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## ***Why Attacks on Public Employee Unions Are on the Rise!***

By Steven Weiner

In recent years throughout America, there have been massive attacks on public employees and the unions that represent them. The latest salvo has come from the newly elected governor of Illinois, Bruce Rauner, who, in the name of “fiscal austerity,” issued an executive order that bars public sector unions from requiring workers they represent to pay fees (often called “fair share payments”) to the union. This means that a worker can benefit from a union’s collective bargaining with respect to wages, health insurance, pensions and job protections, while not financially supporting the union by paying their fair share. The purpose behind this measure is described by Roberta Lynch, Executive Director of AFSCME Council 31:

“I was shocked by the breadth of his assault on labor....It’s not limited to public sector unions. He’s targeting the private sector unions too....It is crystal clear by this action that the governor’s supposed concern for balancing the state budget is a paper-thin excuse that can’t hide his real agenda: silencing working people and their unions who stand up for the middle class.”

Right here in New York teachers are being blamed by various politicians for the state of our education system. In response, New York State United Teachers President Karen E. Magee said:

“New York has one of the strongest public education systems in the nation and a professional, highly dedicated teaching force....The truth is, there’s no epidemic of bad teachers. There is an epidemic of poverty and under-funding that Albany has failed to adequately address for decades. Nearly one million New York schoolchildren—including more than one-third of African-American and Latino students—live in poverty. The state’s systemic failure to provide enough resources for all of its students and to do so equitably—while giving all teachers the tools and support they need—is the real crisis and the one our governor is trying to sweep under the rug.”

And in an open letter in the *Albany Times Union*, seven retired “Teachers of the Year” added more compelling evidence, writing:

“Classes are larger and support services are fewer, particularly for our neediest students....Students with an achievement gap also have an income gap, a health-care gap, a housing gap, a family gap, and a safety gap.”

### **What Must Be Understood**

The stepped-up, increasingly ferocious efforts to extinguish public sector unions are alarming. The persons most affected are children, the elderly, and those on very limited incomes. These individuals have few resources, and depend for their well-being on the services provided by those who work in the public sector—in health care, education, libraries, the maintenance of our bridges, roads, parks, and more. To effectively oppose these attacks, their source must be fully understood.

Beginning in 1970 Eli Siegel, the founder of Aesthetic Realism, gave a series of lectures in which he showed definitively that America’s economic system—the profit system—had failed, and would never work successfully again, despite any attempt to keep it going. Since then Ellen Reiss, Aesthetic Realism Chairman of Education, has been giving detailed evidence showing that the only way to keep profit economics going is by impoverishing the American people. That is why in these past years millions of

workers have lost their jobs, union-busting is rampant, and increasing numbers of Americans are struggling in desperate poverty.

In an issue of *The Right of Aesthetic Realism to Be Known*, Ellen Reiss explains:

“Because of this failure of business based on private profit, there has been a huge effort in the last decade to privatize publicly run institutions. The technique is to disseminate massive propaganda against the public institutions, and also do what one can to make them fail, including through withholding funding from them. Eminent among such institutions are the public schools and the post office. The desire is to place them in private hands—not for the public good, not so that the American people can fare well—but to keep profit economics going. The purpose of privatizing what the American people as a whole own is 1) to provide new means for private profits to be made—which is necessary if profit economics is to continue at all; and 2) to have people feel that the non-profit or public way of owning and employing does not work and that the only way things can possibly be run is through the profit system!

“For the same purpose, we have municipalities giving tax breaks and subsidies to private companies, and handing over public jobs to private firms, while also trying to slash the hard-earned pensions of public employees.”

### **Firsthand**

Ellen Reiss is right. I saw this go on firsthand. In my opinion, the chief objection by some (and really the only objection) to public employees is that the work they do does not provide profit to a few individuals and corporations. For example, as a computer specialist for New York City’s Department of Education for more than three decades I took great pride in my work. One of my most satisfying assignments was to take a substantial role in rewriting the computer programs that calculated how much New York State reimbursed the city for the services provided to Special Needs students. The city and its children depended on getting this money, and I’m glad to say that as a result of my own and other programmers’ efforts, New York received \$50 million more per year in reimbursements. However, by the 1980s, jobs that were being done efficiently by public employees were outsourced to private companies in the name of “efficiency and cost savings”—not so different from what the governors of Illinois and New York are trying to do now. I also saw that often the work performed by profit-making contractors was shoddy and outrageously expensive. As far as I’m concerned, the people of New York City and its students were massively rooked by this outsourcing business. And as Ms. Reiss has explained:

“The purpose of privatizing what the American people as a whole own is to provide new means for private profits to be made—which is necessary if profit economics is to continue at all.”

As a passionate, committed union activist, I am convinced that there will be no end to this thirst to privatize the work of public sector employees, and thereby extinguish unions, until the following question asked by Ms. Reiss is answered by union officials and the American people as a whole:

“Should our economy be based on contempt, on the seeing of people’s labor and needs as means for someone else’s profit; or should it be based on good will, on having the people of our nation get what they deserve?”

It is definitely the second!

## The Beauty and Ethics of Linear Perspective

Donita Ellison

In the 15th century, the Florentine architect Filippo Brunelleschi worked out a scientific method of representing three-dimensional forms on a flat surface. This understanding of linear perspective changed the course of art history. At last, artists were able to depict the depths and distances of the world.

The technique of perspective is now a fundamental part of the art classroom, and I have loved teaching it to high school students at LaGuardia High School for Music and Art using the Aesthetic Realism Teaching Method. I have been fortunate to learn with my students how the beauty of art has an urgent message for our lives. That message is in this principle, stated by the 20th-century educator and founder of Aesthetic Realism, Eli Siegel:

“All beauty is a making one of opposites, and the making one of opposites is what we are going after in ourselves.”

The technique of linear perspective puts opposites together: near and far, surface and depth, appearance and reality. “The purpose of perspective,” said Eli Siegel in his great 1951 lecture *Aesthetic Realism as Beauty: Painting*, “is to have a surface function as if it were also inclusive of distance, also inclusive of depth.”

Surface inclusive of distance is what we see in the painting *The Avenue at Middelharnis*, by the 17th-century Dutch artist Hobbema, which I have discussed with my students.

Through the use of perspective, the artist is able to relate with great proportion what is far in the distance to what is near. Hobbema uses perspective to show an accurate relation among figures, trees, buildings, space. We see that relation in the group of people at the end of the road, the man and dog in the middle distance, and the figure in the field to the right, nearest to us.

