



YOU DID *WHAT* TO MY COMICS?!?

New Work in Papercutting by Isaac Brynjegard-Bialik

Peninsula JCC | Foster City, California | January 4 – March 19, 2013

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."



Fantastic Exodus

24" x 18"
Mixed media
2012

The four members of the Fantastic Four represent the four elements (water, earth, fire, and air) and four of the elements of Israel's journey from slavery to freedom: crossing the Sea of Reeds, gathering at Sinai, and being protected by the pillar of fire by night and pillar of cloud by day. Backed with cut-up comics representing these characters and themes.

Fantastic Four #15 (Jun 1963), 17 (Aug 1963), 21 (Dec 1963), 23 (Feb 1964), 248 (Nov 1982), 265 (Apr 1984), Annual #18 (1984), 282 (Sep 1985), 286 (Jan 1986), 290 (May 1986), 296 (Nov 1986), 297 (Dec 1986), 305 (Aug 1987), 314 (May 1988), 544 (May 2009), 587 (Mar 2011)
Fantastic Four: The Lost Adventure #1 – Apr 2008
Fantastic Four: Flesh and Stone – 2000
Marvel Adventures: Fantastic Four #34 – May 2008
The Last Fantastic Four Story #1 – Oct 2007
Fantastic Four 2099 #6 – Jun 1996
Fantastic Five: The Final Doom #1-5 – 2007
The Thing vol. 1 #22 – Apr 1985
The Thing vol. 2 #2 – Feb 2006, 7 – Jul 2006
Hulk and Thing: Hard Knocks #1 – Nov 2004
Ultimate Fantastic Four #3 – Mar 2004, 5 – May 2004, 10 – Oct 2004, 42 – Jul 2007

