

# GEORGE ADAMS GALLERY

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## Peter Dean

*Paintings 1975 to 1989*

November/December 2014

In November and December George Adams Gallery will show a group of paintings from the 1970s and 1980s by Peter Dean (1934-1993). The exhibition will include 7 large-scale works in the artist's rich, thick, impasto style. This will be his first exhibition with the gallery.

Born in Berlin, Peter Dean was mostly a self-taught artist. He studied geology and audited art history classes at Cornell and the University of Wisconsin and became a full-time artist in the late 1960s. Heavily influenced by German Expressionism and Fauvism, he eschewed the minimalist environment that was in vogue. He developed a deeply expressive style that was personal and also responsive to the politics and events he lived through. While many of the themes of his work are dark, such as *Assassination of Malcolm X*, 1981, his approach was to give historical moments a mystical, symbolic and ecstatic quality. The carnival atmosphere ever present in the paintings does not lessen the tragic resonance of the events portrayed.

It is notable that Dean was responsible for co-founding two artists groups. The first, put together in 1965, was called Torque. Named after a dream, the group was caught up in the counter-culture and Dean said of the group, "We were maniacs in the midst of minimalism." Other members of Torque were Peter Saul and Leon Golub. The second group, called Rhino Horn, took shape in 1969 and included artist such as Peter Passuntino, Nick Sperakis, Benny Andrews and occasionally Red Grooms. Rhino Horn, was named for the supposed aphrodisiac qualities of rhinoceros horns and the artists took this energy to making artworks that spoke out against the Vietnam War and other issues of the day. Towards the end of the 1980s, Dean's work came more into fashion as the East Village art scene heated up and neo-expressionism came into favor.

A retrospective a Peter Dean's work was organized in 1990 by the Alternative Museum in New York City. He was given a solo-exhibition at the North Dakota Museum of Art in 1989. His work is in the permanent collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, Akron Art Museum, National Gallery of Art, New Orleans Museum of Art, Denver Art Museum among other major museums. Over his long career, Dean exhibited in numerous gallery exhibitions in New York, Chicago, New Orleans, San Francisco and many other cities in the United States and Europe.

For more information and images, please contact the gallery at: info@georgeadamsgallery.com

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