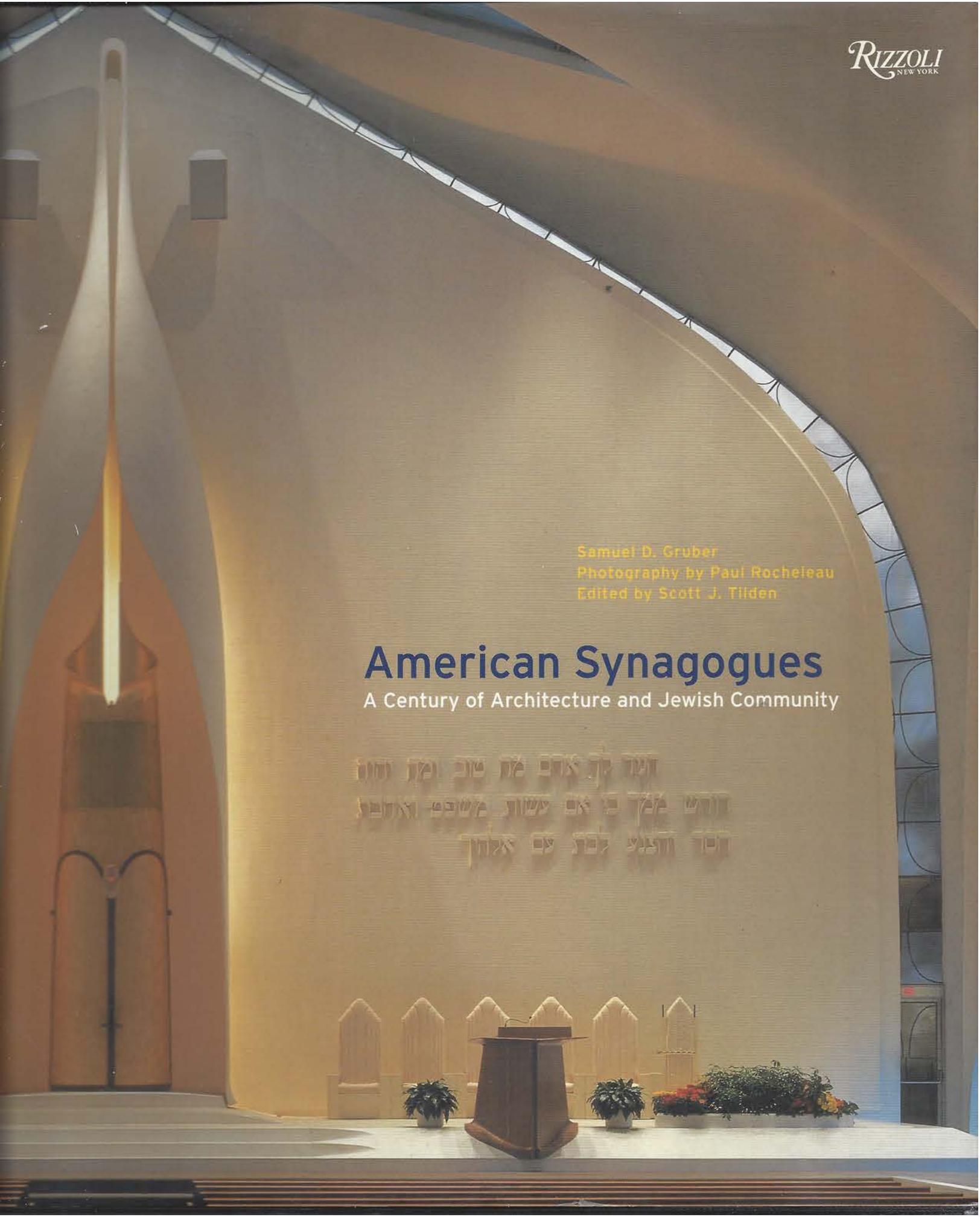


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Edited by Scott J. Tilden

American Synagogues

A Century of Architecture and Jewish Community

וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁאֵלֶּם מֵהַיָּם
וְהָיָה מֵעַד הַיּוֹם
וְהָיָה לְפָנֵינוּ



