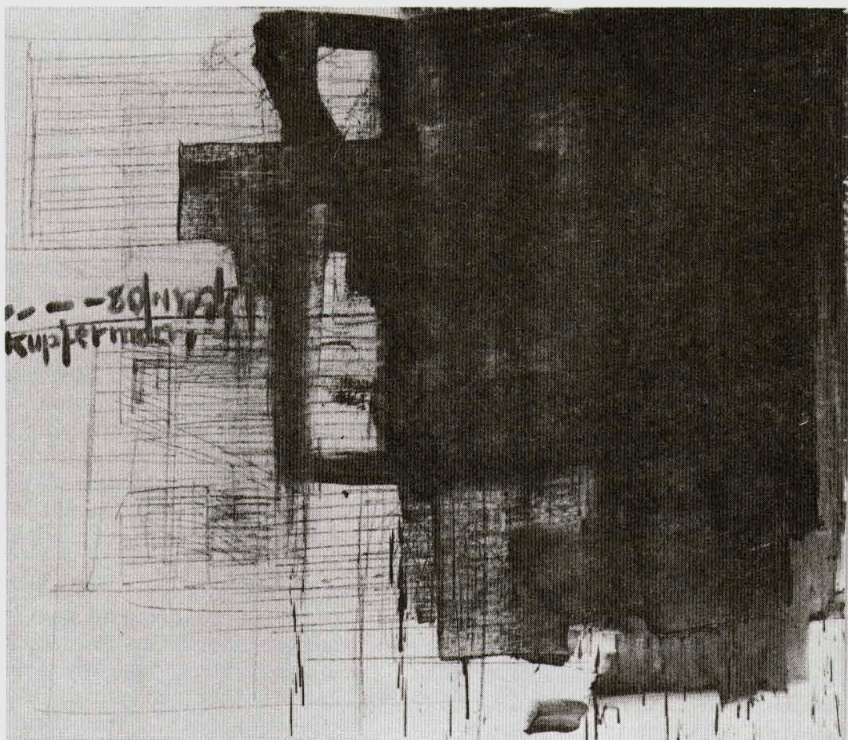


Untitled, 1980



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*"First I put in emotion and expression. Then I cover it up. Then I put in silence."*

Moshe Kupferman, in conversation, April 1980.

These words of Israeli artist Moshe Kupferman suggest that it will take some hard looking on our part to understand the depth and the complexities of his multi-layered works. Each of Kupferman's paintings and drawings seems to be a conjugation of contraries. Often a single work will be dense, transparent, reductive, romantic, meditative, turbulent, dark, optimistic, elegant and rough-hewn. It will be both methodically constructed and open to chance. The artist gathers up opposites into a single grand embrace.

From a distance the paintings are cloudy and ethereal; one senses the celestial veils of color. The drawings are definite and emphatic. Moving up closer one encounters the richly varied passages of the surfaces which invite slow and careful analysis. The contrasts come into focus. Returning to these works even a short time later the viewer will see them anew. Always offering more, these are works of continuing revelation.

The art that Kupferman makes is outspoken about the wide open possibilities of the materials he uses. Sometimes paint is thinly spread, sometimes it is opaque. Very often he puts down layer after layer, covering his tracks. Subsequently he makes bold scratches into the carefully built up surface, violating his own efforts and allowing

us a glimpse of what is in the recent past. But it is a glimpse only. Paradoxically, these removals remind us that mystery prevails -- in his painting, in the confounding events of history and in our primitive knowledge of the universe.

In his drawings Kupferman subjects the paper to considerable manipulation: it is folded, saturated, incised and gouged. Graphite is variously rubbed deep into the paper, pulled along on its short broad side or sharpened to a lethal point. Some sections of the drawings, abraded with turpentine or gum erasers, soak up the light; others shimmer generously with light given back.

Over the past few years, Kupferman's paintings seem more draughtsmanlike and his drawings seem more painterly. The distinction between the two is becoming increasingly and intriguingly hazy.

Kupferman pushes his materials with such force and intensity that his art speaks of process only in passing. Unlike much of the art of today, Kupferman's exploration of materials is clearly a means, not an end.

Although their journey into being is an arduous one, these works assert the primacy of the spiritual and the transcendental over the physical and the empirical. The drawings and paintings which emerge from the fierce determination of his labors are works of reverence and awe. They confirm for us the possibility of triumph and survival.

Moshe Kupferman was born in Jaroslaw, Poland in 1926. In his early teens he fled to the Soviet Union. He immigrated to Israel in 1948 where he became a founding member of the Kibbutz Lohamei Hageta'ot (Survivors of the Ghetto), located north of Haifa in the Western Galilee. In the early

1950s Kupferman had the good fortune to study with Joseph Zaritsky and Avigdor Stematsky in art classes offered to rural settlers. His subsequent growth and development as an artist has occurred primarily in the isolation of his own studio.

