

Brian Maguire
March 5–April 25, 2015

“The absence of justice demands this act.” —Brian Maguire



Fergus McCaffrey is very proud to present the gallery's first exhibition of works by the critically acclaimed Irish painter Brian Maguire (b. 1951). The exhibition opens on Thursday, March 5, with a reception for the artist and continues until April 25.

Since 2010, Maguire has worked regularly in the Mexican city of Juárez—the murder capital of the world—where more than 5,000 people have been butchered by drug cartels over the past six years. The exhibition includes fourteen large paintings completed between 2012 and 2014 that address the Mexican drug war.

The exhibition also includes the documentary film *Blood Rising*, co-produced by Mark McLoughlin and Brian Maguire. *Blood Rising* details Maguire's portraiture and activism in response to the murder of 1,400 young women in Juárez since 1994—a horrifying phenomenon that is known as “feminicidio.”

For Maguire, painting is an act of solidarity with the forgotten and voiceless. His figurative paintings and portraits confound tradition by using the authority of the genre to bring dignity to the overlooked and marginalized. These are some of Maguire's largest and most nuanced paintings to date, which he has crafted with larger brushes and thinned-down acrylic on canvas. He works slowly, using photographic sources, searching for that point where illustration ceases and art begins.

Maguire's aesthetic sensibility and practice can be traced back to his involvement in the struggle for social justice during the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland in the 1970s. Born a decade or more after the German Neo-Expressionists, Maguire's peers include Martin Kippenberger (1953–1997) and Francesco Clemente (b. 1952), but his kinship with Marlene Dumas (b. 1953) is most pronounced, in their outrage at moral hypocrisy and their concerns with both social justice and violence against the body.

Maguire's work is difficult to accomplish, and as Ed Vulliamy of *The Guardian* of London has observed, “Narrators of stories of this kind, if they care, have a fear of exploiting grief as they walk the high wire between narrative and voyeurism.” With respect to Maguire and McLoughlin and *Blood Rising*, he added, “For the first time in a report on the *feminicidio* by foreigners, manipulation is entirely absent from the telling.”¹

Maguire's preoccupations draw him to the margins of the art world—alternative space, prisons, women's shelters, and mental homes—making shows in traditional gallery and museum spaces something of a rarity. A major retrospective of Maguire's work was organized by the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin (2000), and traveled to the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston. He has shown with Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, since 1990, and represented Ireland at the 1998 Sao Paulo Biennial.

About Fergus McCaffrey

Founded in 2006, Fergus McCaffrey is internationally recognized for its groundbreaking role 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 Jürgensen, William Scott, Richard Nonas, Gary Rough, Jack Early and Sigmar Polke.

Chelsea, NY based Fergus McCaffrey opened a second gallery location on the Caribbean island of St. Barthélemy in November 2014. The gallery's third location opens in Tokyo in 2015.

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Stay connected with the gallery via Facebook, Instagram and Twitter with the hashtags #FMBrianMaguire and #FMNewYork.

Photo: Brian Maguire, *Cardona Bridge (Juárez)*, 2012, Acrylic on linen. 82 5/8 x 67 inches, 210 x 170 cm. Courtesy Brian Maguire and Fergus McCaffrey, New York.

¹ Ed Vulliamy, "Painted back to life: Brian Maguire's portraits of the victims of Mexico's 'feminicidio'," *The Guardian*, May 4, 2014.