

# AMERICAN MASTERS



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## **American Masters Presents Art Spiegelman: Disaster is My Muse, A Personal Exploration Into the Life and Work of Cartoonist and Pulitzer Prize-winning *Maus* Author Art Spiegelman, April 15 on PBS**

Throughout his career as a cartoonist and editor, **Art Spiegelman** has never shied away from provocative storytelling in his comics. From his early art for the countercultural underground comix movement to his acclaimed graphic novel *Maus*, Spiegelman's legacy in the comic arts world continues to grow and has inspired many of today's beloved cartoonists. Discover Spiegelman's career and how his life story inspired his groundbreaking work, even in the face of looming censorship, in ***American Masters – Art Spiegelman: Disaster is My Muse***, premiering nationwide Tuesday, April 15 at 10 p.m. ET on PBS (check local listings), [pbs.org/americanmasters](http://pbs.org/americanmasters) and the [PBS App](#). The film is part of The WNET Group's *Holocaust Days of Remembrance* exploring antisemitism through the history and personal stories of the Holocaust, and their impact on Jewish life and culture.

Featuring archival footage and stills, illustrations and new interviews with Spiegelman, ***Art Spiegelman: Disaster is My Muse*** follows Spiegelman's early career as co-editor of comic magazines *Arcade* and *Raw* before becoming a contributing artist for *The New Yorker*, as well as the origins and impact of *Maus*, his autobiographical work that became the first and only graphic novel to win a Pulitzer Prize.

***Art Spiegelman: Disaster is My Muse***, which won the Metropolis Grand Jury Prize at its world premiere at the DOC NYC Festival in November 2024, features interviews from Spiegelman's

family and contemporaries, including designer and wife **Françoise Mouly**, fellow cartoonists **Joe Sacco, Robert Crumb, Emil Ferris, Jerry Craft** and **Bill Griffith**, writer and artist **Molly Crabapple** and author **J. Hoberman**.

Born to Polish-Jewish immigrant parents, Spiegelman began cartooning at a young age, taking inspiration from *MAD Magazine* and Topps Company's trading card illustrations. He met Woody Gelman, then the Art Director of Topps, who encouraged him to apply for a job at the company after high school. While he was a student at Harpur College of Arts and Sciences at Binghamton University, Spiegelman began freelancing for Topps and subsequently moved to San Francisco to participate in the city's burgeoning underground comix scene.

While co-editing *Raw* with Mouly, Spiegelman started developing *Maus* as a book based on his father's experiences as a Jewish immigrant and Holocaust survivor. The project was serialized in *Raw* starting in December 1980 before being published as a graphic novel six years later. *Maus* was a soaring success — it became a New York Times Best Seller and has since sold millions of copies worldwide. The acclaimed graphic novel won the Pulitzer Prize in 1992 and helped establish comics as a formidable storytelling medium and artform.

Since *Maus*' release, Spiegelman has continued illustrating as a contributing artist for *The New Yorker* and released comic collections *In The Shadow of No Towers*, *Breakdowns* and *Metamaus*. While Spiegelman's work is not without its critics, Spiegelman continues to be recognized as a pioneer of comic arts, whose thought-provoking work reflects his ardent defense of free speech.

***Art Spiegelman: Disaster is My Muse*** is directed and produced by Molly Bernstein and Philip Dolin. Bernstein was director and editor of ***American Masters' Deceptive Practice: The Mysteries and Mentors of Ricky Jay***, which was produced by Dolin. She also directed and edited ***An Art That Nature Makes: The Work of Rosamond Purcell***, with Dolin as executive producer and cinematographer. Dolin and Bernstein were directors and producers of another feature documentary called ***The Show's The Thing: The Great Promoters of Rock***. Additionally, Bernstein previously edited the Emmy and Peabody Award-winning ***American Masters*** film ***Jerome Robbins: Something to Dance About***.

Now in its 39<sup>th</sup> season on PBS, ***American Masters*** illuminates the lives and creative journeys of our nation's most enduring artistic giants — those who have left an indelible impression on our cultural landscape — through compelling, unvarnished stories. Setting the standard for documentary film profiles, the series has earned widespread critical acclaim: 28 Emmy Awards — including 10 for Outstanding Nonfiction Series and five for Outstanding Nonfiction Special — two News & Documentary Emmys, 14 Peabodys, three Grammys, two Producers Guild Awards, an Oscar, and many other honors. To further explore the lives and works of more than 290 masters past and present, the [\*\*\*American Masters\*\*\* website](#) offers full episodes, film outtakes,

filmmaker interviews, the podcast “American Masters: Creative Spark,” educational resources, digital original series and more. The series is a production of The WNET Group.

***Art Spiegelman: Disaster is My Muse*** is a production of Particle Productions Inc. and Pollyanna in association with American Masters Pictures and Foothill Productions. Molly Bernstein and Philip Dolin are directors and producers. The program is produced by Alicia Sams. Lauren Lexton is executive producer and Sam Jinishian is producer. Nathalie Seaver and Jamie Wolf are co-executive producers. For ***American Masters***, Michael Kantor is executive producer, Julie Sacks is series producer, and Joe Skinner is digital lead.

***American Masters*** will be available for streaming concurrent with broadcast on all station-branded PBS platforms, including [PBS.org](http://PBS.org) and the [PBS app](http://PBS app), available on iOS, Android, Roku streaming devices, Apple TV, Android TV, Amazon Fire TV, Samsung Smart TV, Chromecast and VIZIO. PBS station members can view many series, documentaries and specials via [PBS Passport](http://PBS Passport). For more information about PBS Passport, visit the [PBS Passport FAQ](http://PBS Passport FAQ) website.

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