

Life in the FINGER LAKES



The Magazine for People Who Love New York State's Wine Region

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Happenings

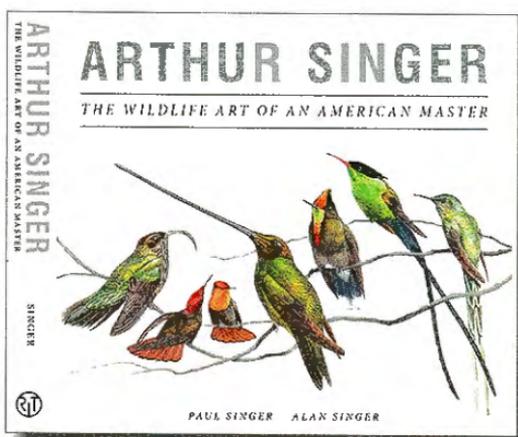
news and events

New illustrated biography explores the work of American wildlife artist Arthur Singer

Singer's sons Paul and Alan chronicle his journey from a top-secret WWII unit to his work as a renowned bird artist

One of the world's finest painters of birds, Arthur Singer (1917-1990), redefined the concept of the bird guide with his 1966 release, **The Golden Field Guide to Birds of North America**. Millions have enjoyed Singer's work published in books, magazines, prints and commemorative stamps and now a new book documents the artist's life and work.

The biography, *Arthur Singer: the Wildlife Art of an American Master* written by his sons Paul and Alan Singer, illustrated profusely with color images, is published by RIT Press, the scholarly publishing enterprise at Rochester Institute of Technology.



"For years, my father had been in the field drawing and photographing birds, and knowing their behavior he felt they should be shown naturalistically" said Alan Singer. "He added light and shadow and developed paintings in his bird guides that show the environment where birds are often seen."

Born in New York City in 1917, Singer began illustrating wildlife as a young teenager after admiring the work of John James Audobon and taking family trips to the Bronx Zoo and the American Museum of Natural History. Singer loved jazz music and in the 1930s, he befriended jazz greats including Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway,

earning early **commercial success drawing caricatures** of the artists that would be published in local newspapers and jazz magazines across the country. After receiving an art degree from the Cooper Union, Singer joined the army following the U.S. entry into World War II.

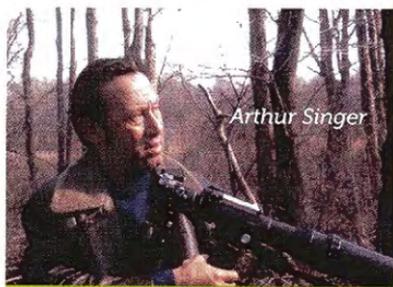
Singer was transferred to the top-secret Company C of the 603rd Camouflage Engineers, where he spent three years creating camouflage and other forms of visual deception to mislead German intelligence. The story of this group of artists, dubbed "**The Ghost Army**," was chronicled in a 2014 PBS documentary by the same name.

Following the war's conclusion and a brief stint in the advertising industry, Singer found his calling as a full-time illustrator and artist depicting wildlife, most notably birds. Singer produced some of his most popular works in the 1950s and 60s, including *Birds of the World*, and his guide to *Birds of North America*, which is still in print after selling millions of copies.

Millions saw Singer's illustrations in 1982 when the U.S. Postal Service issued a set of **50 official state bird and flower stamps** illustrated by Singer and his son and co-author of the biography, Alan Singer.

The Singer brothers worked on the book to commemorate the 25th anniversary of their father's passing, poring over letters, never-before-seen illustrations and other mementos from the artist's personal collection.

Arthur Singer: the Wildlife Art of an American Master is available to preorder in hardcover for \$60 at the **RIT Press website** or by calling RIT Press at 585-475-6766.



Arthur Singer

A companion exhibition at the RIT University Gallery will display a life-spanning selection of illustrations by Singer from **August 7 to October 28**. A public reception will be held **September 8 from 5-7 p.m.**