This has an important ethical meaning for every student and teacher. I have asked my students: as something gets smaller and further away, does its meaning become less? It doesn't. As Hobbema so beautifully shows, the artist doesn't play near and far off against each other, as we often do in life. He wants to see meaning in both near and far. I have also asked my students, “Do the sides of a road really come together as that road goes into the distance?” No, they don't. In life, we can change the facts of reality to suit ourselves, which is contempt. It thrilled my students to learn that the artist changes the appearance of a thing for the purpose of respect—to show it more truly. Through linear perspective the sides of the road appear to meet in the distance at a point—the vanishing point—in order for that road to appear as it *really* is.

The subject of perspective brings up many questions we can ask about ourselves and our students:

Do we use what is near to be fair to what is far away?

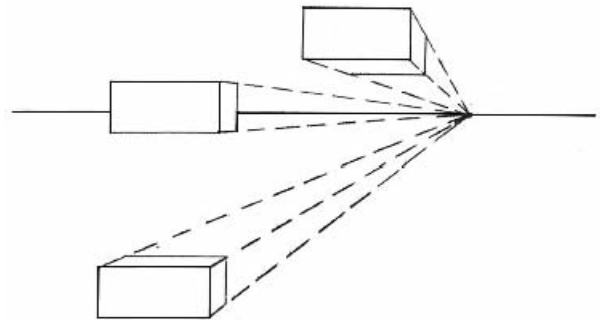
How deeply, beneath the surface, do we want to see things and people?

Do we see them with all the dimension we can, or do we flatten their meaning?

In an exercise for students to begin learning the technique of one-point perspective, I have them draw a horizon line on a piece of paper, establish a vanishing point on that line, and draw 3 squares or rectangles, one above, one below, and one on the line. Using a ruler we connect the corners of these shapes to the vanishing point. We then draw vertical and horizontal lines parallel to the original squares or rectangles. And an amazing thing begins to happen: the flat shapes begin to appear three-dimensional.

“What a delightful thing this perspective is,” said the artist Paolo Uccello, Brunelleschi's 15th-century contemporary. And students in the 21st century are delighted as well. Linear perspective—with its oneness of surface and depth, near and far—has been used by artists to create works with great beauty and meaning, as in, for example, da Vinci's *The Last Supper* and Seurat's *La Grande Jatte*. And through studying it, my students and I have gotten more hope that these opposites can be in a friendly, proportionate relation in the world and in ourselves.

Donita Ellison is a sculptor, printmaker and an Associate at the Aesthetic Realism Foundation in New York City. In seminars on the subject of art and life, she has spoken about the lives and work of artists, including Barbara Hepworth, Hokusai, Louise Nevelson and Auguste Rodin. She has been a guest lecturer at The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and El Museo del Arte de Puerto Rico, and regularly gives staff development workshops.



*The Avenue at Middelharnis* by Hobbema

## The Suffolk County News

APRIL 23, 2015

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Patchogue, NY

### On Schools, Testing, & Profit

In the Letters column of April 2, two Sayville parents have expressed their objection to the Common Core testing in our public schools. They describe its devastating effect on children and their teachers, writing with logic and passion that I respect very much.

Near where I reside in Brooklyn, standardized testing is being used to close schools in poor neighborhoods. These “failing schools” are being replaced with

charter schools that will make a profit for their investors while drawing on public funds, further weakening public education.

Ellen Reiss, Chairman of Education at the Aesthetic Realism Foundation in New York City, writes:

“We should be clear: the purpose of education is completely opposed to the purpose of profit economics. The purpose of all education, Aesthetic Realism explains, is to like the world through knowing it. That is the purpose of learning how to spell a word; how to find

Africa on a map; how to solve an algebraic equation. The profit motive—the purpose behind profit economics—is not to know, but to grab and own.... This way of seeing people and reality is a form of sheer contempt. And Aesthetic Realism identifies contempt as the most hurtful thing in us; it's the ‘addition to self through the lessening of something else.’” (*The Right of Aesthetic Realism to Be Known* #1857)

There is a powerful teaching method based on Aesthetic Realism that shows children that every subject is related to their very selves. Teachers who use it are succeeding, even under the current testing mandate.

Mary Fagan  
Brooklyn, NY

## What the Labor Movement Needs to Learn from the UAW-Volkswagen Vote

By Matthew D'Amico

As a political coordinator for a labor union that represents both public and private sector workers throughout New York State, I have seen how important union representation is for working men and women. Our members do difficult work, such as taking care of the disabled and sick, or plowing our roads after a snowstorm. Thanks to their union contracts, fought for over decades, they are treated with more of the dignity and compensation they deserve.

In recent years, however, there have been intensified concerted efforts by big business and elected officials at the national and state levels to have unions not exist at all. In the private sector, many good-paying union jobs in manufacturing have been outsourced to countries where labor is cheap and unions are almost non-existent. And the assault on unions has continued with laws to make states "right to work" (which really means "we can force you to work for less"), and some states have passed or proposed laws taking away collective bargaining rights for public employees, as Wisconsin did. The attempt to destroy unions and all that they have achieved—decent pay, safe working conditions, medical benefits, pensions—exists because every dollar that goes to a union worker takes away from the profits that corporations insist are their due.

### ■ The Need for Unions, and What Happened in Chattanooga

The need for unions to grow is larger than ever. That is why I, like many people, followed so closely the organizing campaign of the United Auto Workers (UAW) at the Volkswagen (VW) plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The importance of this effort was clear, because more foreign-owned auto companies have been opening up plants down South, since labor is cheaper there and most workers aren't organized. What was unique about this campaign was that Volkswagen and the union both signed a neutrality agreement. Volkswagen, which is used to dealing with workers who have strong union representation in Germany, agreed not to pressure workers against joining the union.

Here in the United States, particularly in the South, trying to organize working people is extremely difficult. Companies constantly break the law by threatening and intimidating workers against joining a union. Untold numbers of men and women have been fired simply for supporting unionization efforts. As someone who did organizing in the South, I saw this kind of intimidation firsthand. I spoke to people working in nursing homes in Georgia, making poverty wages as they cared for the most vulnerable, terrified to talk about unions because they feared being fired. I heard law enforcement tell us we couldn't stand in front of work sites and talk to people about the union, threatening us with arrest if we didn't leave.

