

The Artistic Charm of Kaethe Kollwitz

Lu Zhang

School of Art, Tianjin Polytechnic University, Tianjin 300387, China.

1054904697@qq.com.

Abstract

Kaethe Kollwitz is the most influential German printmaker in modern times, and is a great female artist in modern art. The theme expressed in Kaethe Kollwitz's prints: happiness, peace, Freedom, equality, poverty, dignity, compassion, justice, resistance, and death are all the topics of concern to the human world. His works have unique charm beyond the times and nationality. This article takes the famous German printmaker "Kaethe Kollwitz" as the theme, analyzes the creative background of Kaethe Kollwitz, explores the unique charm of Kaethe Kollwitz and his works, and understands Kaiser. How Kaethe Kollwitz used the "knife and pen" to conquer the world, affect the development of the world and Chinese art, and shined an immortal glory in art history.

Keywords

Kaethe Kollwitz, The power of black and white, Unyielding female artist, The heart of great harmony.

1. Introduction

Throughout the various periods of art history, classic works are mostly occupied by oil paintings, sculptures, and literary works, while the artistic glory of printmaking is rarely known. German printmaking has an important position in the history of art. During the period of Kaethe Kollwitz and expressionism, German printmaking reached a peak stage. Kaethe Kollwitz's contribution is indispensable. In a turbulent historical environment, Kaethe Kollwitz adopts unique expression techniques and shocking painting subjects to bring the public's true subjectivity. Emotions are expressed to reflect the living conditions of the bottom people in Germany in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is full of grief, pain, and rebellious spirit. With her unique and powerful artistic power, she reveals that gloomy era. As Roman Rowland said, "Kaiser Kollwitz's work is the greatest poetry of modern Germany, and it reflects the plight and sorrow of the poor and the common people."

2. Creation Background

2.1 Family Impact

Kaethe Kollwitz was born on July 8, 1867, in a family in Königsberg, Germany. Kaethe Kollwitz achieved great artistic achievements, and was inseparable from the influence of her family environment. The impact is great. In such an era, women were more obedient to the opinions of their fathers and husbands. But when Kollwitz was 14 years old, her father discovered her artistic talents and began her artistic creation. Since then embarked on the road of painting art. Without her father's equal treatment of the four children and the cultivation, may not have found the artistic talent of Kaethe Kollwitz. Her brother is a socialist, and her design ideas are deeply influenced by her brother's politics. In 1891 Kaethe Kollwitz married the doctor Karl Kollwitz, she did not stop the exploration of art precisely. Respecting each other, Karl didn't want to impose his will on Kaethe Kollwitz. Therefore, her art works and design ideas have always been distinctly independent and can be seen in the patients rescued by her husband, more working people under the oppression of the bourgeoisie, as well as the many victims and victims of this battle, which deeply stabbed Kaethe Kollwitz. At the same time, it also confirmed the direction of her art development.

2.2 Social Environmental Impact

Kaethe Kollwitz experienced two world wars, the era of Emperor William, the First World War, the era of the Weimar Republic, the rule of the Nazi regime, and World War II. The working class at the bottom suffers from the oppression of capitalism, the intensification of social contradictions, and the suffering, death, and fear brought to people under the war, living in such an era, witnessing the beauty and ugliness of human nature, good and evil. These social and historical conditions have profoundly influenced Kollwitz's creation. Kollwitz has said in 1922: "People feel the care of others, everyone has their own experience. The art of depicting suffering is to show the viewer that he is not alone in his fall. In a time of desperation and need, I want to play my part." Therefore, Kaiser Kollwitz created many realistic expression Masterpieces that affect modern society.

