

## Portrait of the Artist: Käthe Kollwitz

A British Museum and Ikon Partnership Exhibition

*Generously supported by the Dorset Foundation*

13 September – 26 November 2017



Left: Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945) *Self Portrait looking left*, (1901) Lithograph and Etching © The Trustees of the British Museum

Right: Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945) *Mother with Child in Her Arms*, (1910) Etching © The Trustees of the British Museum

Käthe Kollwitz (née Schmidt, 1867–1945) was one of the leading artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, notable for the emotional power of her drawing, printmaking and later sculpture. This exhibition focuses on around forty works from the British Museum's remarkable print collection, alongside material drawn from other UK public collections. The exhibition highlights the importance of Kollwitz's work and celebrates the enduring impact of her powerful and affecting images.

Kollwitz was born in Königsberg in East Prussia, which formed part of Germany from 1871-1945. After studying in Berlin and Munich she moved permanently to Berlin in 1891 when she married Karl Kollwitz, a doctor for the tailors' medical insurance union. Kollwitz lived an intensely examined life, expressed in her numerous self-portraits (featured in the exhibition), diaries and correspondence; at the core of this existence was her work as an artist: *'It alone is*

*always stimulating, rejuvenating, exciting and satisfying.* (New Year's Day, 1912). Her mastery of graphic art quickly established her reputation in Germany, then further afield as her influence spread to Russia and China after the First World War.

The forty works from the British Museum collection which feature in the exhibition were collected by Campbell Dodgson, Assistant Keeper then Keeper of the Department of Prints and Drawings (1893-1932). He bought Käthe Kollwitz's prints in Germany before the First World War, influenced by his colleague Max Lehrs of the Dresden and Berlin Print Rooms, the artist's first and greatest champion. Since this time the prints have rarely been seen together in one exhibition.

The exhibition looks at her work through the exploration of three themes: social and political protest, self-portraits and the role of an empathetic and suffering mother, which is profoundly marked by the loss of her younger son Peter in October 1914.

Exhibitions and publications have constructed her as a 'woman and artist' and an 'artist of the people', describing her work as 'the art of compassion', but this exhibition will look at her as someone who first and foremost illuminates what it means to be an artist and to sustain a creative life.

*The exhibition is organised in partnership between Ikon and the British Museum and is accompanied by a fully illustrated publication.*

ENDS

## Social Media Handles:

Instagram, Twitter and Facebook: @ikongallery #IkonGallery

## Note to Editors:

### Ikon Gallery

1. Ikon exhibition opening: 13 September 2017, 6-8pm.
2. Ikon is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art venue situated in central Birmingham. Established in 1964 by a group of artists, Ikon is an educational charity and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. The gallery programme features artists from around the world and a variety of media is represented, including sound, film, **mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation**. Ikon's off-site programme develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging **expectations of where art can be seen and by whom**. Education is at the heart of Ikon's activities, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. Through a variety of talks, tours, workshops and seminars, Ikon's Learning Team aims to build dynamic relationships with audiences, enabling visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art. [www.ikon-gallery.org](http://www.ikon-gallery.org)
3. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 5pm. Admission is free. Ikon Gallery is supported using public funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council. For the latest news and events follow @ikongallery on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).
4. For more information or high-res images please contact Emily Luxford, Communications Assistant at Ikon on 0121 248 0708 or email [e.luxford@ikon-gallery.org](mailto:e.luxford@ikon-gallery.org)

### The British Museum

The British Museum is a national presence and works with hundreds of UK partner organisations each year through its wide-ranging National Programmes activity. This includes single-object Spotlight loans, touring exhibitions, partnership galleries, short-term loans and long-term loans, with the lead support of the Dorset Foundation in memory of Harry M Weinrebe. In 2016/17, nearly 3,000 objects were loaned to over 150 venues in the UK, reaching 9 million people outside London. The Museum will continue to develop partnerships across the UK as part of its commitment to sharing the collection as widely as possible.

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## Social and Political protest – The Weavers Revolt



Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945) *Sturm (Riot)*. Plate 5, (1893-7)  
Etching with Stippling © The Trustees of the British Museum





Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945) *Not (Want)*. Plate 1, (1893-7)  
Lithograph © The Trustees of the British Museum

## Social and Political protest – **The Peasant's War**



Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945) *Unemployment*, (1909)  
etching and engraving © The Trustees of the British Museum



Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945) *Unemployment*, (1909)  
Etching and engraving © The Trustees of the British Museum



Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945)  
*Die Carmagnole*, (1901)  
Etching and drypoint  
© The Trustees of the British Museum



Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945)  
*Half-length of working woman in blue shawl*, (1903)  
Lithograph © The Trustees of the British Museum

## Self Portraits



Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945) *Self Portrait*, (1912)  
Etching, drypoint and soft ground © The Trustees  
of the British Museum



Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945) *Self Portrait*, (1904)  
Lithograph © The Trustees of the British Museum



Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945) *Self Portrait*, (1924)  
Lithograph © The Trustees of the British Museum



Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945) *Self Portrait*, (1924)  
Woodcut © The Trustees of the British Museum



## Suffering Mother



Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945) *Woman with Dead Child*, (1903)  
Soft-ground etching with engraving overprinted lithographically with gold tone-plate  
© The Trustees of the British Museum



Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945)  
*Tod und Frau* (Death and Woman), (1910)  
Etching proof © The Trustees of the British Museum





Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945)  
*Inspiration*, (1904-5) (first version of plate 3  
Etching and engraving touched with white heightening  
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