

## Samuel (Shmuel) Tepler - A Distinctive Jewish Painter

### מספרים על הצייר שמואל טפּלר



### שמואל טפּלר 1918-1998

- 1918 נולד בעיר חרובייטשוב Hrubieszow בפולין למשפחה יהודית חרדית  
1935 עובר לוילנה ומתחיל לימודי אמנות  
1939-1945 שנות המלחמה ברוסיה - אוזבקיסטאן והרי אורל, אחרי השחרור חזרה לפולין  
1946-1949 מתגורר במילאנו, איטליה ולומד באקדמיה בררה Accademia di Brera  
1949 תערוכת יחיד ראשונה במילאנו, אח"כ עולה לישראל ומתיישב בתל-אביב  
1950 משתתף בתערוכה קבוצתית של אגודת הציירים והפסלים הישראלית בתל-אביב  
1953 תערוכת יחיד בגלריה כץ בתל אביב  
1954 תערוכת יחיד בגלריה צ'מרינסקי בתל אביב  
1958 תערוכות יחיד בבית האמנים בתל אביב ובבית שגאל בחיפה  
1961 תערוכת יחיד בבית האמנים בירושלים. קיבל את פרס ההסתדרות עבור תמונתו "נוף בירושלים"  
1963 תערוכות יחיד בגלריה צ'מרינסקי בתל אביב ובגלריה רינה בירושלים  
1966 תערוכת יחיד בגלריה 220 בתל אביב  
1965 רוכש יחד עם הצייר רוזנטליס בית ביפו ומתיישב בו  
1967 תערוכת יחיד בבית האמנים בירושלים  
1968 תערוכת יחיד במוזיאון לאמנות מודרנית בחיפה  
1970 תערוכות יחיד בגלריית בית לייזיק ובגלריה צ'מרינסקי בתל אביב  
1971 ראה אור במילאנו ספר על יצירתו Monografia Di Samuel Tepler by Mario Lepore  
1972 תערוכות יחיד בגלריה נובלי Nobelli Gallery ורונה איטליה ובגלריה איל ציניו Il Chinio Gallery מילאנו איטליה  
1974 זכה בפרס מטעם האקדמיה האיטלקית Tiberina Roman Accademia di  
1975 זכה בפרס איטליה Tetradramma d'Oro ובמדלית זהב "לגיון צ'אורו" מטעם יונסקו  
1976 תערוכות יחיד בגלריה נגל Nagal Gallery וינה אוסטריה ובגלריה למברט Lambert Gallery פריז צרפת  
1977 חוזר להתגורר בתל אביב ברחוב מלצט  
1978 תערוכות יחיד בגלריה למברט Lambert Gallery ובגלריה קאלבר Kalber Gallery פריז צרפת  
1982 תערוכת יחיד בגלריה למברט Lambert Gallery פריז צרפת  
1986 תערוכת יחיד בגלריה פריזמה Prisma Gallery ורונה איטליה  
1988 תערוכת יחיד בגלריה גורדון בתל אביב  
1989 תערוכת יחיד במוזיאון לאמנות Kunstmuseum בעיר אולם Ulm גרמניה  
1990-1997 תערוכות קבע בגלריות Venable ו-Neslage בוושינגטון ארה"ב  
שמואל טפּלר נפטר בשנת 1998 בתל אביב.

שמואל טפּלר 1918-1998 נולד בעיירה חרובייטשוב בפולין למשפחה יהודית חרדית שלא קיבלה בעין יפה את רצונו לעסוק בציור. טפּלר עזב את משפחתו בגיל 17 ועבר לעיר וילנה שם למד בבית ספר תיכון לאמנות וקיים עצמו בעבודות שונות. לימודי הציור בוילנה, למרות שהתנהלו באורח שמרני ודי נוקשה, הקנו לטפּלר הצעיר את יסודות הרישום, הצבע והקומפוזיציה.

