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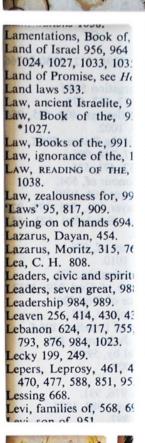
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## YOU DID WHAT TO MY COMIC BOOKS?!?

New Work in Papercutting by Isaac Brynjegard-Bialik

Isaac Brynjegard-Bialik's work explores the stories and traditions of the Jewish people through the twin lenses of the traditional art form of papercutting and pop culture storytelling techniques. From afar, these papercuts might remind you of a Chagall window. But up close, the magic is revealed: Brynjegard-Bialik layers meaning into his work by meticulously positioning cut-up pieces of comic books, maps, and holy books destined for ritual burial beneath delicately sliced paper. The result is visual biblical commentary, what he calls "paper midrash."



# And All The People Saw The Voices

18" x 24" Mixed media 2011

"All the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the blare of the horn and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they fell back and stood at a distance" (Exodus 20:15). The Hebrew word for "thunder" is the same as "voice," and so God's voice is connected with the sound of thunder. Designed to mimic the shape of the lightning bolt worn by Captain Marvel, it is backed with comic elements featuring lightning and fire.



## Flame On: Burning Bush

18" x 24" Mixed media 2011

One teaching is that the real importance of the story of the Burning Bush is that Moses stopped long enough to notice that is was burning, but was not consumed. His attention and focus are key, for that is when God spoke to him out of the bush.

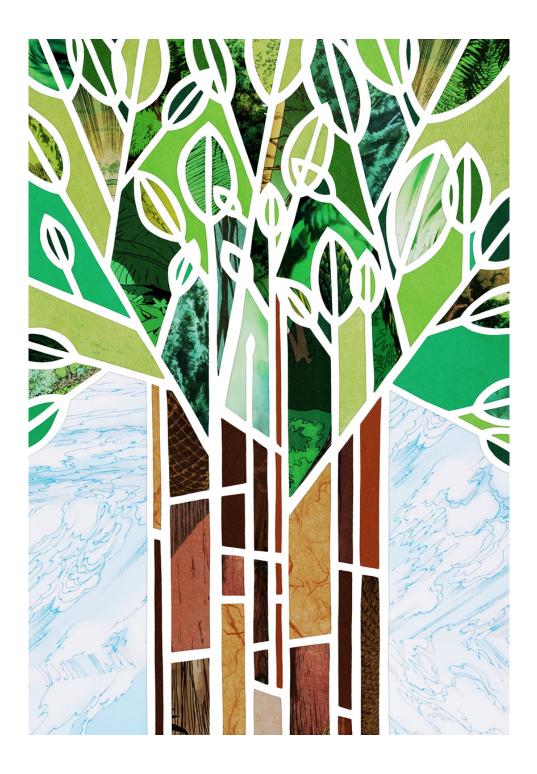
Fantastic Four #282 (John Byrne) – Sep 1985
Fantastic Four #587 (The Last Stand of Johnny Storm) – Jan 2011
Justice Society #53 – Sep 2011
The Lone Ranger #25 (Dynamite) – Jan 2011
Marvels #0 (Kurt Busiek/Alex Ross) – Jan 1994
Nemesis #1 (Mark Millar) – May 2010
Promethea #24 (Alan Moore) – Jan 2004
Ronin #1 (Frank Miller) – Jul 1983
Zauriel #1 – Apr 2007



## Higher and Higher

18" x 24" Mixed media 2011

This cut is inspired by the words of Genesis 7:11: "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day the fountains of the deep burst apart, and the floodgates of the sky broke open." It takes its name from one of the snippets of text in the background, which comes from *Pathways Through the Bible*, a 1946 book of biblical commentary. The background is made of grayscale and limited-palette comics and a photograph from *National Geographic*.



#### Nisan Tree

18" x 24" Mixed media 2011

This papercut celebrates the Jewish month of Nisan, and was inspired by words from the Babylonian Talmud (Berakhot 33,2): "Rabbi Judah said, When a man goes out to the country in the month of Nisan [that is, in springtime] and see trees bring forth blossoms, he is to say, 'Blessed be God, whose world lacks nothing, having created in it comely creatures and beautiful trees, so that human beings may enjoy them.'" The papercut is backed with cut-up comics that reflect the joy and exuberance of springtime, with characters including Green Lantern and She-Hulk, and comic book artists including Alex Ross and Joe Kubert.