Many believed that with VW not actively trying to dissuade its workers from joining the union, the UAW would have a fighting chance to organize its first foreign-owned auto plant in the South. As the campaign began it was clear there was a good chance the employees at the VW Chattanooga plant would vote in favor of joining the union, since the overwhelming majority had previously signed cards signaling their support for union representation. Then something shameful and downright evil occurred. Local politicians from the governor to members of the legislature to a U.S. Senator all threatened that if the VW workers voted for the union, the company would not expand in Tennessee and it might also lose further state subsidies. In addition, right wing, anti-union groups put up billboards throughout the area to discourage support for the UAW, insisting that if workers voted for the union what happened to Detroit—bankruptcy—would also happen in Chattanooga. As a result, the UAW lost by a narrow margin. What we saw in Tennessee has gone on all over the country for decades: a ferocious assault on the rights of workers, going to great lengths to cripple or destroy unions.

### ■ The Central Fight Is Described

In an important issue of the journal *The Right of Aesthetic Realism*

*to Be Known*, Ellen Reiss describes the underlying cause of what led to the UAW loss:

In 1970 Eli Siegel [the founder of Aesthetic Realism] explained that the profit system had reached the point at which it was no longer able to succeed. Though it might struggle on for a while, it would do so with increasing pain to humanity. And that is what has occurred. As production has been taking place in more and more nations, it has become harder and harder for US companies to haul in big profits for stockholders. They can do so now only by making the people who actually do the work become poorer and poorer—be paid less and less. That means crushing unions, because it is unions that have enabled working people to earn a dignified wage and be treated with respect.

...As big a fight as any going on in the world—indeed, as big a fight as any in the history of humanity—is the fight now taking place between the profit system and unions....It is a fight that even most union leaders have not seen clearly. We need to see it clearly, because the fight is really a sheer one: For the profit system to continue, unions must be defeated.

Ms. Reiss, who is the Aesthetic Realism Chairman of Education, continues, describing the chief reason that "the UAW—with all its historic grandeur, kindness and power," narrowly lost the VW election:

The furious meddling by government officials came because certain [anti-union] persons do see that if workers get paid well, the profit system won't be able to go on. If unions prevail, profits will go to those who earn them—the workers—instead of persons who don't do the work. And so those protectors of the profit way will fight against unions with every vicious weapon and sleazy trick they can. The UAW thought it had an amicable agreement with VW; it didn't see that it was fighting the profit system as such, and so it was, perhaps, somewhat blindsided. (There's VW itself. One can question how much it's really for unions. You don't set up a plant in a right-to-exploit state like Tennessee because you want a union.)

The story is not over in Chattanooga or the rest of the South, where many working people are demanding justice for themselves and their communities. In fact there is a UAW organizing campaign going on at the Nissan plant in Oxford, Mississippi. And it is clear that workers are ready to fight for their right to be in a union. For example, Chip Wells, an 11-year veteran working there, said, "People think that [the Volkswagen vote] derailed us, but we think it made us stronger....Here labor rights are civil rights, actually human rights." (Labor South blog Feb. 28th by Joseph B. Atkins)

Millions of Americans who are suffering—unemployed, struggling to make ends meet, worried about their future—are depending on a strong and vibrant labor movement. So now is the time for union officials, activists, and rank and file members to be clear about what we are fighting for, and fighting against. I've seen firsthand that Aesthetic Realism is the knowledge that makes for that much needed understanding and meets the hopes of people, including every member of a union. Ellen Reiss writes:

And if unions and the economic justice they represent succeed, the profit way will be done in, finished, kaput. When that happens it will be (as the idiom goes) good riddance to bad rubbish. There will be a way of economics different from any that has been. It will be based, neither on profit for a few nor on "collectivism," but on an honest answer to the question Eli Siegel said was the most important for humanity: "What does a person deserve by being a person?"

## Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

APRIL 14, 2014

ONE OF AMERICA'S GREAT NEWSPAPERS

PITTSBURGH, PA

## Contempt at root

Regarding the stabbings at Franklin Regional High School in Murrysville, once more, agonizingly, a shocked nation asks: How can this be happening—again—in American schools, places where every child should be safe and secure? As parents, our hearts go out to the children who were hurt, to their families and to the other students at the school who were so profoundly affected by this tragedy. We were moved, too, reading about the courageous actions of Sam

King, the assistant principal, and many students.

As educators, politicians and citizens all cry out for an answer to the question "When will this end?" we are impelled to say that these atrocities CAN end!

Eli Siegel, founder of the educational philosophy Aesthetic Realism, explained the cause of all human cruelties, including what impels a 16-year-old student to want to hurt so many of his classmates. It is contempt, "the addition to self through the lessening of something else." It is in each of us—for example, in a group of children

making fun of the way another child dresses. But this everyday contempt, taken far enough, is the cause of what was inflicted on 21 students in Murrysville on an early spring morning.

School tragedies will end when contempt is studied, understood, and criticized in schools and everywhere across America, and people are able to see that their true importance comes from seeing the feelings of other human beings to be as deep and real as their own.

LAUREN and BRUCE BLAUSTEIN  
New York, NY.



# Teaching with movies: Can contempt be animated?

By Ken Kimmelman

Can contempt be animated? Yes it can! Film animation artists since 1909, when Gertie the Dinosaur defiantly turned her back to the audiences, have been interested in animating the contempt people have for the world. And when animation is successful, it gives form to contempt as a means of opposing it.

I began to learn this in my study of the philosophy Aesthetic Realism, founded by the American poet and critic Eli Siegel. He showed me that I wanted to give artistic form to something I disliked myself for very much—how I could mock and make fun. That form is in this great Aesthetic Realism principle: “All beauty is a making one of opposites, and the making one of opposites is what we are going after in ourselves.”

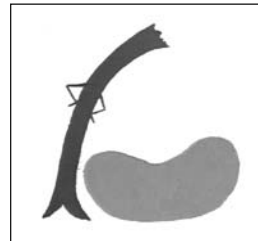
With one part of me I wanted to make films that had beauty, but with the other, I thought the more ridiculous and silly I could make things look, the more profound I'd be. This was definitely contempt, the thing that takes the possibly beautiful and makes it ugly; and also exploits the ugly for the glory of oneself. But the purpose of art, which Aesthetic Realism shows corresponds to our deepest desire, takes the pretenses, hypocrisies and cruelties and shows they can be used in behalf of beauty, good sense, and like of the world.

That was my purpose in 1989, when the United Nations commissioned me to make a film for children against prejudice, with the proviso there be no spoken language because it was going to be shown all over the world, and no colors that would imply a particular race of people.

I came to the idea of an artist's canvas being painted with different colors and shapes as the characters who, instead of speaking to each other, express themselves through motions, sounds, and music. *Brushstrokes* is one of the films I show to children in the presentations I give, titled “Prejudice Changes to Kindness: Aesthetic Realism Shows How!” in schools and libraries. A large value of the film is, through humor, it gives form to, makes outward, the ugliness

and hurtfulness of the contempt, which, I learned, is the cause of prejudice, as it also shows the ridiculousness of it.

