



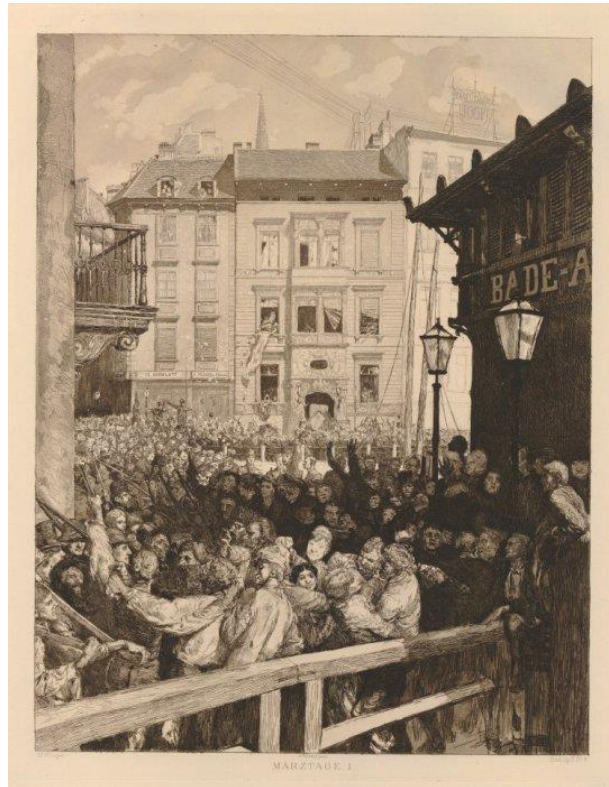
ART STUDIES

**Influences on
Kathe Kollwitz**



Kollwitz
Self Portrait
1920

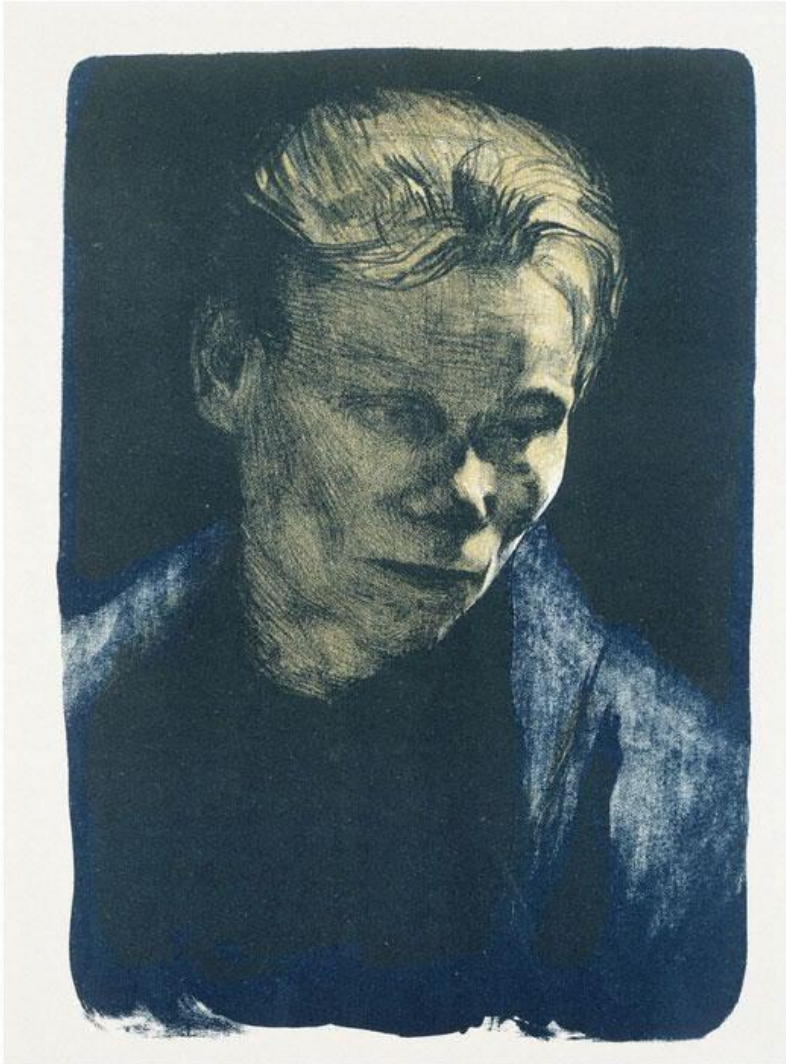
Kathe Kollwitz was born in 1867 into a politically radical family. She had originally intended to become a painter, but under the influence of the German etcher Max Klinger she turned to drawing and printmaking