## And God Spoke

24" x 18" Mixed media 2012 This papercut progresses from the chaos of "tohu v'vohu" to the expanding light of God's creation, ushered into being with the words, "vayehi or" ("let there be light"). The papercut features the characters of The Watcher, Metamorpho, and Black Bolt (whose voice is the source of his great power, and his role as leader of the Inhumans).

Fantastic Four #240 & 248 (John Byrne) – Mar & Nov 1982 Fantastic Four #296-297 (John Buscema) – Nov-Dec, 1986 Green Lantern #50 (Geoff Johns) – Mar 2010 The Inhumans #1 – Jun 2000)

JLA: Liberty & Justice (Alex Ross/Paul Dini) – Nov 2003 The Lone Ranger #25 (Dynamite) – Jan 2011 Metamorpho and Aquaman #1 – Oct 2007 Outsiders #47 – Jul 2007 Secret Origins #6 (Halo) – Sep 1986 Trinity #31 (Kurt Busiek) – Dec 2008)

Ultimate Mystery #1 – Sep 2010 War of Kings #5 – Sep 2009 What if...? #59 – Mar 1994 National Geographic – Jun 2012

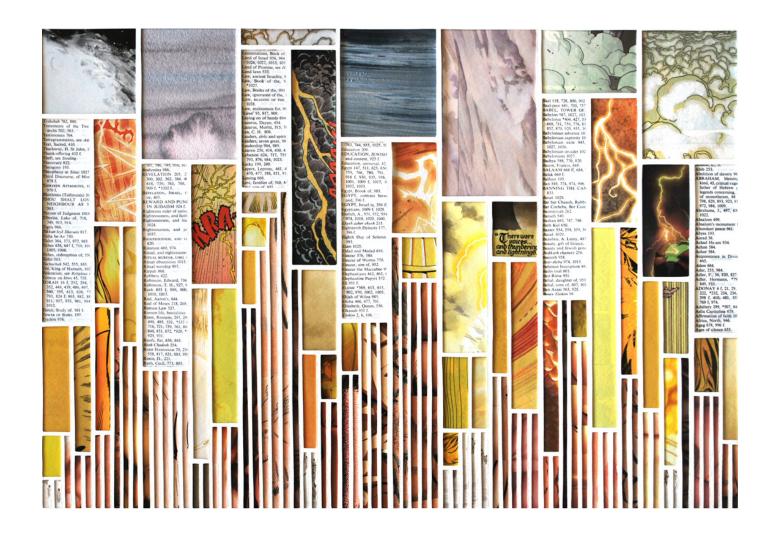


## Rebel Spies

24" x 18" Mixed media 2012 This papercut is based on parshat *Shelach Lecha* in the Book of Numbers. Moses sends spies to scout out the Land of Canaan, and they return with stories of giants who live there and clusters of grapes so large it takes two men to carry them. The story is a contrast between those who fear going into the land, and those who have faith that with God they will succeed. The papercut includes cut-up Star Wars comics, with characters and speech bubbles that complement the biblical story.

Star Wars #3, #68, #70 (Marvel) – Sep 1977, Feb & Apr 1983
Star Wars #17, #18, #30 (Dark Horse) – Apr & May 2000, May 2001
Star Wars: Jedi Council #3 of 4 (DH) – Aug 2000
Star Wars Crimson Empire II #3 of 6 (DH) – Jan 1999)
Star Wars Empire #34 (DH) – Jul 2005
Star Wars Jedi: The Dark Side #3 (DH) – Jul 2011
Star Wars Legacy #15 (DH) – Aug 2007
Star Wars Rebellion #5 & #15 (DH) – Aug 2006 & Jul 2008

"The Grand Canyon" (National Geographic) – Jul 1978



## Seven to Seventy

24" x 18" Mixed media 2012 As the children of Israel stood at the foot of Mt. Sinai, God spoke the words of Torah for all to hear. The rabbis teach us that God's voice (the sound of thunder) was split into seven voices, and then to seventy, so that all would hear and understand. This pieces shows that progression, as lightning brings down all of the words of Torah.