It moves me every time to see how much children are interested in ethics. When they see contempt acted out on a big screen, they show how much they dislike it and want to be against it. The main character, the prejudiced green brushstroke, sees anything that is different—a color, a shape, even sounds—as against him, to be disdained and dismissed. And what he cares for are things that are like him—other green brushstrokes.



I've asked the children, “Do you think the green brushstroke is smart, cool?” “No!” they've shouted back, “he was mean and stupid!” I've also asked, “Do you have anything like the green brushstroke in you? Can you think you're bigger by making something else smaller? When you say 'pooh!' to something, do you feel like a big shot?” “Yes,” a boy answered. “What do you think of yourself?” He said, “I feel bad.” I asked, “What kind of world would it be if it was made of only green brushstrokes?” They yell, “Bo-o-or-ing!” “Is the world more beautiful and exciting having many different colors and shapes?” “Yes!” they answer. “And do the colors and shapes add to each other? And is that how you want to see other people—as adding to you?” “Yes!” they eagerly shout out.

The purpose of animation is to bring objects to life, to give them *anima*—to have people feel the charm, the wonder of reality. That contempt can be animated, criticized, and changed into useful form—the meaning of this for the world and every person's life is truly great!

*KEN KIMMELMAN is an award-winning filmmaker and consultant on the faculty of the Aesthetic Realism Foundation in New York City where he teaches the class “If It Moves It Can Move You”: Opposites in the Cinema.*

## ARTBEAT

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ART EDUCATORS OF NEW JERSEY

### Does the Keystone Arch Meet a Hope of Ours— or, Strength and Grace Can Be One!

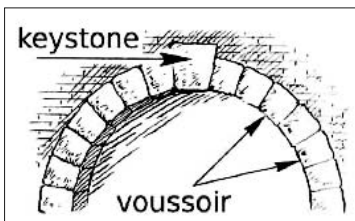
By Donita Ellison

I taught Art History at LaGuardia High School in Manhattan for many years, using the Aesthetic Realism Teaching Method, based on the educational philosophy founded by Eli Siegel. I've seen this method work in my classroom with thousands of students. For a teacher to know what I'm fortunate to have learned—that the purpose of education and life itself is to like the world on an honest basis—is an absolute necessity! Aesthetic Realism also explains the biggest interference with learning: the desire to have contempt, to get an “addition to self through the lessening of something else.”

In teaching the unit on the art of ancient Rome, my class studied how the keystone arch was central to its great architectural structures. There is the Pont du Gard, a powerfully-built aqueduct consisting of a series of graceful keystone arches, built in the 1st century BC in Nîmes, France. What makes this structure beautiful is in this principle stated by Eli Siegel: “All beauty is a making one of opposites, and the making one of opposites is what we are going after in ourselves.”

This aqueduct with its repeating curves and strong vertical supports, carried 100 gallons of

water per day over a distance of 30 miles for each city resident, making possible the fountains and public water works. “Clearly this is powerful, but does it have something else?” I asked. “Is it also



ever so graceful, with those curves?” I've seen that students—including the toughest young men—long to be both strong and graceful, or gentle, and suffer because they feel they can't be both. They think if they have gentleness they'll be weak and people will take advantage of them. My class began to see that this aqueduct does something they were hoping to do: it puts opposites together.

They wanted to know how the aqueduct worked, and we learned that the power of gravity is what made the water flow. Built on an exquisitely calculated decline, from its source high in the mountains, the water flowed downward to the city fountains. Rafael was amazed to learn that this aqueduct was designed to withstand the strength of flooding river currents and has remained standing for 2000 years even as more modern bridges in the area have washed out in heavy flooding! “Wow, that's strong!” he said. “What did this strength come from?” I asked. The strength actually depends on that curved,

graceful thing—the arch. As we read from our textbook, Helen Gardner's *Art through the Ages*, this description of the Pont du Gard, there was a sense of awe: “Each large arch spans some 82 feet and is constructed of uncemented blocks weighing up to two tons each.”

The class saw the amazing relation of solidity and lightness in this structure. Vocabulary words for the lesson were *keystone* and *vousoir*. The vousoirs, I explained, are the wedge-shaped stones fitted around the sides of the arch, and the keystone is the topmost vousoir. The keystone, the last stone placed at the highest point in the arch, locks all the other stones or vousoirs into place. The downward pressure it exerts gives the arch its strength. The other vousoirs, in turn, send a counter pressure upwards on both sides, holding the keystone in place. The strength of an arch, we learned, depends on something that has amazing delicacy—the precision with which the vousoirs are fitted together—and all done without any cement!

The class was thrilled to see that the keystone—the thing upon which all that power depends—seems to be the lightest, even the most vulnerable thing, with nothing but space underneath it! George, who rarely showed any emotion, was excited, “That's really cool,” he said.

In this arch, massiveness is the same as lightness; strength is the same as delicacy or grace. Seeing these opposites as one in a structure that has joined earth, sky, and water for thousands of years, my students had more hope for themselves.

*Bio: Donita Ellison is a sculptor, printmaker and an Associate at the Aesthetic Realism Foundation in NYC. She has been a guest lecturer at The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and El Museo del Arte de Puerto Rico, and teaches staff development workshops.*

## Seeing the Feelings of Other People as Real: An Urgent Necessity

By Ruth Oron, Rose Levy, Zvia Ratz,  
Avi Gvili, Harriet Bernstein

Like many Israelis, we were shocked to learn of the recent attack by Israeli teenagers on Palestinian youths in Jerusalem. There has been huge enmity and cruelty on both sides for decades, but the idea that we, the Jews, who endured the Holocaust could be brutal in this way is unbearable to us.

People all over Israel are tremendously worried and are asking: How have we, a people who pride ourselves on our moral values, come to this? What have we been teaching our children?

In a recent article in the New York Times, Nimrod Aloni, the head of the Institute for Educational Thought at Tel Aviv's Teachers College, likens this attack to other instances of cruelty in history and now. He writes:

"This is directly tied to national fundamentalism that is the same as the rhetoric of neo-nazis, taliban and KKK. This comes from an entire culture that has been escalating towards an open and blunt language based on us being the chosen people who are allowed to do whatever we like."

As Israelis who dearly love our country, we have learned from Aesthetic Realism, the education founded by Eli Siegel, that what

Mr. Aloni describes is contempt: "the addition to self through the lessening of something else."

Contempt is ordinary. People build up themselves by lessening others through gossip, not listening when someone is talking, feeling smugly that we have better taste, that we are superior to someone else. But ordinary contempt taken far enough leads to horrors.

