



The first major exhibition of the work of Alexander O. Levy in three decades will open Friday in the Burchfield Penney Art Center.

Alexander O. Levy's Art Deco paintings go on view in Burchfield Penney

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In many mid-sized American cities, the careers of local artists who achieved great fame and popularity in their day are too often doomed to perpetual irrelevance. But not in Buffalo, where staffers at the Burchfield Penney Art Center (1300 Elmwood Ave.) constantly mine the proud artistic history of the city and its former art-world superstars.

A case in point is "Alexander O. Levy: American Artist, Art Deco Painter," the first major exhibition of Levy's work in three decades and an attempt to put contemporary audiences back in touch with the work of one of the city's most accomplished artists. His work is well-known to art experts but has lost its resonance with wider audiences.

The show, curated by Burchfield Penney Chief Curator Scott Propeack and SUNY Buffalo State professor and collector Albert Michaels, contains 75 paintings by Levy from 27 public and private collections.

Levy was born in Germany, moved to Buffalo in 1909 and later worked as an illustrator for the Larkin Soap Co. and various national publications. He painted in the Ashcan style, contributing murals to buildings throughout the city and establishing himself as one of its most gifted and prolific painters.

"To understand where we are today, we need to constantly look backwards," Propeack said in a statement. "Levy's iconic work represented not only an identity of a city, but of a nation at a tumultuous time. He helps us explore complex, contemporary questions in this community about the evolution of art – the shift from the traditional representation of art to exploratory abstraction and how art deco can be seen through a new lens."

The exhibition opens Friday as part of the Burchfield Penney's free Second Friday celebrations. For more information, visit www.burchfieldpenney.org (<http:///>) or call 878-6011.

– Colin Dabkowski