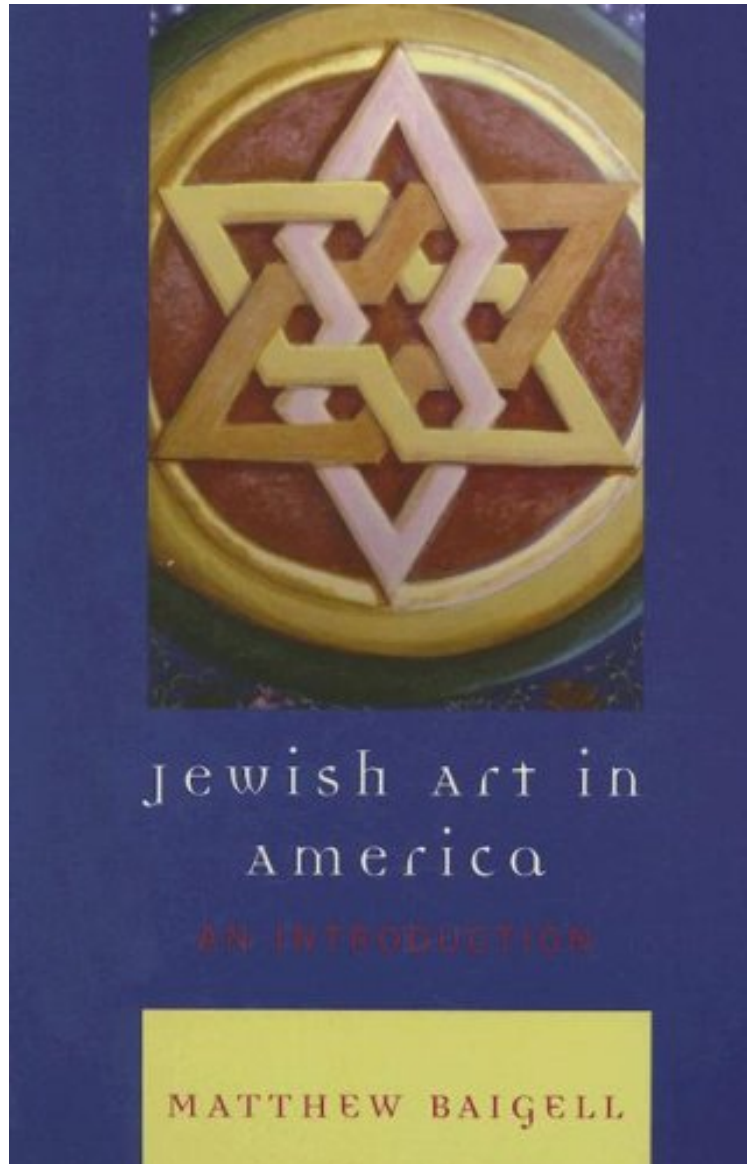


[Download free pdf] Jewish Art in America: An Introduction

Jewish Art in America: An Introduction

Matthew Baigell

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Matthew Baigell : Jewish Art in America: An Introduction before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jewish Art in America: An Introduction:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Fine addition to a virtually barren fieldBy drkhimxzWhile Baigell has made contributions to art history related to American developments with both general histories and monographs on particular authors, no doubt the most valuable of his books, written and edited, have been those exploring the fascinating and yet uncultivated area of The Jewish Artist. Fine publications exist on the most internationally

