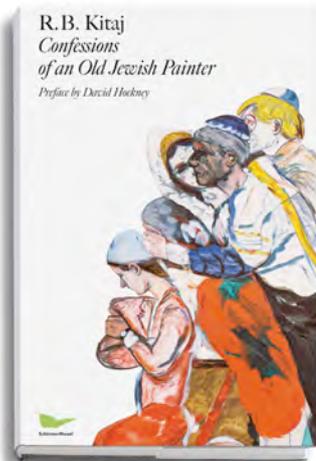


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PRESS RELEASE

Hidden treasures: Discovered only recently, the autobiography of American painter R. B. Kitaj is published for the first time ever

R. B. Kitaj: Confessions of an Old Jewish Painter

Preface by David Hockney

R. B. Kitaj
Confessions of an Old Jewish Painter
Preface by David Hockney
Edited and with an epilogue by Eckhart J. Gillen
400 pages,
212 ill. in colour
ISBN 978-3-8296-0813-8
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Available immediately!

"I was born on a Norwegian cargo ship called Corona slipping out of New York harbor at night, bound for Havana and Mexican ports in the summer of 1950. But the world began for me before that, when I was introduced to something called art as a child in Ohio. I would be born again and again as a Jew later on..."

R. B. Kitaj (1932-2007) is one of the most intriguing 20th-century artists. Born into a Russo-Jewish family near Cleveland, Ohio, 17-year-old Kitaj spent 5 years at sea aboard a Norwegian freighter. He went on to study art in New York and Vienna. A Royal College of Art stipend made him move to London where he became a celebrated artist. Curating *The Human Clay*, a 1976 show of figurative contemporary British artists, he coined the term "School of London" for the artistic circle around Francis Bacon, Frank Auerbach, Lucian Freud, and Leon Kossoff. In 1991 he was elected a member of the Royal Academy, one of only three American painters to be thus honored in the history of the institution.

A major 1994 retrospective at London's Tate Gallery failed to produce Kitaj's international breakthrough but was unanimously panned by British critics instead. This, and the unexpected death of his wife Sandra, induced his increasingly paranoid perspective. Embittered he returned to the USA and settled in Los Angeles, where he finally took his own life in 2007.

Kitaj left behind a manuscript unmatched among 20th-century artist autobiographies: *Confessions of an Old Jewish Painter*. It tells the story of an artist vacillating between America and Europe. Eloquently describing his vices and sufferings, it stands in the traditions of both St. Augustine and Thomas de Quincey. Now published for the first time – more than twenty years after its making – with the consent of the artist's family, it is a sensation, from both a literary and an art historical point of view.

With a foreword by Kitaj's friend, David Hockney; and an epilogue by the editor, Eckhart Gillen, who discovered the manuscript in the artist's Los Angeles estate when he prepared the 2012 Kitaj retrospective exhibition at the Jewish Museum in Berlin.

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