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PETER DEAN: Visions and Fantasies

Cape Cod Museum of Art

On View November 3 – January 7, 2018

Public Reception November 9, 2017 5:30 – 7 pm

I interpret reality into fantasy and back again. I'm a juggler of color and textures. I'm a seer of the past and a prophet of the future. I ride the hurricane. – Peter Dean

This Cape Cod Museum of Art (CCMoA) exhibition of Peter Dean's work is a cornucopia of vibrant colorful landscapes, symbols, and phantasmagoria from an artist whose work during the turbulent 1970s and 80s, when abstract art was popular, was largely dismissed, but today seems to have reverberations with contemporary art.

"Today, Dean's rich, thick impasto style of figurative expressionism has a collage-like quality and reflects political concerns that we see in contemporary artwork," says CCMOA Director Edith (Deede) Tonrelli. "He brought his energy to express his passions in a symbolic and sometimes burlesque carnival atmosphere. His landscapes are the embodiment of emotion and mood."

All of the pieces in this show are from a local private collection that includes work from many of the figurative expressionist painters from the 1960s through the 1990s. Dean was a New-York based artist who spent summers on Cape Cod, and brought many of his artist-friends with him. A commissioned series of local landscape paintings, called the "Wianno" series, included a painting that was chosen for the Venice Biennale of 1984.

Dean, who died in 1993, was born in Berlin in 1934. Dean and his parents fled Nazi Germany for the United States in 1938. He studied geology and travelled for years before dedicating himself to painting in the late 1960s. He was influenced by the art movements of German Expressionism and Fauvism that flourished in the early twentieth century. In 1969, Dean co-founded the Rhino Horn Group, a group of artists whose passion was to make art that spoke up against the horrors of war and other contentious issues of division in our country.

Their manifesto states, "We are not concerned with making pure color or pure form the subject of the painting; we are concerned with, and express, a harsher reality - harsher, that is, than the cotton-candy world that advertising men would have all of us believe we live in. Nor does our work allow a pleasant, self-indulgent escape; for it is a product of our awareness of the state of the world we do live in."

Dean said, "I am of the future but [I] worship an ancient god. I am a magician who transforms the images of our times into painting. I interpret reality into fantasy and back again. I'm a juggler of color and textures. I'm a seer of the past and a prophet of the future. I ride the hurricane. I walk on the tightrope of sanity. I live on the edge of the world."

He was given a solo-exhibition at the North Dakota Museum of Art in 1989 and a retrospective of his paintings was organized in 1990 by the Alternative Museum in New York City. 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.

About Cape Cod Museum of Art

Founded by artists in 1981, the Cape Cod Museum of Art preserves and celebrates the distinctive artistic identity of Cape Cod, Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. CCMoA is a major hub of cultural growth and creativity that educates, inspires and excites the imagination through its outstanding art collection and diverse programming. Located in a beautiful setting surrounded by a sculpture garden, the museum has seven galleries, a museum shop and film screening room. The museum is supported in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod.

CCMoA is located at 60 Hope Lane, just off Route 6A, on the same campus as the Cape Cinema and the Cape Cod Playhouse in Dennis, MA. Winter Hours are 10 am to 4 pm Thursday through Saturday and noon to 4pm on Sunday. It is open on Thursdays from 5 – 7 with no admission fee. General Admission is \$9, \$7 for seniors and students 19+ with school ID, \$5 for students 13 to 18, and free for children 12 & under. For more information, see www.ccmoa.org or call (508) 385-4477.