SOLD



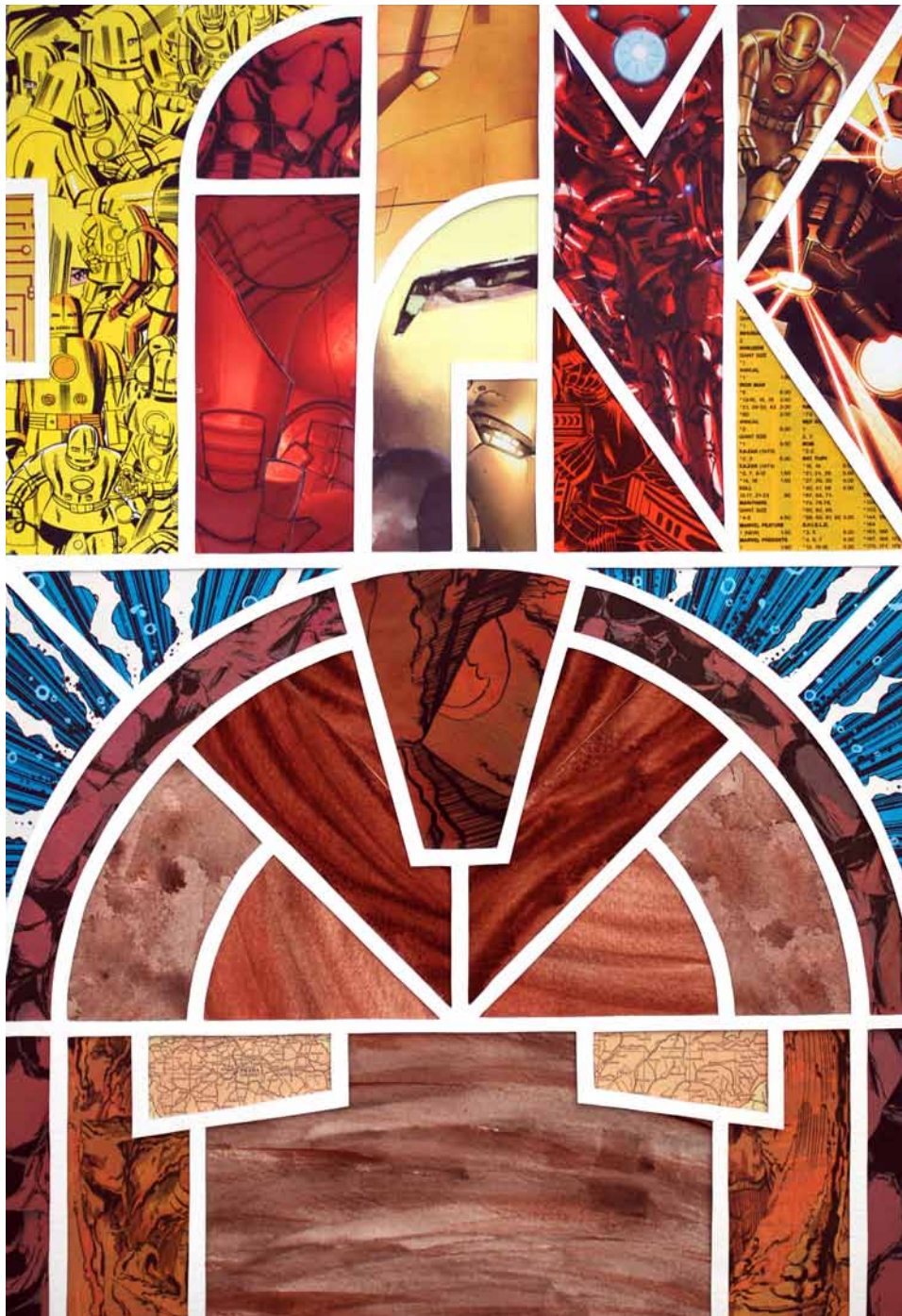
Live Long and Prosper

20" x 16"
Mixed media
2012

Leonard Nimoy originated the Vulcan salute on the original Star Trek television series as a gesture of greeting, with the accompanying words "live long and prosper." The gesture is based on the blessing performed by the Jewish priestly class (the *cohenim*) in the days of the Temple in Jerusalem. The papercut is backed with cut-up Star Trek comics and bits of the blessing from a *chumash* destined for ritual burial in the *genizah*.

Star Trek [DC] #4 (May 1984), 33 (Dec 1986), 36 (Mar 1987)
Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan [IDW] #2 (Jun 2009)
Star Trek III: The Search for Spock [DC] (1984)

SOLD



The Golem

18" x 24"

Mixed media

2012

Legend tells us that in times of danger there are those who have created golems to protect the populace. The golem has the Hebrew word "emet" ("truth") on its forehead; when its task is done the aleph is erased, leaving only "met" ("death"). The Iron Man armor was also created to protect those who could not protect themselves. This papercut is backed with cut-up comics featuring clay and mud, and watercolors by the artist to imbue the piece with a handmade element. At the top are the three Hebrew letters which make the word "emet," obscured through overlapping to maintain the secret of the golem's power.

Iron Man #200 – Nov 1985), 203 – Feb 1986, 273 – Nov 1991
 Iron Man: Director of Shield #23 – Dec 2007
 Invincible Iron Man #25 – Aug 2010
 Iron Age #3 – Oct 2011
 Iron Man 2.0 #11 – Feb 2012
 Avengers #1-3 – Sep 1963, Nov 1963, Jan 1964 (reprint);
 501 – Oct 2004
 The Mighty Avengers #1 – May 2007
 The Coming of the Avengers – 2012
 Detective Comics #604-607 – Sep-Oct 1989
 Legionnaires #3 – Jun 1983
 Adventure Comics #4 – Jan 2010
 Map of Czechoslovakia by C.S. Hammond & Co., New York (1924)



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.



