



ROBERT M. SWEDROE SYMBOLISM

ARCHBISHOP JOHN C. FAVALORA ARCHIVE & MUSEUM

This catalog is published in conjunction with the art exhibition "SYMBOLISM" on view at
The Archbishop John C. Favalora Archive & Museum @ St. Thomas University Library,
Miami Gardens, September 2020

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Front Cover: Robert M. Swedroe "Kohein's Conundrum" 2019, 25 in. x 31 in.

ROBERT M. SWEDROE SYMBOLISM

September 29, 2020 - January 22, 2021

Archbishop John C. Favalora Archive & Museum

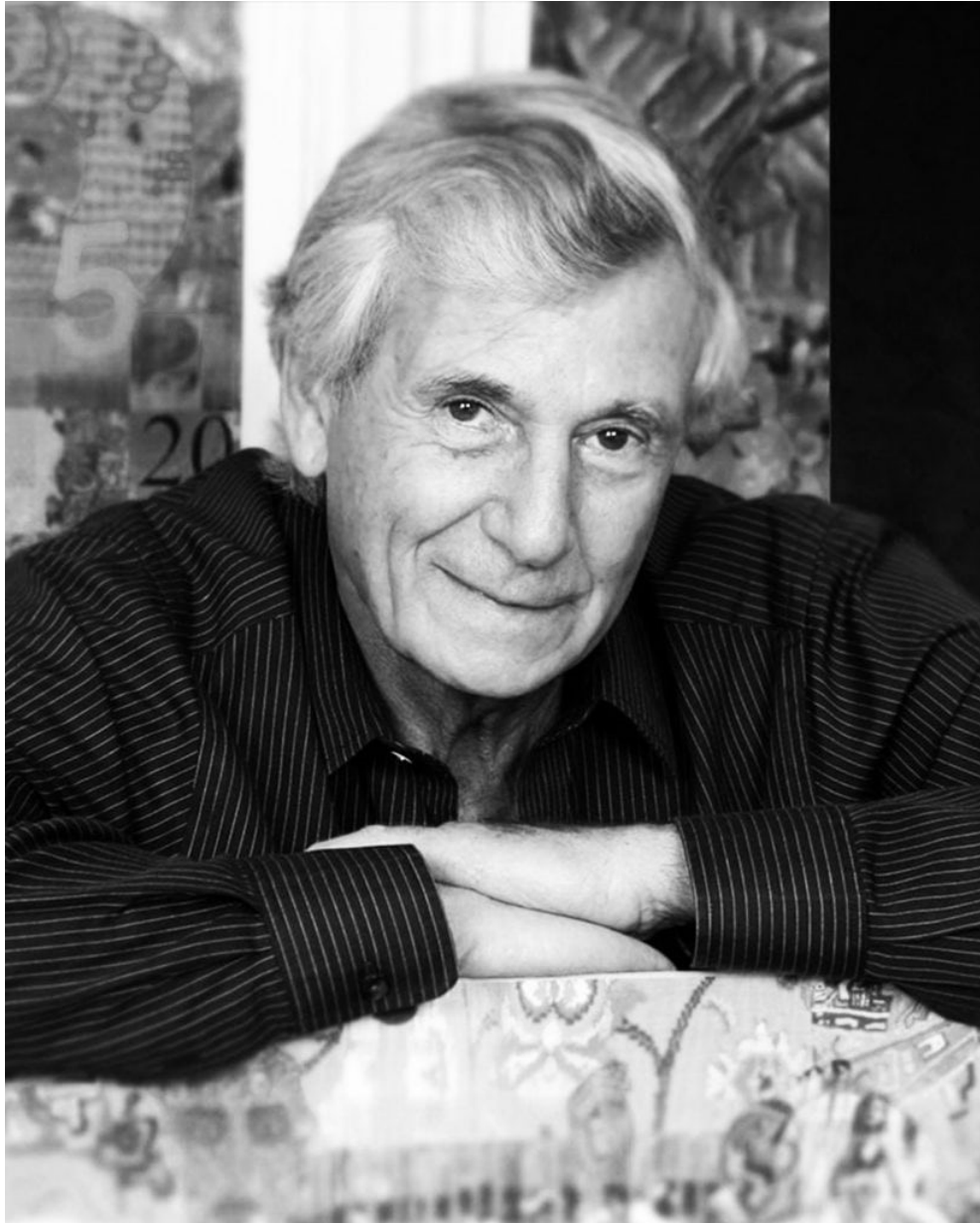


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Curator's Statement

Acclaimed artist Robert M. Swedroe returns to Saint Thomas University with a new exhibition of contemporary Jewish art entitled "Symbolism". Once again, Swedroe **demonstrates** his mastery of imagery, but this time with an assembly of various ritual objects. Swedroe invites us to explore and discover the visible religious tokens in each of his compositions with symbolic narrative scenes of the Jewish faith. This collection of collages is dazzling, colorful, and the Swedroe's delicate and meticulous work of **integrating each piece together** is appreciated for its finery. **Swedroe's Symbolism** is inspiring, unique and iconic.

