

GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE PRESENTS KÄTHE KOLLWITZ: PRINTS, PROCESS, POLITICS

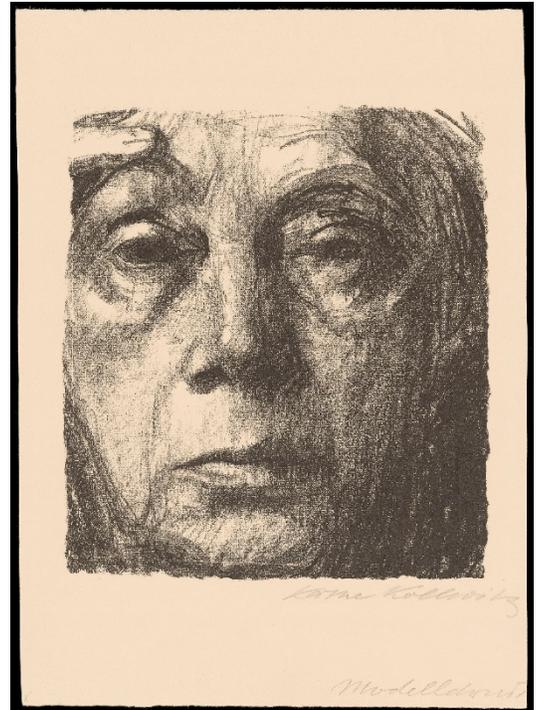
December 3, 2019 - March 29, 2020
Getty Center

LOS ANGELES – Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945), one of the foremost graphic artists of the 20th century, is celebrated for her affecting portrayals of poverty, injustice, and loss in a society troubled by turbulent societal change and devastated by two world wars. Presenting rare works on paper spanning all five decades of her career, *Käthe Kollwitz: Prints, Process, Politics*, casts light on the extraordinary technical virtuosity of these powerful images.

The exhibition, on view at the Getty Research Institute from December 3, 2019 through March 29, 2020, is drawn from the Dr. Richard A. Simms Collection of Prints and Drawings, which was a partial gift to the Getty Research Institute in 2016.

“Uniting a passion for social justice with a commitment to artistic excellence, Kollwitz’s prodigious oeuvre has a remarkable capacity to engage and inspire audiences in the 21st century,” said Mary Miller, director of the Getty Research Institute. “For its significant depth and scope, the Dr. Richard A. Simms Collection at the Getty Research Institute is an unparalleled resource for the study and appreciation of this influential artist. This exhibition offers compelling, fresh insights into Kollwitz’s accomplishments as a printmaker and activist, presenting works that have seldom been on public display.”

Käthe Kollwitz: Prints, Process, Politics features etchings, woodcuts, and lithographs from every phase of the artist’s career, alongside related preparatory drawings, proofs, and rejected versions of prints. These rich sequences of images vividly document the evolution of her ideas, both artistic and political.



Käthe Kollwitz (German, 1867–1945), *Self-Portrait*, 1934, crayon and brush transfer lithograph, printed in black ink on copperplate paper, only state. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2016.PR.34). Partial Gift of Dr. Richard A. Simms. © 2019 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

According to exhibition co-curator Louis Marchesano, “Kollwitz is known for her powerful social commentary but what people often don’t fully appreciate is that the immediacy and expressive clarity of her images belie the efforts behind the works, which are products of a deliberate and measured artistic process.”

Born Käthe Schmidt in a conservative region of the German Empire, Kollwitz grew up in a politically active Socialist household. She studied painting at schools for women artists in Berlin and Munich in the 1880s, but did not receive formal instruction in printmaking. Learning from artists, printers, manuals, and her own restless experimentation, she produced a remarkable 275 etchings, lithographs, and woodcuts.

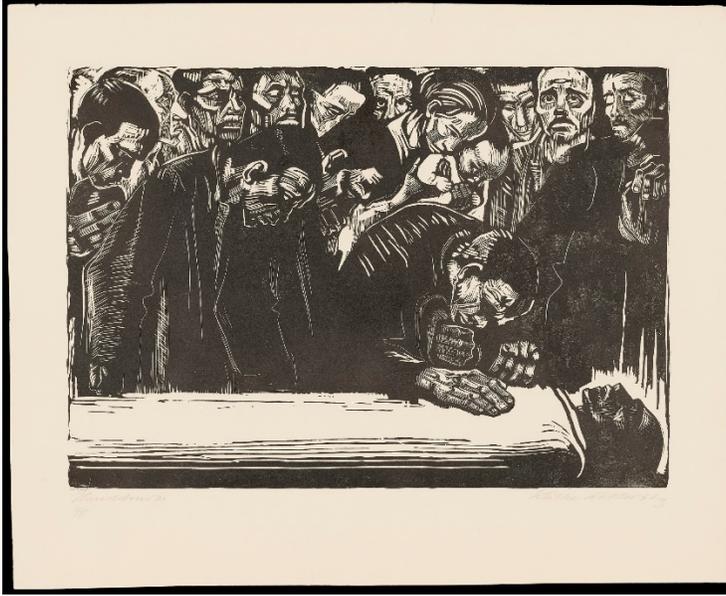
Kollwitz’s reputation flourished during a printmaking renaissance in late 19th- and early 20th-century Germany. The artist embraced the medium’s capacity to disseminate her designs to a wide audience. In her search for a visual language that would appeal to discerning collectors and engage an ever-broadening public, she remained largely independent of avant-garde movements such as expressionism.

