

# CHURNER *and* CHURNER

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Exhibition: **Taylor Mead**

Dates: **12 January – 18 February 2012**

opening reception with reading by the artist: 12 January, 6-8 pm

film screening: 14 January, 7 pm

*I don't do anything. I just spontaneously happen into  
strange situations. . . . I'm a renaissance person.*

– Taylor Mead

Churner and Churner presents an exhibition of works by Taylor Mead, magister ludi of the American underground in film, poetry, and painting. The exhibition focuses on works from the 1980s—many never before seen—and a new set of drawings based on Mead's "Fairy Tale Poem." The exhibition opens on January 12 with a poetry reading by the artist.

On Saturday, January 14, the gallery will show Andy Warhol's *Lonseome Cowboys* and the rarely screened *Taylor Mead's Ass*, along with a collection of home-movies by Mead. A question-and-answer with the artist will follow.

The exhibition focuses on Mead's "Fairy Tale Poem," a wry, illustrated tale of a castle in the woods (starring none other than Andy Warhol himself), which features prominently in the artist's regular performances at the Bowery Poetry Club and was shown in the 2006 Whitney Biennial. For the show at Churner and Churner, Mead has created a new series of drawings for the ever-evolving poem. Also on display are a group of paintings, some retrieved from Mead's apartment in the Lower East Side where he has resided for thirty-two years, and others from the collections of his friends in the neighborhood. Testimonies to the romantic bohemian lifestyle of New York in the 1980's, the paintings have survived cockroach infestation, subsequent fumigation, and a collapsed ceiling. Mead's work supplanted everyday considerations long ago; in the artist's own words, "I've painted myself out of my apartment."

These paintings take their gestures and color palettes from Neo-Expressionism but retain a purposeful naivete. Many are portraits, including images of Garbo and Warhol; others depict wild animals and exotic scenes. Like all of Mead's artistic practice, these paintings are invigorated by a combination of ironic naiveté and a roguish sense of humor.

The exhibition is accompanied by a publication which includes a catalogue of images, including the new version of “Fairy Tale Poem,” as well as an excerpt from the third volume of Mead’s longform poem “Anonymous Diaries of a New York Youth.”

**About the artist**

Taylor Mead was born in 1924 in Grosse Point, Michigan. He was an influential member of the Beat scene in San Francisco’s North Beach and New York’s Lower East Side, crafting witty, ironic and occasionally dirty poetry. His first venture into film stardom was in Ron Rice’s *The Flower Thief* in 1960. Soon after Mead relocated to New York, where he was introduced to Andy Warhol, with whom he made numerous films, including a starring turn in Warhol’s *Tarzan and Jane Regained... Sort of*. J. Hoberman once called Mead “the first underground movie star.” He recently appeared in Jim Jarmusch’s *Coffee and Cigarettes*, and continues to perform at the Bowery Poetry Club every Monday night.

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