We deeply regret the contempt we once had for the Arab people – how we thought of and spoke about them, scorning their culture and seeing them as ethically inferior. We unjustly used the fact that the Jews had met enormous cruelty, to be unfeeling ourselves, to justify this contempt.

We know now that there is an answer to the crisis in the Middle East, one that is practical and just. It is in the study of contempt and also in the study of good will, as Aesthetic Realism explains it: "The desire to have something else stronger and more beautiful, for this desire makes oneself stronger and more beautiful." Good will, we have seen, is the only thing strong enough to combat contempt in a person and a nation.

Our lives changed when, in 1990, Ellen Reiss, Aesthetic Realism Chairman of Education, suggested that Israeli students of Aes-

thetic Realism write a 500-word soliloquy of a Palestinian person, describing his or her hopes and fears as deeply and honestly as we could. Each of us wrote about one human being: a mother, for instance, terrified her husband might be killed in a raid by the Israelis; a teenage girl in Lebanon hoping for love; a college student studying agriculture, learning to cultivate the land he grew up on and dearly loves. For the first time, we saw the feelings of those we had seen only as enemies, as real. And we were amazed and moved to find how much their feelings were like our own.

When you see the feelings of a person as real, it is impossible to be cruel to them. This is a fact. We have lived it. We are proud to say that our ignorance and hatred of once has changed into a passion that justice come to the Palestinian people.

For peace to be in our homeland, both Israelis and Palestinians need to write these soliloquies. All government representatives do. What happened to us can happen to every person. Let this recent brutality in Jerusalem be the impetus to begin now.

To learn more, visit the website: [www.AestheticRealism.org](http://www.AestheticRealism.org), the not-for-profit educational foundation.

### Machias Valley News Observer

MACHIAS, MAINE SERVING WASHINGTON COUNTY CITIZENS & BUSINESSES FOR MORE THAN 158 YEARS Sept. 26, 2012

## Why Does High Unemployment Persist?— The Cause & Ethical Solution

by Carol Driscoll

As a frequent visitor to Downeast Maine, I had a deeper sense of the suffering of people in Washington County when I read Ruth Leubecker's compassionate front-page story in the *Machias Valley News Observer* about the struggle to supply food pantries with basic necessities (8/29/2012). She quotes advocate Susan Farley: "Homelessness has increased in Washington County...it's getting harder and harder to help people." That so many people, including children, are homeless and hungry in this rich, bountiful nation is appalling and shameful. I will be making a contribution to one of the food pantries mentioned in the article, but that's a stopgap measure that does not solve the problem of the rampant unemployment, which has led to such misery. I love the beautiful state of Maine, and feel passionately that every person has a right to decent housing and adequate, nutritious food, and that means, having a good paying job! I very much want your readers to know what has been described in Aesthetic Realism, the education founded by the American philosopher Eli Siegel.

In the journal *The Right of Aesthetic Realism to Be Known*, Editor Ellen Reiss wrote: "An economy which cannot supply

jobs to the people of a nation is a failure. Today, the cause of production, of jobs, is the profit motive: how much money can some private individuals squeeze from the labor and needs of their fellow citizens? Along with the fact that it no longer works, this way of thought as an engine of economics was always ugly and cruel. The solution for our economy is not a matter of political parties, of left or right: it is a matter of ethics and practicality. One of the ways Mr. Siegel put it is: 'Jobs for usefulness, not for profit.'

"With such a basis, a person in America can feel: 'I can do something; I can fix a computer—or design a garment—or play an instrument—or paint a house—or teach a language. What I can do is good for my fellow citizens. It can make them stronger. And they can do things that will make me stronger. None of us is being exploited by somebody—someone who's not doing the work. And we are all being respectfully compensated.' When this *good will* is the cause of production in America, no one will be unemployed. And there will be pride, and means for people's true expression."

This is true kindness, and is what needs to be for our country to be truly strong, our economy to prosper, and our people to thrive.

## The WESTON FORUM

December 28, 2012

Weston, CT

## Root cause of Newtown tragedy is contempt

To the Editors:

I grew up in Weston and was in one of the first graduating classes from the new high school. Newtown was our rival in football and basketball. Those memories come now with a different feeling.

As a mother and a New York City teacher for 27 years, my heart is breaking for the families of the children and for the teachers of Newtown. And I'm awed by the courage they showed and by the strength and unity of that community in these days.

Nothing can bring back the precious lives that were taken with unspeakable violence on an ordinary December morning. But for true healing to begin and for an end at last to horrors like this one, an understanding of what made for it is imperative. And that understanding does exist.

While details surrounding the tragedy at Newtown are being sought with great care by investigators, the root cause of this terrifying occurrence, and others that have taken place like it, has been explained by Eli Siegel, founder of the philosophy Aesthetic Realism, in his understanding of contempt: "the lessening of what is different from oneself as a means of self-increase as one sees it."

That desire for contempt that is in every person can show itself in bullying, but taken far enough it leads to massive cruelty. Eli Siegel wrote:

"As soon as you have contempt, as soon as you don't want to see another person as having the fullness that you have, you can rob that person, hurt that person, kill that person."

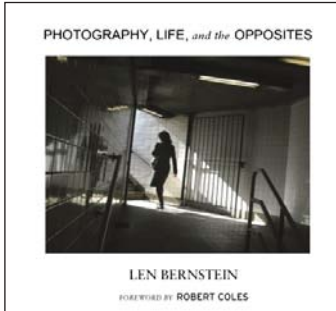
As people ask over and over, what can we do to make sure this doesn't happen again—I know that the study of contempt as explained by Aesthetic Realism is the only way. It needs to be an urgent national study now.

Barbara Spetly McClung  
New York, N.Y.

## PHOTOGRAPHY, LIFE, and the OPPOSITES

by Len Bernstein

A Book Review by Harvey Spears



I thought I was going to read Len Bernstein's new book, *Photography, Life, and the Opposites*, in one sitting. But I couldn't, and here's why: it inspired new thought and made for such large emotions in me that I wanted to savor them.

When I got to the last page, I was sure of two things: first, I had a deeper understanding of what makes for beauty in photography; and second, I was a

more thoughtful person. Mr. Bernstein, a photographer and teacher, has based his approach to the art he clearly loves on this historic principle of Aesthetic Realism, stated by its founder, the eminent American philosopher and poet Eli Siegel: "All beauty is a making one of opposites, and the making one of opposites is what we are going after in ourselves." With clarity and style, Mr. Bernstein keeps the promise he makes in his Preface: "You will learn what makes a photograph successful and how our most everyday and urgent questions are answered in art."

