

Playboy illustrator Patrick Nagel dies

L.A.-trained artist was 38

By Hunter Drohojowska
Herald staff writer

Patrick Nagel, a popular illustrator and artist best-known for his Art Deco-style drawings of sultry women in Playboy magazine, has been found dead in his car after attending a celebrity aerobics event.

According to the coroner's report, Nagel, 38, died Saturday of occlusive coronary atherosclerosis, or a heart attack.

Nagel was one of more than 25 celebrities — including TV actors Dennis Cole, Ron Ely and Joanna Cassidy — who took part in Aerobathon II Saturday at the Santa Monica Athletic Club. Ironically, the benefit was held to raise funds for the American Heart Association.

The event drew over 300 people who paid \$10 to \$15 each to participate in the daylong contest of endurance and skill. The celebrities, however, only worked out for 15 minutes. Nagel was found late Saturday afternoon.

Karl Bornstein, whose company Mirage Editions represented the artist, said, "He was doing well, he had everything going for him. He was a big wonderful guy and whenever anybody asked him to do anything, especially for a good cause, he'd do it."

Since 1980, Nagel's images had gained nationwide popularity, selling thousands of posters, and attracting something of a cult following. The demand for his works had grown to the point that last year's exhibition of 16 paintings at the New York's Dynason



Patrick Nagel, left, and one of his Playboy drawings.

Gallery sold out in little over an hour.

Nagel graduated from Choinard Art Institute in Los Angeles (now California Institute of Arts in Valencia) and developed his signature style in the early 1970s. He rendered women who were lean and sexy with high cheekbones, pouty mouths, and pale skin, often wearing dark exotic lingerie. His illustrations reflected a more independent, contemporary woman in contrast to the rosy, voluptuous nudes typical of Playboy illustrators such as Alberto Vargas.

He was influenced by the Japanese woodblock print, silhouetting his figures against a neutral background, using strong areas of black and white and unconventional perspective.

Nagel is survived by his wife, Jennifer Dumas, and an 18-year-old daughter by a previous marriage, Carol Ness. Private services were to be held for family and friends.

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