Max Klinger
A Mother
1883



The Plague
c.1889



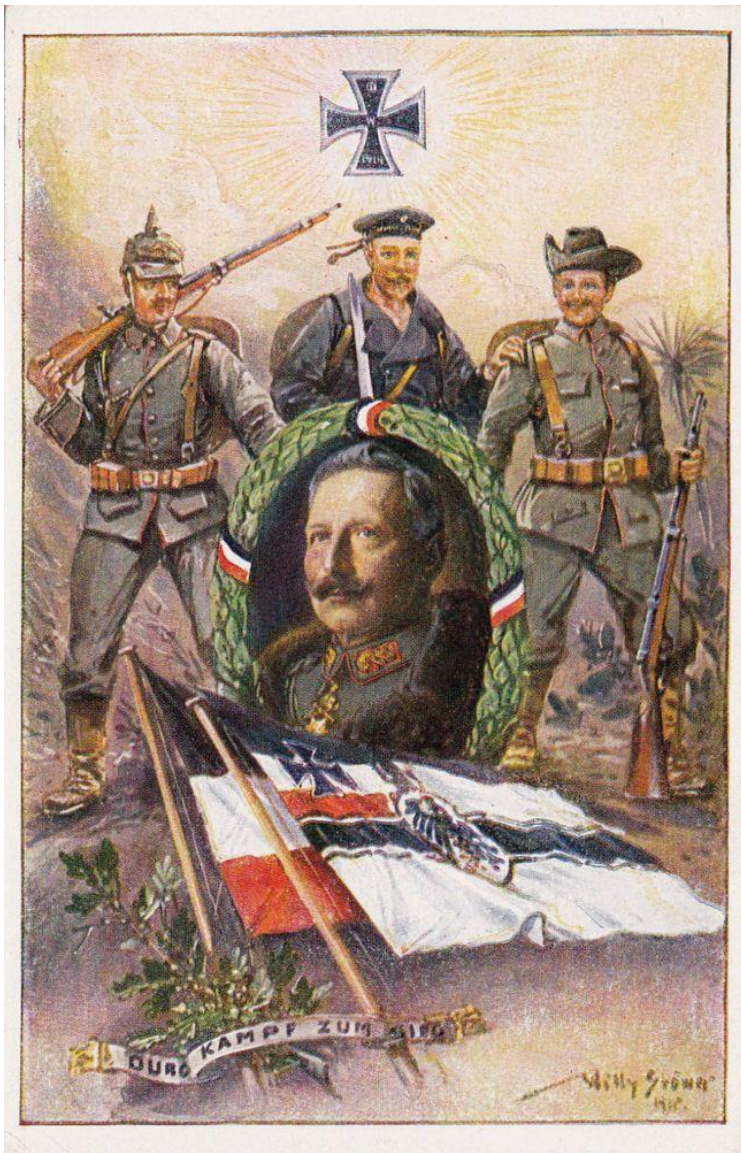
Kathe Kollwitz

Working Class Woman
1903

Mother and Dead Child
1903



Printmaking media Kollwitz thought more sympathetic to the working-class subjects she encountered, especially after her marriage in 1891 to Karl Kollwitz, a doctor working in one of Berlin's poorest districts. A number of her prints from this period depict - with unsentimental naturalism, but evident sympathy - the careworn features and dispirited demeanour of the working-class women who consulted her husband.



