

# Stripes into magic

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the art scene

TO THE uninitiated eye, the majority of abstractions painted by **Moshe Kupferman** over the past 15 years ring with a deceptive similarity. Drawing on a bank of visual elements and painterly techniques that vary but slightly in their contribution to the work as a whole, Kupferman might appear to be formularizing rather than inventing.

But a good look at a dozen new paintings makes one realize that the contrary is true: there is no such thing as serial painting for Kupferman. Each canvas is a fresh challenge leading to a new statement. Although his ubiquitous colour scheme of greyed violet, dirty chalk greys and warm blacks are steady companions, he controls their weights and balances in a carefully planned manner. Compositionally, each picture is quite remarkable in its intricate solution. The basic iconographic elements contain a freshness of spirit, whether recurring geometric stripes, symmetrical mesh patterns, a slashed X or effortlessly brushed calligraphic strokes.

Each and every work created by Kupferman rings with a painterly authority and a personal intensity. Observing fixed images embedded in several spacial levels is like looking into Kupferman's psyche — or directly into an open wound. One can begin to appreciate and understand the mental strain and creative struggle an artist will endure in order to extract a persuasive non-objective picture from the simplest of ingredients.

A particularly satisfying quality of Kupferman's art is its physicality. It is a form of abstraction that invites the viewer to come closer and be part of the action. There is no dis-

tinction between the painting's formal elements and the handling of the medium. One cannot live without the other. The broad squeegee or palette knife used to transform raw pigment into squads of alternating vertical and horizontal bands are as right as the bristle brush slashing across the surface, or the violet tones penetrating every centimetre of every frame.

Despite slight changes in direction, notably the occasional presence of vivid green patches (previously used by Kupferman as transparent undercoats), a curtailment of surface cross-hatching and the addition of some new shapes, Kupferman's paintings retain their warm familiarity. They continue to radiate with a sense of conviction, a quality that very few artists can sustain over such a long period of time. Definitely worth a visit. (Givon Fine Art, 35 Gordon, Tel Aviv). Till April 13.

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