With every Annual Review published since I became Director of the Casden Institute for the Study of the Jewish Role in American Life, we have aimed to view the Jewish impact on America and American culture from new angles and from different perspectives. But—until now—this mandate has been more aspirational than literal. Not this time. This is signaled to the reader right away when she or he compares the cover of our tenth volume of the Annual Review to the covers of all of the previous volumes. This cover photograph, a panoramic image shot by the noted photographer and a contributor to this volume, Bill Aron, is in color rather than the black-and-white images we have always employed in the past. This is intended to make the point—even before you open the cover and go to the first page—that you are going to be looking at more than text in the articles that follow. Indeed, the title for this volume, Jewish Cultural Aspirations, must be seen in this light. The aspirations to be considered here are vividly visual and artistic.

In this respect, I can think of no one better qualified to bring this Annual Review into the spotlight than the guest-editor who has guided the publication of Jewish Cultural Aspirations from its outset: Ruth Weisberg. Ruth has long been a friend and an academic colleague of mine here at USC, whose scholarly and administrative endeavors I have always admired and tried, as best I can, to emulate. But, as is the case with this volume, she brings an added dimension to everything she does, because she is rightfully acknowledged to be one of the finest visual artists of our time. Moreover, she has used her enormous talent to engage themes that are self-consciously Jewish and, through her artistic works she has allowed us to see things about Jewish culture, and especially the role of women in Jewish cultural life, that we might not comprehend without her vision to illuminate them for us. In this volume she has taken the opportunity to paint on a broader canvas by inviting colleagues engaged in artistic efforts complementary to her own work to assess where art in a Jewish context is heading today and in the future.

This leads me to note a curious problem that I encountered as I
copy-edited this volume. As the final copy-editor for the *Annual Review*, I always pore over every word and try to block all errors and to enforce a common style throughout. To be frank, I can get downright compulsive about such minutiae, and it was directly because of this that I began to notice, as I went from article to article, a slight variation in style that gave me pause. It all had to do with how to handle a phrase used frequently in this volume, namely “Jewish art”—or should I say, “Jewish Art”? Depending on who was doing the writing and especially the specific contexts in which this phrase occurred, sometimes the phrase was written as “Jewish art,” and sometimes it was “Jewish Art.” There were variations on the theme, as well; for example should one speak of “Jewish architecture” or “Jewish Architecture”? This is especially true in an article (as you will see below) where it is the Jewish aspects of architecture that are under close consideration.

The more I thought about it, the more I realized that this was not necessarily a minor matter, easily dismissed. In the lead article for *Jewish Cultural Aspirations*, the eminent art-historian Matthew Baigell makes a bold claim: that—although we may not realize it—we are in the midst of a “golden age” of modern art with Jewish themes. Wonderful, but if this is so, should we not then elevate the status of such cultural aspirations by speaking of them as “Jewish Art” rather than “Jewish art”? Perhaps so, but Prof. Baigell (upon being queried about this) made it quite clear that he prefers the lower case “a.” On the other hand, other contributors to this volume prefer “A” in the upper case. So which one is it to be? I went to our guest-editor with this quandary, and asked her to make a decision: Jewish Art or Jewish art? But she wisely proposed that we follow Emerson’s advice and not succumb to a “foolish consistency”; rather, we should allow “Jewish Art” and “Jewish art” to coexist. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that this would allow us to make an important point. After all, there is a considerable gray area between art that happens to be Jewish and art that is sufficiently distinguished from other artistic endeavors to be part of a cultural movement worthy of being deemed Jewish Art.

From the standpoint of the individual artist, there is a natural and justifiable desire to eschew any such “either/or” lumping-labeling as overly simplistic. After all, when Monet painted what he imagined in his mind’s eye, he did not label his canvasses as “impressionistic.” This was done by an outside observer—and not a friendly one at that; still, the label, however imperfect, has stuck. Whether art that has self-conscious Jewish themes, which—as the articles in this volume attest, is flourishing on many levels—will ever be known as Jewish Art remains to be seen. In part, it may be argued that this is a question
that this volume of the *Annual Review* is trying, in an open-ended fashion, to address.

We have gone to considerable lengths to make sure that the articles that follow are well illustrated. Not only have we inserted black-and-white illustrations at the most appropriate places in the body of each of the studies, so they can be easily referenced by the reader as he or she progresses through *Jewish Cultural Aspirations*, but we have also included a special color supplement in the middle of the volume that better depicts the works that are in color of the artists who are featured. In this regard, I want to thank our colleagues at Purdue University Press—especially Charles Watkinson and Bryan Shaffer—for encouraging us and supporting us in doing this. Nonetheless, I wish to caution the reader that this *Annual Review* does not feature a collection of fine modern art prints of the type one might expect to encounter, for example, in an exhibition catalogue; rather, this is a book *about* rather than *of* art in a modern Jewish context. We hope that the illustrations in our color supplement will give the reader an opportunity to gain a better sense of the featured art works, but they will not be all they could be, if money were no object. For the reader’s reference, we are also establishing a page on the website of the Casden Institute where the art cited in *Jewish Cultural Aspirations* may be found; or, alternatively, directions to where good illustrations may be found on the Internet are noted. Fortunately, nearly all the art featured in this volume can be found on the Web.

The production-editorial work for Volume 10 of the *Annual Review* and the time-consuming task of getting all proper permissions for use of illustrations were particularly demanding this time around. Marilyn J. Lundberg was her usual hyper-competent self in doing the former, and Lisa Ansell, Associate Director of the Casden Institute, invested many hours in the latter. Ruth and I are grateful to you both. Every year, as I write these forewords, I am reminded of how many people share their valuable time to ensure the success of the Casden Institute and of this *Annual Review*, in particular. Of these, Alan Casden always deserves pride of place. It is his expectation of excellence that we all try to meet at the Institute that bears his name. Susan Wilcox, Associate Dean of Dornsife College Advancement keeps a sharp lookout for us in order to ensure that we keep moving forward on a steady and successful course. Others in the USC administration, especially USC’s President C. L. “Max” Nikias, Provost Elizabeth Garrett and Vice-Provost Michael Quick, are all stalwart friends and supporters of the goals of the Casden Institute and the scholarly aims of the *Annual Review*, and we are highly appreciative of all their efforts on our behalf.
The Jewish Role in American Life

The Dornsife College of Letters, Arts & Sciences has just welcomed a new dean to lead us forward, and I want to take this opportunity to welcome Dean Steve Kay to his new position and wish him the very best.

When Ruth Weisberg and I were trying to decide to whom to dedicate this volume, we both immediately concurred that one long-time lover of the arts, dedicated supporter of USC and the best of friends to the Casden Institute was the clear choice: Ruth Ziegler. Not only has she done so much to advance Jewish cultural aspirations on our campus and in Southern California, but, as many artists will attest in a wide range of visual arts, film, architecture, etc., she has been the one who has so often enabled their work to become a reality. Besides, I simply cannot be objective about Ruth Ziegler—I just love her and everything about her (and I am just one of many who would say as much and more). So we take enormous pleasure in dedicating Jewish Cultural Aspirations to Ruth Ziegler. If we are living in a golden age of Jewish A/art, even though many of us may not realize it, Ruth has long known this to be true—and has helped make it happen.

Bruce Zuckerman, Myron and Marian Casden Director