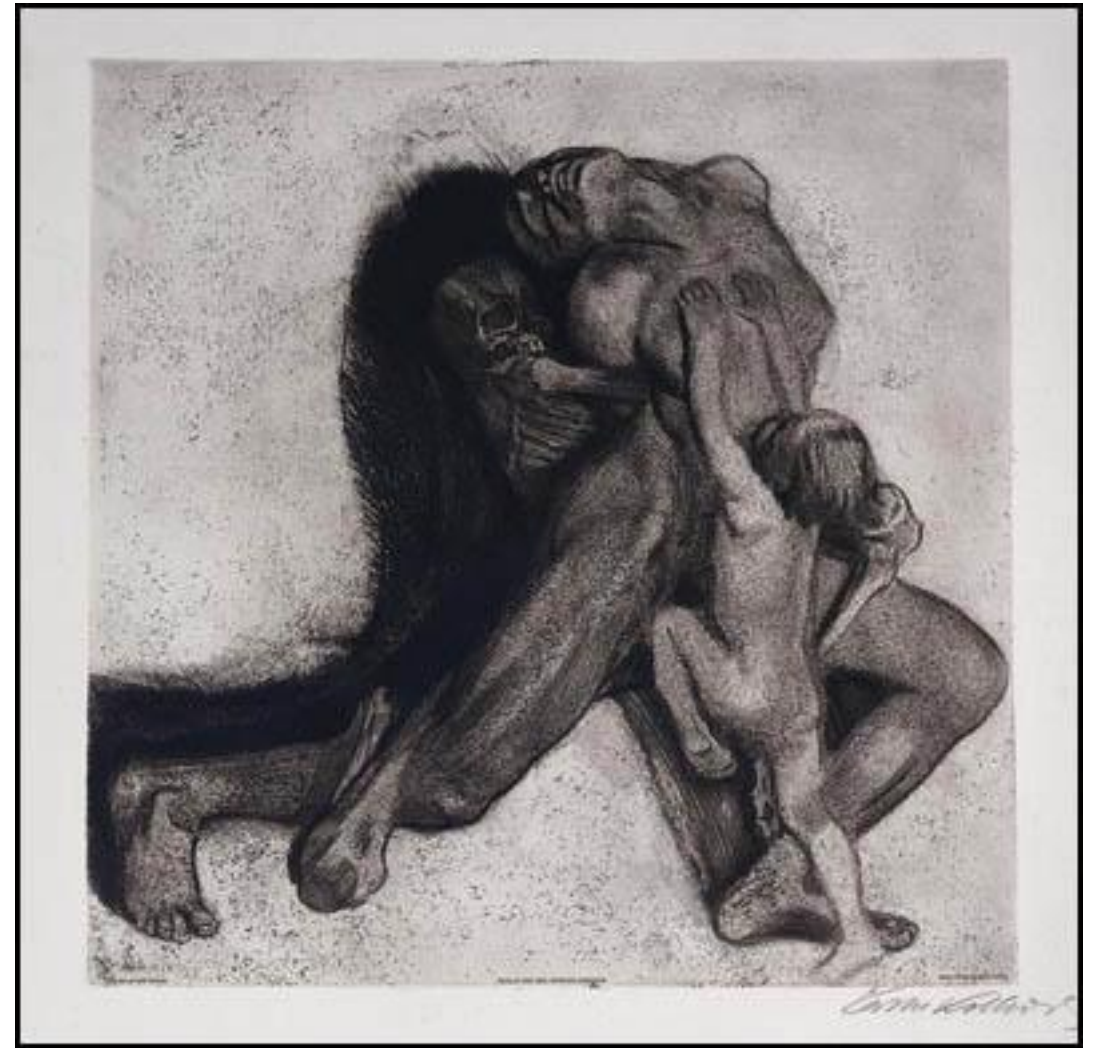
German WW1 Propaganda Poster



Otto Dix
Trenches
c.1915

Kollwitz made no more individual portraits of this kind after the First World War - in which her younger son was killed.

Instead of individual portrait studies, Kollwitz took up more universal themes and archetypal images of poverty, grief and suffering. Her Political background can be seen in the *Frauenkunstverband* (Organisation of Women Artists), co-founded by Käthe Kollwitz in 1913. They protested that 600,000 Berliners lived in dwellings with five or more people to a room while 100,000 children had nowhere to play.



Death, Mother and Child
1910

Käthe Kollwitz, *Anguish: The Widow* (1916)