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

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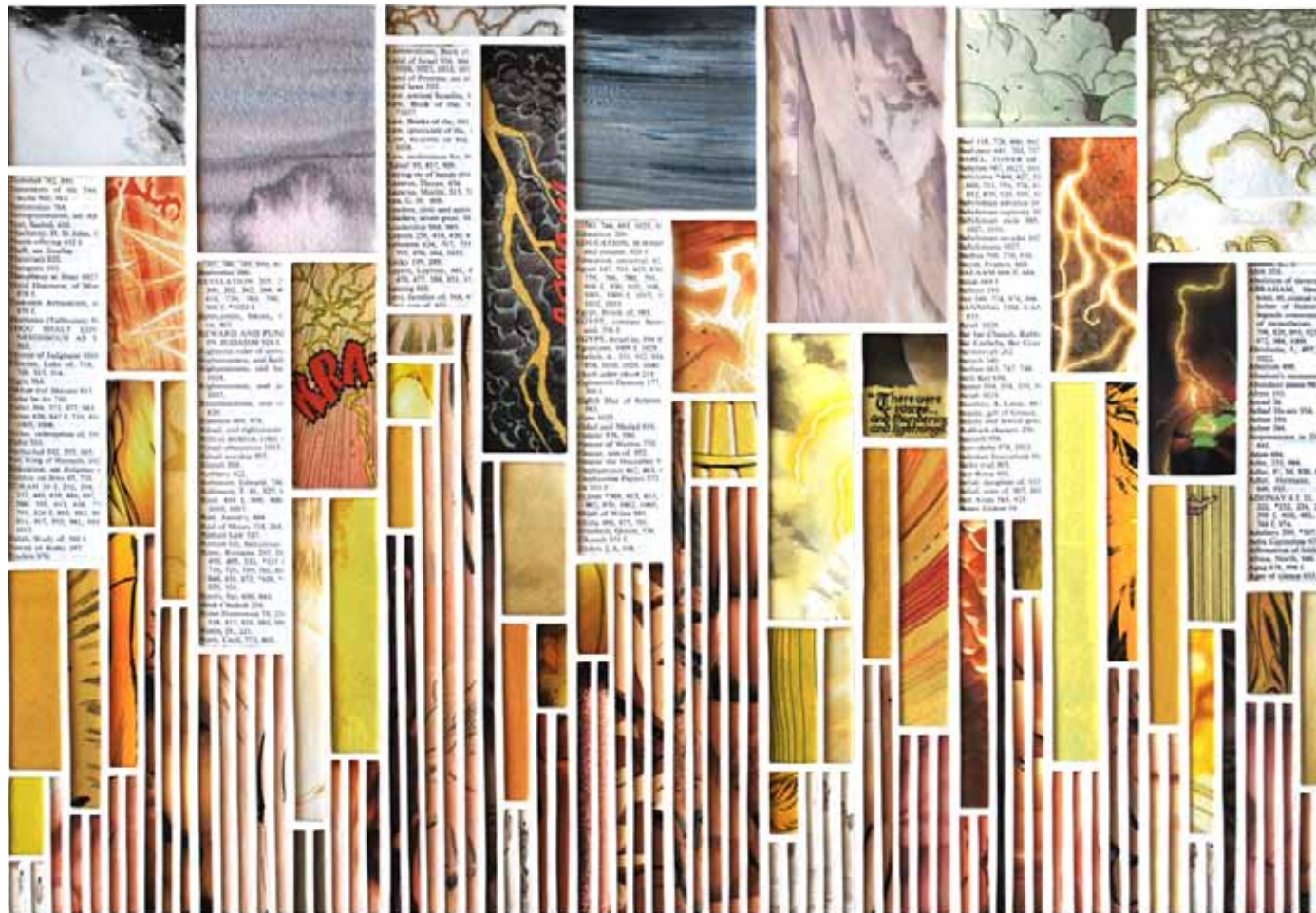
Rebel Spies

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

SOLD



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 piece 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



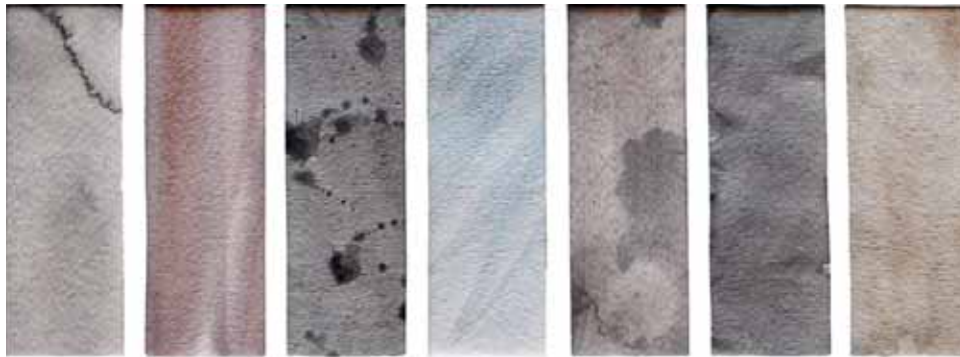
The King

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.