כשפרצה מלחמת העולם נמלט טפּלר לרוסיה ובהמשך הועבר יחד עם רבבות הפליטים לעומק ברית המועצות לאוזבקיסטאן ואח"כ לגבול אורל סמוך לסיביר. בזמן המלחמה הועסק טפּלר בציור דיוקנאות ענק של סטאלין שהוצבו במבני ציבור ובכיכרות ערים בברית המועצות כחלק ממערך התעמולה הסובייטי ופולחן האישיות שיזם סטאלין. משפחתו שנותרה בפולין נספתה בשואה - דבר שנודע לטפּלר רק מאוחר יותר, כשהזר לפולין עם סיום המלחמה.

מפולין החרבה שאחרי המלחמה היגר טפּלר למילאנו שבאיטליה שבה למד ציור אצל מספר אומנים איטלקיים חשובים באקדמיה בררה Brera במילאנו. ב-1949 עלה לישראל והתיישב בתל אביב. טפּלר שהתגורר ליד הים הרבה לצייר את נוף הנמל והחיים שבו בדרכו הייחודית שאין שני לה בציור הישראלי והאירופאי של זמנו.



שמואל טפּלר - שמן על בד - נוף נמל

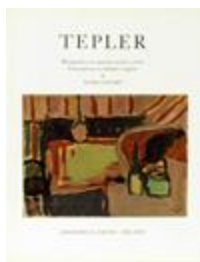
ציוריו אינם מתארים את הנוף בדרך הסיפורית הפולקלוריסטית שאפיינה את מרבית הציירים הישראליים; טפּלר משתמש בנושא המצויר כנקודת פתיחה וכחומר גלם לתרגום לשפת הצורות והצבעים הפרטית שלו כשם שמשורר לוקח אפיזודה קטנה ומרכז בה מהות של עולם שלם. יכולתו של טפּלר ליצור ציור אבסטרקטי "טהור" יחד עם זאת לשמור על קשר עם הנושא המצויר יהי זה נוף או דומם היא מופלאה.

### **שמואל טפּלר**

#### דן צלקה - ספר האלף-בית

פעם סיפר לי שבבית האמנים ברחוב האחרזי נערכה תערוכת ציירי ישראל לכבודו של מארק שאגאל. שאגאל נכנס לאולם ומיד נשאב אל שתי תמונות קטנות של טפּלר. מארחיו משכו אותו אל תמונות אחרות, אל זריצקי ואמרו: לא, לא, שם זה בית שימוש, אבל שאגאל הגיע אל תמונותיו של טפּלר והייד אליו.

אהבתי לשמוע את סיפוריו על שהותו בברית-המועצות במהלך מלחמת העולם השנייה. טפּלר (שנולד ב-1918) הכריז על עצמו כאמן, הראה תעודה או שתיים והועסק בציור דיוקנאותיו של החבר סטאלין ובייצור המוני של פסלונים. גם עיצוב דמויותיהם של מרקס, אנגלס ולנין לא היה נדיר, לפעמים יחד עם החבר סטאלין, לפעמים לחוד. היו לו סיפורים נפלאים על הערותיהם של פטרוניו, אנשי המפלגה, על מלאכת הקודש שעשה - דיונים דקים ועדינים על הזווית הראויה של השפם, למשל.



#### **לאפורה שמואל טפּלר - מונוגרפיה מקיפה, מבוא - מאריו**

#### Monografia Di Samuel Tepler by Mario Lepore

**Samuel Tepler** was born in 1918 in Poland, of a Jewish Family. Even if one would like to rigorously reject in the following short and simple pages the obvious temptation of reflecting on the tragic years of the dreadful tempest which he survived, it is nevertheless necessary to consider these experiences in his biographical data. In fact it is impossible to know an artist without, at least superficially, knowing him as a man. There is a profound and indissoluble bond between art and life, both being in a state of continuous osmosis, even if this phenomenon does not result from first observation.