Batman #700 – Aug 2010
First Thunder #1 – Sep 2005
Ink #1 – Jul 2009
Kingdom Come (Alex Ross) – 1996
Noble Causes #10 – Apr 2005
Quasar #37 – Aug 1992
Salvation Run #1 – Jan 2008
The Shadow #3 (Howard Chaykin) – Jul 1986
Supergirl #2 – Dec 2011
Superman: Peace on Earth (Alex Ross/Paul Dini) – Jan 1999
Pentateuch (Soncino Press, Ed. Hertz) – 1975



## The King

16" x 20" Mixed media 2012

A double portrait of King David and Elvis Presley. The structure is based on a King of Spades playing card, which traditionally represents King David. The piece is backed with parts of Psalm 33 from the 1954 *Authorised Daily Prayer Book:* "Sing joyfully to the Lord... make music to God with the harp of ten strings... play skillfully with sounds of joy." The background is otherwise entirely composed of cut-up pieces of the 1995 *LIFE* magazine special, "Elvis: A Celebration."





#### El Na R'fa Na La

16" x 20" Mixed media 2012

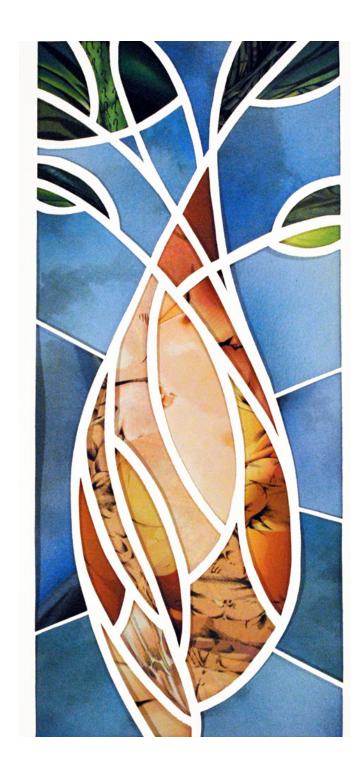
Miriam falls ill in the desert in the Book of Numbers in the Torah, and her brother Moses prays to God with one of the most touching — and succinct prayers in history (just five Hebrew words) — which translates into English as "O God, please, heal her please." Backed with watercolor and maps.



## Herzl

16" x 20" Mixed media 2010

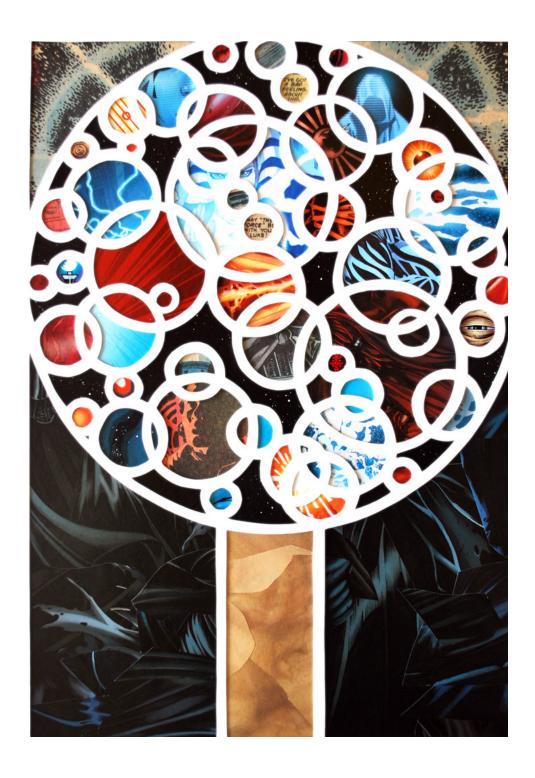
Theodore Herzl wrote that "If you will it, it is no dream" – and so this portrait, based on a photograph of him in Geneva at the First Zionist Congress, is backed entirely with cut-up Green Lantern comics. The Green Lantern's ring is, of course, powered by will.



