



## MACKENZIE YOUNGER: *PICTURES*

September 9 – 19, 2015

160 West Broadway, New York

Opening Reception: September 9, 2015, 6 – 8 pm



NEW YORK, August 21, 2015—A+E Studios is pleased to present *Pictures*, the first solo exhibition of work by New York based artist Mackenzie Younger, on view at 160 West Broadway from September 9 through September 19, 2015.

Inspired by early American art and the prevalence of smartphone imagery in today's culture, Younger's work re-contextualizes pre-photography paintings within the frames of the iPhone lock screen. The composition of each piece serves as a subtle commentary on the role of the smartphone as both benefactor of global curatorial practices, and disseminator of western democratic ideologies.

Applying his obsessive practice of referencing other artists' works to his own very personal framing of each image, Younger's paintings are able to make historical imagery relevant again. Representing both pictorial and numerical languages simultaneously, the works have easily recognizable icons from the iPhone lock screen format: battery life, Internet connection, and cell phone provider, some even read 'Slide To Unlock' at the bottom of the canvas. Pieces

with the time and date reveal the exact moment of the works completion. Younger uses these symbols to communicate to his contemporary audience, who unconsciously navigate the digital world on a daily basis.

Younger selected the subject of pre-photography American paintings as a way to become educated about art in a different realm, where painting was the primary mechanism for documenting people and events. The term 'Picture' itself, once solely applied to the creation of a painting or drawing, is now primarily associated with the act of taking photos and photography. George Washington, a subject in one of Younger's paintings is quoted as saying, "I hate having my picture taken," when asked to sit for painter.

In many ways parallels can be drawn between the Smartphone's ability to empower the individual, and Enlightenment principles of the 18th century—the conceptual basis for the founding of America. The smartphone serves as a streamlined platform for unrestricted self-expression and the personalized aesthetic curation of our daily lives. It is also a political tool and vehicle to document injustice. Police violence captured on video and shared via the smartphone can be seen as the modern day equivalent to Thomas Paine's 1776 revolution inspiring, *Common Sense* pamphlet, which helped shape public opinion on repression by appealing to the masses. History and consumption of art has been forever changed by technology and the access it provides. The iPhone has become an instrument of curatorial creative exploration and communication, a conduit for American democratic ideology. Once confined to site-specific exhibitions and organized by a select few empowered tastemakers responsible for discerning zeitgeists and deconstructing paradigms, art in all of its forms is now available to anyone with an Internet connection.

Divisive opinions about the smartphone's global cultural impact as transmitter of capitalistic virtues—often unwanted and without proper cultural appropriation— put the device as a central emblem of modern American culture and democratic ideals. As described by Louis Latham in his essay, *Who and What is American*, Democracy continues to exist in that delicate balance between lofty ideals and human fallibility, "For the spirit of liberty is never far from anarchy [...] If we wish to live in the state of freedom that allows us to make and think and build, then we must accustom ourselves to the shadows on the walls and wind in the trees. The climate of anxiety is the cost of doing business."

### About Mackenzie Younger

Mackenzie Younger studied painting at the Rhode Island School of Design, and is presently getting certified as a Landscape Designer at the New York Botanical Gardens. In the past six months Younger has contribute to an A+E group show, Fluxus auction, and participated in two artist residences. His latest body of work is a reflection of his interests in history, place and contemporary media culture.

### About A+E Studios

Located in the heart of Tribeca, A+E Studios is a multi-purpose event and exhibition space dedicated to facilitating dynamic partnerships between artists, collectors, and innovative brands. Founded in the fall of 2014, the gallery has since provided a platform for artists working across all creative industries, engaging broad audiences with exhibitions and events in their 2300 square foot space on West Broadway. In close collaboration, Jessica Speiser and Annie Shinn carry out A+E's mission of relating contemporary art to the ideas and concepts shaping contemporary life creating thoroughly researched presentations, which place the work on display within relevant historical social and cultural contexts.

At the intersection of contemporary culture and its artistic products, A+E Studios presents exhibitions, which investigate today's increasingly complex exchanges between input and output, inner and outer, natural and artificial, public and private - revealing the shape shifting forces and abstract ideas transforming the present day.

Image credit: MACKENZIE YOUNGER [to be titled], 2015. Courtesy of the artist and A+E Studios.

Listings Information: A+E Studios is located at 160 West Broadway in Tribeca.

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