

Artist Statement



At the heart of my work is the inspiration provided by texts, primarily Judaic, which

include the Bible, midrash (stories and legends), liturgy, poetry and other related materials. The creative process is played out in paper cutting, painting and illumination, using precious metals and calligraphy. Collaborating with other talented artists and writers allows for the inspiration that results from that artistic interaction. I enjoy the contrast of combining traditional motifs and ways of working with contemporary materials as I strive to bring the written word to life in a way that is uniquely my own.

The Rissman Kol Ami Collection is a unique collection of Jewish art, artifacts and ritual objects. In addition to preserving significant objects for posterity, the museum seeks to develop programs and exhibitions that are designed to educate the congregation and promote an appreciation for works of Judaica.



1175 Sheridan Road, Highland Park 60035

A CUT ABOVE

ART BY LEAH SOSEWITZ



September 6 – November 3, 2019

The Rissman Kol Ami Collection at
North Suburban Synagogue Beth El

About the Artist



Leah Sosewitz is a professional artist who creates traditional Jewish folk art paper cuts and gilded illuminations which are usually text based. Some of these works

are cut by hand and some extremely detailed works are created with a laser machine. Paints, specialty papers and precious metals may be added embellishments.

Leah's work with traditional illumination has also included traditional ketubah design (Jewish marriage contracts) and calligraphy. Leah has illuminated existing manuscripts such as a *Megillat Esther* (Scroll of Esther), working with gouache and 23k gold leaf on parchment as well as creating new pieces based on artistic interpretations of specific texts or images from the Torah and Jewish lore.



Leah exhibited two handmade books entitled, "The Jacob's Ladder" and "Zachor –

Remember" in *Women of the Book: Jewish Artists, Jewish Themes*, an exhibition of 90 women artists curated by Judith Hoffberg, which traveled throughout the United States and Europe between 1997 and 2002.

Leah was the recipient of an Artist's Fellowship in Ethnic Folk Arts from the Illinois Arts Council in 1998. She holds a BFA from the Art Institute of Chicago and studied with calligrapher and artist Reggie Ezell in a yearlong intensive class in 1995. She also studied with renowned Judaic artist David Moss at Camp Ramah in Wisconsin along with other Midwestern Judaic artists during an annual artists' kallah each summer from 1992-1995. Leah completed the two-year program of the Florence Melton New Adult School in 1992 and continued to attend advanced studies at NSS Beth El with Rabbi Yehiel Poupko.



Her work is in the collections of individuals and synagogues both nationwide and internationally.



Be sure to check out our beautiful Tot Shabbat Ark created by Leah. You can find it in Room 3 in the School Wing.

Some of the artwork from the **Cut Above** exhibit is available for purchase. For more images and information, please visit Leah Sosewitz's website at <http://judaicartstudio.com>.