Isabel Medina | Curator



Robert M. Swedroe
Artist and Architect

Photo credit: Andrew Goldstein Photography

ROBERT SWEDROE

Denise M. Gerson, Former Associate Director, Curator, Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami

Miami Beach-based architect and artist Robert Swedroe makes use of computer technology, paint, fabric, cut paper, and all manner of found objects to create large- and small-scale dimensional collages and assemblages, which he stacks in the round, arranges on canvas or board, and secures in place through a deft handling of resins, shiny or matte. Fluidly juxtaposing fractured POP, art historical, and contemporary motifs, alternately embracing the aesthetics of formal geometry, the artist produces compositional reliefs and sculptural objects that challenge conventional notions of form, style, and pictorial structure.

While Swedroe's labor-intensive artwork champions his experiments with mixed media, which includes a vast array of costume jewelry, semi-precious stones, beads, buttons, feathers, tiles, charms, sequins, and bottle caps, it is his brilliant color strategies that anchor each of his various bodies of work, which he divides thematically into discreet series. Three, *Cyber*, *Narratives*, and *Butterflies*, are on view at ArtSpot Miami International Art Fair 2015. Mesmerizing in their complexity, ranging from whimsical to hallucinogenic, Swedroe's collages offer viewers a dazzling riot of psychedelic hues, densely layered iconographies, and stunning visual effects, the sums of which are as thought provoking as they are decorative.

Informed by Swedroe's architectural roots, the hard-edged geometric abstractions of *Cyber* works, composed of collaged, computer-generated concentric squares -- a nod to Frank Stella -- and embellished with strategically-placed, small, glistening objects, explore spatial depth. The stacked Towers, sculptures in the round, address structure as color and color as structure, while expansive, multi-part wall and floor installations, ingeniously designed to accommodate variable arrangements and dimensions, integrate form and function.

In the *Butterfly* series, formatted on both petite and grand scale and characterized by a single predominant color, Swedroe explores a winged motif that belongs to the artistic heritage of many cultures. Touching upon the dichotomy of temporal and ephemeral notions, conveying grace, charm, and delicacy, Swedroe's butterflies float among kaleidoscopic spheres drawn from yet another body of work, his *Celestial Series*, which alludes to galaxies of imagination. Thus, Swedroe fuses a mystical marriage between the known, natural world, and cosmic worlds beyond our ken.

It is, perhaps, the *Narrative Series*, which most dramatically conveys the artist's exquisite sense of materiality and his longing to engage the viewer's thinking. Gazing into the enigmatic compositions, totally devoid of hierarchical order, richly imbued with pattern and decoration, and laden with a dizzying accumulation of visual idioms and cultural references, one is drawn into a seemingly bottomless well of fascinating imagery and saturated color. Compelling titles, such as "Virtues of a Wondering Mind" (2015) and "Transportive Visions" (2015), do little to explicate the iconographic puzzles, which beg contemplation, so as to unravel Swedroe's mysterious realms of thought.

Possessed of architectural vision and artistic passion, Robert Swedroe creates art that simultaneously dazzles the eye and invigorates the mind. His oeuvre, for which he has been frequently lauded and awarded, numbers in the hundreds, and he shows no sign of slowing down. Ultimately, Swedroe's art resists classification, which underlies its enduring appeal.



Emounah (rules to live by)

2006

Mixed media on board

24 in. x 24 in



Heritage

1973

Mixed media / Print

23 in. x 26 in



Kohein's Conundrum

2019

Mixed media on board

25 in. x 31 in



Hatikvah

1972

Mixed media print

26 in. x 32 in



Yerushalum

1973

Mixed media on board

18 in. x 26 in



Jerusalem

1972

Mixed media on board

40 in. x 26 in



Cabbala

1973

Mixed media on board

26 in. x 18 in



K'tuvim

1973

Mixed media on board

18 in. x 26 in

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