

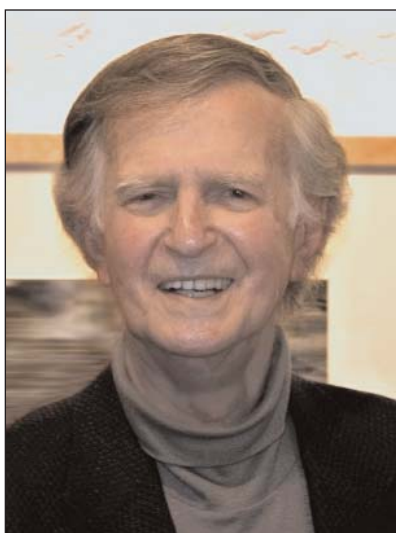
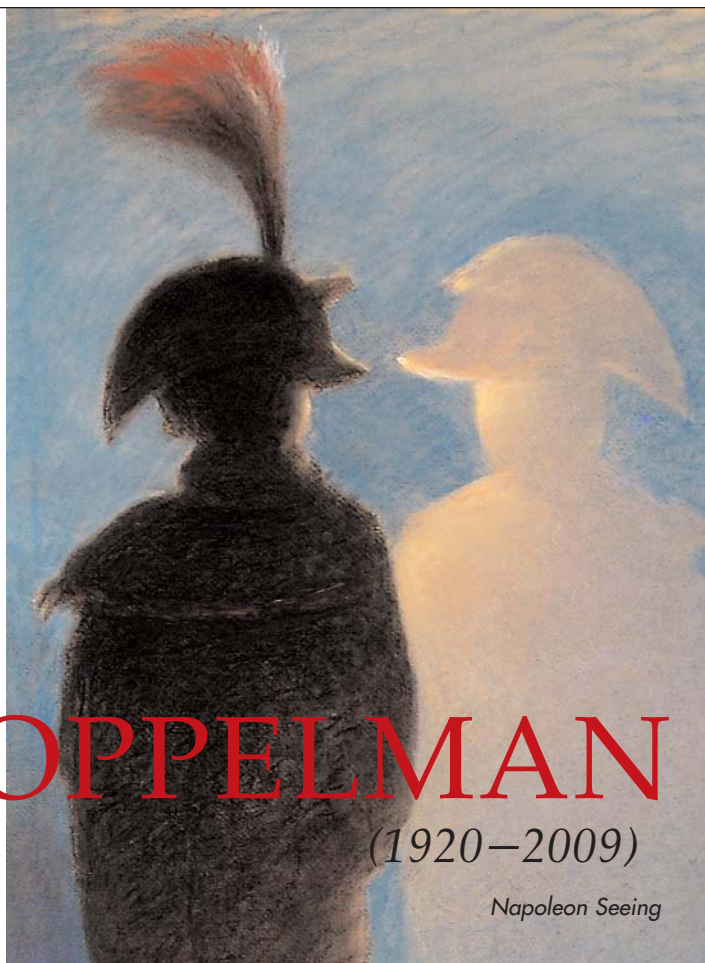
A Memorial Exhibition

*Prints, Paintings, Pastels, Sculpture
with critical comment*

CHAIM KOPPELMAN

(1920–2009)

Napoleon Seeing



A Memorial Exhibition

Chaim Koppelman

(1920 — 2009)

Opening Thursday, May 27, 2010, 6:00 PM

Memorial Program, 7:00 PM

Exhibition through September

In reality opposites are one; art shows this. — ELI SIEGEL

TERRAIN GALLERY / AESTHETIC REALISM FOUNDATION

141 Greene Street, NYC 10012 • www.AestheticRealism.org • 212.777.4490

WE CELEBRATE the art and life of Chaim Koppelman, artist, teacher, and Aesthetic Realism consultant, with an exhibition of works spanning seven decades—drawings, sculpture, and paintings from the 1940s, and prints and pastels from the 1950s into the 21st century. He is distinguished in American art for the beauty and power of his work, and for his proudly expressed opinion—come to early and sustained—of the truth and importance of the philosophy Aesthetic Realism, founded by critic and poet Eli Siegel.