### Re'uven

8" x 20" Mixed media 2011

In Genesis 30 we read that Re'uven, the first son of Jacob and Leah, brings his mother mandrakes from the field, a sign of fertility, so that she might conceive again with her husband Jacob. Her sister Rachel takes the mandrakes in exchange for a night with their husband, and so — in this roundabout way — Leah does conceive again.



#### Good and Evil

12" x 16" Mixed media 2012

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve are forbidden to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. In this papercut the tree is represented with elements of good and evil as represented by the Force and the Dark Side, from cut-up Star Wars comics.

Star Wars #2, 3, 39, 40 (Marvel) – Aug & Sep 1977, Sep & Oct 1980 Star Wars #30 & #44 (Dark Horse) – May 2001 & Jul 2002 Star Wars: The Force Unleashed (Dark Horse trade paperback) – 2008 Star Wars Clone Wars Adventures #1 (DH) – Jun 2004 Star Wars Crimson Empire II #3 of 6 (DH) – Jan 1999) Star Wars Empire #21 (DH) – Jun 2004 Star Wars Legacy #15 & #35 (DH) – Aug 2007 & Aug 2009



#### Follow Me

12" x 16" Mixed media 2012

Revelation at Mt. Sinai, when the children of Israel renew their commitment to God, and take upon themselves the laws of Torah. The voice of God is heard in the sound of thunder, echoing down from the smoke which wreathes the mountaintop.

300 (Frank Miller) – 1988 Green Lantern: Blackest Night #0 – Jun 2009 JLA: Liberty & Justice (Alex Ross/Paul Dini) – Nov 2003 The Torch #2 of 8 (Dynamite/Marvel) – Dec 2009 World War Hulks: Wolverine vs. Captain America #1 – Sep 2010



## Shamayim

12" x 16" Mixed media 2012

The rabbis teach that the Hebrew word for "heaven" – *shamayim* – is composed of the words for fire (*aish*) and water (*mayim*).

The Savage Hawkman #2 – Dec 2011

JLA: Liberty & Justice (Alex Ross/Paul Dini) – Nov 2003

Justice League International – various 1988

Sea Ghost #1 – Oct 2010

Shazam: Power of Hope (Alex Ross//Paul Dini) – Nov 2000

Sub-Mariner – various

Wolverine: Firebreak #1 – Dec 2007







#### Koufax

16" x 20" Signed numbered giclée print (#13 of 18) Created in tribute to one of baseball's greatest players, this papercut is backed with elements that represent the life and career of Sandy Koufax, including pieces of "The All-Star Story of the Dodgers," a 1979 comic book published by Stadium Comics. The papercut is a triptych of Yom Kippur *shofarot*, as Koufax famously sat out the first game of the 1965 World Series because it fell on Yom Kippur. The number three appears repeatedly with the blowing of the *shofar*; the Torah commands us three times to blow the *shofar*, and we are commanded to listen to it three times. There are, as well, three different *shofar* blasts: *tekiyah*, *shevarim*, and *teruah*.



#### MaAriv Aravim

16" x 20" Signed giclée print

In this prayer we praise God for bringing on the evening, for ordering the stars and the planets, for the cycle of the seasons and the immutable processes of the universe. We praise God for keeping the heavenly bodies spinning in their orbits, and the papercut is designed to reflect these orbits. One of the primary comic book heroes used in the background is Cloak, who harnesses the power of darkness to fight evil alongside his partner Dagger.

DC Universe #0 – Jun 2008
Batman #700 – Aug 2010
Cloak and Dagger #1 & #2 – July & Aug 1985
Cloak and Dagger: Predator and Prey – 1988
Cloak and Dagger: Spider Island #1 – Aug 2011
Flash #1 (Brightest Day) – Jun 2010
Green Lantern #45 – Oct 2009
JSA Classified #24: Dr. Mid-Nite – May 2007
The Legion #24 – Nov 2003
R.E.B.E.L.S. #10 – Jan 2010
Silver Surfer #2 – Jul 1987
Strange Tales Featuring Cloak and Dazzler #9 – Dec 1987
Thor #400 (Tom DeFalco) – Feb 1989

Isaac Brynjegard-Bialik www.NiceJewishArtist.com