An artistic ability revealed itself in the very young Samuel; however - coming from a deeply traditional and religious family, he encountered immediately within this familiar environment, his first and decisive obstacles. While still in his teens, he left home and went to Vilna where he entered an art school and at the same time found a job to support himself. This were the first difficult moments of his life, but Samuel did not intend to give up his interest in painting, even though these first fundamentals in art were taught in a very old, academic, and very mechanical methods which sure were not adapted to win over and stimulate a youthful imagination; the more so, because this basic instruction required much hard work and many sacrifices.

And now the Second World War; Hitler's armies invade the country; the Germans began their mad and cruel hunt for the Jews.

While all of his family were being massacred, and Samuel learned the news only very much later, he succeeded in fleeing from Vilna towards the Russian border, which he subsequently crossed. He believed that he was safe and tried to find some work, but then the Germans attacked Russia and he, together with other refugees, were transferred to the interior of the country. First to Uzbekistan, almost at the Persian border, then to the North, beyond the Ural mountains, near Siberia.

A long time was spent wandering around under the most difficult conditions. His work which permitted him to pay for his upkeep was, at least in our eyes, rather strange. He had to paint enormous portraits of Stalin, the type which was used in public ceremonies and installed in halls and public outdoors to dominate public meetings, sort of enormous publicity posters. His realistic art education enabled him to succeed quite well in these frequently asked for official portraits, almost always the same in their iconographic style, from the cult of the personality and so called socialistic realism which dominated the aesthetic arts in the USSR.

It certainly was not work which would inspire an artist nor would it allow him to progress in a technical sense, but it was a job which permitted Samuel to live. Perhaps on reflecting it was not all in vain for him: with the very large dimensions of the surface he was required to cover with flat and simple colors, his eye schooled to a perfect synthesis of planes, to the elimination of the anecdote which enormously increased in size loses its minute character, these endless canvasses, all factors which helped him to progress, to develop, without being conscious of it. A hypothesis, nothing but a hypothesis, that seems rather hazardous but not so far fetched.

However, his painting of this enormous images stopped with the end of the war and the lessening of enthusiasm for victory. Tepler, as a Polish refugee, returned to his devastated homeland, facing a new territorial and political reorganization quite different from the old one. It seems impossible for him to remain in Poland; at the same time he feels the necessity to study his art freely and deeply, to learn from valid masters, to find a job to live and a less disturbed climate: he still suffers from his personal tragedy and also from that of his country. He decides to go away and chooses to come to Italy to Milan.

Here he enrolls in the Brera Academy. It was a fortunate moment because this old, glorious Academy, in the intermediate postwar climate, enthusiastically renewed its contacts with European culture.

The first combative wave of young artists of that time, such as Birolli, Cassinari, Morlotti, Sassu and many others which from post-cubism to socialistic realism and to Picasso had

brought forward to new directions in art, was now followed by younger ones, by Crippa and Dova, companions of Tepler in the not yet completely repaired halls of the old Brera. His masters were Carra, Carpi, Valenti, De Rocchi, Salvadori and many others. All were artists, often linked to tradition but not tedious followers of it, rather interpreters of it and, at the same time, open to new ideas. In short, Tepler finally found himself in an environment made for him, capable to give, through his teachers, through his companions, through the contacts with different movements and experiences introduced by a big group of young artists beginning to find success, a serious base for his own painting, his own culture.

The years in Milan, where he lived in a small room in the neoclassic street which took its name from the famous museum and the annexed Braidense Academy, were certainly most important for the young painter and without doubt shaped him: not only on the technical level but also on those of ideas and taste. Later on he was able to travel, visit other European art centers, and especially Paris, where he succeeded in completing still further his knowledge and in studying other trends in modern, contemporary arts presented by innovative artists, but his present artistic physiognomy was definitely formed by his years at the Brera, to be later, as in the case of each true artist, adapted to his own temperament, that is, made legitimately individual and distinctive for his own personality.

