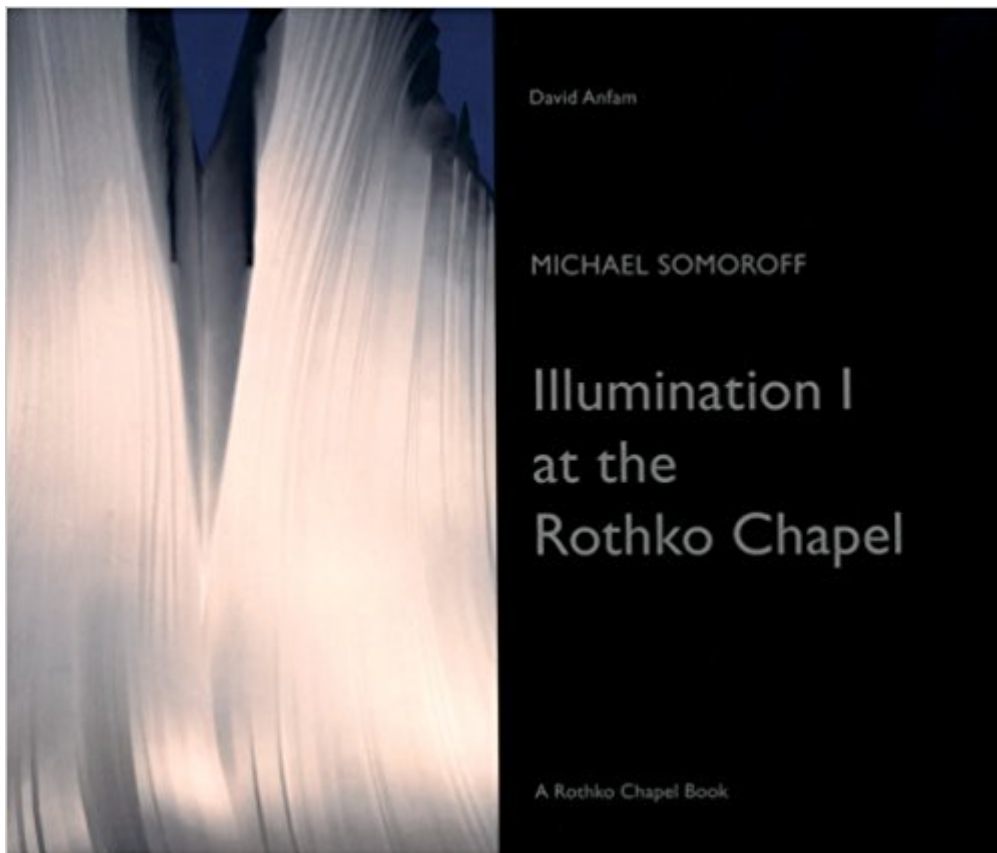


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# Michael Somoroff: Illumination I At The Rothko Chapel (Rothko Chapel Books)



## Synopsis

In 2006, the Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas, invited Michael Somoroff to place his majestic sculptural installation, *Illumination I* on the campus grounds. It was the first such invitation ever made by the Chapel, and the only addition to it since Barnett Newman's *Broken Obelisk* was placed there some 30 years prior. This book tells the story of this groundbreaking installation, from its conceptualization through its unveiling--in formal and documentary photographs, diagrams and studies. The art historian and author of *Mark Rothko's catalogue raisonné*, David Anfam, contributes a text, as do Rothko's son, Christopher Rothko, and the artist. Michael Somoroff was born in New York City in 1957. He works in photography, installation, filmmaking, writing and a variety of new media technologies. His work is in the collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Houston Museum of Fine Arts and the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This well designed and well written and illustrated book concerns the installation of a sculpture by Michael Somoroff in 2006 - 2007 outside the Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas. David Anfam opens the book with an essay about how the commission was established and the work completed and installed. In his words, the sculpture relates to the spiritual elements of Mark Rothko's wondrous canvases on many levels. ` Generated from an array of hi-tech software programs, hands-on collaborative expertise in the crafting of the sculpture proper, wide-ranging empirical observations and personal reflections both political and ontological in nature, *Illumination I* promises a rich

physical experience graced with an equally metaphysical dimension. In this respect, Somoroff's project renews Rothko's artistic endeavor which, in a nutshell, sought to combine perceptual immediacy with spiritual import. As Rothko said upon completing the Chapel paints, "I wanted to paint both the finite and the infinite." The book shows all the preliminary drawings and manipulation of those drawings that brought the huge white uprising flow of energy that depicts the way light pours through a chapel dome. According to the artist's concept, 'It is the world as seen through the lens of one's own ego. The ego provides a breeding ground for more separation by encouraging hatred, anger, bitterness, discrimination, all false sensations of division and the very foundations of evil.' He found his inspiration for the sculpture not only in the cathedrals of the past but also in the tenor of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and it is this coming together of ancient and present history that he celebrates. 'Waling together, lovingly, we can change ourselves and the world around us. It is up to each of us. Every moment is indeed a defining one. It is my hope that somehow this wonderful opportunity to collaborate with the Rothko Chapel and on so many others by placing Illumination on the campus of the chapel will somehow serve to teach all of us the "togetherness". The sculpture is no longer present on the grounds of the Rothko Chapel. I was made of stucco and it ages. But it is such an important concept and artwork and line of developing thinking that its absence makes this beautiful book all the more important. Grady Harp, May 12

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