Mourning woman holding a child (detail)
Woodcut
Käthe Kollwitz
1919

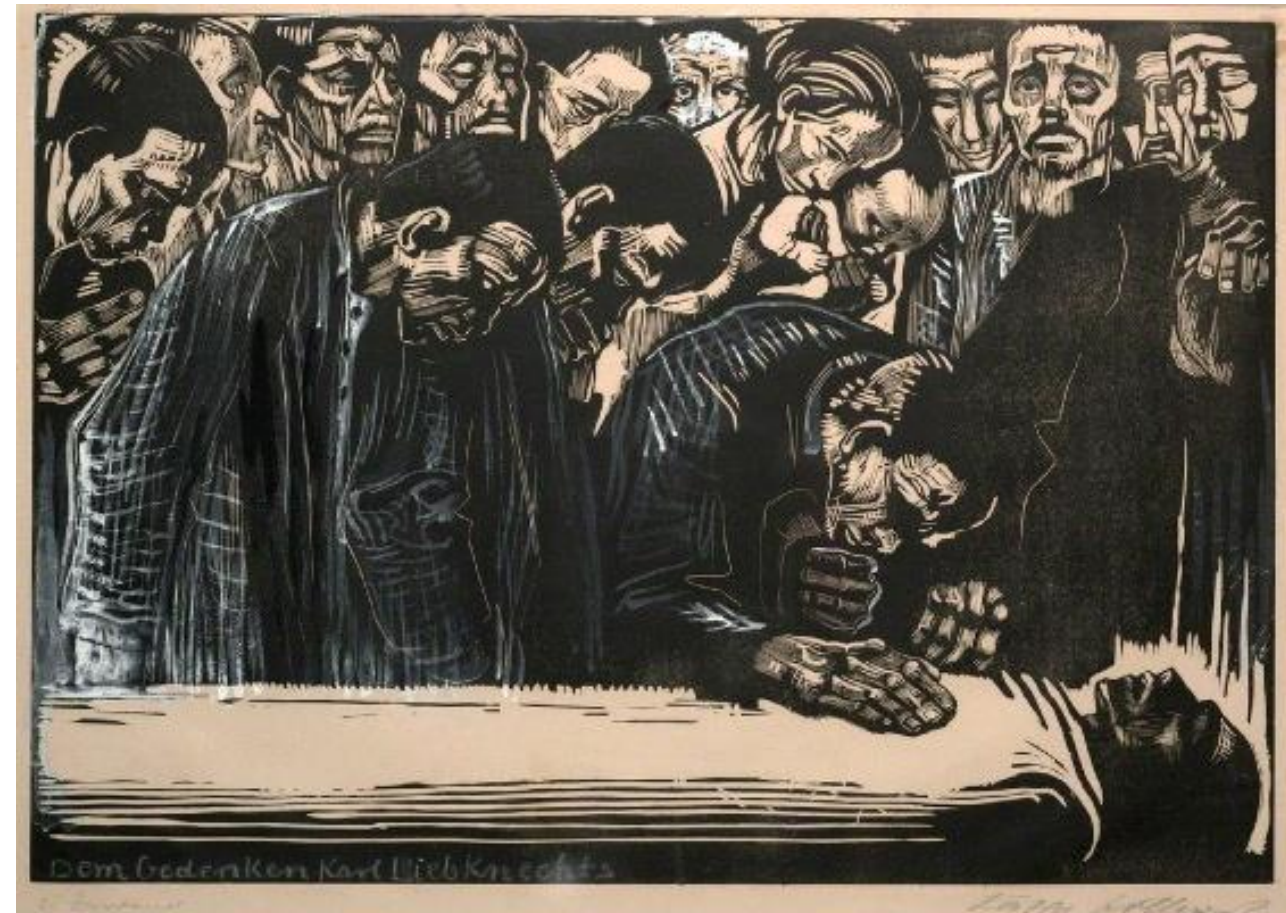


In the political turmoil after the First World War, many artists turned to making prints instead of paintings. The ability to produce multiple copies of the same image made printmaking an ideal medium for spreading political statements. German artist Käthe Kollwitz worked almost exclusively in this medium and became known for her prints that celebrated the plight of the working-class.

The composition divides the sheet into three horizontal sections. The top section is densely packed with figures. Their faces are well modeled and have interesting depth in themselves, but the sense of space is very compressed – the heads push to the foreground and are packed into every available corner of space. It gives the impression of multitudes coming to pay their respects, without compromising the individuality of the subjects.

The middle strata contains comparatively fewer details, further emphasizing the crowding at the top of the printing plate. This section draws attention to the specific action of the bending mourner. His hand on Liebkecht's chest connects this section to the the bottommost level of the composition, the body of the martyred revolutionary. Above the bending mourner, a woman holds her baby up to see over the heads of those in front of them. Women and children were a central concern of Kollwitz's work, making her a unique voice in a creative environment dominated by young men.

*Memorial Sheet of Karl Liebknecht
1919*



Major INFLUENCES ON Kathe Kollwitz's work:

- Born into a poor, working class family with political leanings
- Living in a poverty stricken neighbourhood in Berlin
- Marrying a Doctor and seeing the patients that he saw

- The German Printmaking Tradition (going all the way back to Gutenberg)
- Max Klinger's social documentation in printmaking
- Being a woman and a mother, (in fact, Kollwitz was the first woman to be admitted into the Prussian Academy).

- The degradation of the working classes in late 19th Century Germany
- The German Expressionist movement
- WW1
- Losing her son in WW1
- The continued struggle of the German people in inter-war years
- The political changes in Germany in inter-war years
- The rise of the Nationalist (Nazi) party
- Seeing Germany enter into a second world war with a clear memory of WW1