After his first exhibition in Milan, in 1949, Tepler left to **Israel** and decided to establish himself there, beginning his own artistic activity the year after with an exhibition organized by the Painters and Sculptors Association, which has since then accepted him as a member.

The main characteristics of Samuel Tepler's actually present the result of a long and meditated maturation of his inner world and expressive style. He uses a simplified and constructive idiom based upon the learned economy of means and methods to reach objectives that are well defined in his vision, a vision fundamentally arising from his intimate and lyrical nature, and therefore based upon secret and abstract feelings. Abstract but not in the sense given today in enormous matter to the term "abstraction", that is, synonym of the plastic address which does not deduce its elements from the appearance of the physical fact offered by the appearance of the sensed world, being in reality a purely fantastic invention, non figurative, to make it quite clear.



כורסא, שולחן, קנקן ומנורה: שמואל טפּלר - שמן על בד - דומם

Here we use "abstraction" in its classical sense, in the more correct sense, of the transposition of physical data onto an ideal level, a metaphysical one, that is, a potential one and therefore devoid of any contingent naturalistic dress, capable of being recognized in its essentialization and, therefore, to appeal to all. That is, in fact, the basis of art and for which reason all art is abstract, from the graffiti of prehistoric man to the Egyptians, to the Greeks and so on. Therefore, the definition arising from this line of interpretation of the

show on nature comprising an amalgamation of the objective and the subjective, is better replaced by another one such as "configuration" for example, not "abstract art" or "abstraction" and others - a useless confusion.

Returning to Tepler, the metamorphoses he uses when translating nature into a work of art, are always realized with the help of his own pictorial art, in agreement with their most intrinsic essence. He discards any realistic description to go right down to the root of the idea inspiring him. His care, at once evidence by the construction of the painting, is formulated by large color planes arranged in an architecture freely revoking the chosen natural motive: whether or not inspired by a figure, by a landscape or by a composition. But still further to the plastic and chromatic life his eye has caught from the original that inspired him, there is present also the proper breath of the motif factor, of the sensation he has received contemplating nature and then expressed in his painting.

Generally, a few decisive strokes of his brush will suffice to recapitulate his object and to stabilize its mass in the space, a space conveniently chosen so that the mass has its vital palpitation, its breath, its lyrical vibration, while air and light circulate in an easy manner. Not only for the reason of exactness of the relationship between mass and mass, between positive and negative spaces, and not only for the harmonic development of the rhythms of every kind being the fulcrum of the composition and because of the cuts and the makeup of the painting, but also, and especially so for the ceiling, for the color key of the poetic ceiling of his art and for the matter substantiating it.

His color is constantly understood as tonality, that is, made alive by the light that is acting upon it. A light that prefers to be diffused and clear, eliminating the contrasts that are too sharp with their shades, though the latter are mostly very neat and useful for the structure of the painting when required, permitting the modulation of the color in fine variations and giving at the same time the sensation of solar and atmospheric powers. He usually avoids excessive heavy notes in the chromatic texture - refers to that diffused cantabile with impastos that are materially sustained and juicy but limpid, created by large, constructive stroke that remains palatable even when applied with certain fullness. Besides his tonal sensibility Tepler possesses also taste in using a good and decanted matter vigorously applied, but always conserving that general equilibrium hallmark of his art.

Art, which by certain of its aspects, recalls that of [Giorgio Morandi](#), a painter Europe is just discovering, and that of [De Stael](#) and of certain Jewish artist of the very early Paris school. But this is rather a selective affinity and nothing else, because his way of intending color construction, tonal synthesis and therefore also that of color and light, in juxtaposition by color zones in the image are already found in his paintings before he had the possibility to see the works of the above-mentioned painters and, on the other hand, are elements already found, though with different intents and formulations in modern painting of French and European art of the 19th Century. All in all, Tepler's interpretation reveals itself in the context of his creations that are without doubt his own: be it by the conscious observation of the problem or by its realization.