The black & white and color photographs in this volume display a fine artistic sensibility and are reproduced beautifully. Many of them are of daily life, and they are moving. But it is their meaningful relation to the text that will have you feel, from the very beginning, part of an odyssey that is not only the author's, but has large meaning for every person. You will learn about the impediments in oneself to seeing fairly, both in art and in life. Len Bernstein's journey, before we realize it, becomes our own, even while it is uniquely his. We see ourselves in him and his work.

People have been waiting a long time for a book like this—a book that illustrates, through beautiful photographs and text, how art and life are inextricably together. It's with style and the thrill of a hopeful explorer. The chapter titles alone will draw you in. For example, there are "The Oneness of Assertion and Yielding in Life and Art," "Can You Tell the Difference Between Candor and Brutality?" and "Truth and Our Imagination."

As a photographer myself, and as one who is fortunate to be learning from Aesthetic Realism about how to see things with the justice they deserve, I know that good photography does not come easily and I'm grateful to Mr. Bernstein for what he has seen. It will make me a better photographer.

In the chapter "Where Does Photography Begin?" he writes: "The art of photography begins long before we ever pick up a camera; it begins with how we see the whole world." He tells of his study of Aesthetic Realism in consultations, where he began learning how to see both the world and a person close to him more accurately, and how crucial this was to having more integrity as an artist. Here is a brief excerpt of one consultation:

**Consultants:** If you have to give your attention to something else, as a photographer, what does it take your attention away from for a while?

**LB:** From myself.

**Consultants:** Would you say you have that question with your wife—that is, if you give your thought to her for fifteen minutes, those are fifteen

minutes you can't give to yourself?

**LB:** Yes, that makes sense.

**Consultants:** Now, do you think it's possible—and this is where aesthetics comes in—to feel that as you are giving your thought to something else, you are taking care of yourself?

Again and again, Mr. Bernstein shows what he learned: that the biggest matter in our lives is how we see the outside world, and that criticism, including self-criticism, is necessary if we want to do a good job. He shows that it is the artist's desire to see fairly, and not his or her ego, that makes for art. And who knew that criticizing our own egos could be so much fun and make for so much pride?

The author discusses an early portrait he took of his wife, Harriet. This discussion, about the relation of dark and light, assertion and yielding, intensity and calm, is a tour-de-force of technical and life criticism that is precise and illuminating. He says: "I remember looking into her eyes and feeling so lucky that we were learning how to have a good effect on each other. I wanted very much to capture some of the qualities in her that I fell in love with—including a deep friendliness I've come to count on."

He continues: "This photograph has a reposeful quality, with its symmetrical composition—and from the moment we met, I did feel Harriet brought some repose to my turbulent nature. But she is not just placid. Her face is dramatically divided between light and dark, between what is clearly seen and unplumbed depths, and her gaze is penetrating, critical."

This book is not only for photographers and artists—it is for everyone. Mr. Bernstein wanted the combination of photographs and text to be "a means of understanding the fight that rages in every person between respect for the world and contempt for it. They are a means of asking: What does it mean to have a beautiful way of seeing; a way of seeing that will make us proud?"

I believe the photo "Stone and Humanity. New Orleans, LA" comments importantly on these two kinds of perception—one based on respect, the other on contempt. Mr. Bernstein writes:

"In daily life, it is common to focus on a detail about someone in order to think less of him or her. One example is looking at an article of clothing a person is wearing and smugly thinking, 'I'd never wear that!' The purpose of art is very different: A detail is focused on to hint at something greater.

"That's what I was going after when I took this photograph. We see only a part of this person, and it sets us to wondering who he is. There is wonder also in the fact that man and building are so continuous with each other, having light and dark tones in common, as well as similar architecture of vertical, horizontal, and diagonal lines. Stone and humanity have joined in a most surprising way."

In the 210 pages of this hardcover book, you will be treated to landscapes, portraits (both human and animal), photographs of historic events, like the 1983 "March on Washington for Jobs, Peace, and Freedom," celebrating the twentieth anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's immortal "I Have A Dream" speech, as well as some wonderfully surprising candid photos of people. All of them, I think, will encourage you to feel that this is a world it is wise to see meaning in and have more feeling for.

*Photography, Life, and the Opposites*, published by Delia Press 2013, Cloth, 9" by 9-1/2", List \$60

Len Bernstein's work is in many public collections, including The Library of Congress, Washington, DC, and Bibliothèque nationale de France. His articles have been published in the US and abroad. He has given photography workshops at high schools and colleges. [www.LenBernstein.com](http://www.LenBernstein.com)

Harvey Spears is a wildlife, landscape, and fine art photographer whose work and photographic essays have appeared in galleries and publications in Maine and NY. [www.harveyspears.com](http://www.harveyspears.com)

## Newsday

WWW.NEWSDAY.COM

LONG ISLAND

DECEMBER 5, 2012

### Why are there homeless?

The actions of NYPD Officer Larry DePrimo, who bought boots and socks for a homeless man near Times Square, were commendable ["Man gifted shoes back on streets—without them," News, Dec. 4].

However, the main question not being asked is, why in this day do we have human beings living on our streets? The sight of this man barefoot was heart-breaking. No person, regardless of circumstances, should be in this situation.

"What does a person deserve by being alive?" is a question asked by Eli Siegel, founder of the philosophy called Aesthetic Realism. This question must be asked by all of us, including our elected officials.

Every person deserves a decent place to live, clothes to keep warm, food and the opportunity to earn a living through useful work. Until these things are a reality for every person, we are not truly civilized.

Matthew D'Amico, Lynbrook

## Webster Post

July 5, 2012

websterpost.com

Canandaigua, NY

### Good will vs. contempt in bus bullying issue

Like people all over the world, we were outraged seeing how mercilessly seventh graders taunted 68-year-old Karen Klein, retired New York school bus driver now working as a bus monitor! This particular bullying is just one example of the bullying that is taking place across our land. Where does this come from? Can it stop?

Eli Siegel, founder of the educational philosophy Aesthetic Realism, explained the cause of

all cruelty, all human injustice, including what makes for the pleasure in bullying. It is contempt, the "disposition in every person to think he will be for himself by making less of the outside world."

Contempt is present in people at the workplace, for instance, luxuriating in gossip about a co-worker; or a family around the dinner table making fun of their neighbors. The feeling aboard the school bus

was: "We'll be important, feel big, have a good time, if we can look down on this woman!"

Every person has felt something like this. Yet people were so ashamed to see sheerly how far contempt can go, that thousands of people were impelled by good will to want Karen Klein, through their donations via the Internet, to be more at ease.