Chaim Koppelman was a master of the art of printmaking—engraving, etching, aquatint, embossment, lithography—with an imagination at once original and universal, incisive and compassionate, serious and playful. Critics have related his work to Goya, in his fearlessness in tackling the ugly, the cruel, and to Redon in his sense of the mystery of things.

Born in Brooklyn in 1920, he studied art in WPA classes, and in 1940 was among the earliest artists to study with Eli Siegel. He was joined soon after by painter Dorothy Myers, who became his wife in 1943.

During the war, he took part in the invasion of Normandy, and was awarded the Bronze Star. In 1955 the Terrain Gallery opened, with Dorothy Koppelman as director, and Chaim Koppelman as print curator.

In the catalogue for his one-person exhibition at the Beatrice Condé Gallery in 2000, Koppelman wrote in part:

I am grateful to Eli Siegel...for teaching me and the world the enduring criterion for judging what is beautiful in art and good in life: All beauty is a making one of opposites, and the making one of opposites is what we are going after in ourselves.

This principle was the basis of his teaching at NYU, SUNY New Paltz, the School of Visual Arts, whose Printmaking Division he founded in 1959 and where he continued to teach until 2007, and in the class “The Art of Drawing: Surface and Depth,” which he taught at the Aesthetic Realism Foundation. He is remembered with large gratitude by his many students

and colleagues for the kindness and depth of his teaching and perception. As an Aesthetic Realism consultant on the faculty of the Foundation, he changed people’s lives in ways they had greatly hoped for.

In his own work Koppelman explored the relation of opposites—the emperor and the democrat—in Napoleon and in himself. And in works as different as “Murdered, Vietnam” and “Gentleness,” his purpose was to show, through form, a beautiful resolution of good and evil.

His works are in the collections of major museums here and abroad, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim, the Whitney, and the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. A member of the National Academy and a past president of the Society of American Graphic Artists, he was the recipient of numerous awards, including SAGA’s Lifetime Achievement Award, two Tiffanys, and a CAPS grant.

CHAIM KOPPELMAN’S ART will last, and with it, the meaning of his important, courageous, pioneering life.



Combat



Hommage à Degas

By 1940, the year I was introduced to Aesthetic Realism, I was already a serious art student. In Aesthetic Realism classes I learned that art is a making one of opposites; that the formal structure of art and one's most intimate feelings are related in a way I had never thought possible. I learned truth and imagination were closer than I had known. My work changed. I became more imaginative, freer in concept.

Working at Atelier 17 and the Blackburn Printmaking Workshop in the 1950s, I found my medium. The way etching is both critical and kind, I came to love. It has a digging, critical, biting quality. Yet it can also make for effects of the gentlest lights and shadow. Etching is at once gentle and sharp—and I wanted to put these opposites together in myself.

—Chaim Koppelman



A printmaker equally at ease with experimental as well as traditional techniques, Chaim Koppelman brings a totally new concept to the field of graphic art. He is concerned with good and evil, with what he calls "the ethical drama of black and white." Koppelman [is] an innovator, not only technically, but in the scope of his subject matter, the depth of his seeing.

—Sylvan Cole, Director, Associated American Artists Gallery

He was brilliant, both in printmaking and painting. His work has a sense of darkness and light that is unique, and of what is going on in life in general—an observation, that is unusual and exciting, of what takes place between people. He was a very excellent graphic artist, with a very fine technique that varies from idea to idea. There was this profundity in him, and this sense of humanity. And it was developed through Aesthetic Realism. He was a vital force in the art community for many years.

—Will Barnet, Artist

Chaim Koppelman has an outstanding sense of touch, and its rightness delights in changes of scale, as in the "etcher at the press" series....This sense of touch moves through rich aquatint grays and subtle bas-relief. ...Something from one century and something from another and something brand new all come together, as it turns out, at the right time on the right plate. He impresses his individuality on all this through a superb use of allegory, which serves as well to discipline his richness.

—Art News

He has harnessed his skills and his unblinking imagery to the troubled, often controversial problems of our times, [as in] his embossed intaglio *Murdered, Vietnam*. Koppelman is not alone in his visual and partisan demands for humanistic values; nevertheless, he is one of the most eloquent.

—Una Johnson, *American Prints and Printmakers*