The substantially lyrical and contemplative temperament of this artist and his purely pictorial formation permit him to arrive also at a serene and detached inner attitude which, in my opinion is most unusual and deserves to be revealed here. Tepler has suffered and lived through great and immense tragedies which without doubt have caused him hard blows and great spiritual sufferings, but his art is not based upon the tragic or the pathetic, though legitimate evocations of the tragedies he has lived, he never mentions them and is

reluctant to talk of these moments and of himself - he seems to have almost decided to forget it all and is willing to concentrate on his art, the only interest he has.

He is living in **Tel-Aviv** now, near the port, and his preferred themes are those of the landscape and the life of this Israeli port. But he does not intend to describe them as they are or with a folkloristic vein. On the contrary, with special reference to folklore, he surely does not indulge in its seductions which, especially here in Israel, must be very strong, to judge from the paintings of many, and even famous, Israeli artists which the author of the present lines has had occasion to see at various exhibitions including the Venice Biennale.

For Tepler painting must be only painting, he is not interested in narrating. When choosing a theme, he chooses it because this theme is most suitable for being translated and so become a pretext for being painted, that is, a pretext for using the language of color and form, that does attract him and which he feels to be perfect for potential translation.

**Because he is, without doubt, a poet:** for him the most simple motif will be sufficient to make an image in which he can concentrate the essence of the contemplated reality, then covered and adorned, nay, recreated by the ideas from the color have suggested to him as pictorial and plastic discovery, that is, artistic, expressed without hesitation, including at the same time his own emotions, his own vibrations in front of a stretch on an inspiring nature.

All in all, Tepler is endeavoring to form his own art into something of an absolute art, a "mental" art, even if his abstractions give the possibility of being identified with the reality of his starting point, that is, preserve a recognizable objectivity and, therefore, the possibility of a better communication with the observer - art, like love, needs two to be alive - in the purely subjective, that is, abstract sphere that is submerging it. He renews it like an image, an original creation of phantasy, a product of his personal vision of our world's spectacle.

Like all other painters, Tepler has "his" dimension to paint in, using shapes, to employ a word of art jargon, which enable him to find his best, especially the medium and the small ones, as far as I was able to observe. In the medium-large surfaces I believe he is succeeding best, but his strokes remain spontaneously large, his material impastos substantial; the quality of the constructional and tonal precision of his paintings seems to be exalted by the tight flow of the color rapidly covering the reduced surface.

In fact, in this reduced dimensions he succeeds in giving the impression of being in front of a much vaster surfaces than those reproduced in reality. This is a result of his capacity to summarize and of the immediacy with which he is condensing his sensation - revealing thus an impressionistic background in his art. An impressionism, however, which is very much older than the French one and possessing above all the capacity of abbreviating in a most meditated and wise manner similar to the classical examples of European painting and Oriental figurative art, like the old Japanese.

The "production" - to use a rather ugly commercial term very widely used today - Tepler has decided to show us to date is always characterized by the distinct signs of sincere, honest and expert art reaching an elevated intensity of expression using the most simple and economical means and being, therefore, highly communicative with regards to the spiritual state of the artist and his free and poetic vision of the world. Though he surely has learned, as far as he was interested, the lessons of some modern masters, he has transformed them until making them an integral part of his own style, making them significant and individual not only as a plastic, and especially as a color narration but also as his own, intimate and lyrical, inner world, of which his art becomes a direct expression. This

confers to his art the seal of a clear and noble personal impression, that immediately distinguishes him from the others, together with a penetrating charm that has the virtue of becoming the greater the longer one observes his paintings. And this is perhaps his best recommendation. Mario Lepore - 1971



### שמואל טפלר - ראיון

#### ראיון עם טפלר בירחון לאמנות Il Cigno

איטליה האירה פניה לצייר שמואל טפלר.

