

Raphael Soyer And The Search For Modern Jewish Art

[#Raphael Soyer](#) [#Modern Jewish Art](#) [#Jewish Artists](#) [#Jewish Identity in Art](#) [#American Jewish Culture](#)

Explore the profound journey of Raphael Soyer as he sought to define and create modern Jewish art, examining the intersection of heritage, identity, and contemporary artistic expression. His work offers a compelling insight into the challenges and triumphs of establishing a distinct Jewish voice within the broader art world.

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Raphael Soyer and the Search for Modern Jewish Art

Artist Raphael Soyer (1899-1987), whose Russian Jewish family settled in Manhattan in 1912, was devoted to painting people in their everyday urban lives. He came to be known especially for his representations of city workers and the down-and-out, and for his portraits of himself and his friends. Although Soyer never identified himself as a "Jewish artist," Samantha Baskind, in the first full-length critical study of the artist, argues that his work was greatly influenced by his ethnicity and by the Jewish American immigrant experience. Baskind examines the painter's art and life in the rich context of religious, cultural, political, and social conditions in the twentieth-century United States. By promoting an understanding of Soyer as a Jewish American artist, she addresses larger questions about the definition and study of modern Jewish art. Whereas previous scholars have defined Jewish art simply as art produced by people who were born Jewish, Baskind stresses the importance of an artist's cultural identity when defining ethnic art. As Baskind explains how Soyer negotiated his Jewish identity in changing ways over his lifetime, she offers new strategies for identifying and interpreting Jewish art in general. Her analysis of Soyer's work places the artist in a necessary context and provides a valuable new approach to the study of modern Jewish art.

Jewish Art

Covering nearly two centuries, this is a comprehensive account of the art made by Jews across Europe, America and Israel. The book discusses many issues including the shifting Jewish identity, the effects of the diaspora, anti-Semitism and the distinctive character of images made within a Christian.

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Encyclopedia of Jewish American Artists

Encyclopedia of Jewish American Artists presents over 80 19th- and 20-century Jewish American artists, ranging from the critically neglected Theresa Bernstein, Ruth Gikow, and Jennings Tofel, to the well-known Eva Hesse, Roy Lichtenstein, and Larry Rivers. The subject matter of some of these artists may surprise readers. Adolph Gottlieb designed and supervised the fabrication of a 35-foot wide, four-story high stained glass facade for a synagogue; Louise Nevelson sculpted a Holocaust memorial; and Philip Pearlstein painted a version of Moses with the Tablets of the Law early in his career. Covering painters, sculptors, printmakers, and photographers, as well as artists who engage in newer forms of visual expression such as video, conceptual, and performance art, the book is in part intended to stimulate further scholarship on these artists. When appropriate, entries reveal the influence of the Jewish American encounter on the artists' work along with other factors such as gender and the immigrant experience. In many cases, the artists' own words are employed to flesh out perspectives on their art as well as on their Jewish identity. To that end, the volume contains excerpts from recent interviews conducted by the author with some of the artists, including Judy Chicago, Audrey Flack, Jack Levine, and Sol LeWitt. Illustrations accompanying each artist's entry, some in color, aid this invaluable look at Jewish American art.

Sephardic Jewry and Mizrahi Jews

Volume XXII of the distinguished annual *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* explores the major and rapid changes experienced by a population known variously as "Sephardim," "Oriental" Jews and "Mizrahim" over the last fifty years. Although Sephardim are popularly believed to have originated in Spain or Portugal, the majority of Mizrahi Jews today are actually the descendants of Jews from Muslim and Arab countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia. They constitute a growing proportion of Israeli Jewry and continue to revitalize Jewish culture in places as varied as France, Latin America, and the United States. *Sephardic Jewry and Mizrahi Jews* offers a collection of new scholarship on the issues of self-definition and identity facing Sephardic Jewry. The essays draw on a variety of disciplines--demography, history, political science, sociology, religious and gender studies, anthropology, and literature. Contributors explore the issues surrounding the emergence and increasingly wide usage of "Mizrahi" in place of "Sephardic," as well as the invigoration of Sephardic Judaism. They look at the evolution of Sephardic politics in Israel through the dramatic rise and continuing influence of the Shas political party and its spiritual leader, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef. Other contributors examine the variegated nature of Mizrahi immigration to Israel, fictional portraits of female Mizrahi immigrants to Israel in the 1940s and 1950s, contemporary Mizrahi Israel feminism, modern Arab historiography's portrayal of Jews of Muslim lands, and the changing Sephardic halakhic tradition.

