

= Chaim Koppelman =

Chaim Koppelman (November 17 , 1920 ? December 6 , 2009) was an American artist , art educator , and Aesthetic Realism consultant . Best known as a printmaker , he also produced sculpture , paintings , and drawings . A member of the National Academy of Design since 1978 , he was president of the Society of American Graphic Artists (SAGA) , which presented him with a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004 . He established the Printmaking Department of the School of Visual Arts in 1959 , and taught there until 2007 .

Koppelman was an early student of Aesthetic Realism , the philosophy founded in 1941 by Eli Siegel , which is based on the principle , " All beauty is a making one of opposites , and the making one of opposites is what we are going after in ourselves " . This principle informed Koppelman 's art , teaching , and his work as an Aesthetic Realism consultant . About the importance of this principle to art and life , Koppelman stated , " When Eli Siegel showed that what makes a work of art beautiful ? the oneness of opposites ? is the same as what every individual wants , it was one of the mightiest and kindest achievements of man 's mind " .

Koppelman 's art is noted for its originality , masterful technique , humor , and power . He is represented in most major print collections , including New York 's Museum of Modern Art , Guggenheim Museum , Whitney Museum , Metropolitan Museum , New York Public Library , Brooklyn Museum , Philadelphia Museum of Art , National Gallery , Smithsonian Institution , and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington , DC , and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London . A retrospective exhibition at the Museo Napoleonico in Rome (2011 ? 12) exposed his work to an international audience .

= = Early life and education = =

Chaim Koppelman was born in Brooklyn , New York City , to Sam and Sadie Koppelman , whose images appear in several of his works . At the age of 9 , he drew a profile of Napoleon in a geography book , and images of the Emperor would reappear throughout his long career . He began his study of art in Works Progress Administration (WPA) classes at the Brooklyn Museum in 1936 , and continued at Brooklyn College , the Educational Alliance , and the American Artists School . He studied sculpture with William Koss , abstract painting with Carl Holty , and lithography with Eugene Morley . At the Art Students League , he studied sculpture with Jose de Creeft and etching with Martin Lewis and Will Barnet .

In the early 1940s Koppelman worked at the Museum of Non @-@ Objective Painting on 54th Street in Manhattan (which later became the Guggenheim Museum) with , among others , Jackson Pollock , Robert De Niro , Sr. , Rolph Scarlett , Lucia Autorino , and Ward Jackson . Two of his early , abstract pen and ink drawings are in the Guggenheim collection . The first recorded exhibition of Koppelman 's work was held in the Lounge Gallery of the Eighth Street Playhouse in 1942 , and included drawings , paintings , and sculpture . The following year , he had a solo exhibition at the Outlines Gallery in Pittsburgh .

= = Aesthetic Realism and artistic development = =

In 1940 Koppelman began attending poetry classes with Eli Siegel , the American poet and critic who first came to national attention in 1925 , when his poem , " Hot Afternoons Have Been in Montana " won the esteemed poetry prize of The Nation . This poem , Siegel later stated , arose from a way of seeing that in 1941 became Aesthetic Realism , the philosophy that reality is aesthetic , and that " The resolution of conflict in self is like the making one of opposites in art . " In Koppelman 's opinion , Siegel was " the most important philosopher of the 20th century ? perhaps of all time " .

In Aesthetic Realism classes and lessons , Koppelman learned that ethical problems are also artistic problems . He felt his work suffered from a fight between rigidity and flexibility . He learned he could go after precision in the studio as penance for being careless at other times , wanting to

get away from things . As freedom and order , truth and imagination became more integrated in his life , his art became more imaginative . ? I had always had a classical bent in my work , ? he wrote . ? But there was also a wildness in me that had not come into my work sufficiently or gracefully . ? As a result of his study , Koppelman noted , ? Tightness and abandon , the classical and the wild , even the conservative and the rebel seemed to be working better together ? resulting in art that was ? more imaginative , freer in concept ? Boldness of imagination and an unerring sense of detail were two qualities Koppelman ? s work became noted for .