הפליט היהודי קטן הגוף והצנוע שנדד מארץ לארץ ושרד את מוראות מלחמת העולם השנייה בתושיה גדולה והרבה מזל, הגיע לאיטליה אחרי המלחמה, למד וספג את מסורות הציור האירופאי. טפלר נשאר קשור לאיטליה גם אחרי שעלה לישראל ב-1949 והרבה לבקר בה ולהציג את עבודותיו בפני הקהל האיטלקי.

הראיון עם טפלר בכתב העת Il Cigno התקיים ב-1975 כאשר טפלר הגיע לאיטליה אחר מסע תערוכות מוצלח בצרפת ובמונקו ולפני התצוגה המתוכננת של עבודותיו החדשות במילאנו ובורונה. לשאלתו של ליווי ציסרולי Livio Cisaroli מה מושך את טפלר בחזרה לאיטליה לאחר ההצלחות הגדולות בצרפת עונה טפלר:

"אני מכבד ומעריך את איטליה כאחת מן המדינות הטובות בעולם. רבים בישראל חושבים שסגנון הציור שלי הוא צרפתי ומתאים לצרפת אבל אני מעדיף את איטליה שסצנת הציור שלה כיום היא אולי מצומצמת יותר בהיקפה אך בוודאי פחות מבולבלת ויותר ממוקדת. לצרפתים תעשיה גדולה שמטרתה להפיץ את התרבות הצרפתית, החל בתמיכה בהדפסי רפרודוקציות של הקלאסיקנים האימפרסיוניסטים הצרפתים וכלה בתעשיית סרטי אמנות לא מבוטלת. זו הסיבה שרבים בישראל מכירים את הציור הצרפתי. האמנות האיטלקית העכשווית אינה מוכרת לחלוטין לקהל הישראלי ועל כך אני מצטער מאד."

מדוע בחרת באיטליה להשלים את לימודי האמנות שלך?

"הבחירה באיטליה היתה בדרך המקרה. בתחילה הייתי ברוסיה, אחר כך בפולין שם חיפשתי מקום רציני ללמוד בו ציור. בפולין שמעתי שלאיטליה יש מסורת גדולה של אמנות ואז, אחרי המלחמה הגעתי לכאן. הייתי מאושר מאד כשהגעתי לאיטליה ועוד יותר כשמצאתי את המורים הטובים של האקדמיה של בררה."

מה דעתך על הדור החדש של האמנים הצעירים האיטלקים?

"זה קשה לחוות דעה על אמנים חדשים צעירים ולהסביר מה מונע מהם מלהגיע אל הציור הטוב. אני חושש שרמת הציור באיטליה יורדת. בכל פעם שאני מגיע לאיטליה ורואה משהו טוב, מתברר שזו עבודה של מישהו מהגוורדיה הוותיקה שאני מכיר מתקופת הלימודים פה"

## מקורות נוספים:

ה"אתר הרשמי" של שמואל טפּלר  
ארכיון המהגרים הפולני  
שמואל טפּלר - שמן על בד - נוף נמל  
שמואל טפּלר - שמן על בד - דומם על שולחן כחול  
שמואל טפּלר - מונוגרפיה מקיפה. מבוא - מארז לאפורה

אם ציוריו של שמואל טפּלר קרובים לליבך, נשמח מאוד לקבל ממך אימייל עם פרטים כגון תקופות, סוג העבודות וכד' שמעניינים אותך. ברשותינו **יצירות נוספות של הצייר שמואל טפּלר** שעדיין לא הספקנו להעלות לאתר ונשמח לשלוח לך פרטים לפי בקשתך.

If you like Shmuel Tepler and his paintings, you are most welcomed to send us an email describing your particular topics of interest such as preferred periods, types etc. We have **more works of the painter Shmuel Tepler** which we haven't yet found the time to upload, and we'll be glad to send you the information you require.

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