“The Dr. Richard A. Simms Collection at the Getty Research Institute affords a privileged, intimate view into Kollwitz’s working methods. In its preparatory sheets, we witness initial concepts coalescing into masterful compositions. We observe the artist probing formal possibilities, innovating technical solutions, and, at times, abandoning one idea to persevere admirably with another,” said Naoko Takahatake, the Getty Research Institute’s Curator of Prints and Drawings. “Works like these, revealing artistic process and charting the evolution of creative thought, represent a rich vein of our prints and drawings collection.”

The exhibition includes one of her most ambitious print cycles, *Peasants’ War*, completed in 1908. Its seven prints evoke the effects of social injustice and revolution through an historical lens that focuses on a tragic episode in German history. Drawings, trials in lithography and etching, and working proofs produced over the course of six years testify to Kollwitz’s meticulous planning and execution.



Käthe Kollwitz (German, 1867–1945), *Charge*, between 1902 and 1903, sheet 5 of *Peasants’ War*. Etching, drypoint, aquatint, lift ground, and soft ground with the imprint of two fabrics and Ziegler’s transfer paper, printed in black ink on copperplate paper, and reworked with white pigment and black wash, state III of XIII. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2016.PR.34) Partial Gift of Dr. Richard A. Simms. © 2019 Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York



Käthe Kollwitz (German, 1867–1945), *In Memoriam Karl Liebknecht*, between early August and Christmas 1920, woodcut, printed in black ink on japan paper, state V of VI. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2016.PR.34). Partial Gift of Dr. Richard A. Simms © 2019 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The finished work is a tour de force that affirmed her standing as one of Europe's most important artists.

The important connection between technique and subject in Kollwitz's practice is exemplified by her 1920 tribute to Karl Liebknecht, leader of the Communist Party of Germany, who was arrested and killed by right-wing paramilitary forces following the Spartacist Uprising in Berlin in January 1919. Although she was not a member of the Communist Party, Kollwitz was moved to create a memorial print for Liebknecht. The artist labored to find the technique that would best express her sentiment, writing:

"The immense impression made by the hundred thousand mourners at his grave inspired me to a work. It was begun and discarded as an etching, I made an attempt to do it anew, and rejected it, as a lithograph. And now finally as a woodcut it has found its end."

In 1919, Kollwitz became the first woman elected to the Berlin Akademie der Künste (Academy of Arts) but was forced to resign in 1933, following the Nazi Party's seizure of power. During World War II, in the late fall of 1943, her Berlin home was bombed, and numerous works, studio materials, and documents were lost. In April 1945, at the age of 77, she died in Moritzburg, near Dresden.

Käthe Kollwitz: Prints, Process, Politics is accompanied by a book of the same title, published by Getty Publications.

The exhibition is curated by Louis Marchesano, the Audrey and William H. Helfand Senior Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Christina Aube, Exhibitions Coordinator at the Getty Research Institute, and Naoko Takahatake, Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Getty Research Institute, with contributions from Lauren Graber and Alina Samsonija. A related exhibition, *Käthe Kollwitz and the Art of Resistance*, will be presented at The Art Institute of Chicago from May 30 to September 13, 2020.

More information about the exhibition, including a schedule of related programming, is online at https://www.getty.edu/research/exhibitions_events/exhibitions/kollwitz/.

###

MEDIA CONTACT:

Amy Hood
Getty Communications
(310) 440-6427
ahood@getty.edu

The J. Paul Getty Trust is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that include the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Foundation. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Pacific Palisades.

The Getty Research Institute is an operating program of the J. Paul Getty Trust. It serves education in the broadest sense by increasing knowledge and understanding about art and its history through advanced research. The Research Institute provides intellectual leadership through its research, exhibition, and publication programs and provides service to a wide range of scholars worldwide through residencies, fellowships, online resources, and a Research Library. The Research Library—housed in the 201,000-square-foot Research Institute building designed by Richard Meier—is one of the largest art and architecture libraries in the world. The general library collections (secondary sources) include almost 900,000 volumes of books, periodicals, and auction catalogues encompassing the history of Western art and related fields in the humanities. The Research Library's special collections include rare books, artists' journals, sketchbooks, architectural drawings and models, photographs, and archival materials.

Visiting the Getty Center

The Getty Center is open Tuesday through Friday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Admission to the Getty Center is always free. Parking rates vary. No reservation is required for parking or general admission. Reservations are required for event seating and groups of 15 or more. Please call (310) 440-7300 (English or Spanish) for reservations and information. The TTY line for callers who are deaf or hearing impaired is (310) 440-7305. The Getty Center is at 1200 Getty Center Drive, Los Angeles, California.

Same-day parking at both Museum locations (Getty Center and Getty Villa) is available for one fee through the Getty's Pay Once, Park Twice program. Visit the Museum Information Desk at the Center or the Villa to obtain a coupon good for same-day complimentary parking at the other site.

Additional information is available at www.getty.edu.

Sign up for e-Getty at www.getty.edu/subscribe to receive free monthly highlights of events at the Getty Center and the Getty Villa via e-mail, or visit www.getty.edu for a complete calendar of public programs.