He also learned that art does not arise from suffering or depression , but rather from the hope to respect and honestly like the world by seeing opposites as one . This , according to Aesthetic Realism , is the deepest desire of every person , but it is opposed by the desire for contempt ? the false notion that one adds to self by lessening the value of other things . Koppelman ? s art is permeated with his understanding of this conflict . His works are often allegories which point to the discrepancy between , and the need to integrate , opposites such as pride and humility , generosity and selfishness , idealism and cynicism . ? That art could be a vehicle for understanding individual behavior seems always to have inspired Koppelman ? s creative process ? wrote John B. Ravenal of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts , noting that his works ? offer intimate rendering of closely observed detail , by which , paradoxically , they evoke universal truths ?

In November 1942 , Koppelman was drafted into the United States Army and in 1943 he married painter Dorothy Myers . He worked as a radio weatherman during World War II , guiding ships through the rough waters of the English Channel , which was a critical part of the Invasion of Normandy . He manned an anti @-@ aircraft machine gun in the D @-@ Day landing on Omaha Beach , and later , as staff sergeant , was awarded a Bronze Star . Before the invasion , he had been able to study at the Art College of Western England in Bristol , and later at the École des Beaux @-@ Arts in Reims . While on leave , he visited Picasso 's studio in Paris , and it was Picasso and Louis Aragon who told Koppelman that the war in Europe was over . Letters describing his wartime experience are in the Chaim and Dorothy Koppelman papers at the Smithsonian Archives of American Art .

Upon returning to New York , Koppelman continued his study of Aesthetic Realism , and under the G.I. Bill , he studied at the Amédée Ozenfant School and became Ozenfant 's assistant . While he continued to exhibit sculpture and drawings , he also began printmaking , a medium which , he said , combines the carving quality of sculpture with the subtleties of light and shade in drawing and painting .

= = Influence in the art community = =

In the early 1950s Koppelman was part of the Stanley William Hayter Atelier 17 in New York . Later he worked at the Printmaking Workshop founded by Robert Blackburn and Will Barnet . Blackburn credited Koppelman with saving the workshop when it faced financial difficulties in 1956 , by transforming it into a seven @-@ member artists cooperative with annual dues to keep its doors open .

Blackburn , Chaim and Dorothy Koppelman , and Leo Katz ? the head of Atelier 17 after Hayter ? were among the artists who attended Beauty Conferences and Art Inquiries conducted by Eli Siegel , classes in which he discussed current work of contemporary artists with the artists present and participating . " The depth of the discussions that took place , " Koppelman later wrote , " encouraged the artists to understand more deeply what their work was about , and what their intention was " .

In 1955 , the Terrain Gallery opened with Dorothy Koppelman as founding director . She and Chaim Koppelman , as print curator , were responsible for major print exhibitions which included the work of Roy Lichtenstein , Claes Oldenburg , Alex Katz , Ad Reinhardt , Fay Lansner , John von Wicht , Leonard Baskin , Robert Conover , Will Barnet , Harold Krisel , Vincent Longo and others . The motto of the Terrain was Siegel 's statement : " In reality opposites are one ; art shows this . " The gallery held exhibitions of contemporary art , with works frequently accompanied by the artists ' comments on Siegel 's fifteen questions , *Is Beauty the Making One of Opposites ?* , published by

the Terrain and reprinted in The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism . After one @-@ person shows at the Terrain , both Chaim and Dorothy Koppelman had work included in the 1962 exhibition " Recent Painting USA : The Figure " at the Museum of Modern Art .

Koppelman opened his own studio and graphic workshop in 1964 at 498 Broome Street , pioneering the SoHo artists ' community . The Broome Street Workshop remained open more than forty years , and was used and cared for by various artists , including Michael DiCerbo , Sally Brody , Carl Shishido , Reynolds Tenezias , and others .

In 1967 the Terrain Gallery held an exhibition to benefit napalm @-@ burned and crippled Vietnamese children . Titled All Art Is for Life and Against the War in Vietnam , it included the work of 105 painters , sculptors , printmakers , and photographers . " Vietnam " , a Koppelman aquatint originally in the Terrain exhibit , is included in The Indignant Eye : The Artist as Social Critic in Prints and Drawings from the Fifteenth Century to Picasso , by Ralph E. Shikes , which quotes Koppelman about his artistic intention : " I wanted a sense of a mother 's dignity in the midst of tragedy . "

" Our Injustice , Vietnam " , an embossed print with metallic paint on paper , described as a " stark political statement " in The New York Times , is in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Brooklyn Museum .