prominent of these, the abstract expressionists and their successors in the latter part of the twentieth century, but little has been done on the group mostly born in the period from 1885-1915, many of whom were immigrants and many of whom, in one way or another, were associated with New York City for some or all of their careers. They faced the crises of immigrant adjustment, of minority status, of the Great Depression, and of a holocaust in which many lost family left behind in Europe and all faced the fact that a people with whom they were identified were being annihilated not for what they had done but for what they were born to be. Baigell tells the story with brevity, clarity and considerable insight, from the early 20th century beginning with pioneers like Max Weber, Abe Walkowitz and Bill Zorach, through the age of Ben Shahn, the Soyer brothers, Abe Harriton, then the youngest overlapping with them, such as Jack Levine and Leonard Baskin, to the latest in that long line. Of course, not excluded are the abstract expressionists and those who were, and remained, European, although spending some time in the United States (usually when escape from Europe was a necessity). As he freely admits, scholarship on original sources is still in its infancy. This work will hopefully contribute to stimulating the interest of younger scholars. Non-scholarly readers, for whom the book is written, will, I believe, be encouraged to read the other books he has written or collaborated on, which contain more intensive studies of the complex motivations and very difficult adjustments which marked the lives of these creative artists, most of whom are fading from the collective memory by reason of all those factors which go into distinguishing the remembered from the forgotten (perhaps, the least of which, is the quality of their work). In the interest of fair disclosure, I should mention that all the artists specifically named, and many others similar in background to them, were represented in my own art collection which, too, is now only a fading memory. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Baigell's book is splendid, and higher-quality academic writing. By Sidney Orr...however, it was a terrible decision to publish the illustrations only in BLACK AND WHITE. This does not do the works, the artists, or the book, a service.

In this first book-length study of Jewish art in America, Matthew Baigell explores works from the early settlers of America to the present. It concentrates on exploring and examining Jewish subject matter employed by artists as they illustrated aspects of their religious and ethnic heritage and as they responded to major events over the decades, including the Great Migration, the Great Depression, the Holocaust, and the founding of the State of Israel, as well as the dispersal of Jewish artists around the country and the rise of feminism and spiritualism in the late-twentieth century. Subjects include genre scenes of "the Jewish street," religious and spiritual themes derived from the Bible and the Kabbalah, and images that record the artists' participation in and witnessing of major events in their lifetimes. The author also considers the often asked questions: Is there a Jewish art? and, Is there a single Jewish Experience?

A pioneer in the field of Jewish American art, Baigell has fittingly written the first full-length introduction on the subject. A welcome and much-needed contribution. (Samantha Baskind) What Matthew Baigell is proposing is something quite unique and certainly cutting edge: the presentation that there is a Jewish art in America which is distinct to its practitioners and which does not necessarily conform to European conceptions of Jews and Jewish art and which at the same time in America is both part of the mainstream and a unique stream unto itself. Very fresh and in some ways radical. (Seth Wolitz) In this first book-length study of Jewish art in America, Matthew Baigell explores works from the early settlers of America to the present. Baigell concentrates on Jewish subject matter employed by artists as they illustrated aspects of their religious and ethnic heritage and as they responded to major events over the decades, including the Great Migration, Great Depression, the Holocaust, and the founding of the State of Israel, as well as the dispersal of Jewish artists around the country and the rise of feminism and spiritualism in the late-20th century. (Jewish Book World) The book's...merit lies in its useful documentation of the work of artists, some of them like Max Weber or Ben Shahn, reasonably well known, but in many instances much less familiar and perhaps worthy of greater attention that they have received. (W. Cahn Choice) [Baigell] provides an excellent background for understanding the various contexts in which American Jews, including artists, have operated....[a] worthy addition to one's library. (American Jewish History) Given his unmatched expertise in Jewish American art, and his experience as an author of general narrative history in the field of American art, I could think of no one more suited to the task of putting together the a textbook on Jewish American Art history than Matthew Baigell. (Daniel Morris) The editors hope that 'by historicizing the Jewish art question, the essays in this volume pose the question in different ways and, above all, keep it alive and unpredictable as a question that can shed light on the relationship between Jews, the arts, and modernity' (18). What is impressive about *The Art of Being Jewish*, and marks it as the most significant edited volume in the field since Catherine Soussloff's *Jewish Identity in Modern Art History*, published a decade ago, is the overall rigorousness and variety of its contributions. Once thought to be a liability, it is precisely the imprecision of the term 'Jewish art,' its fecund ambiguity, which makes it most worth holding on to. (Religion And The Arts) About the Author Matthew Baigell is professor emeritus of art history at Rutgers University.