Jewish Art Primer

Jewish Art: Any cultural production that utilizes Jewish subject matter and content drawn from;

1) All material found in Jewish sacred texts and those secular texts that explore Jewish social life and history,

2) Jewish history, from Antiquity to the present, as well as Jewish ritual, music and synagogue architecture.

Jewish Art can be created by Jews and non-Jews. The essential factor in this kind of art is always the Jewish content; ideas and notions that can be called Jewish. The definition is not exclusive, rather it is flexible and changing, much as is all creativity. Jewish Art is most simply defined as the cultural expression of the Jewish people and their ideas over the millennia.
Synagogue Interior at Dura Europos, 250 CE, National Museum, Damascus, Syria
Synagogue Mosaics
350 CE – 550 CE

Synagogue Mosaic Floor, Hammas Tiberias, Israel, 350 CE
Synagogue at Ein Gedi, Israel  ca. 500 CE
Golden Haggadah, 1330, Barcelona

Death of First Born,
Going Out of Egypt,
The Egyptians Pursue the Hebrews,
At the Sea
British Library, London
Manuscripts
9th – 14th centuries

GERMANY, FRANCE & ITALY
NARRATIVE ANNOTATIONS

Kaufman Mishnah Torah, Rambam,
1295 Cologne
Manuscripts
9th – 14th centuries

Leipzig Machsor, 1310, Southern Germany
Leipzig University Library
Books, Manuscripts, Papercuts
16th – 20th centuries

Wise Son; Mantua Haggadah, 1560
Jewish Theological Seminary Library, New York
Tikun Erev Rosh Chodesh, manuscript, Netherlands, 1728
Courtesy Kestenbaum & Co., New York
Av Harachamim, prayer book manuscript,
Germany, 1673
Courtesy Kestenbaum & Co., New York
Vashti’s Execution, Amsterdam 1701 Megillah
Braginsky Collection
Books, Manuscripts Papercuts
16th – 20th centuries

Mizrah, Papercut, Poland, 1848
 Courtesy “Traditional Jewish Papercuts”
 by Joseph & Yehudit Shadur
Silver Menorah, Lemberg, Germany; 18th century
The Dawn of Jewish Painting
19th – 20th centuries

Wedding (oil on canvas) by Moritz Oppenheim
Pictures of Traditional Jewish Family Life (1861)
The Israel Museum, Jerusalem
The Dawn of Jewish Painting
19th – 20th centuries

Jews Praying on the Day of Atonement, (oil on canvas) (1878)

by Maurycy Gottlieb
Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel
Rabbi (oil on canvas), early 20th century, by Isidor Kaufmann
The New Age of Individuals
20th Century

The Road to Jerusalem, Ein Karem (1925), Oil on canvas by Reuven Rubin; Courtesy Sotheby’s
Creation of Man, (1936), etching
by Marc Chagall; The Jewish Museum, New York
The Tower of Babel Toppled (1963) by Shalom of Safed
Ghetto Resident with Badge (1942)
charcoal on paper by Hirsch Szylis
(died in Auschwitz)
Yad Vashem Art Museum
Sarah (1947) oil on board
by Mordechai Ardon
Azazel – The Scapegoat (1994), oil on canvas
by Janet Shafner
Collection of Joshua Prottas
Akeidah, 1992 (18 x 24) acrylic on canvas by Archie Rand
Courtesy the artist
leAhava, 2005 (10 x 7)
Archival pigment print on paper by Batya F. Kuncman
Courtesy the artist

Contemporary Jewish Art
20th & 21st Century