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THE GALLERY OF **EVERYTHING**
22ND TO 25TH FEBRUARY 2024

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HOW TO LOOK AT MODERN ART IN AMERICA

by Ad Reinhardt



AD REINHARDT, HOW TO LOOK AT MODERN ART IN AMERICA (1946)

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untitled (c 1944), oil, cane on board, 76.5 x 56.3 cm / 30 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 22 $\frac{1}{8}$ in

INTRODUCTION

Born in Ukraine in 1893, Janet Sobel is one of the unsung heroines of 20th century art. Her idiosyncratic and shape-shifting aesthetic was championed by collector Peggy Guggenheim, artist Mark Rothko and curator William Rubin.

Sobel's self-taught practice began in humble circumstances when she began to sketch memories of her Jewish upbringing in Eastern Europe. These early works delighted with their swirling faces and bright colouration.

The imagery revealed an instinctive certainty of shape and form. It spoke not just of Sobel's past, but of her identity in the new world. It also brought her to the attention of legendary gallerist and curator Sidney Janis, who included a painting by Sobel in his show *American Primitive Paintings* at the Arts Club of Chicago in 1943.

Sobel soon evolved a particular form of abstract expressionism, which in turn led to an enthusiastic reception by the great and the good of New York's art scene. Sobel found herself welcoming artists like Max Ernst and surrealist André Breton to her family home in Brooklyn.

Sobel was exhibited at Norlyst Art Gallery by Max Ernst's son Jimmy in 1944; and her inclusion in *The Women* at Peggy

Guggenheim's Art of This Century gallery (along with Louise Bourgeois) led to a solo show in 1946.

Ad Reinhardt's insiders' art map of 1945, *How to Look at Modern Art in America*, locates Sobel alongside Mark Tobey, Arshile Gorky and André Masson. It is widely accepted that her invention of so-called *drip painting* - whereby paint is dribbled and splattered across the canvas - was unashamedly borrowed by Jackson Pollock and revolutionised his trajectory.

Yet Sobel was not cut from the same cloth as her peers. She moved to New Jersey, stopped creating work and slipped out of the spotlight. Despite her stellar ascent, art history labelled her a *primitive painter*. Even the curator William Rubin's support and patronage, acquiring paintings for the Museum of Modern Art in 1968, were not enough for a society fixated on the art-educated male gaze.

Sobel died in 1968. It would be almost 50 years before her work was again singled out for its influence and innovation.

Today her paintings and drawings are highly sought after and regularly included in exhibitions on female art and abstraction, with advocates ranging from Lynne Cooke, chief curator of the National Gallery at the Smithsonian, to Alice Walton, founder of Crystal Bridges Museum.

Janet Sobel's painting, *The Milky Way* (1945), is currently on display at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.



Janet Sobel, c. 1945



untitled (c 1943), oil on masonite, 57.1 x 45.4 cm / 22½ x 17% in



untitled (c 1942), oil on panel, 30.8 x 25.4 cm / 12% x 10 in



Janet Sobel in her home studio, c 1946

I PAINT WHAT I FEEL

The work of Janet Sobel by Jennifer Higgie

In the Museum of Modern Art's collection in New York is a painting titled *The Milky Way*. As much an evocation of the depths of the sea as it is the infinity of the night sky, it could also be read as an image of an atmosphere or spirit. At just over a metre long and 50 centimetres wide, it's a vivid study in pale blues, watery greens, soft pinks and ochres that evoke cobwebs and coral in equal measure; the enamel paint is applied to the canvas in drips, swooping lines and thin washes. At once abstract and figurative, gestural, and detailed, at the time it was made, it was, in its delicate way, revolutionary. It was painted in 1945 – two years before Jackson Pollock's famous drip paintings – by an untrained artist in her 50s: Janet Sobel. Her life and work are yet another example of a gifted woman being excluded from the narrow lens of the art-historical canon.

Born Jennie Olechovsky to a large Jewish family in Ekaterinoslav, Ukraine in 1893, after her father was killed in a pogrom, at the age of 14, Janet – as she re-named herself – along with her mother and sister, emigrated to New York. She had ambitions to be an actress but marriage at 17, five children and supporting her widowed mother made it impossible.

