



The Art of Maurice Sendak: 1980 to Present

By Tony Kushner



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The first volume of *The Art of Maurice Sendak*, published when he was 53, covered the period 1951–1981, and spanned more than 80 books, including Sendak's signature, Caldecott-winning book, *Where the Wild Things Are*. This new collection presents 350 illustrations, many of which are drawings for set and costume design work, which Sendak has been producing prolifically, others of which are posters for plays and for events such as the New York is Book Country fair. The style of all these works will be familiar to fans of *Wild Things*; Sendak's precise, intensely shaded yet welcoming shapes and figures have lost none of their luster. They would ordinarily be enough in themselves in a survey like this, but Kushner's lovely, funny, partisan text ("I've been his devoted fan since I was four years old") lifts the book to another level. It's not often that the subject of such a book is matched with a writer as gifted and assured. His discussion of the book's better known gems—such as the poster for *Really Rosie* (the theatre production based on Sendak's book of the same name)—as well as his analysis of less celebrated works—such as Sendak's Blakean illustrations for an edition of Kleist's *Penthesilea*—help makes this volume a worthy companion to Selma Lane's initial, classic collection.

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From School Library Journal

It has been 20 years since Selma G. Lanes's *The Art of Maurice Sendak* (Abrams, 1998) provided a "picture biography" of this groundbreaking picture-book creator. This companion volume has the same coffee-table size and is as copiously illustrated, but its new page design and approach reflect the new directions in Sendak's career as an operatic "theater artist." Playwright Tony Kushner's "unapologetically subjective" paean is divided into a prologue and six movements. They include a recapitulation of Sendak's life and work to 1980; an analysis of the "trilogy" *Outside Over There*, *Dear Mili*, and *We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy*; brief mention of other books since 1981; and an extended analysis of Sendak's work in the opera world. Kushner's book is a more intimate portrait than Lanes's. It addresses not only Sendak's projects but also his aesthetics and psychology. Academic institutions with programs in the arts, even those without Lanes's book, will find the volume valuable.—*Sue Burgess, Framingham State College, MA*

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About the Author

Tony Kushner is the author of over two dozen plays, including *Angels in America*, for which he received the Tony Award and the Pulitzer Prize for the best play of 1993.

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