Modern Jewish Art

In *Modern Jewish Art: Definitions, Problems, and Opportunities*, Ori Z. Soltes considers both the emerging and evolving discussion on, and the expanding array of practitioners of 'Jewish art' in the past two hundred years. He notes the developing problem of how to define 'Judaism' in the 19th century—as a religion, a culture, a race, a nation, a people—and thus the complications for placing 'Jewish art' under the extended umbrella of 'religion and the arts.' The fluidity with which one must engage the subject is reflected in the broadening conceptual and visual vocabulary, the extended range of subject foci and media, and the increasingly rich analytical approaches to the subject that have surfaced particularly in the past fifty years. Well-known and little-known artists are included in a far-ranging discussion of painting, sculpture, photography, video, installations, ceremonial objects, and works that blur the boundaries between categories.

Labor's Canvas

At an unprecedented and probably unique American moment, laboring people were indivisible from the art of the 1930s. By far the most recognizable New Deal art employed an endless frieze of white or racially ambiguous machine proletarians, from solo drillers to identical assembly line toilers. Even today such paintings, particularly those with work themes, are almost instantly recognizable. Happening on a Depression-era picture, one can see from a distance the often simplified figures, the intense or bold colors, the frozen motion or flattened perspective, and the uniformity of laboring bodies within an often naive realism or naturalism of treatment. In a kind of Social Realist dance, the FAP's imagined drillers, haulers, construction workers, welders, miners, and steel mill workers make up a rugged industrial army. In an unusual synthesis of art and working-class history, *Labor's Canvas* argues that however simplified this golden age of American worker art appears from a post-modern perspective, The New Deal's Federal Art Project (FAP), under the aegis of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), revealed important tensions. Artists saw themselves as cultural workers who had much in common with the blue-collar workforce. Yet they struggled to reconcile social protest and aesthetic distance. Their canvases, prints, and drawings registered attitudes toward laborers as bodies without minds often shared by the wider culture. In choosing a visual language to reconnect workers to the larger society, they tried to tell the worker from the work with varying success. Drawing on a wealth of social documents and visual narratives, *Labor's Canvas* engages in a bold revisionism. Hapke examines how FAP iconography both chronicles and reframes working-class history. She demonstrates how the New Deal's artistically rendered workforce history reveals the cultural contradictions about laboring people evident even in the depths of the Great Depression, not the least in the imaginations of the FAP artists themselves.

Insiders and Outsiders

This collection of essays breaks new ground in its interdisciplinary study of the way Jews redefined their identity in the changing societies of modern eastern Europe. Sensitively treating the drama of east European Jewry from cultural and political vantage points, prominent scholars provide fresh insights into the complex issues facing the Jewish world. The multifaceted essays in this volume reflect the influence of the pioneering work of the historian Ezra Mendelsohn.

The Art of Being Jewish in Modern Times

The wide-ranging portrayal of modern Jewishness in artistic terms invites scrutiny into the relationship between creativity and the formation of Jewish identity and into the complex issue of what makes a work of art uniquely Jewish. Whether it is the provenance of the artist, as in the case of popular Israeli singer Zehava Ben, the intention of the iconography, as in Ben Shahn's antifascist paintings, or the utopian ideals of the Jewish Palestine Pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair, clearly no single formula for defining Jewish art in the diaspora will suffice. *The Art of Being Jewish in Modern Times* is the first work to analyze modern Jewry's engagement with the arts as a whole, including music, theater, dance, film, museums, architecture, painting, sculpture, and more. Working with a broad conception of what counts as art, the book asks the following questions: What roles have commerce and politics played in shaping Jewish artistic agendas? Who determines the Jewishness of art and for what purposes? What role has aesthetics played in reshaping religious traditions and rituals? This richly illustrated volume illuminates how the arts have helped Jews confront the various challenges of modernity, including cultural adaptation and self-preservation, economic diversification, and ritual transformation. There truly is an art to being Jewish in the modern world—or, alternatively, an art to being modern in the Jewish world—and this collection fully captures its range, diversity, and historical significance.

The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Jewish Cultures

The Routledge Handbook to Contemporary Jewish Cultures explores the diversity of Jewish cultures and ways of investigating them, presenting the different methodologies, arguments and challenges within the discipline. Divided into themed sections, this book considers in turn: How the individual terms "Jewish" and "culture" are defined, looking at perspectives from Anthropology, Music, Literary Studies, Sociology, Religious Studies, History, Art History, and Film, Television, and New Media Studies. How Jewish cultures are theorized, looking at key themes regarding power, textuality, religion/secularity, memory, bodies, space and place, and networks. Case studies in contemporary Jewish cultures. With

essays by leading scholars in Jewish culture, this book offers a clear overview of the field and offers exciting new directions for the future.