The story goes that when Sobel was in her 40s, her art-student son Sol brought home his brushes and paints. Sobel picked

1. Gallery label for Janet Sobel *Milky Way*, 1945, Museum of Modern Art New York.

them up and, without further ado, became a phenomenal artist: inventive and intense; expressive, wildly original. According to Sol, his mother would prepare a ground, which would invariably suggest or trigger some "idea" for her, whose sudden conception was matched by an equally rapid execution. She would pour the paint, tip the canvas, and blow the wet lacquer. Her automatic technique echoes that of the Surrealists. She described her motivation simply: 'I only paint what I feel.'¹ Her granddaughter vividly remembers seeing Sobel at work:

In 1942, I'm a tot sitting on the floor next to Gram. She's working on a long canvas. She poured paint on the canvas and took out a vacuum cleaner ... she used the black hose to blow the paint around the canvas. No one had ever done this before. Her face is shining and her blue eyes intent. She's smiling and I remember it perfectly. I can still breathe the air coming in from the open window.²

The sounds that surrounded her often dictated Sobel's images. She never painted in silence. In one interview she explained that: *I don't think that ever would I paint a picture without music to listen to. All humans must have something like that, that warms them inside.*³ Her major work *Music* (1944) – a complex abstract work created by dripped enamel paint – was, in her words, her *impression of the music of Shostakovich, created in a world torn by war and bloodshed. Shostakovich*

2. Ashley Shapiro, email, 2021

3. Gail Levin, *Janet Sobel: Primitivist, Surrealist, and Abstract Expressionist*, *Woman's Art Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Spring - Summer, 2005), p. 12

*has captured the power of the Russian people and given them strength.*⁴

Everything she made is shot through with a great tenderness towards humanity. Glimpses of faces and flowers emerge from a tangle of undergrowth rendered in marbled enamel; patterns on dresses and people evoke the Jewish folk traditions of Sobel's Ukrainian childhood and the mood and technical innovations of contemporary painters such as Marc Chagall and Jean Dubuffet. Occasionally, in dense, elegiac works such as *The Illusion of Solidity* (c 1945) and *Hiroshima* (1948) Sobel alludes to the horrors of war, while in other paintings, exuberant layers of colour suggest the myriad promises of the New World. In *Untitled* (1944) a face – represented in thick black lines – materializes from a jumble of red, blue and yellow marks floating on a translucent blue ground: it's like a hallucination on a summer day. In *Artists at the Preview* (1943), three figures, as weighty as totems, sit in a lush red/gold environment, their eyes enlarged in order, perhaps, to see the visions they can conjure. A crimson bloom creeps over their bodies and sprouts like an organic crown from the central woman's head; it's an image that is at once, somehow, very ancient and very new.

Sobel was tireless in her exploration of materials. As well as using enamel – which lends the surface of her works the soft sheen of a stained-glass window – she became adept in crayons and pencils and in some instances incorporated

4. Gail Levin, *Janet Sobel: Primitivist, Surrealist, and Abstract Expressionist*, *Woman's Art Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Spring - Summer, 2005), p. 8

organic elements such as sand to lend texture to her surfaces; she also used glass pipettes from her husband's business to distribute paint. Again and again, she drew faces like masks – floating, disjointed, rhythmic. In *Untitled* (c 1942) four characters, their features simplified and bold, glow like moons in a verdant undergrowth of deep orange and blue leaves that seem to bend and quiver as if in a high wind. Often, the rich variety of materials evokes the worn, lovely patina of old walls, flaking in the sun. For example, in two untitled mixed-media-on-cardboard works from 1948 and 1946/48 blunt herringbone lines define androgynous, slightly smiling figures as dark as spiders' legs against a background of swirling red and pinks. The direction of the paint makes clear that it was applied from different directions: dripped from above and pushed about with a brush. Photographs of Sobel show her working, like Pollock, on the floor.