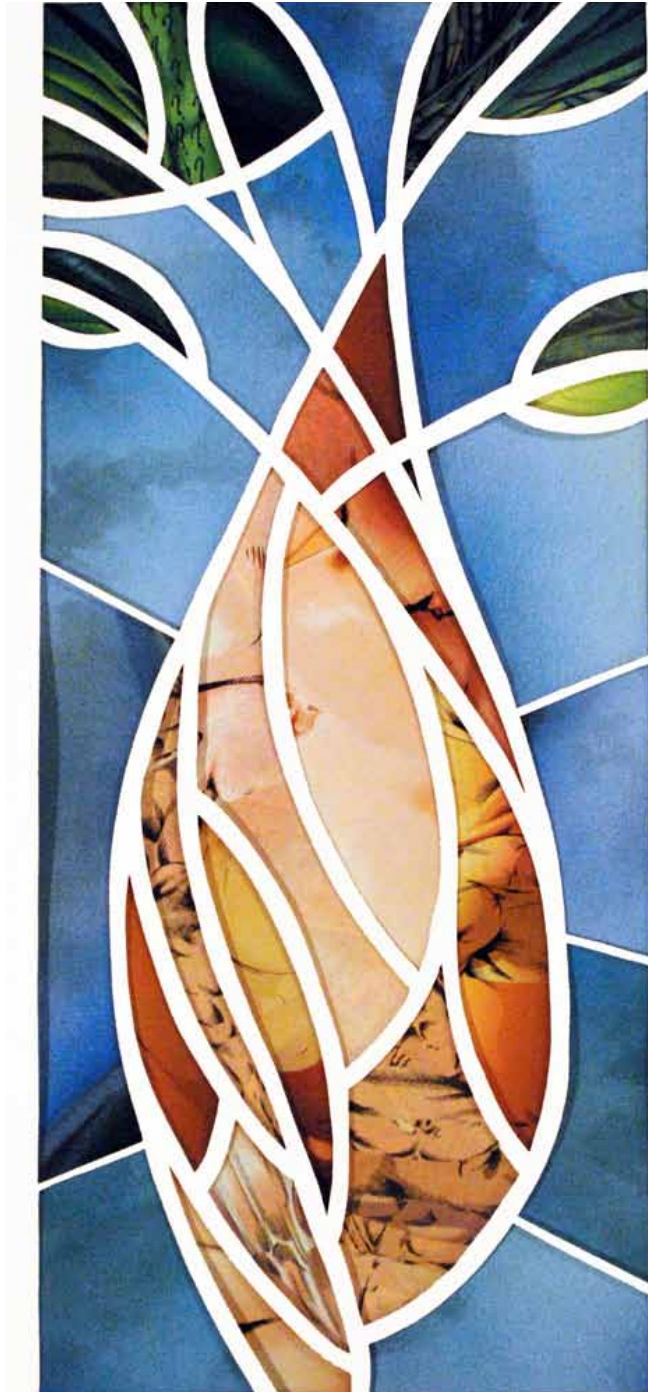
Herzl

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.



