

Martin Lemelman: The Art of Illustration

November 2023 – February 2024

in the Rissman Kol Ami Collection at North Suburban Synagogue Beth El



Martin Lemelman is an author, illustrator, teacher, and a passionate gardener who began his artistic journey at an early age when he found a dried-out pack of paints in his father's tiny Brooklyn candy store. He loves drawing and writing and considers these acts his meditation. He has illustrated

over 30 children's books and his work has been published in magazines ranging from the *New York Times Book Review* to *Sesame Street Magazine*. He has been a freelance illustrator since 1976.

Martin Lemelman is retired from the Communication Design Department at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania where he was Full Professor. He lives in Florida with his wife Monica. They are the proud parents of four sons and nine grandchildren. He has spoken about his work throughout the U.S. and Europe.

Lemelman is the illustrator of the revised edition of *The Tattooed Torah* (1994) by Marvell Ginsburg, and completed over 100 paintings for the 2021 animated film. That project was initiated by Marvell's daughter and Beth El congregant, Beth Kopin. Marvell's grandson, Rabbi Brett Kopin, was a co-screenwriter of the film. In 2021, a third edition of *The Tattooed Torah* was published, again with Lemelman's stunning illustrations.

Lemelman's latest graphic novel, *The Miracle Seed* (2023), is the thrilling true story of an ancient plant – the Judean date palm – wonderfully reborn in the modern era through the hard work of two female Israeli scientists. *The Miracle Seed* is a Junior Library Guild Selection and was named one of Evanston Public Library's 101 Great Books for Kids.

Martin Lemelman is also the author of two award winning graphic memoirs. *Mendel's Daughter* (2006) is a true story about his mother's survival in the Holocaust. His graphic memoir about growing up in the 1950s, *Two Cents Plain: My Brooklyn Boyhood* (2010), was selected as one of the best memoirs of the year by *Kirkus Reviews* and was a winner of the 2010-2011 New York City Book Award.