Koppelman was commissioned in 1968 to interview Roy Lichtenstein , Richard Anuszkiewicz , and Clayton Pond on the relevance of the Siegel Theory of Opposites to their work . Recordings of these interviews are part of the Smithsonian Archives of American Art . The following year , essays by Dorothy and Chaim Koppelman appeared in the book , Aesthetic Realism : We Have Been There ? Six Artists on the Siegel Theory of Opposites (New York : Definition Press , 1969) .

After having tested his aesthetic concepts in literally thousands of works of different periods , in different styles , in different media , for more than twenty years , I say that Eli Siegel 's Theory of Opposites is the key to what is good or beautiful in art . I have seen that the greater the work of art , the richer , more surprising and subtle the play and fusion of the opposing qualities in it . In a bad work of art , the opposites are present , but either they fight too much , or they are limply there ... Contempt is the greatest enemy of art ... Contempt , according to Aesthetic Realism , is the difference between what a thing deserves and what we give it ... Beauty can only arise from a mind that is just , wants to see things exactly and give them all the meaning they deserve . You can 't switch from contempt outside to respect in the studio , and get away with it .

= = Critical reception and awards = =

Koppelman 's prints were compared to William Blake and Francisco Goya . ARTnews wrote of his " superb use of allegory . " Critics praised his work at the Terrain Gallery , the Kennedy Gallery , the RoKo Gallery , the Brooklyn Museum , the National Academy of Design , and the National Gallery in Washington , D.C. " Koppelman 's concern is man , good and evil ... He is a superb technician whose work has grandeur and emotional impact , " wrote Bennett Schiff . " Chaim Koppelman brings a totally new concept and technique to the field of graphic art , " wrote critic and gallery director Sylvan Cole , Jr . " Siegel 's Theory of Opposites has had a profound effect upon his work " . Una Johnson , Curator Emeritus of Prints and Drawings at the Brooklyn Museum said , " He has harnessed his skills and his unblinking imagery to the troubled , often controversial problems of our times . " Fellow artist Will Barnett said , " He was brilliant , both in printmaking and painting . His work has a sense of darkness and light that is unique ... There was this profundity in him , and this sense of humanity . And it was developed through Aesthetic Realism " .

Koppelman received the SAGA Markel Prize in 1956 , and Tiffany Grants in 1967 and 1969 . He represented the United States in the Documenta II exhibition , Kassel , West Germany in 1969 . In the SAGA annual exhibition of 1967 , Koppelman 's print " Exodus " was awarded the Vera List Prize . The following year , his work was shown and discussed on Channel 31 , WNYC @-@ TV . In 1976 , he won a New York State CAPS (Creative Artists Public Service) Grant for a suite of lithographs titled Closeness and Clash in Couples and Domestic Life . In 1998 , his charcoal drawing " The Dark Angels " won the Gladys Emerson Cook Award for general excellence from the National Academy . In 1992 Koppelman , Blackburn , and Barnett received a New York Artists Equity Award

for their dedicated service to the printmaking community . Legends of the Printmaking Workshop , a 2011 exhibition at the LaGrange Museum in Georgia , featured prints of all three artists and Tom Laidman , selected by , and now part of , the collection of Wesley Cochran . ,

= = Teaching , writing , and later work = =

In 1959 , Koppelman began the Printmaking Department at the School of Visual Arts , where he taught until 2007 . He also taught at the National Academy , New York University , SUNY New Paltz , the Rhodes Preparatory School , and the 92nd Street Y. In 1973 , he became a consultant on the faculty of the not @-@ for @-@ profit Aesthetic Realism Foundation . As part of the trio , The Kindest Art , he gave consultations to artists and others , teaching that art answers the deepest question in life : how to be fully oneself by being fair to the outside world . He taught The Art of Drawing : Surface and Depth . He studied Aesthetic Realism with Eli Siegel until 1978 , and then in professional classes with the Chairman of Education , Ellen Reiss .