Imagining Jewish Art

Short-listed for the Art and Christian Enquiry/Mercers' International Book Award 2009: 'a book which makes an outstanding contribution to the dialogue between religious faith and the visual arts'. What does modern Jewish art look like? Where many scholars, critics, and curators have gone searching for the essence of Jewish art in Biblical illustrations and other traditional subjects, Rosen sets out to discover Jewishness in unlikely places. How, he asks, have modern Jewish painters explored their Jewish identity using an artistic past which is- by and large - non-Jewish? In this new book we encounter some of the great works of Western art history through Jewish eyes. We see Matthias Grunewald's Isenheim Altarpiece re-imagined by Marc Chagall (1887-1985), traces of Paolo Uccello and Piero della Francesca in Philip Guston (1913-1980), and images by Diego Velazquez and Paul Cezanne studiously reworked by R.B. Kitaj (1932-2007). This highly comparative study draws on theological, philosophical and literary sources from Franz Rosenzweig to Franz Kafka and Philip Roth. Rosen deepens our understanding not only of Chagall, Guston, and Kitaj but also of how art might serve as a key resource for rethinking such fundamental Jewish concepts as family, tradition, and homeland.

Jewish Art in America

Is there a Jewish art? Is there a single "Jewish experience"? Matthew Baigell, the acknowledged American expert on Jewish art, offers the first book ever on the history of Jewish American art from the early settlements to the present.

The Jewish Graphic Novel

The Jewish Graphic Novel is a lively, interdisciplinary collection of essays that addresses critically acclaimed works in this subgenre of Jewish literary and artistic culture. Featuring insightful discussions of notable figures in the industry—such as Will Eisner, Art Spiegelman, and Joann Sfar—the essays focus on the how graphic novels are increasingly being used in Holocaust memoir and fiction, and to portray Jewish identity in America and abroad.

Canons and Values

A critical rethinking of the way canons are defined, constructed, dismantled, and revised. A century ago, all art was evaluated through the lens of European classicism and its tradition. This volume explores and questions the foundations of the European canon, offers a critical rethinking of ancient and classical art, and interrogates the canons of cultures and regions that have often been left at the margins of art history. It underscores the historical and geographical diversity of canons and the local values underlying them. Twelve international scholars consider how canons are constructed and contested, focusing on the relationship between canonical objects and the value systems that shape their hierarchies. Deploying an array of methodologies—including archaeological investigations, visual analysis, and literary critique—the authors examine canon formation throughout the world, including Africa, India, East Asia, Mesoamerica, South America, ancient Egypt, classical Greece, and Europe. Global studies of art, which are dismantling the traditionally Eurocentric canon, promise to make art history more inclusive. But enduring canons cannot be dismissed. This volume raises new questions about the importance of canons—including those from outside Europe—for the wider discipline of art history.

The Jewish Graphic Novel

The graphic novel is a vital and emerging genre, and this is the only book that focuses on its relation to Jewish culture, literature, and history. A highly readable and informative collection that will be of great interest to readers across a wide range of disciplines.--Deborah R. Geis, editor of "Considering MAUS: Approaches to Art Spiegelman's "Survivor's Tale" of the Holocaust."

Chagall to Kitaj

Explores the works of five major American Jewish artists: Jack Levine, George Segal, Audrey Flack, Larry Rivers, and R. B. Kitaj. Focuses on the use of imagery influenced by the Bible.

Jewish Artists and the Bible in Twentieth-century America

The widespread assumption that Jewish religious tradition is mediated through words, not pictures, has left Jewish art with no significant role to play in Jewish theology and ethics. *Judaism and the Visual Image* argues for a Jewish theology of image that, among other things, helps us re-read the creation story in Genesis 1 and to question why images of Jewish women as religious subjects appear to be doubly suppressed by the Second Commandment, when images of observant male Jews have become legitimate, even iconic, representations of Jewish holiness. Raphael further suggests that 'devout beholding' of images of the Holocaust is a corrective to post-Holocaust theologies of divine absence from suffering that are infused by a sub-theological aesthetic of the sublime. Raphael concludes by proposing that the relationship between God and Israel composes itself into a unitary dance or moving image by which each generation participates in a processive revelation that is itself the ultimate work of Jewish art.

