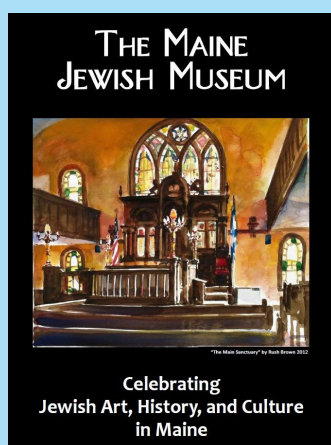




# THE MAINE JEWISH MUSEUM

## Celebrating Jewish Art, History, and Culture in Maine



Maine Jewish Museum  
267 Congress St.  
Portland ME 04101  
207-773-2339  
[mainejewishmuseum.org](http://mainejewishmuseum.org)

Hours: M-F 10:00-4:00  
Often later, call ahead.  
OPEN SUNDAYS  
1:00-5:00

**Gary Barron**  
Executive Director

**Nancy Davidson,**  
Curator in Residence  
[nancyd.mjm@gmail.com](mailto:nancyd.mjm@gmail.com)  
207-239-4774

### 2018-2019

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## Upcoming Art Talk at Maine Jewish Museum

**Sunday, September 15, 2019 at 2:00 PM**

**Artist Talk : William (Billy) Baum**  
on behalf of Father and Artist, **Mark Baum**

- William (Billy) Baum is a behavior analyst.  
He received his Ph.D. in 1966 from Harvard University.  
He taught at University of New Hampshire for 22 years and  
has published many articles and a book. He is known for his  
pioneering theories. Baum lives in San Francisco and stays  
part of the summer at the house in Maine where his father,  
Mark Baum, lived and painted for 36 years.  
He is the executor of the Mark Baum Estate. -

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### Exhibition

September 12, 2019 - November 1, 2019

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## Faith Regained

**Mark Baum**

Early Works: Spiegel Gallery  
Later Works: Fineberg Family Community Room  
Curator in Residence, Nancy Davidson

Mark Baum (1903-1997) was a Polish-born American artist whose paintings and artistic direction are unique in the twentieth-century modernist canon. Baum was born into a conservative Jewish family in what is now Southeast Poland, near the Ukrainian border.

Following World War I and a daring emigration through occupied Europe to New York City in 1919, he turned to art.

Mostly self-taught, Baum became a respected painter of city- and landscapes in the late 1920s, having his first solo exhibition at the Whitney Galleries in 1929, with subsequent shows at Marie Harriman Gallery in 1931 and Perls Galleries in 1941, among others.

His work was collected by a number of museums, including the Whitney and the Frick, as well as the private collection of Alfred Stieglitz. His representational period of work is notable for its unusual perspective, flattened patterning, and mix of the natural and industrial presented as a total vision.

**Board members at large:**

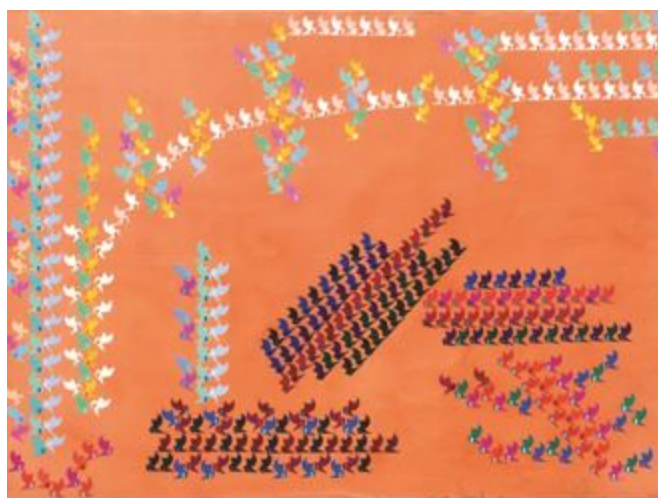
Nancy Osher Blumberg  
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Distraught House, 1949

At the end of World War II, with the revelations of its devastation to his homeland and family, Baum fell into crisis—personally and artistically. The painter became disillusioned with the representational art that had become his trademark, though in looking at it anew he understood that it contained the seeds of something important for where he needed to go. Baum began to see his painting as part of—and the vehicle for—a larger spiritual quest.

Initially this took the form of a richly experimental transitional period in the late 1940s and early 1950s, during which he maintained representational and symbolic imagery. Then in 1957 he moved decisively to non-objective painting, developing a unique, abstract form he called "the element." This form was inspired by a revelation he had upon re-looking at his 1948 painting *Aspirational Staircase*; specifically, he sought to create a singular shape that, like the staircase, invoked a rhythmical, directional movement. He evolved the "element" over a decade arriving at its final form in the late 1960s.



Fruits of Meditation, 1964

Baum would paint exclusively using this element until his death in 1997. The "element" was presciently algorithmic of our digital age in the sense that it was a code by which he could build worlds, but it also became a spiritual vocabulary and a creative, cosmic force unto itself. This glyph was for Baum a visual mantra through which he regained his faith and was able to once again access the awe of the universe. Baum's change to non-representational art also corresponded with his move out of the New York art scene and to rural Maine (Cape Neddick), where he painted in a converted barn and nurtured an extensive garden.

Working in virtual obscurity for almost three decades, Baum nonetheless had the faith of the visionary that he was: he felt sure that even though his work was unrecognized in the moment, it was accessing a larger spiritual channel and would someday be understood. Mark Baum's painting is found in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Whitney Museum, the Fogg Art Museum, the Berkeley Art Museum, and Bowdoin College Museum of Art, among others.

We look forward to your visit.

Maine Jewish Museum  
267 Congress Street, Portland, ME 04101  
Monday - Friday 10am-4pm  
Sundays 1pm - 5pm or by appointment

The mission of the Maine Jewish Museum is to honor the contributions and diversity of Maine's Jewish immigrants in the context of the American experience. Through exhibits and programming, the Museum seeks to build bridges of appreciation and understanding with people of all backgrounds.

Join us in celebrating Jewish ART, HISTORY and CULTURE in Maine.

Maine Jewish Museum, 267 Congress St, Portland, ME 04101

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