



Joe Pintauro, Playwright, Author & Artist, Dies at 87

June 9, 2018

by Pat Rogers

Joe Pintauro, a prolific playwright, author and artist, died on May 29, 2018 at his home in Sag Harbor, NY. He was 87 years old and died of prostate cancer, according to his husband, Greg Therriault, reported The New York Times. A funeral Mass for Pintauro was held on June 6, 2018 at St. Andrew Roman Catholic Church in Sag Harbor with a memorial service to be held in New York at a later date. Donations in his memory can be made to the Animal Rescue Fund of the Hamptons or the Sag Harbor Partnership's efforts to rebuild the Sag Harbor Cinema.

A former priest who turned playwright, Pintauro's plays were staged in both New York and The Hamptons with Bay Street Theater a particular favorite. Olympia Dukakis, Peter Boyle, William Hurt, Calista Flockhart and Lois Smith were among the stars that appeared in his plays that were staged in New York at Circle Rep, according to the New York Times. He was a resident playwright at Circle Repertory Theatre in New York from 1980 to 2016, according to [Pintauro's website](#). His plays often revealed the human cost and struggle when times change and worlds collide. This includes revealing slices of life of fisherman and farmers; the AIDs crisis, church sex scandals and linchpin moments in people's lives.



Joe Pintauro at an exhibit at Stony Brook Southampton in 2013. Photo by Tom Kochie for Hamptons Art Hub.

Pintauro was perhaps best known for plays that included "Men's Lives" (1992), a work that spotlighted the struggle of Long Island's baymen after New York State banned the age-old technique of net fishing (based on a book by [Peter Matthiessen](#)). The play was the first Main Stage production at Bay Street Theater when it opened in 1992.

"Heaven and Earth" (1997), which depicted a North Fork farm family trying to preserve its way of life (based on a book by former Newsday writer and editor Steve Wick), was another prominent play by Pintauro which also was a Bay Street Theater Main Stage production. "By the Sea, by the Sea, by the Beautiful Sea" (1995), a trio of short plays written by Pintauro, Lanford Wilson and Terrence McNally, was commissioned by Bay Street and performed there. Bay Street Theater was a champion of Pintauro's work and is based in Sag Harbor, NY where Pintauro was an active member

of the community. In The Hamptons, his plays were also performed at Guild Hall and the Parrish Art Museum.

Other plays include "Murder by Chocolate" (1995); "Raft of the Medusa" (1991); "The Dead Boy" (1990); "[Beside Herself](#)" (1989) and "Snow Orchard." Last week, the Parrish Art Museum in Water Mill debuted a multi-media performance unfolding in three one-acts, "Salvation," that was taken from Pintauro's collection of 40 short plays called "Metropolitan Operas."

Pintauro's writing credits also include a book of poetry "To Believe in God" (1968), which brought Pintauro a burst of fame, according to the New York Times, as well as "Kites at Empty Airports" and others. His novel "Cold Hands" (1979) was hailed by the New York Times as "one of the best of the year."

Over the last decade, Pintauro began making art with a focus on large-scale photography. His work was exhibited at galleries in The Hamptons including Peter Marcelle Project, Avram Gallery at Stony Brook Southampton University, as well as the Sag Harbor Whaling and Historical Museum, Guild Hall's annual Artist Members Exhibition, for which he won Honorable Mentions twice by Pintauro, having his art selected by jurors Elizabeth Sussman, photography curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art, and by art critic Lilly Wei.

His work was also selected for the site-specific exhibition "[Moby-Dick](#)" presented in 2013 at East End Historical Society's Mulford Barn in East Hampton Village, NY. The show was curated and organized by artist [Janet Goleas](#).



"Ocean Vortex" by Joe Pintauro, 2013. Photograph on vinyl, 50 x 96 inches. Installed as part of "Moby-Dick," a site-specific installation curated and organized by Janet Goleas. Photo by Pat Rogers.

In describing Pintauro's series "Arcadia," exhibited at Peter Marcelle Project in Southampton, NY in 2014 for Hamptons Art Hub, [art critic Janet Goleas wrote](#), "As the American photographer Edward Weston insisted, "To see the thing itself is essential." For Pintauro, whose immaculate vision seems to reach around all the sides of a person, place or thing, this couldn't be more true. The romance in Joe Pintauro's exquisite photographic works is the visual experience."



"Einstein's Dream" by Joe Pintauro, 2014. Diptych, 2 pigment prints on Kozo paper 23 x 30 1/2 inches. Ed 1/18. Courtesy of the artist.

Pintauro's photographs are held in the permanent collection of the Library of Congress (Washington, DC); the Smithsonian Institute (Washington, DC); Guild Hall Museum (East Hampton, NY); Stony Brook University Library (Southampton, NY); and John Jermain Memorial Library (Sag Harbor, NY).

Pintauro is survived by Greg Therriault, his partner of 40 years. The pair was married in 2013.

To read a full obituary at The New York Times by [Neil Genzlinger](#), click [here](#).

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