Judaism and the Visual Image

Analyzes the life, work, and reception of a founding father of modern Jewish art in Eastern Europe.

Painting a People

Contemporary Jewish art is a growing field that includes traditional as well as new creative practices, yet criticism of it is almost exclusively reliant on the Second Commandment's prohibition of graven images. Arguing that this disregards the corpus of Jewish thought and a century of criticism and interpretation, Ben Schachter advocates instead a new approach focused on action and process. Departing from the traditional interpretation of the Second Commandment, Schachter addresses abstraction, conceptual art, performance art, and other styles that do not rely on imagery for meaning. He examines Jewish art through the concept of *melachot*—work-like “creative activities” as defined by the medieval Jewish philosopher Maimonides. Showing the similarity between art and *melachot* in the active processes of contemporary Jewish artists such as Ruth Weisberg, Allan Wexler, Archie Rand, and Nechama Golan, he explores the relationship between these artists' methods and Judaism's demanding attention to procedure. A compellingly written challenge to traditionalism, *Image, Action, and Idea in Contemporary Jewish Art* makes a well-argued case for artistic production, interpretation, and criticism that revels in the dual foundation of Judaism and art history.

Image, Action, and Idea in Contemporary Jewish Art

Includes section: Notes and reviews.

The Art Bulletin

In the years between the world wars, Manhattan's Fourteenth Street-Union Square district became a center for commercial, cultural, and political activities, and hence a sensitive barometer of the dramatic social changes of the period. It was here that four urban realist painters--Kenneth Hayes Miller, Reginald Marsh, Raphael Soyer, and Isabel Bishop--placed their images of modern "new women." Bargain stores, cheap movie theaters, pinball arcades, and radical political organizations were the backdrop for the women shoppers, office and store workers, and consumers of mass culture portrayed by these artists. Ellen Wiley Todd deftly interprets the painters' complex images as they were refracted through the gender ideology of the period. This is a work of skillful interdisciplinary scholarship, combining recent insights from feminist art history, gender studies, and social and cultural theory. Drawing on a range of visual and verbal representations as well as biographical and critical texts, Todd balances the historical context surrounding the painters with nuanced analyses of how each artist's image of womanhood contributed to the continual redefining of the "new woman's" relationships to men, family, work, feminism, and sexuality.

The new Woman Revised

Illustrated with more than one hundred full-color reproductions of works by the artists under discussion, *The Human Figure and Jewish Culture* is an essential addition to any library of art history or Judaica.

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The Human Figure and Jewish Culture

Written by the most prominent scholars in American Jewish history, this encyclopedia illuminates the varied experiences of America's Jews and their impact on American society and culture over three and a half centuries. American Jews have profoundly shaped, and been shaped by, American culture. Yet American history texts have largely ignored the Jewish experience. The Encyclopedia of American Jewish History corrects that omission. In essays and short entries written by 125 of the world's leading scholars of American Jewish history and culture, this encyclopedia explores both religious and secular aspects of American Jewish life. It examines the European background and immigration of American Jews and their impact on the professions and academic disciplines, mass culture and the arts, literature and theater, and labor and radical movements. It explores Zionism, antisemitism, responses to the Holocaust, the branches of Judaism, and Jews' relations with other groups, including Christians, Muslims, and African Americans. The encyclopedia covers the Jewish press and education, Jewish organizations, and Jews' participation in America's wars. In two comprehensive volumes, Encyclopedia of American Jewish History makes 350 years of American Jewish experience accessible to scholars, all levels of students, and the reading public.

Encyclopedia of American Jewish History [2 volumes]

Can studying an artist's migration provide the key to unlocking a "global" history of art? The artistic biography of Michail Grobman and his group, which was active in Israel in the 1970s, open up this vital new perspective and analytical mode.

Journal of Jewish Art

Focusing on 19th-and 20th-century European, American and Israeli artists, the contributors explore the ways in which Jewish artists have responded to their Jewishness and to the societies in which they lived (or live), and how these factors have influenced their art, their choice of subject matter, and presentation of their work.