List of Synagogues

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| 30 Temple Society of Concord
Syracuse, New York
Arnold Brunner
1910 | 95 Temple Beth El
Providence, Rhode Island
Percival Goodman
1954 | 146 Temple B'nai Jehudah
Kansas City, Missouri
Kivett & Myers
1967 | 196 Kol Ami Synagogue
Scottsdale, Arizona
Will Bruder
1995 |
| 37 Stone Avenue Temple
Tucson, Arizona
Ely Blount
1910 | 100 Temple Beth Sholom
Miami Beach, Florida
Percival Goodman
1956 | 151 Temple Beth Zion
Buffalo, New York
Harrison & Abramovitz
1967 | 201 Hampton Synagogue
Westhampton, New York
Edward Jacobs
2000 |
| 40 Congregation Rodef Shalom
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Palmer & Hornbostel
1907 | 105 Beth Sholom Synagogue
Elkins Park, Pennsylvania
Frank Lloyd Wright
1957 | 158 Congregation Sons of Israel
Lakewood, New Jersey
Davis, Brody & Wisniewski
1963 | 206 Temple Israel
Greenfield, Massachusetts
Louis Goodman
1996 |
| 48 The Temple-Tifereth Israel
Cleveland, Ohio
Charles R. Greco
1923 | 110 Congregation Kneses Tifereth Israel
Port Chester, New York
Philip Johnson
1956 | 164 Temple Brith Sholom
Cortland, New York
Werner Seligmann
1969 | 211 North Shore Hebrew Academy Synagogue
Kings Point, New York
Alexander Gorlin
1999 |
| 54 K.A.M. Isaiah Israel Congregation
Chicago, Illinois
Alfred S. Alschuler
1924 | 121 Chicago Loop Synagogue
Chicago, Illinois
Loebl, Schlossman & Bennett
1958 | 169 Gumenick Chapel at Temple Israel of Greater Miami
Miami, Florida
Kenneth Triester
1969 | 214 Hevreh of Southern Berkshire
Great Barrington, Massachusetts
Michael Landau Associates
1999 |
| 61 Wilshire Boulevard Temple
Los Angeles, California
Abram M. Edelman, S. Tilden Norton & David C. Allison
1929 | 122 Temple B'rith Kodesh
Rochester, New York
Pietro Belluschi
1962 | 176 Temple Beth El of Great Neck
Great Neck, New York
Armand Bartos & Associates
1970 | 221 Congregation Agudas Achim
Austin, Texas
Lake/Flato Architects, Inc.
2001 |
| 68 Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York
New York, New York
Robert B. Kohn, Charles Butler & Clarence S. Stein
1930 | 128 Temple Oheb Shalom
Baltimore, Maryland
Walter Gropius
1960 | 181 Perlman Sanctuary at North Shore Congregation Israel
Glencoe, Illinois
Hammond, Beeby & Babka
1979 | |
| 76 The Temple
Atlanta, Georgia
Philip Trammel Shutze
1931 | 134 Temple Sinai
El Paso, Texas
Sidney Eisenshtat
1962 | 184 Jewish Center of the Hamptons (Gates of the Grove)
East Hampton, New York
Norman Jaffe
1989 | |
| 86 Park Synagogue
Cleveland, Ohio
Eric Mendelsohn
1953 | 140 North Shore Congregation Israel
Glencoe, Illinois
Minoru Yamasaki
1964 | 192 Gordon Chapel at Temple Oheb Shalom
Baltimore, Maryland
Levin/Brown
1988 | |

Kol Ami Synagogue
Scottsdale, Arizona
Will Bruder
1995

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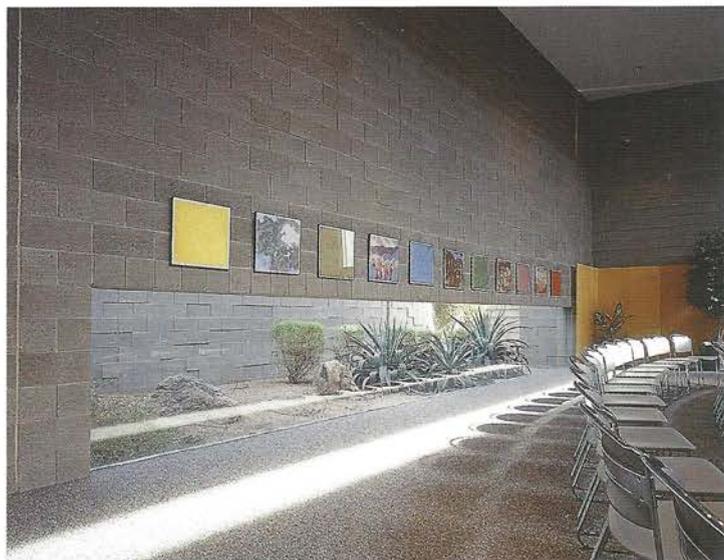
Kol Ami Synagogue in Scottsdale, Arizona, designed by Will Bruder, signals a new approach to synagogue design.⁷ Bruder looks neither to past American sources nor to Jewish Europe for inspiration. His sources are closer to home—in the desert landscape of the Southwest, in the potential of everyday building materials, and in the quirky do-it-yourself constructivism of Frank Lloyd Wright seen at his nearby school and complex, Taliesin West, and more so, Paolo Soleri at Arcosanti, an experimental town north of Phoenix being built according to hand-craft principles and an environmental philosophy.⁸ Like Arcosanti, Kol Ami remains a work in progress. Planning for the synagogue on this site began in 1992, and a first phase, which included a multipurpose hall that now serves as sanctuary and social hall, was complete by 1995. A second phase now being designed will add a sanctuary to the north.

