

Armenian Art at Center

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A show of paintings by Ariel Agemian called "Sacred to Profane: Early 20th Century Armenian Art" takes place at the Glenwood Springs Center for the Arts (next to the vapor caves) December 3 -30.

Turkish-born Agemian (1904-1963) was driven out of his home as a boy during a Turkish massacre against Armenians, was rescued by Armenian Monks and taken to Italy where he was raised.

Agemian graduated from the Venice Academy of Fine Arts in 1926, and taught in Italy until 1931, when he went to Paris, until 1938.

Agemian was of the school of academic realism, and was a master of composition. A devout religious man, he painted the Armenian people, as well as landscapes, portraits, still lifes, nudes, figures and battle scenes.

A move to the US in 1938 signaled a new era for the artist, who caused quite a stir on art gallery row, after a showing of his work in 1939 in New York.

Later he went to work for a Catholic publishing house and painted more than 500 illustrations and major works. In 1958, Agemian was given the highest honor bestowed upon a layman by the Catholic Church as Pope Pius XI honored him with a gold medal and knighthood.

He became reclusive and though he sketched daily, his works were never publicly displayed again. His legacy lives on through works donated to museums in New York and Soviet Armenia, and in the private collection of Annig Agemian Raley, his daughter.