American Jewish History

With the Blanton's new American collection catalogue, students, scholars, and art lovers alike will have the opportunity to trace the history of artistic achievement in the United States from the last century to the present day through this most important collection of American art. The core of the Blanton's American art collection was formed by the significant gift of the Mari and James A. Michener Collection, which came to the museum in 1968 and 1991. Today, the Blanton's collection of modern and contemporary American art is a significant resource of more than 4,000 paintings, prints, drawings, sculptures, and works in new media from 1900 to the present. This attractive catalogue thoroughly presents selections from the collection's noteworthy concentrations: early American modernism, the American scene and social realism, abstract expressionism, and paintings of the 1960s. Artists represented include Jo Baer, Jim Dine, Philip Evergood, Helen Frankenthaler, Arshile Gorky, Adolph Gottlieb, Hans Hofmann, Ellsworth Kelly, Franz Kline, Jacob Lawrence, Brice Marden, Joan Mitchell, Mark Rothko, Peter Saul, Ben Shahn, Raphael Soyer, and Richard Tuttle, among many others. The catalogue also includes a selection of contemporary art in all media by a culturally diverse group of emerging and established figures such as Jeremy Blake, Rachel Harrison, Arturo Herrera, Byron Kim, Fabian Marcaccio, Dario Robleto, Shahzia Sikander, Amy Sillman, and Bill Viola. Accompanying the more than two hundred images are various essays by museum professionals, artists, and members of the art community.

Reinventing Jewish Art in the Age of Multiple Modernities

The sixth volume of the annual publication of the Institute for Contemporary Jewry at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, *Art and Its Uses* analyzes the levels of meaning present in a wide range of visual images, from high art by Jewish artists to Judaica, caricatures, and political propaganda. The use of such material to illuminate aspects of modern history and society is rather uncommon in the field of modern Jewish studies; these essays provide the tools necessary for understanding the image in its proper social and political context. The distinguished contributors include Richard I. Cohen, Michael Berkowitz, Milly Heyd, Irit Rogoff, Chone Shmeruk, Ziva Amishai-Maisels, Vivianne Barsky, and Vivian Mann. Accompanied by more than 160 illustrations, the essays shed new light on such topics as Jewish nationalism, Jewish identity, and Jewish-gentile relations. In addition to the symposium, the volume contains articles by major scholars of contemporary Jewish studies, a substantial book review section, and a list of recent dissertations in the field.

Complex Identities

Presents a major new interpretation of the Ashcan School of Art, arguing that these artists made the working-class city at the turn of the century a subject for beautiful art. At the beginning of the twentieth century the Ashcan School of Art blazed onto the art scene, introducing a revolutionary vision of New York City. In contrast to the elite artists who painted the upper class bedecked in finery, in front of magnificent structures, or the progressive reformers who photographed the city as a slum, hopeless and full of despair, the Ashcan School held the unique belief that the industrial working-class city was a fit subject for great art. In *Beauty in the City*, Robert A. Slayton illustrates how these artists portrayed the working classes with respect and gloried in the drama of the subways and excavation sites, the office towers, and immigrant housing. Their art captured the emerging metropolis in all its facets, with its potent machinery and its class, ethnic, and gender issues. By exposing the realities of this new, modern America through their art—expressed in what they chose to draw, not in how they drew it—they created one of the great American art forms. “A delight for the eyes, a treat for city lovers, and a fine example of how historians can use art, *Beauty in the City* will enrich such fields as urban history, art history, the history of New York City, and America in the twentieth century. Robert Slayton has identified a group of artists who saw in the gritty details of city life real beauty and social meaning.” — Hasia R. Diner, author of *Roads Taken: The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way* “A century ago, the Ashcan painters created an art that was of, by, and for urban Americans—in all their exhilarating pluralism. Robert Slayton analyzes and celebrates their accomplishment in a work that combines brilliant scholarship and a profound passion for his subject. To his great credit, he reveals ‘the beauty already there.’” — Michael Kazin, author of *War Against War: The American Fight for Peace, 1914–1918* “With great narrative skill and finely drawn characters, Robert Slayton paints a vivid picture of New York and the art world in the early twentieth century. He reminds us that these artists and the city they inhabited continue to influence our perspective—about class, about gender, about race—a century later. This book is a wonderful, vibrant look at a forgotten part of our history.” — Terry Golway, author of *Machine Made: Tammany Hall and the Creation of Modern American Politics*

Blanton Museum Of Art

Abstract:

Studies in Contemporary Jewry: VI: Art and Its Uses

This richly illustrated volume illuminates how the arts have helped Jews confront the challenges of modernity. There truly is an art to being Jewish in the modern world--or, alternatively, an art to being modern in the Jewish world--and this collection fully captures its range, diversity, and historical significance.

Jewish Art

Every 3rd issue is a quarterly cumulation.

Beauty in the City

Jewish Quarterly

