten by fifteen-foot metal panels, creating a tonal and thematic connection between each object. Using pink, blue, and black-and-white as organizing principles, the three *Arrays* explore their own materiality as well as the formal qualities of shape and color. Pierson's process of continuously adding and rearranging the diverse components on the wall can be indicative of a collector's mindset. Each material is afforded a highly-charged presence within the whole; works made by Pierson, purchased or found in his travels are set with exquisite, lapidary skill. For the first time, Pierson's own watercolors and drawings have been embedded in the new *Arrays*.

In addition to the *Arrays*, Pierson is debuting a new suite of sculptures fashioned from silver painted plywood found in his studio. Continuing an approach of assemblage the he began during time alone during the pandemic, Pierson has erected these freestanding objects in a way that can be read both as plinths or furniture, and they act as structures for the arrangement and display of various materials already within his studio. These may include Pierson's early 90s drawings or found photographs, alongside collected folk art, shells, exhibition posters and other ephemera. The works sit alongside other sculptural pieces, *Kodak Composition* (2023), *Bed Springs* (2023) and *Driftwood* (2022). They provide a structure for storytelling and the presentation of objects not necessarily made to be art, but that the artist wishes to be treated as art, archived, curated, and brought forth. The process of bringing forth is an ongoing celebration Pierson makes of what has gone before and what might be in danger of being overlooked.

Coinciding with the exhibition, Pierson will inaugurate a new gallery at 105 Henry Street. The gallery will open to the public October 1 from 12-6pm. Elliott Templeton Fine Arts will serve as a tribute to the antique shops that Pierson encountered in New York throughout the 80's and 90's often run by older gay men, which have now vanished from the map. The space will feature a broad range of programming and rotating presentations highlighting the male nude, physique photography and antique erotica. More information can be found online via Instagram @elliotttempletonfinearts

About the artist

Jack Pierson employs photography, collage, sculptural assemblage and installation in pursuit of love, longing, kinship, poetry, celebration, youth, and identity. The artist's mode of non-hierarchical cultural compilation and a process of impulse-led editing allows Pierson to create personal and universal narratives across his multidisciplinary practice.

Pierson's move to New York via stays in Miami and Los Angeles saw the evolution of staging in his work. Depicting recollections of autobiographical nights out and days in the studio, he constructed melancholic sets of indelible experiences and occasional, ironic gestures of self-portraiture. Pierson's eclectic approach also applies to his photography and ongoing accumulations of imagery, which evoke shared notions of reminiscence and desire. His first word sculptures, composed of discarded signage letters removed from their intended context, were found on the streets of New York's East Village and introduced a multiplicity of meaning into Pierson's practice. They question what is staged and what is casual, a theme that is unquestionably his own, in which material, object, subject, fragment and life all coalesce.

Jack Pierson was born in 1960 in Plymouth, Massachusetts. He lives and works in New York and in California. He graduated from the Massachusetts College of Art in 1984 where he participated in the Studio for Interrelated Media, one of the earliest formal academic programs for the study of performance art. Recent solo presentations include *Jack Pierson* at Museo Ettore Fico Torino, Italy (2021); *Jack Pierson: 5 Shows from the '90s* at Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO, USA (2017); and *Jack Pierson* at CAC Málaga, Málaga, Spain (2009). Select group exhibitions include *High Desert Test Sites 2022 (HDS 2022): The Searchers* curated by Iwona Blazwick at Joshua Tree, CA, USA (2022); *Any distance between us* at RISD Museum, Providence, RI, USA (2021); *Photography's Last Century: The Collection of Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, USA (2020); and *Be Seen: Portrait Photography Since Stonewall* at Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT, USA (2019).

Pierson's work is found in major public collections, including Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA; CAPC Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA, USA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, USA; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX, USA; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, USA; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, USA; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY USA, and Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT, USA.

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and promotes the work of more than 60 international artists across spaces in London, New York, Los Angeles, Shanghai and Beijing. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, John Latham, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. It still works with many of these artists as well as others of that generation from Carmen Herrera to the renowned estate of Leon Polk Smith. In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors to the public for the first time, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. Since 2000, the gallery has gone on to represent many more leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller, Tatsuo Miyajima and Sean Scully. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Ryan Gander, Van Hanos, Hugh Hayden, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes, Wael Shawky and Cheyney Thompson.

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