

Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945): A life in text and image

Saturday 14 October 2017

This symposium explores the life and work of the German artist Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945), who was the first woman artist elected to become a member of the Prussian Academy of Arts. It examines her extensive and varied oeuvre, which encompassed printmaking, drawing and sculpture, and discusses this in relation to wider socio-political and cultural contexts in Germany and beyond. Kollwitz lived through a tumultuous period in German history, which witnessed the birth and collapse of the Empire, the stillbirth and disintegration of the Weimar Republic and the rise and fall of the Third Reich. As a committed socialist and pacifist, her work bears testament to such challenges; she depicts the impoverished working classes, starving children, injured soldiers and mothers mourning the loss of their sons in conflict. It considers the importance of her extensive diary writing in relation to her artworks and as a written form in their own right. Kollwitz's diary and letters reveal her personal feelings about literature, politics and the role of art.

In current times of conflict and uncertainty, Kollwitz's work continues to hold powerful resonance in contemporary society. Her sculptural works and their meaning are explored as sites of remembrance in the cities of Berlin and Cologne.

Kollwitz's works are considered through a series of short papers and roundtable discussion. This is a unique chance to listen to academics, curators and writers talking about the impact of Kollwitz in a gallery setting surrounded by the artist's own work.

Portrait of the Artist: Käthe Kollwitz runs until 26 November 2017.

Programme

10.00 -10.30am coffee and registration

10.30am: Jonathan Watkins (Ikon)

Frances Carey (British Museum)

11.15-11.45am: Dorothy Price (University of Bristol): *Imagining the Maternal*

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11.45-12.15pm: Elizabeth Kajs (University of Bristol): *Motherhood at the Centre: Connecting Creativity and Reproduction in Käthe Kollwitz's Artistic Practice*

Discussion – Chair Frances Carey

12.35-2pm Lunch (own arrangements) and Kollwitz exhibition

2.00-2.30pm: Shulamith Behr (Courtauld Institute of Art): *Kollwitz through the Eyes of Women Art Critics: The "Hieroglyphic Language of Drawing" and Gendering of Authorship*

2.30-3pm: Nina Lübbren (Anglia Ruskin University): *Kollwitz: A Printmaker's Sculpture*

Discussion – Chair Camilla Smith

3.20-3.50pm Tea/coffee and comfort break

3.50-4.20pm: Nicholas Martin (University of Birmingham): *Petrified Grief: The First World War in Käthe Kollwitz's Art and Writing*

4.20-4.50pm: Camilla Smith (University of Birmingham): *Kollwitz during the 1930s: An Artist between Resistance and Conformity*

Discussion – Chair Dorothy Price

5.15-6pm: Round table discussion: Kollwitz, legacy and sites of remembrance

Lord Max Egremont and Frances Carey (chaired by Jonathan Watkins)

This event is sponsored by:



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