

A VERY SPECIAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBIT

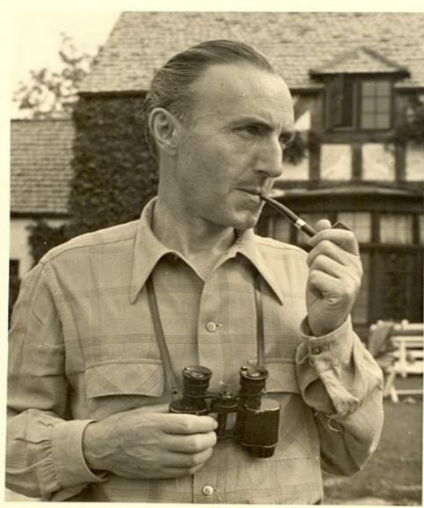
ATHOS MENABONI – GEORGIA’S OWN ARTIST:

As part of the celebration of its 50th anniversary, the Jekyll Island Arts Association, Inc. is reacquainting itself with an old friend.

Athos Menaboni, though Italian born, lived and worked in and around Atlanta for over 60 years.

From March 19th through 31st, the Association is excited to present an exhibit,

BIRDS OF JEKYL ISLAND: ORIGINAL WORKS BY ATHOS MENABONI.



Menaboni (1895-1990) is considered by many as one of the world’s finest painters of bird life and acclaimed by art lovers and bird lovers alike. His and his wife Sara’s lives and work were a love affair, not just with his art, but with the birds and other creatures who inhabited it. They also inhabited their home. Birds sat on eggs in a basket threaded to the chandelier. A coot roosted on the shower rod and a screech owl perched on the corner of the easel. Rescued little squirrels cuddled under the desk. When asked if all this nature didn’t “streak” the furniture, Sara replied that furniture could be cleaned. The implication was that nothing else could replace the joy.

All this closeness helped Athos intimately know his subjects. He developed techniques which allowed him to layer his oil colors thinly and in fine detail. Feathers are almost luminous. The

down peeking from underneath is just waiting to be ruffled by the slightest passing breeze. Athos believed that like us every bird has an individual face. Placed in their native foliage, usually paired with their mates, his beloved friends are brought to life for us.

Classically trained in art growing up in coastal Tuscany, Menaboni immigrated to America following arduous service in World War I. To support himself, he painted church candles and religious art. He later became sought after as a muralist and his work graces the walls and ceilings of many of Georgia’s finest homes and other buildings. He and Sara spent several months on Sapelo Island while he created the whimsical works that fill the R.J. Reynolds South End mansion.

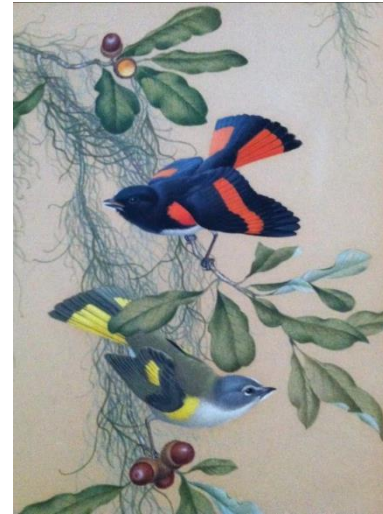
During the late depression years, when mural work was scarce, Athos started experimenting for his own pleasure with his first love – the birds. The first piece, a cardinal, was immediately snatched off the wall of his home by a decorator friend and placed in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hartwell Boyd of Saint Simons Island.

Sara later sent a portfolio of Athos’ work to her sister-in-law in New York which resulted in almost immediate exhibitions at noted galleries and organizations in New York City. The works then went on to Boston. The rest is history.

Menaboni’s most devoted sponsors included Robert Woodruff, long-time leader of Coca-Cola for whom Athos created an original Christmas card featuring a different bird found on the Woodruff retreat in

south Georgia for 41 years in a row. Members of the Calloway family also became good friends and sponsors and both Athos' and Sara's estates were willed to Callaway Gardens upon their deaths.

In 1974, two residents of Jekyll Island who were also friends and neighbors of the Menabonis arranged for an exhibit of Menaboni originals at Goodyear Cottage, the then new and newly restored home of the Jekyll Island Arts Association. The Menabonis spent a week on the island being met and feted as over 1000 visitors enjoyed the 3 day exhibit. A limited edition of 250 lithographs of one of the exhibit pieces, "Snowy Egret", was made available for sale to help defray costs of caring for Goodyear Cottage. It was sold out in a day and a half.



A few months later, Menaboni donated an original work, "Osprey" to the Arts Association in memory of the recently deceased Cecily Masters, a long time resident of the island and beloved Georgia ornithologist. It now hangs in the entry to the Goodyear gallery and is a prized possession.

Two years later, in 1976, Menaboni works were again exhibited at the cottage as part of a larger bicentennial exhibit of original works by known artists. Again, lithographs were donated. This time, 250 of a 950 piece edition of the bicentennial work "American Bald Eagle" were sold.

Menaboni works have been widely exhibited in galleries and museums around the country and are included in permanent collections of many institutions and private owners. Having Menaboni's original works highlight the Jekyll Island Arts Association's 50th anniversary celebration is an honor and a perfect commemoration.

In order to reacquaint everyone with this old friend, the association hosted a program entitled "A Valentine from Athos Menaboni" to share and expand the artist's story. The program was held at Mistletoe Cottage in the Historic District on Jekyll Island on Valentines Day. Refreshments followed at Goodyear Cottage next door.

We shared materials provided by the March exhibit's guest curator, D. Russell Clayton. He is a retired educator from Marietta, GA who was a personal friend of the Menabonis. He devotes much of his time to preserving and perpetuating the memory and legacy of Athos Menaboni. Athos is fortunate to such a faithful and generous friend. We are the beneficiaries.

Mr. Clayton has recently donated one of the 1976 "American Bald Eagle" lithographs to the Arts Association and Mr. and Mrs. David Hamer, long-time members of the association have generously donated one of the rare 1974 "Snowy Egret" lithographs. These were unveiled at the program.

The March anniversary exhibit of original works will open to the public with a gala reception at Goodyear Cottage on Sunday, March 19, 2017 from 1:00 to 5:00PM. Admission is free and the public is cordially invited. The exhibit will continue daily from 9:00AM to 5:00PM until March 31, 2017.



Kate Hamer with "Snowy Egret"



Mary Stock and "American Bald Eagle"