

CHEIM & READ



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WINGS OF DESIRE

Jack Pierson is an utter iconoclast, an artist who not only understands the darkest sides of beauty and desire but also the cultural psychosis that drives us onto the public stage in the name of some unattainable glamour. His is a vision that should die young and leave a beautiful corpse, an ideal that must self-destruct in martyred ecstasy before the shrine of history and its false gods of immortality. Hardly then would we ever expect his much-celebrated oeuvre to fit so comfortably and elegantly in the forthcoming hard-cover coffee-table tome glory of a mid-career retrospective *Jack Pierson: Desire/Despair* (Rizzoli). "For me it was about letting go," Pierson explains, "understanding that it was not my book but a book about me." Antiheroic, of the moment and built from the sort

of nuanced impermanence that is the most dangerous kind of glamour, Pierson's aesthetic wanderlust has always sought refuge from authorship. As this collection runs a quarter century gamut from desperate drawings and erratic word sculptures to wickedly seductive photographs, Pierson contemplates his own midlife assessment. "I always thought my art would be a great collection of junk and wanted my retrospective to be like a really good thrift store," he maintains. "I'd like my style to be anonymous, maybe not even art, but I realize now that it does have a look to it, a style that I just can't help." Indeed, the tragedy and travesty of life has never been sexier. *Desire/Despair* is just the kind of guilty pleasure anyone could be proud of. ★ Carlo McCormick • Artwork by Jack Pierson