Sobel was his mother's great champion, writing to people he felt could help her – from Marc Chagall, with whom she could converse in Russian, to the surrealists André Breton and Max Ernst, the Jungian psychologist John Dewey and the gallerist Sidney Janis. It paid off. Sidney Janis included a painting by Sobel in his show of American Primitive paintings at the Arts Club of Chicago in 1943 and wrote in *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* that: *Janet Sobel will probably eventually be known as one of the important surrealist artists in this country.*⁵ In the same year, she had a solo show with the artist and dealer Fernando Puma. Word got about. In 1944, Peggy Guggenheim

5. Maya Blackstone, *Overlooked No More: Janet Sobel, Whose Art Influenced Jackson Pollock*, *The New York Times*, 30 July 2021

called Sobel *the best woman painter by far in America*⁶; in 1945 her work was included in the legendary exhibition of 33 female artists, *The Women at Guggenheim's Art of This Century* gallery in New York, alongside that of Louise Bourgeois, Lee Krasner, Kay Sage and others. A solo show followed at the same gallery in 1946. A decade or so later, Sobel was the only woman out of 30 or so artists mentioned by Clement Greenberg in his seminal 1955 essay, *American-Type Painting*:

Back in 1944, however, he [Jackson Pollock] had noticed one or two curious paintings shown at Peggy Guggenheim's by a primitive painter Janet Sobel (who was, and still is, a housewife living in Brooklyn). Pollock (and I myself) admired these pictures rather furtively: they showed schematic little drawings of faces almost lost in a dense tracery of thin black lines lying over and under a mottled field of predominantly warm and translucent color. The effect—and it was the first really all-over one that I had ever seen [...] Later Pollock admitted that these pictures had made an impression on him.

The praise, here, is begrudging: Greenberg's description of Sobel as a *primitive* and a *housewife*, and the fact that he and Pollock had to be *furtive* in their admiration of her, is patronising. Sobel was a working-class, untrained female artist in her 50s. Everything was stacked against her.

6. Eleanor Nairne, *Janet Sobel, Women in Abstraction*, Centre Pompidou, 2021, p.154

7. Ashley Shapiro, email, 2021

Her family's relocation to New Jersey in 1946 and Peggy Guggenheim's concurrent move to Venice was disastrous for Sobel: she disappeared from the art world. After the death of her husband, she ran the family's costume jewellery business. Her granddaughter is blunt about the hurdles placed in her way, declaring that:

My grandmother [...] had to create art – until she was squashed by the way men thought about women and the way she thought of her duties as a woman. [...] People thought she had allergies to paint. [...] She had allergies to suburbia.⁷

Despite the far-sighted MoMA curator William Rubin's belief in the artist – he bought two paintings from her in 1968 – it would be half a century before her ground-breaking originality was fully recognised. In a 2012 talk given at the San Diego Museum of Art, the educator Brian Patterson described Sobel's untitled painting from 1946 – which at first glance looks like an early Pollock – as *perhaps the most important in the collection because it challenges the biases of the white, male art-historical canon.*

Since then, Sobel's work has been rightfully included in numerous landmark exhibitions, most recently *Women in Abstraction* at the Pompidou in Paris. (It's travelling to the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao.) When Sobel died in 1968, she left behind around 1,000 pictures. As she told *The Brooklyn*

8. Ashley Shapiro, email, 2021

9. Quoted by Maya Blackstone, *Overlooked No More: Janet Sobel, Whose Art Influenced Jackson Pollock*, *The New York Times*, 30 July 2021

Daily Eagle in 1946: *It is not easy to paint. It is very strenuous. But it's something you've got to do if you have the urge. Her granddaughter, who describes Sobel as a magical human being with an immense spiritual dimension⁸ remembered her as bursting with a flow of creativity that couldn't be stopped.⁹ Our world is all the richer for it.*



Eleanor Roosevelt and Janet Sobel, c 1947

Jennifer Higgie (b 1962) is an Australian writer who lives in London. Formerly editor of *frieze* magazine, she is the author of *The Mirror and the Palette: Rebellion, Revolution and Resistance, 500 Years of Women's Self-Portraits*.



