

ART EXHIBITION

Paintings by Attilio Sinagra: June 1 – August 30, 2016



Attilio Sinagra was an esteemed local artist from Atlantic City. He completed a vast body of work during his lifetime, ranging from book covers to fine art. As an illustrator, he perfected the art of capturing the soul of his subjects. This gift, along with his appreciation for beauty, was conveyed in all of the disciplines and bodies of his work. Following the philosophies of Gerald Celente and Verdi, Sinagra focused much of his life on the redevelopment and renaissance of Atlantic City. Through his artwork responding to the state of the city, and as Vice Chairman of the Atlantic City Art Commission, he worked to bring the resort back to its former glory.

Sinagra received his BFA in Illustration from Pratt Institute, studying under illustrators Nicholas F. Riley and Harvey Dunn. For thirty-two years during the heyday of commercial illustration, he worked as an advertising and publishing illustrator in New York. His clients included prestigious corporations, publishers, studios and advertising agencies. A well-respected art teacher for more than sixteen years, he taught at his alma mater, Pratt, as well as schools and colleges throughout Atlantic City.

During the time of the Vietnam War, Sinagra was appointed as an official artist of the US Air Force. He painted his impressions of the war, which required travel to the middle of the action in the air and on the ground. His sketches later informed paintings and lithographs that are now part of the US Air Force's permanent collection. From this military background he acquired discipline and a sense of duty that persisted throughout his life. Upon his return, he lobbied for the restoration of Atlantic City's beauty as Vice Chairman on the Atlantic City Art Commission.

Following a six-month trip to Venice in the mid -1960s, Sinagra completed an impressive body of paintings, drawings, and glass sculptures. Work from this period was shown in several galleries in Italy and New York, with his glass sculptures famously shown side by side with work by Picasso, Chagall,



Attilio Sinagra
Dilapidated Home and Lighthouse, 1986
Watercolor on paper
On loan from the collection of
The Noyes Museum of Art of Stockton University

Ernst and Coignard, among others. His interest in historic preservation was enhanced by this experience, and in many ways informed the works he completed following his return to Atlantic City.



Attilio Sinagra
Greek Monument, 1989
Watercolor on paper
On loan from the collection of
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In the last third of his life, Sinagra painted scenes and impressions of his hometown. These illustrations highlighted a time of transition throughout the city. When he returned in 1968, he was dismayed to find that the town where he grew up looked altogether unfamiliar to him. Heartbroken by the mass demolition of charming architecture and Victorian homes on the northeast end of the island and the decaying structures throughout the city, he felt inspired to improve the town. Documenting the changing face of the city through watercolor paintings, he continued until his death in 2004. Viewing it almost as a cautionary tale, the story of the city's rise and fall was important to Sinagra. He completed a number of paintings of the earlier Atlantic City skyline, before the casinos and concrete parking lots replaced famous boardwalk hotels and beautiful architecture. In many ways, his painted scenes

and skylines were proposals of what should continue throughout the city. The work was exhibited in 1989 and 1999. The first exhibition made parallels between architectural elements and adornments on older Atlantic City hotels and similar fixtures in Venetian architecture. His second exhibition was bolder, with contrasting paintings of old and new structures introduced by his personal artist statement:

I still believe that a city has the right to be beautiful. But this requires a very strong sense of pride in its citizens as well as great diligence in responsible government. An aesthetic environment was the key to the Renaissance. We will never have a "Renaissance," nor a lasting redevelopment WITHOUT IT!

Attilio Sinagra left a lasting legacy as an active force in his campaign for the return of the old Atlantic City. The idyllic painted scenes of his hometown are wistful memories of what used to be, before the demolition and development of the area. Certain paintings celebrate a movement in the right direction, such as the War Memorial Monument, the Greek-style temple that welcomes visitors entering the city on the Black Horse Pike. Documenting the decay within the town, Sinagra accomplished his goal: to force his audience to recognize the reality of Atlantic City. His body of work condemned missteps in the city's past but, more importantly, urged his viewers to avoid making the same mistakes.

For more information about The Noyes Museum of Art of Stockton University go to:

www.noyesmuseum.org

www.artsgarageac.com