The local desert landscape might evoke the desert tradition of ancient Judaism, as in Eisenshtat's work in El Paso (chapter 6), but Bruder's approach is radically different. Where Eisenshtat brought a Romantic emotional approach to his design, Bruder's work is grounded in sharp pragmatism. Kol Ami is closer to a postwar desert kibbutz in Israel than to Mount Sinai or some other biblical icon.

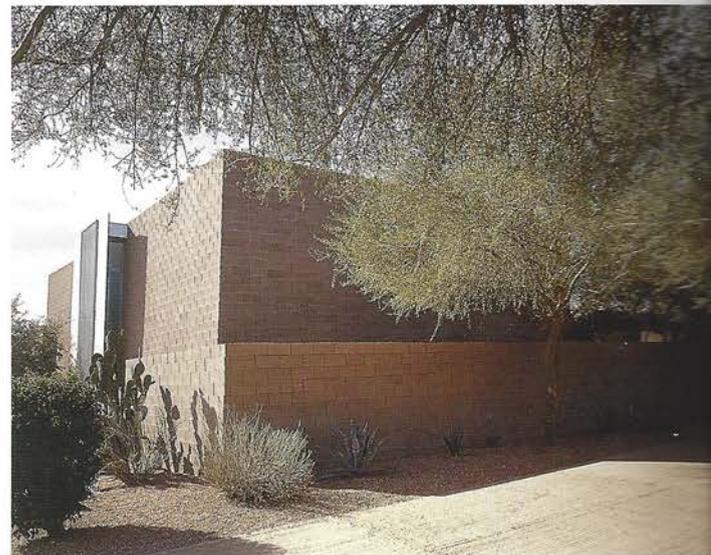
The complex contains both religious and educational facilities—it is conceived, in the words of one critic, as a "modern version of the traditional fortified village of ancient desert settlements."⁹ The master plan creates a tight-knit pattern of streets and protective courtyards intended to enforce a sense of community identity. The east wall of the compound forms the principal public elevation—it undulates along the full length of the complex inspired in part, Bruder claims, by the lines of a Richard Serra sculpture.¹⁰ The building that now serves as the sanctuary is a large, solid-looking block with sheer sides and no decoration. Inside, it is an airy space sliced with sunshine that slants in through a window on the south wall, windows behind the Ark, and windows in the roof. An Ark designed by Bruder of cherry wood projects from the east wall. Outside, a galvanized metal panel extends from the east wall and allows light to enter through narrow windows. According to Bruder, he had "designed a multipurpose room that you can worship in [but that] never became sacred. . . . There is a duality to it, the way you enter in, the way it works."¹¹

Right: Interior of multi-use space that serves as sanctuary. View toward the Ark.





The walls of the sanctuary consist of blocks of sand aggregate laid in courses slightly offset, recalling the rough masonry of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. The irregular masonry pattern catches the bright sun, which animates the wall into patterns of light and shadow. Lightweight concertina awnings of polycarbonate sheeting face the courtyard, supported by projecting narrow metal poles. They create a zigzag pattern of shadow upon the wall. These walls extend higher than the roofs of the classrooms behind them, hiding the varied roof levels that intersect in a clever way to allow the insertion of clerestory windows by which the rooms are naturally lit. Bruder varies the classroom heights within, too, by creating a series of successively lower floors. As the children grow and move from class to class, the rooms grow taller, like the occupants. The high walls also create the feel of an old Western town, where two-story facades were frequently erected before the buildings behind them went up. This device, as well as the raw feel of so many of the materials, emphasizes Temple Kol Ami as a work in progress. But unlike many construction sites, Kol Ami will maintain this quality in years to come, even when all its phases are complete.



Left: One side of the sanctuary opens into a small enclosed desert garden.

Right: The exterior of the sanctuary, with its cast blocks slightly offset, has a projection where the Ark is set within and where light filters inside.

Opposite: The court along which the classrooms are arrayed resembles the main street of an Old West town.