Top: *Artists at the Preview* (c 1943), enamel on canvas, 60 x 75 cm / 23 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ in
Bottom: *Three Vases* (c 1943), enamel on canvas, 60.8 x 91.5 cm / 24 x 36 $\frac{1}{8}$ in



The Illusion of Solidity (c 1945), oil on canvas, 108.5 x 68.8 cm / 42 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 27 $\frac{1}{8}$ in





untitled (c 1946), crayon on paper, 42.3 x 27.2 cm / 16 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ in



untitled (c 1942), gouache on paper, 15 x 9.5 cm / 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ in



Janet Sobel, c 1945

THIS IS NEW YORK

with Bill Leonard on WCBS

The way to make any artist fighting mad is to say, *I don't know anything about art, but I know what I like ...* . Consequently I was careful not to say it when I went to call on Mrs Janet Sobel in Brighton Beach one day last week.

Mrs Sobel is a short, plump, bright-eyed grandmother who, within the last six years, has become one of America's most talked-about surrealist painters - thereby reversing the usual amateur-turned-professional story.

Once in a while the art world is thrown into an uproar by the discovery of an artist, middle-aged or older, who has taken to painting late in life for the fun of it. Critics find the pictures refreshing because they're *simple* and *uncomplicated*, and galleries vie with each other to show the work of these *primitives* as they're called.

It's as if everybody had suddenly reached the saturation point of sophistication ... a point, I might add, that I don't find it hard to reach at all. It seems to be a case of how complicated can you get, before utter confusion sets in.

Mrs Sobel isn't the least bit confused. *I'm a surrealist*, she says. *I paint what I feel within me.*

What Mrs Sobel feels within evidently pays off. She's had two exhibitions of her work on New York's 57th Street, and by no stretch of the term could her paintings be called *primitive*. They're about as primitive as a B-29!

Until six years ago Mrs Sobel had never attempted her art and to this day she's never had a lesson. *How did you happen to start painting?* I asked her when I visited the canvas-strewn apartment last week. Mrs Sobel smiled: *My son, Sol, is very talented and he urged me to try. I liked it so much I never stopped.*

To illustrate her work, Mrs Sobel pointed out a large canvas which she called *Chronicle of our Elders*. That's when I refrained from making the statement about art and what I like. Mrs Sobel tried to enlighten me.

It's the story of the persecution of great men who have devoted themselves to the truth, she said. With an intense gesture, she pointed to a face staring out from under a groping scarlet hand. Christ was crucified, she explained, because he (talked about) humanity's departure from the truth.

With a second stabbing gesture she pointed to a different face. *Moses, the great lawgiver, suffered for all mankind. Again the quick finger darted and identified a (strange) figure in the sombre shadows. Hitler, she choked, not only anti-Jew and anti-Christ, but a betrayer of all humanity.*

The grandmother in Mrs Sobel is just as strong as the artist. When John Dewey, world famous American philosopher, called on her in Brighton Beach, he came to admire and talk about her paintings. But he stayed to consume her gefilte fish.

Broadcast: December 16th 1946



Janet Sobel with John Dewey, c 1945

Bill Leonard (1916-1994) was an American journalist and radio presenter. He served as president of CBS from 1979 to 1982.

LETTERS

Monday

Dear Mrs. Janet Sobel:

It was very nice of you to ask me to dinner yesterday and I enjoyed my visit very very much.

You have a grand family - very congenial and full of affection for one another, which I believe is of first importance in family life.

I found your work more exciting than I had expected and you must continue - regardless of what any one says - to do sincere things that you really feel + want to paint.

At the first opportunity, I will show the six examples I took, to some of my friends. I will let you know if there are possibilities for sale - into the right collection.

Very kind regards to yourself and your family. I am
yours

Ridley Janni

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Dear Mrs. Sobel:

A friend of mine, David Porter who has a gallery in Washington, is giving an exhibition of abstract painting called 'A Painting Prophecy, 1950'. This exhibition will travel in the United States afterwards. It will be shown in Washington on January 6. After I showed him your work he was very anxious to exhibit one of your paintings. Would you therefore be kind enough to bring in a few for me to choose from if you wish to take part in the exhibition? He also requires a statement about art from each artist for the catalogue. Will you please be as quick as you can about all this if you are interested.