Kupferman has remained an active participant in the life of his kibbutz, choosing to travel outside it only occasionally and concerning himself hardly at all with the international art world's interest in him. Four photographs of the kibbutz terrain are included in this exhibition; they suggest the close connection between Kupferman's work and the land on which he lives. The artist is represented by Bertha Urdang Gallery, New York City.

Andrea Miller-Keller  
Curator of MATRIX

Works in MATRIX:

Untitled, 1971, oil and sand on canvas, 51 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 64 inches.

Untitled, 1972, oil on canvas, 39 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 45 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Courtesy of Judd Hammack.

Untitled, 1972, oil on canvas, 39 x 45 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Untitled, 1977, oil on canvas, 39 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 58 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

Untitled, 1980, oil on canvas, 39 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 45  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

Untitled, 1980, oil on canvas, 37 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 42 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Untitled, 1978, charcoal and graphite on paper, 27  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 39 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

Untitled, 1978, oil and graphite on paper, 28 x 39 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Untitled, 1978, oil stick on paper, 27  $\frac{5}{8}$  x 39 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

Untitled, 1978, oil and graphite on paper, 27 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 39 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Untitled, 1979, acrylic and graphite on paper, 28 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 35  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

Also in the exhibition: four color photographs taken on the kibbutz where Kupferman lives. Photographs taken by Uri Kupferman, the artist's son.

All works in this exhibition are courtesy of the Bertha Urdang Gallery, New York City, unless otherwise noted.



Selected one-man exhibitions:  
Chemerinsky Gallery, Tel Aviv '60; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem '60, '69; Mabat Gallery, Tel Aviv '71; Museum of Modern Art, Haifa '72; Gordon Gallery, Tel Aviv '72, '73; Bertha Urdang Gallery (formerly Rina Gallery), NYC '73, '75, '77, '80; Sara Levi Gallery, Tel Aviv '76, '78; The Tel Aviv Museum '78; University Gallery of Fine Art, Ohio State University '79.

Selected group exhibitions:  
Museum of Art, Ein Harod, Israel New Horizons '63; The Tel Aviv Museum Autumn Exhibition '64, '65, '66, '67, '68, '69; University Art Gallery, State University of New York at Albany A Leap of Faith '69; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem Beyond Drawing '74; Worcester Art Museum, MA Three Israeli Artists: Gross, Neustein, Kupferman '75; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark Ten Artists from Israel '77; The Israel Museum, Israeli Artists 1977 '77; University Gallery of Fine Art, Ohio State University, Columbus Sensible Explorations '78; Los Angeles County Museum of Art Seven Artists in Israel, 1948-1978 '78 (traveled to The Brooklyn Museum, NY '79); Bronx Museum of the Arts, NY Marking Black '80; Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester, NY Contemporary Drawings and Watercolors '80.

Selected bibliography about Kupferman (in English):

Fischer, Yona. Three Israeli Artists: Gross, Neustein, Kupferman, Worcester Art Museum (Worcester, MA) '75.

Pincus-Witten, Robert. "Six Propositions on Jewish Art," Arts Magazine, vol. 50, no. 4 (December '75), p. 68+.

Frank, Peter. "Moshe Kupferman at Rina," Art in America vol. 64, no. 3 (May-June '76), p. 104.

Pincus-Witten, Robert. "The Neustein Papers," Arts Magazine, vol. 52, no. 2 (October '77), p. 109+.

Cardozo, Judith Lopes. "Moshe Kupferman, Bertha Urdang Gallery," Artforum, vol. 16, no. 5 (January '78), p. 71+.

Breitberg, Sara. Kupferman, The Tel Aviv Museum '78.

Barron, Stephanie and Tuchman, Maurice. Seven Artists in Israel: 1948-1978, Los Angeles County Museum of Art '78, p. 32+.

Perkins, Constance M. "Seven Artists From Israel," Artweek, vol. 10, no. 4 (January 27, '79), p. 8.

Kasher, Steve. "Seven Artists of Israel," Artforum, vol. 17, no. 10 (Summer '79), p. 50+.

Cardozo, Judith Lopes. "'Marking Black,' Bronx Museum of the Arts," vol. 18, no. 8 (April '80), p. 83+.

Rickey, Carrie. "Space Walk," The Village Voice, vol. 25, no. 17 (April 28, '80), p. 79+.

Burnside, Madeleine. "Moshe Kupferman at Bertha Urdang," The New York Arts Journal, no. 18 (June '80).