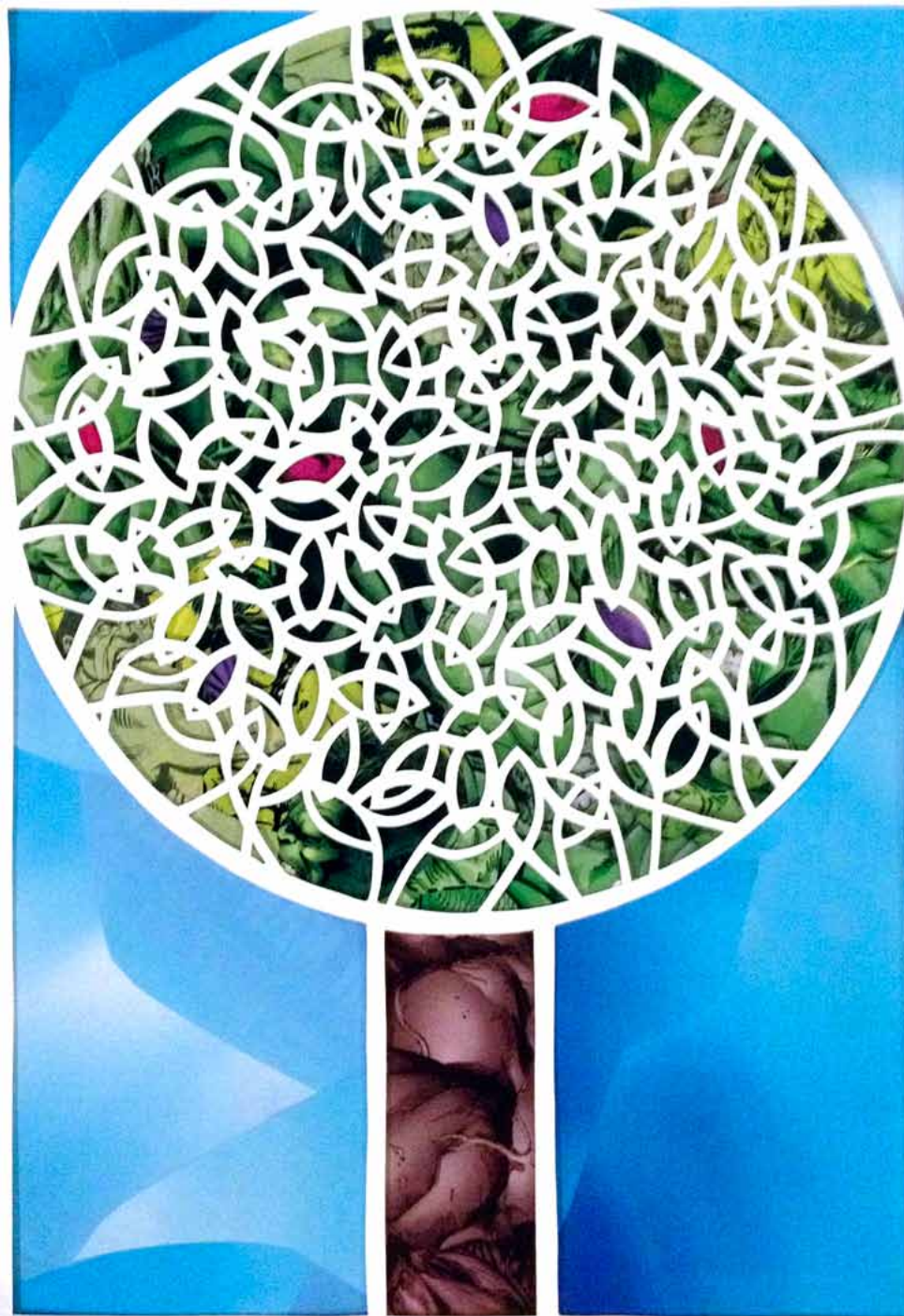
Re'uven

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.



Incredible Little Tree

12" x 16"

Mixed media

2012

This papercut highlights the tug between two extremes: the desire to know, and the desire to live. In the Garden of Eden our ancestors were told to eat freely of the tree of life, but not to touch the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This tree, backed with cut-up Hulk comics, explores the idea that knowledge and danger can grow from the same soil.

The Incredible Hulk #2 – July 1962 (reprint), 240 – Oct 1979,
280 – Feb 1983, 295 – May 1984, 296 – Jun 1984, 448 – Dec 1996
Incredible Hulk #78 – Apr 2005
Giant-size Incredible Hulk #1 – Jul 2008
Hulk #4 – Aug 2008
Ultimate Hulk Annual #1 – Dec 2008

SOLD



Koufax

16" x 20"

Signed numbered giclée print
(limited edition of 18)

SOLD

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

SOLD

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