Yours very sincerely,

Peggy Suggs Levin

Rothko
1288-6 Ave
Myp



Janet Sobel
1163 Woodland Ave
Plainfield
N.J.

1288-6 Ave Myp
Nov 18

Dear Janet Sobel-

Peggy Guggenheim
has asked me to help gather
some information for her in
regard to the exhibition of her
American in Paris.

While I am not certain
I believe it involves some publication
she has in mind. So can you mail
me to the above address
biographical material and anything
else you may think suitable.

Regards
Mark Rothko

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 245-3200 Cable: Modernart

Department of Painting and Sculpture

November 6, 1968

Dear Mr. Sobel:

At recent meetings of the Committee on Painting and Sculpture and the Board of Trustees two works by your mother, Janet Sobel, were seen and approved for acquisition with enthusiasm. These are the painting of 1945 entitled Milky Way which you and other members of your family have so very generously offered as a gift to the Museum's collection, and the smaller untitled work which you have given to Mr. Rubin with the understanding that he will pass it on to the Museum as a bequest.

Although a few members of the staff knew of your mother's work, I think the great majority of the Committee was completely ignorant of it even though it had been shown in the mid-forties at both the Brandt Gallery and Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century. Consequently we were both surprised and impressed by the originality of these paintings which apart from their very considerable esthetic merits, are of real historical value, anticipating as they do certain aspects of the all-over "drip" technique which Jackson Pollock made famous a little later.

On behalf of the Trustees won't you please accept my thanks for this very welcome and generous expression on the part of members of your family and yourself of interest in our Museum's collection.

Sincerely,


Walter Bareiss, Chairman
Committee on Painting and Sculpture

Mr. Sol Sobel
Sobel Brothers, Inc.
400 Barclay Street
Perth Amboy, New Jersey



untitled (c 1944), gouache on paper, 35.56 x 20.96 cm / 14 x 8¼ in

PAINTINGS BY JANET SOBEL **ART OF THIS CENTURY (1946)**

Introduction by Sidney Janis

In seclusion from art and artists and only after she had become a grandmother did Janet Sobel feel the compelling urge to paint. Her beginnings, fresh as those of a child, were primitive, not in the sense of crude and awkward strivings many believe primitive to mean, but in a truer sense, that of original, source inspiration.

The self taught or instinctive-naive painter is generally expected to develop. Unfortunately this development usually is at the sacrifice of a rare innate quality – his originality. Becoming aware of sophistication in art, he introduces knowing touches and short cuts which are in conflict with his basic style. Although Mrs Sobel's work is no longer primitive and has taken another direction no such development but rather a metamorphosis takes place. A comparison of her early oils, No. 1, 3, and outstanding recent examples, No. 11, 12, 16, demonstrate this metamorphosis. Today her paintings are filled with unconscious surrealist phantasy.

The psychological drive of instinctive-naive painters almost invariably manifests itself in perfection of detail. Mrs Sobel is an exception. More and more her work is given over to freedom and imaginative play. Her auto-didactic techniques in which automatism and chance effectively predominate, are

improvised according to inner demands. Further, *a posteriori* images suggest themselves to her and these she develops. Out of them springs the intense hallucinatory phantasy that often intuitively parallels in concept and spirit the work of leaders of surrealism such as Ernst and Masson.

Unexpected color transpositions and self invented methods for applying pigment are uncanny plastic weapons in Mrs Sobel's hands. With these the artist is enable to project psychologically and in various moods her emotive forms which confront the observer as strange new visual experiences.



Janet Sobel and Sidney Janis, c 1945

Sidney Janis (1896-1989) was a writer, curator, gallerist and collector of self-taught and modern art, and a leading figure of the 20th century art world in America.



Pro & Contra (1941), oil on board, 76.2 x 50.8 cm / 30 x 20 in

ART IN REVIEW

by Roberta Smith

Jackson Pollock may have broken the ice, in Willem de Kooning's well-known phrase, but Janet Sobel definitely helped crack it. Using her son's art materials, this Ukraine-born Brighton Beach mother of five took up painting in 1937 at the age of 43. Within a few years, she was making small abstractions covered with paint dripped in continuous, looping lines.