When we have good will, we see another person's feelings and thoughts as real. Only when contempt and good will are seriously studied in our homes and schools will America be safer and kinder.

LAUREN & BRUCE  
BLAUSTEIN, NYC

# From— Racism deserves to get the red card

BY RICH MKHONDO

Sport is supposed to be the epitome of the level playing field, where people are judged by their performance on the field or court, not by the colour of their skin. My favourite sport, football, has the capacity to bring people together. I am pained by the fact that when it comes to the poisonous hate of racism, the game has also been there, done that.

It is hard to think of a single month in a single year in the past generation in which there has been no racism in sport. As we bade farewell to 2011, England and Chelsea captain John Terry was alleged to have racially abused Queens Park Rangers defender Anton Ferdinand. Terry was said to have used the words “\*\*\*\*ing black \*\*\*\*” in an exchange with Ferdinand....The Terry incident came soon after the spat between Liverpool forward Luis Suarez and Manchester United defender Patrice Evra....While we have advanced from the days when banana skins were tossed at black players, the fact that a footballer could insult a fellow professional in terms of his skin colour is an affront to these enlightened times....

No matter how far we have come in the fight for equal rights, racism is still a major issue every day, everywhere, as well. All of us are guilty of it, one way or the other. We all judge people based on appearance without even thinking about it. Of course, we would like to think that we have moved beyond issues of race, ethnicity and skin colour—that those issues are problems of the past. The truth is that despite the progress we have made breaking down barriers, we are still steeped in the filth of racism—and those who think it’s already gone need to be especially active in recognising and ridding it from society....

Why do people act in these horrific ways, and what do these terrible events have to do with the everyday racism that does not make the headlines?

Eli Siegel, an American educator who founded the philosophy of Aesthetic Realism, has an answer. He explains that racism begins with the hope for contempt—the “false importance or glory” a person gets by making less of the reality of other people.

In his book *James and the Children*, a consideration of *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James, Siegel writes: “According to Aesthetic Realism, the greatest sin that a person can have is the desire for contempt. Because as soon as you have contempt, as soon as you don’t want to see another person as having the fullness that you have, you can rob that person, hurt that person, kill that person.” Contempt, Aesthetic Realism explains, is the cause of every injustice—from ethnic ridicule and slurs to the deadly forms of racism, bombs and war.

One of the clearest places where contempt can be seen is on the pitch, where it can construe itself as an international danger. It also carries personal friction, as demonstrated by Suarez’s and Terry’s moments of “false importance or glory.” A person who is “white” (Suarez) looks at a person whose skin is darker (Evra) and feels: “I am better than you.” Because the two white players wanted to think well of themselves, an easy way of seeming to think well of themselves was to consider the other as inferior.

In my life, respect for people begins with asking, and honestly trying to answer, the necessary question which Siegel first presented: “What does a person deserve by being a person?”

No one begins life as a racist, but all of us can yield to the temptation of wanting to feel superior to other people, especially when we feel unsure of ourselves.

Rich Mkhondo, an executive for Corporate Affairs at MTN Group, was Chief Communications Officer of the 2010 World Cup.

Also appeared in— **THE DOWNEAST COASTAL PRESS**  
Cutler, ME

THE QUODDY TIDES  
Eastport, ME

*The Florida Patriot*  
Magazine of the Florida Society, Cocoa, FL



## The Ellsworth American.

161st Year—Issue No. 23.

www.fenceviewer.com

ELLSWORTH, MAINE 04605

Thursday, June 9, 2011

### Meaning of Machias 1775 Naval Victory Lives On

By Harvey Spears

Why does an historical event that took place on June 12, 1775—the onset of America’s Revolutionary War—have such meaning for people today? As a photographer who loves the natural beauty of coastal Maine, and the history of our great country, that is the question I was thinking about as I

traveled from New York City to Machias last summer to participate in Margarettas Days. I loved being at this event, which commemorated the 235th anniversary of the first naval battle of the American Revolution. Its meaning came alive as I thought about what Eli Siegel, the great American philosopher and founder of the education Aesthetic Realism, said: “The aim of history is to make past feeling felt more, or, simply, the past felt more.” I believe this is why people are so stirred seeing our relation to the past, to men and women who lived at a critical time in our nation’s history.

Largely unknown today, this mighty occurrence was called the “Lexington of the Sea” by the eminent writer James Fenimore Cooper. Though few in number, the men and women of Washington County seized the British ship the Margarettas, anchored in Machiasport. It was a known fact that the British were planning to use the Margarettas to transport lumber to Boston in order to build forts to be used against Washington’s army. Though threatened, Mainers put their lives on the line to protect the meaning of the Revolution, and refused to provide the British with one log of Maine’s valuable resource. Their brave decision stands for what we, as individuals and a nation today, so much hope for. In the periodical *The Right of Aesthetic Realism to Be Known*, Ellen Reiss wrote:

“What the American Revolution was concerned with is the same thing Americans are in tumult over now—as people across this nation are so worried about jobs and money....By April 1775

there came to be a fury in many persons in America that while they lived on the American earth, planted it, built on it—the wealth...was being robbed from them by an English king. There was fury that George III saw the American land and the people who lived on it as a means to enrich England.”

I believe this describes the underlying cause of the fierce resistance to British tyranny shown by ordinary citizens—women and men who felt there was something to oppose with relentless determination and something big and beautiful to be protected and fought for. This feeling was represented with depth and style in the Margarettas Days celebration!

While today America’s wealth is not going to the British monarchy, there is tremendous hardship and distress in the lives of most Americans because our vast wealth is used to bail out corporations and enrich executives and shareholders, as the average American gets poorer, including in Washington County. No person should ever be forced to worry about not having a good-paying job or not being able to afford the basic necessities. If America’s economy were based on ethics, and people, including in our government, were honestly answering the question Eli Siegel asked: “What does a person deserve by being a person?” our country would be so different!

As a photographer, I was stirred by the expressions on the faces of people. For instance, there was Chris Sprague, a direct descendant of Jeremiah O’Brien, who spoke with such pride as he told of the preparations prior to the attack on the Margarettas. There was Dona Emerson who described the dilemma of Hannah (Watts) Weston, a young woman of 17, trying to decide how she can aid the defense of her land. She bravely carried ammunition for miles through the woods to support the men fighting at the

front. We learned about the Rev. James Lyon who was portrayed by Doug Guy. Rev. Lyon, through the immortal words of Thomas Paine, inspired courage and perseverance:

“THESE are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.”

And I was moved by Valdine Atwood who told the story of “The Battle of the Rim” where the Passamaquoddy Indians joined the colonists, and fought side by side with them.

