

Molly was a member and Past President of the American Jewish Artists Club and was active in a number of other artists groups. Before her death in December 2018, Molly had studios in Evanston, Illinois, and Mesa, Arizona. Her solo show, *I Remember Purim: A Visual Narrative*, was featured in NSS Beth El's Rissman Kol Ami Museum in 2012, and later that year she curated the museum's exhibit entitled *City of Broad Shoulders and Bright Lights: The Spirit of Hanukkah through the Eyes of Chicagoland Artists*.

Often using pure oil sticks and acrylic techniques, Molly worked figuratively and abstractly on both paper and canvas. A bright palette of traditional spring colors, each work in this exhibit is playful in its depiction of biblical figures and reflects Purim as one of the most joyous celebrations on the Jewish calendar. About her work, Molly explained, "*What does ART mean to me, the painter - the person?! The answers are in the work ... during the activity. I don't stop to define ... only to view, to perceive and, perhaps, to intuitively analyze ... but mainly to continue the activity!*"

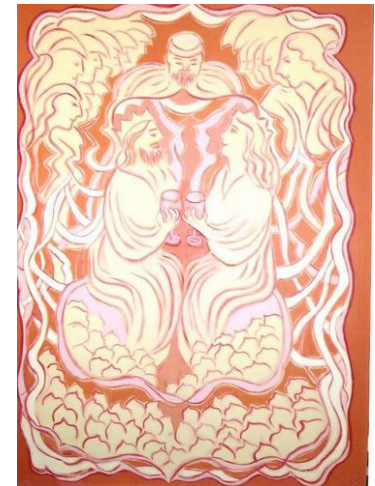
The Rissman Kol Ami Collection is a unique collection of Jewish art, artifacts and ritual objects. In addition to preserving significant objects for posterity, the museum seeks to develop programs and exhibitions that are designed to educate the congregation and promote an appreciation for works of Judaica.



1175 Sheridan Road, Highland Park 60035

REINTERPRETING FREEDOM

Molly J. Schiff



January 10 – March 9, 2020

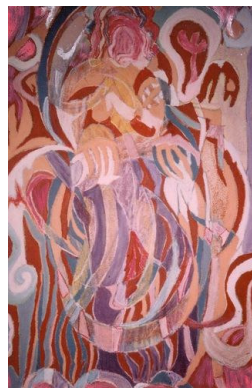
The Rissman Kol Ami Collection at
North Suburban Synagogue Beth El

About the Artist



Molly J. Schiff (1927-2018), a native Chicagoan, drew inspiration from her extensive travels within the United States and to 90 countries throughout the world. She held Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Fine Art and a Master's in Arts and Art Education from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Molly taught at New Trier High Schools, Governor's State University, and private institutions. Her artwork has been exhibited locally, nationally, and internationally, including at Loyola University Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Illinois State Museum, Art Heritage Gallery-India, Spertus Museum, Balzekas Museum, Freeport (Illinois) Art Museum, the Chicago Cultural Center, the University of South Carolina, Stanislaus State College, and the United States Art in the Embassies program sponsored by the U.S. State Department.

About Purim



Purim (Adar 14) celebrates the victory of Mordechai and Esther over wicked Haman. The story is related in the Book of Esther, which is read during the holiday. The name Purim means "lots," for Haman used a lot (*pur*) to decide when to kill the Jews. The lot fell on the month of Adar. Therefore the rabbis stated: "*Mi-shenikhnas Adar marbim be-simcha* – With the start of the month of Adar we greatly increase joy."



The story in the Book of Esther is a melodramatic tale of court intrigue. In the first part of the book, the stage is set by the banishment of



the proud Queen Vashti and the choice of Esther in a beauty contest to be the new queen. The courtier, Haman, becomes grand vizier, but Mordechai, Esther's protector, refuses to bow down to him. Haman decides to take out his fury on all the Jews and convinces the rather silly king, Ahasuerus, to consent to a decree calling for the massacre of the Jews throughout the kingdom. Mordechai and Esther go to work to counteract this scheme. Esther entrances the king, wines and dines him, and then reveals that she is Jewish and pleads for her people. Haman is hanged and the Jews are allowed to turn the tables on their enemies. Mordechai and Esther live



happily ever after—after instituting Purim as an annual holiday.

(Adapted from *The Jewish Holidays* by Michael Strassfeld)