Because of an allergy to paint, Sobel worked in crayon and pencil after 1948, and at her death in 1968 she was little more than a rumor, the woman who had dripped paint before Pollock. She had resurfaced in an article on Pollock by William S Rubin that appeared in *Artforum* in 1967; the Museum of Modern Art acquired a painting just after she died, and occasionally exhibited it next to its Pollocks.

Sobel's first 15 minutes occurred in the mid-1940's, when she was embraced by the art world as a kind of Surrealist savant. Her work was included in a group show at Peggy Guggenheim's gallery, *Art of This Century*, in 1944, where it was seen and admired by both Pollock and Clement Greenberg, who later cited it as the first instance of *all-over* painting he had seen. Sidney Janis wrote the catalog preface for her solo show at Guggenheim's gallery in 1946, noting her *self-invented method for applying paint*.



Death Takes a Holiday (1945), oil on canvas board, 60 x 50.8 cm / 23½ x 20 in

The gallery's 41-work exhibition - the first since 1946 - reveals a complex mix of innate Outsider, folk and Surrealist instincts. Sobel's first efforts show a flair for a primitivist figuration that recall early Chagall and presage early Dubuffet and for profuse floral patterns reminiscent of Ukrainian peasant art.

But equally innate was a need to exploit materials of all kinds (including sand). Ditto all-over patterns and surfaces, which might entail repeating faces, herringbone marks, splattered watercolor or zigzagging pencil lines. If her drips weren't vivid enough, she didn't mind outlining them in ink, and helping to invent Abstract Expressionism did not end her imagistic work. Her main goal was visual intensity, which she achieved with impressive regularity.

Starting out in the vicinity of Kandinsky and Klee and ending nose to nose with Pollock, Sobel's work is further proof of modernism's impure, nonlinear paths. It is great that her short strange career is visible again. May it remain so.





untitled (c 1946/48), enamel on canvas, 50.8 x 40.6 cm / 20 x 16 in



untitled (c 1946/48), enamel on canvas board, 40.6 x 30.5 cm / 16 x 12 in

EXHIBITIONS

- 1943 *American Primitive Painting of Four Centuries*, Arts Club of Chicago, Chicago
- 1943/46 *27-30 Annual*, Brooklyn Museum, New York
- 1944 *Abstract and Surrealist Art in America*, Mortimer Brandt Gallery, New York
- 1944 *Janet Sobel*, Puma Gallery, New York
- 1944 *Abstract and Surrealist Art in the United States*, Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; Santa Barbara Museum; Seattle Museum of Art and others
- 1944 *Chronicle of Our Elders*, Norlyst Art Gallery, New York
- 1945 *Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture*, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia
- 1945 *The Women*, Art of This Century, New York
- 1946 *Janet Sobel*, Art of This Century, New York
- 1970 *Recent Acquisitions*, Museum of Modern Art, New York
- 1984 *American Women Artists Part I: 20th Century Pioneers*, Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
- 1987/88 *Peggy Guggenheim's Other Legacy*, Guggenheim, Venice; Guggenheim, New York
- 1989/90 *Abstract Expressionism: Other Dimensions*, Whitney Museum of Art at Phillip Morris, New York and others
- 1991 *Art of the Forties*, Museum of Modern Art, New York
- 1995 *Artist's Choice: Elizabeth Murraray: Modern Women*, Museum of Modern Art, New York
- 2002 *Vital Forms: American Art and Design in the Atomic Age 1940-1960*, Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York and others
- 2008 *Action/Abstraction: Pollock, de Kooning and American Art, 1940-1976*, Jewish Museum, New York
- 2010 *Approaching Abstraction*, American Folk Art Museum, New York
- 2012 *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women in Mexico and the United States*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles
- 2016 *The Museum of Everything #6*, Kunsthal Rotterdam, Rotterdam
- 2016/17 *Abstract Expressionism*, Royal Academy of Arts, London; Guggenheim, Bilbao
- 2017 *Making Space: Women Artists and Postwar Abstraction*, Museum of Modern Art, New York
- 2017/18 *The Museum of Everything #7*, Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania
- 2018/19 *Outliers and American Vanguard Art*, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles
- 2021 *519: Architecture for Modern Art*, Museum of Modern Art, New York
- 2021 *Janet Sobel: 20th Century Woman*, The Gallery of Everything, Frieze Masters, London
- 2021/22 *Women in Abstraction*, Centre Pompidou, Paris; Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao
- 2023 *Action, Gesture, Paint: Women Artists and Global Abstraction 1940-70*, Whitechapel Gallery, London

