

Eternity's Breath by  
Francis Mesaros



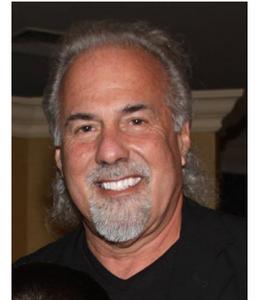
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# An Artist's Dream

## THE HOLTZMAN GALLERY AT THE CLARIDGE: MAKING ART HISTORY IN ATLANTIC CITY

By MOLLY GOLUBCOW

David Holtzman



As a local artist and art lover, David Holtzman has been creating and displaying art since he was eight years old. Art is in his blood; part of his genetic makeup. He grew up in the 1960s watching his father, also an artist, buying unique art such as Peter Max's work and displaying them around their Philadelphia home. Holtzman went on to become a book and magazine cover illustrator working for the Philadelphia Inquirer, Good Housekeeping, and many other publications.

In addition to his illustrator career, he also created numerous sculptures and portraits over the last 30 years, including James Dean, Marilyn Monroe, Muhammad Ali, and other celebrities. As an evolving artist, he always seeks out new things for his own art. According to Holtzman, "I am always trying new and different types of images and media, as did Picasso and other versatile master artists from around the world." If David Holtzman could be a famous artist, he would be "a

Picasso with a touch of Van Gogh and a splash of Gauguin."

*"I chose Ventnor as a SoHo by the beach for the location of my first gallery."*

In 2012, Holtzman opened a gallery on Atlantic Avenue in Ventnor featuring his own work as well as some of his favorite artists. Why Ventnor? Holtzman, a transplant from Philadelphia to Ventnor explains, "I see Ventnor as having more character than Margate or Longport with a touch of city feel ... just a block from the beach, with major window visibility and the only high-end, fine art gallery on the island — and in Atlantic County for that matter."

Offering new and exciting art is what Holtzman Gallery does best, featuring Peter Max, Dali, Erté, Icart, John Lennon, Anthony Quinn, and many more. Although Holtzman loves many of the pieces in his gallery, some of his favorites include a self-portrait of Anthony

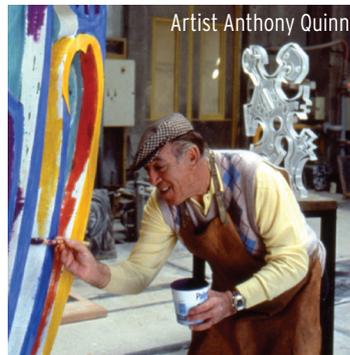
Quinn, a very 1928 Deco piece by Louis Icart, and a moody Salvador Dali.

*"The Holtzman Gallery at The Claridge will be a one-of-a-kind creative art venue in the world."*

Holtzman's vision for his gallery is becoming a three-fold reality: 1. Creating a museum setting where people are welcome to look and enjoy over 1,000 works of art, but in the nature of a true fine art gallery, offer what is exhibited for sale. 2. Displaying the works of world-renowned artists — some that are sold exclusively at the gallery, and 3. Offering works by local artists, well known or budding, added to the versatile collection of fine-quality art "never seen together under the same roof."

Featuring something for everyone's tastes, the gallery will display oil, acrylic, and water color paintings, museum quality limited-edition prints, and one-of-a-kind original pieces by Anthony Quinn, Francis Mesaros, Burt Young, Vladimir Kush, Nicola Simbari,

***“If I could have any piece of art in the world, I would want a Vincent Van Gogh self-portrait – he was a painter’s painter.”***



David Holtzman, and many more. There will be no two artists with any art similar to each other. In addition to paintings, the gallery will offer a mix of sculpture, from huge bronze pieces to marble, stone, metal, glass, and mixed media art.

After a soft opening in late January, Holtzman hopes to host a grand opening in the spring. Located off the first floor lobby of the Claridge Hotel, the art exhibits will be free to the public Monday-Thursday, 10:00 AM-5:30 PM and Friday-Saturday 10 AM-10 PM. In the future, the gallery may offer more extended weekend hours to accommodate late-night art enthusiasts. Additionally, there will be a free, gallery-only parking lot directly outside its entrance doors at Park Place and Pacific Avenue.

*“The Holtzman Gallery will be the hip place to have special high-end events, such as black tie cocktail receptions, and we are getting requests for wedding ceremonies too.”*

The Claridge Hotel, one of the last holdouts still standing from the old, classic Atlantic City skyline, decided to close its casino floor last year and concentrate on rebirthing itself into a boutique setting with fine dining and other amenities. Following that new philosophy, Holtzman has transformed the area where hundreds of slot machines once clanged 24/7 into a 20,000-square-foot art gallery. He hopes and feels that his vision will become “...the largest fine art gallery space in the world.”

The museum will have a sleek, contemporary feel, but retain some of its 1930s traditional touches reminiscent of the

times when the Claridge was built. All walls are white with subtle touches of gold and brass railings illuminated with extravagant chandeliers. Vaulted ceilings create a multi-level space — the upper level, steps up from the main floor, houses the “Holtzman Collection.” The “Alex & Doris Collection” (named after Holtzman’s parents who passed in 2012) is located on the lower level. The art pieces will be displayed on uniquely designed, diagonal nine feet high walls, allowing for plenty of “breathing space” throughout the gallery for the art and sculptures.

The Gallery is Holtzman’s baby, his love, his life, and he has carefully hovered over every detail, from architectural plans to carpet colors. He meticulously controls the horizontal and the vertical to create a unique venue for art and art goers. Holtzman explains, “I exclusively designed all the floor plans in order to avoid cookie-cutter designs as if it were an art expo or trade show. I am creating a high-end museum atmosphere.”

In addition to being a space to exhibit fine art, The Holtzman Gallery will also serve as a venue for special occasions like wedding receptions and other events where the art will serve as a backdrop. Already scheduled for February, Burt Young — actor, painter, writer, and director, will speak at a Greater Chamber of Commerce event at The Gallery. Young, who made his name playing rough-edged, working class Italian-American characters, is best-known for his signature role as Sylvester Stallone’s brother-in-law Paulie in *Rocky*. Holtzman is excited to have Young as one of the first speakers at his gallery because Young’s art has been displayed in galleries throughout the world.

In March, the Garden State Film Festival — New Jersey’s premiere independent film festival — will hold festival events in the Holtzman Gallery. Hosting the festival is a much needed feather in Atlantic City’s cap and for the new gallery as well. In the past, the Garden State Film Festival has attracted a host of famed actors, including Glen Close, Celeste Holm, Ed Asner, and the late James Gandolfini.

*“I believe I will be the city’s engineer and torch holder, to finally make Atlantic City a true place for the arts.”*

Why build his gallery in Atlantic City? Holtzman feels the city is entering a new era, a “rebirth.” He sees Atlantic City becoming a resort where beach, boardwalk, ocean, art, entertainment, dining, shopping, and gaming blend into a positive experience that draws people to AC. Holtzman is a huge proponent for reinventing Atlantic City, but with a touch of art. According to Holtzman, “Many venues already exist, and are not known. The Gallery at Claridge will be a champion of such, and will get the word out internationally about our gallery, what exists now and what is still to come.”

Like a true master, a perfectionist, and artist, Holtzman aims high. He believes his idea will help draw people to his gallery to see and/or buy amazing pieces of art. If the city is a blank canvas ready for reinvention, Holtzman feels his art selections and the gallery itself will paint an exciting and new “portrait” of the city that will “... help put Atlantic City on the map as far as fine art goes.” ■