

Broken/Whole

New Works by Rabbi Linda Motzkin

Schenectady Jewish Community Center

October 8 through November 30

Reception will be held on Sunday, October 25, from 3PM to 5PM



Rabbi Linda Motzkin is a *soferet* (Hebrew scribe), one of a handful of women in the world engaged in this sacred craft traditionally reserved for men. She is unique among female scribes in that she is the only one who hand makes her own parchment, using deerskins donated by local hunters for the Torah scroll she is currently writing. Motzkin's artwork is an outgrowth of her scribal work. It features fragments of Hebrew passages from the Bible and other sacred Jewish literature, calligraphed upon pieces of handmade deerskin parchment that are flawed and unsuitable for use in a Torah scroll.

Each piece is thus the result of a double process of rejection: skins first discarded by hunters wanting only the venison but not the hide of the deer, and then deemed unsuitable for use in a Torah scroll because of size, scars, imperfections or damage. Each piece also represents an attempt to express a dimension of the sacred, by using both Hebrew texts and scarred and damaged skins, which bear testimony through their imperfections to the unique life experience of an individual creature. The process of creating these pieces reflects the Jewish mystical teaching that holiness lies embedded within all matter, waiting to be recognized, uplifted and transformed.

Rabbi Motzkin is co-rabbi, with her husband, Jonathan Rubenstein, of Temple Sinai of Saratoga Springs and High Holy Day Chaplain at Skidmore College.

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