All these activities represented the feelings of people and what people are now insisting on more than ever—that they be seen with the fullness and justice they deserve. Commenting on the battle of Lexington, Ellen Reiss wrote: “As they (the colonists) came out, that April day, with their flag and weapons, to face the trained soldiers of England, they were saying, ‘This land on which our lives take place is *ours*. It does not exist for some monarch and his henchmen to make profit from, while tyrannizing over, sapping, and ruining our lives in order to do so....’ For the 13 colonies to be independent was for the people living in them to own the rocky Massachusetts earth and the lush Virginia earth and the earth at New York harbor, where ships could come.”

I believe that in 1775, the people of Machias felt intensely: “This land is ours—and we’ll protect it with our very lives!” We can use what took place then to be clearer and surer about what we hope for and deserve—an economy that is based on ethics, and which will enable every man, woman and child to have good lives.

Harvey Spears is a photographer/writer/art director who is from New York and Maine and loves photographing in Maine. His work has appeared on the State of Maine website, including the Maine Fish and Wildlife magazine. His work has also appeared in photographic exhibitions.

People are now insisting more than ever that they be seen with the fullness and justice they deserve.



and the



APRIL 2, 2012 NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER www.nydailynews.com

## Racism can end

Dear Editor:

As two persons—one black, one white—who have been friends for over 25 years, we like so many others are very angry at the killing of young Trayvon Martin.

We feel it is a national emergency that people use this tragedy to once and for all understand what racism comes from and how it can end. And yes racism can end!

The answer is in the important philosophy and education Aesthetic Realism, founded by Eli Siegel. It explains that there are two desires in every person, regardless of the color of their skin. The first is our deepest desire: to like the world honestly and see meaning and value in things and people. The second is the desire for contempt, “the addition to self through the lessening of something else.”

Contempt is so ordinary, from making fun of a person who makes a mistake or thinking you’re better than another because of the section of town you live in. Contempt is also what makes for the great injustices of this world from war to racism—it’s what made for slavery and Nazism.

In the international journal *The Right of Aesthetic Realism to Be Known*, of June 25, 1997, titled “Racism Can End,” Chairman of Education Ellen Reiss wrote: “The big thing people have not known about racial prejudice is that it does not begin with race. It begins with how one sees the world.”

Unfortunately, these horrors will continue unless the larger and stronger desire for respect is gone after, and the desire for contempt is criticized in all of us. We want the tragic and unjust killing of Trayvon Martin to be a means of people being truly against injustice in others and ourselves.

Sincerely,

ALLAN MICHAEL  
*Brooklyn*

MATTHEW D’AMICO  
*Manhattan*

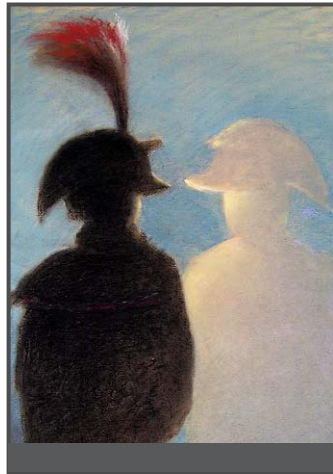
# CORRIERE DELLA SERA\*

Fondato nel 1876 www.corriere.it

## Napoleone a NYC, l’arte di Koppelman

### La mostra

Un sottotitolo titolo curioso e immaginario, York», per la mostra inaugurata ieri nel Museo su «Chaim Koppelman e l’Imperatore», co 1957 e il 2



**Icona** L’artista americano Chaim Koppelman ha dedicato parte della sua carriera a descrivere la figura dell’imperatore

Koppelman, formatosi con Eli Siegel fondatore della corrente del Realismo estetico Napoleone con una profondità che gli dà filosofici, cogliendo in questa figura il corpo apparire, tra la radice rivoluzionaria e l’anima fetta incarnazione della teoria Siegeliana di Inedite, ovviamente, le raffigurazioni dell’Island, in una affollata spiaggia estiva, nuda alca un bue entrando a Manhattan.

### Translation of Corriere della Sera article:

### Exhibition

“Napoleon Entering New York” is the subtitle, intriguing and fictitious, for the exhibition inaugurated yesterday at the Museo Napoleonico in Rome on “Chaim Koppelman and the Emperor,” with works from 1957-2007.

It was the artist Chaim Koppelman, considered one of the greatest American printmakers, who was to open, at least ideally, the gateway of New York to Napoleon. To the figure of Napoleon studied in different forms, in all his contradictions and his diverse attitudes, Koppelman (1920-2009) in fact dedicated a large part of his long career, beginning at age nine, when, for the first time, he drew Napoleon’s profile in his geography book. And a good portion of these works (he created one hundred such paintings, drawings and prints) are on exhibit in Rome, until January 8 (piazza di Ponte Umberto I, from Tuesday to Sunday 9-19, tel. 060608).

Koppelman, a student of Eli Siegel (1902-1978), the philosopher and founder of Aesthetic Realism, explores the figure of Napoleon with a profundity that derives from his lengthy study of that philosophy. He presents in the Napoleonic figure the contrast of what is and what appears, of revolutionary roots and imperial ambition, a perfect embodiment of the Siegelian theory of the oneness of opposites. The emperor is represented as he has obviously never been seen before: at Coney Island on a crowded summer beach; nude; or portrayed riding a steer as he enters Manhattan.

\* The *Corriere della Sera*, or *Evening Courier*, is the largest newspaper in Italy.

*Malverne/West Hempstead, NY*



MARCH 1 - 7, 2012

and



WWW.NEWSDAY.COM

MARCH 5, 2012

## Pensions are not luxuries

To the Editor:

As a retired school crossing guard for the Nassau County Police Department for 28 years who loved the work I did making sure our children were safe, I am grateful to the labor movement, including CSEA, for the modest pension I now receive. It has allowed me and my husband to live with dignity in our later years.

I am outraged at our political leaders who are trying to blame our economic problems on pensions. We, the workers, are taxpayers who have paid into the pension system; we are not getting rich from it. The attempt to destroy traditional pensions and replace them with 401(k)s is shameful, and is only making it harder for people to retire. In the journal *The Right of Aesthetic Realism to Be Known*, Ellen Reiss, chairman of education, writes, “...pensions, which are not gifts, were earned by workers with the labor or their bodies and minds. Pensions are not luxuries, because in a civilized country, to feel one can meet old age without terror of impoverishment should not be a luxury.”

I am grateful for this quote because it describes how I feel about my pension and the fact that no person getting older should be terrified that they will not have enough money to live decently.

ANNA MILLER  
*West Hempstead*