

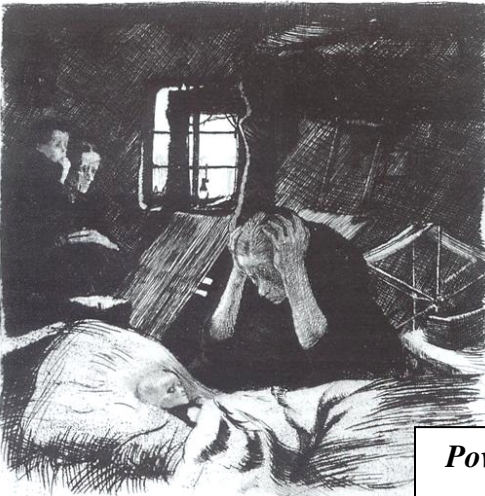
Name:  
Hour:

## Social Issues Print (Linoleum Relief Prints ala Käthe Kollwitz)

Käthe Kollwitz was a printmaker who expressed human poverty and suffering in her artwork. Born in Prussia in 1867, she was part of a family that valued social activism and encouraged her artistic pursuits. The art academy in her country did not allow female students, so when she was 17 Käthe traveled to Berlin and enrolled in the School for Women Artists. In 1898 Kollwitz became a teacher at the same school.



Kollwitz created this *Self-Portrait* in 1898.



*Poverty* was created in 1893.

Some of the biggest inspirations for Kollwitz's work came from the poor patients of her husband, Dr. Karl Kollwitz, and the working class residents in their Berlin neighborhood. She produced emotion-filled etchings and woodcuts that showed the strife and hardships of the poverty in Germany during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

During the time of the Great War (WWI) Kollwitz was disgusted with the thought of two nations killing and slaughtering each other. When one of her sons was killed on the frontline, Kollwitz created works that expressed the grief mothers felt during times of war.



This woodcut from 1923 is entitled *Mothers*.

Like many other well-known artists, Kollwitz's artwork invoked a lot of controversy. In 1897 she was prevented from receiving an award because of the content (or subject matter) of her work. Later, during the Nazi era, she was forced to resign her position as professor at the Prussian Academy of Art, and was not allowed to exhibit her work. She had to remove artwork on display in various museums and galleries.

Much of Käthe Kollwitz's artwork was destroyed in a Berlin air raid during WWII, including the sculptures she began creating during the later part of her career. The artwork (prints, drawings and sculpture) that remains continues to provoke thought and emotion about the struggles of poverty.

- For this project you will be creating a relief print that illustrates a social issue important to you. As a class we will brainstorm ideas. Write down 3 choices that you are interested in. (You may choose one of the issues discussed in class, or you may come up with one on your own.)

1.

2.

3.

- Think carefully about how you might depict (or show) each of the issues you wrote down. **Sketch an idea for each of your social issues** in the boxes below.

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1

2

3

- Decide which of your ideas you would like to use for your final print. Think about which issue and which sketch you feel the strongest about. **Circle the social issue and the sketch that you are going to work with.**

- On a piece of 8"x10" drawing paper, create a drawing of your print. You will be transferring this drawing to your linoleum block with carbon paper when you are finished. Pay special attention to your use of line, texture, shape, and balance. When you begin carving your block you will be cutting away all of the **negative (or white) space** in your drawing. The remaining **positive (or black) spaces** will be raised. Ink will be applied to the raised surface before printing.
- Use the linoleum cutter tools to carefully carve away the negative space on your block. (This will be the area around the lines and shapes you have transferred to the block.) **REMEMBER** to cut **AWAY** from your hand!! We do not want any unnecessary accidents or injuries.
- When you have finished carving your block, you will be ready to print. You must create **AT LEAST** 3 good, clean, final copies of your print.
- Follow these steps for successful prints:



Kollwitz made this *Self-Portrait* in 1923.

1. Prepare a space to work at with a partner. Cover the table area with newspaper and gather your tools and supplies. You will need your lino block, a brayer, ink, printing paper, a wooden spoon, and a surface to spread the ink on.
2. Squeeze a small amount of water based ink onto the rolling surface.
3. Use a brayer to evenly roll out the ink. It should sound crackly and look sticky. If the brayer is sliding around and not rolling, you have too much ink on the brayer and you will need to spread it out more.
4. Roll the brayer over the surface of the printing block that you are going to print. Make sure you cover all of the raised areas completely!
5. Set the brayer down, roller side up! Carefully pick up your printing block and turn it upside down. Line it up over the paper you are printing on and press it down firmly.

6. Carefully flip both the block and paper right side up. Do NOT let the paper shift! Use the side of your hand and/or the wooden spoon to smooth the paper over the lino block.
  7. Carefully lift the paper off of the printing block and carry it to the drying rack.
  8. Start over and make another print! You do not have to clean the block in between prints unless there is dirt or dust that needs to be washed off OR if you are going to print in another color. When you are finished, wash and dry your lino block in the sink to remove all of the ink.
- When the prints are dry, the teacher will show you how to sign, number, and title your series of prints.



*The Volunteers* is a woodcut Kollwitz created in 1922-1923.