His scholarly writing as an Aesthetic Realism consultant showing the relation of art and life includes considerations of the lives and works of sculptors Augustus Saint @-@ Gaudens and Jacques Lipchitz ; painters René Magritte , Giorgio de Chirico , Henri Matisse , Rembrandt , Fernand Léger , Henri de Toulouse @-@ Lautrec , Masaccio ; and many American printmakers . He is the author of The Art of the Print , essays on works of Picasso , Daumier , Munch , Hogarth , and Duane Hanson . His drawings illustrate Siegel 's book , Damned Welcome : Aesthetic Realism Maxims (New York : Definition Press , 1972 , 2011) .

Although known mostly for his work in black and white , Koppelman 's painterly interest in color took a new form in the 1970s , when he began using color in his prints . After 1980 , he worked increasingly in pastel and watercolor .

= = Collections and exhibitions = =

Koppelman 's work appears in major print collections , including the Museum of Modern Art , the Metropolitan , Whitney , Brooklyn and Guggenheim Museums ; Peabody Essex Museum , Yale University Art Gallery , the National Gallery , Pennell Collection @-@ Library of Congress , the Minneapolis Institute of Art , Los Angeles County Museum , the Walker Art Center , the Victoria and Albert Museum in London , the Fine Arts Museum in Anchorage , and the Museum of Fine Arts in Caracas . Both Chaim and Dorothy Koppelman kept " object books " begun in 1949 , containing sketches of ordinary objects along with , at the suggestion of Eli Siegel , three descriptive sentences about each object . These sketches and notes continued to the year 2000 , and some volumes are among the Chaim and Dorothy Koppelman papers in the Archives of American Art collection of the Smithsonian Institution .

In 2000 , a retrospective exhibition of Koppelman 's works on paper was held at the Beatrice Conde gallery . Chaim Koppelman died on December 6 , 2009 of natural causes at Beth Israel Medical Center in Manhattan , New York City . A memorial exhibition spanning seven decades of his work was held at the Terrain Gallery in 2010 .

= = Museo Napoleonico exhibit = =

Throughout Koppelman 's long career , the image of Napoleon is recurrent , and a retrospective exhibition of over eighty works and studies dealing with Napoleon was held at the Museo Napoleonico in Rome (11 October 2011 ? 6 May 2012) . Titled Napoleon Entering New York : Chaim Koppelman and the Emperor , Works 1957 ? 2007 , it included paintings , pastels , drawings , collage , watercolors , intaglio etchings , linocuts , and many of the artist 's notes on paper . The exhibition also included selections from a lecture Siegel gave in 1951 , Napoleon Bonaparte : or , Orderly Energy , which Koppelman had attended and which he credited with inspiring much of the work displayed .

In his review , " Chaim Koppelman 's Napoleon Entering Brighton Beach , Coney Island " , artist

Richard Sloat , past president of SAGA , wrote : " In his art , Chaim Koppelman was a maker of stories about our inner self For Napoleon to be leading his army in retreat down the boardwalk of Coney Island is a bit heroic , a bit tragic , a bit funny , a bit absurd , but also glorious . Is this not a wonderful metaphor of our living this life ? "

In reviewing this exhibition , the Italian daily newspaper , Corriere della Sera described Koppelman as " one of the greatest American printmakers " .

= = Books and essays = =

Koppelman , Chaim (1969) . This Is the Way I See Aesthetic Realism . New York : Terrain Gallery & Definition Press .

Koppelman , Chaim . " I Believe This About Art " . In Kranz , Sheldon . Aesthetic Realism : We Have Been There ? Six Artists on the Siegel Theory of Opposites . New York : Definition Press . ISBN 0 @-@ 910492 @-@ 11 @-@ 5 .

Koppelman , Chaim (2004) . Four Essays on the Art of the Print . New York : Orange Angle Press . ISBN 0 @-@ 9759813 @-@ 0 @-@ 7 .

Koppelman , Chaim (24 July 2003) . " The Sculpture of Augustus St. Gaudens : Its Meaning for Our Lives " . The Southampton Press . ISSN 0745 @-@ 6484 .