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'Painted Alleys' display at OCAC focused on overlooked places

By **KRISTEN KELLEHER**
 Sure Guide

OCEAN CITY — Artist Anthony Allman, a Florida resident who used to live in North Cape May, takes pride in finding beauty in overlooked places.

Allman's solo showcase, "Painted Alleys," is now on display at the Ocean City Arts Center (OCAC). The show, which is on display through Aug. 31, includes Allman's paintings of alleys in Ocean City and the unique details and architecture found in them.

Alleys became the subject of Allman's work when he began to notice these details while bicycling through the alleys for years. Allman is originally from Lafayette Hill, Pa., and has vacationed in Ocean City since he was a baby.

His interest in art also started at a young age. He began painting and drawing as a child, but said he got sidetracked as a teenager. At around age 30, Allman picked up his old hobby. Locally, Allman studied with Bob Roehenbeck, whom Allman met in the 1980s after walking into his studio in Cape May, according to the OCAC.

Allman's work has appeared in the Ocean City Boardwalk Art Show, the Wayne Art Center, Pegasus Gallery in Florida, the Mainland Art Center in Philadelphia, the Noyes Museum and others.

His work includes several subject matters and mediums, including landscape paintings, still life and portraits. Allman paints and works in mosaics and clay as well.

For the "Painted Alleys" exhibit, Allman worked in oil and acrylic paints.

The scope of his subject matter is limited. During the show, the focus of his pieces is often a quirky, older building in an alleyway, the light breaking through the houses in the alleyway or a more whimsical twist on a dog in an alley.

For Allman, what is interesting about Ocean City's alleys is the old buildings that are juxtaposed with new ones and the distinctive details that can be found there.

While some people may ride by without giving these details a second thought, Allman has an eye for architecture from working in construction for 45 years. He said most of the alleys he painted are in Ocean City's Historic District and mostly show the spring and summer months.

In his opinion, the alleys also allow for some unique lighting.

"If you go through at 7 a.m., you get big bends of light," he said. "It's different back there."

One of his paintings shows the shadow of power lines on the street in an alley with blue buildings against a blue sky.

One of Allman's more eccentric



Paintings by Anthony Allman on display at the Ocean City Arts Center through the end of August.



works in the show focuses on a small dog in an alley wearing a shirt that says "I Love Ocean City."

A piece shows an old wooden garage with pink painted panels and green trim near Eighth Street and Central Avenue, and another painting shows the side of the Chatterbox, a restaurant known for its iconic pink exterior.

Allman hopes those who see the show may be inspired to look more closely for hidden beauty in Ocean City.

The public can view the exhibit at the OCAC in the Ocean City Community Center, 1735 Simpson Ave. Hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Friday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. For more information, call (609) 399-7628 or visit oceancityartscenter.org.