PUBLICATIONS

- 1944 *Abstract and Surrealist Art in America*, Sidney Janis, Arno Press, New York
- 1944 *Janet Sobel*, John Dewey, Puma Gallery, New York
- 1944 *Paintings by Janet Sobel*, Sidney Janis, New York
- 1947 *Art and Culture*, Clement Greenberg, Beacon, Boston
- 1947 *Modern Art Looks Ahead*, Fernando Puma, Beechhurst Press, New York
- 1960 *Confessions of an Art Addict*, Peggy Guggenheim, Echo Press, Hopewell
- 1979 *Out of This Century Confessions of an Art Addict*, Peggy Guggenheim, Universe Books, New York
- 1979 *Originals American Women Artists*, Eleanor Munroe, Da Capo Press, New York
- 1983 *Jackson Pollock*, Elizabeth Frank, Abbeville Press, New York
- 1985 *Peggy Guggenheim Collection: Venice*, Angelica Zander Rudenstein, Abrams, Solomon R Guggenheim Foundation, New York
- 1986 *Peggy – The Wayward Guggenheim*, Jacquelin Bograd Weld, E P Dutton, New York
- 1989 *Abstract Expressionism: Other Dimension*, Jeffrey Wechsler, Jane Voorhees, Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers, New Jersey
- 1991 *Art of the Forties*, Riva Castleman, Museum of Modern Art, New York
- 1997 *Abstract Expressionism Other Politics*, Yale University Press, New Haven
- 1997 *Art of This Century: The Women*, Siobhan M Conaty, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice
- 1999 *Janet Sobel*, American National Biography, Deborah A Goldberg, Oxford University Press, Oxford
- 2002 *Art in Review: Janet Sobel*, Roberta Smith, New York Times, New York
- 2003 *Northwest Mythologies*, University of Washington Press, Tacoma
- 2003 *Eyesight Alone*, Caroline Jones, University of Chicago Press, Chicago
- 2003 *Inside Out: Selected Works by Janet Sobel*, Gail Levin, Gary Snyder Fine Art, New York
- 2005 *Janet Sobel: Primitivist, Surrealist, and Abstract Expressionist*, Gail Levin, *Woman's Art Journal* 26, Old City Publishing, Philadelphia
- 2016 *Abstract Expressionism*, David Anfam, Susan Davidson, Eleanor Nairne, Royal Academy of Art, London
- 2018 *The Museum of Everything* #7, The Museum of Everything, London
- 2021 *Janet Sobel: 20th Century Woman*, The Gallery of Everything, London
- 2021 *Women in Abstraction*, Centre Pompidou, Thames and Hudson, London
- 2023 *Action, Gesture, Paint: Women, Artists, and Global Abstraction 1940-1970*, Whitechapel Gallery, London

COLLECTIONS

American Folk Art Museum (New York)
Centre Pompidou (Paris)
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art (Bentonville)
Hirshhorn Museum And Sculpture Garden (Washington, DC)
Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles)
The Menil Collection (Texas)
Museum of Modern Art (New York)
Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art (Philadelphia)
San Diego Museum of Art (San Diego)
The Museum of **Everything** (London)
Whitney Museum of American Art (New York)



This book and exhibition are dedicated to the memory of **Janet Sobel** (1893-1968).

Credits:

Production Michelle Trivilegio

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AD REINHARDT, *HOW TO LOOK AT MODERN ART IN AMERICA* (1946)
(DETAIL & HIGHLIGHT)



Janet Sobel

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