3. The Expression of Realism-The Power of Black and White

The content of the works created by Kaethe Kollwitz is very rich. The topics of survival, suffering, resistance, and death are only part of the content of her works. The artistic images created by her works have far exceeded the stories conveyed by her works, it have more profound practical significance. We can see more historical and realistic meanings through the works of Kaiser Kollwitz, which can not only shock our soul, but also stimulate our behavior. As an expressionist artist, Kollwitz showed his abstract ideas and emotions more vividly in the strong contrast between black and white. In his works, black is often used as the main color, and melancholy, darkness, despair, and the tension of death. The performance of the atmosphere is just right. Through the performance of light and shadow, the shocking part will be prominently expressed, deeply rooted in people's hearts, and inspired to think. In the rhythm of white and black, composes a sorrowful tragic epic, such as "Poverty", "Sacrifice" In the works "Women and the Dead Child" and its "Self-portrait" and other works, the picture uses black as the main color, causing viewers to have a strong psychological shock. For example, the first "Poverty" in the famous "Weaver Weapon" in 1898, the entire work is still dominated by black. Under the cover of darkness, icy and messy houses can be seen vaguely, It reflects the poverty of the working masses. There are very few bright parts in the picture. Only the face of the dying child, the dilapidated window, and the child's parents and the children of father's arms are partially processed into bright colors. This form of processing is extremely depressing. The painful and helpless atmosphere of the entire family was vividly manifested. The mother hugged her head with both hands and looked at her child with a pained and loving look. The father could not help but sit in the corner and looked helplessly. The large-scale black treatment makes the whole family's hard life in the endless darkness directly appear, a little bit of white space strikes people's hearts, and is thought-provoking.

There is also a woodcut print "Sacrifice" created by Kaethe Kollwitz, published in the first issue of Beidou Magazine in 1931. In the picture, the entire layout is dominated by black, and the layout and the clothes under the characters are treated as thick black, but the arms of the woman's body, chest and child's face, embracing hands, and the background of the face of the mother and child are all processed as bright blocks, and there are many detailed line treatments, white lines on black background, The thickness changes of the lines fully show the structure and texture of the characters. The arms around the woman's body are solid and powerful, highlighting the mother's desire to protect her child and reluctance; the child's relaxed face is tense with the mother's face, and the eyes are closed. In contrast, the state of despair is a more powerful expression of the pain of imminent loss of children. The thick black shrouds the whole picture in a nightmare atmosphere, which clearly highlights the heavy blow of the child's sacrifice to the mother's soul. In most of her works, in addition to expressing sympathy and compassion for women, as well as the expression of hard and unyielding resistance, Kaethe Kollwitz is a typical representative of women's groups, voice to the world for the people at the bottom of society.



《Poverty》



《Sacrifice》



《Women and the Dead Child》



《Self-portrait》

4. Unyielding Female Artists

In the human concept, women often represent weakness, love, tolerance, mercy, and war should not be the scope of women, but in human history, whether it is against the oppression of their own nation or against foreign aggression, or a natural disaster, and women never are no exception. They are victims and victims of disasters, but under the pen of Kaethe Kollwitz, it shows the hard power of women and the spirit of fighting against inequality, pursuing justice, happiness, escaping suffering and rising up. In this sense, the ideological connotation expressed by Kaethe Kollwitz's art works has transcended its specific era and nationality, and has profound typicality and reflectiveness to the human world.

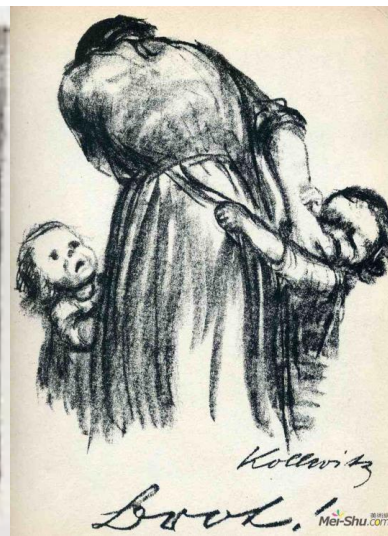
Her work is often about women. The “other kind of people” depicted in Kollwitz’s works are basically mothers who have lost children, such as “Death, Mother and Child”, children suffering from hunger, Such as "Mother holding a child", the bottom working people in the deep waters, such as "The deceased held a woman". In the works of art, you can see the face of Kaethe Kollwitz and the mapping of her inner emotions. Some people think that "she is a pessimistic and painful painter". Her art is gloomy, but behind it is more

much of it is optimism and love for life. To understand her art works more deeply, and to observe the three roles of women, mother and artist together, Fischer emphasized: "Who wants to live joy does not have the ability to feel, so he has no ability to deal with those heavy topics. "Roman Rowland praised it even more: "With her gloomy and tender sympathy, this husbandly woman took all this into her eyes and her mother-like wrist; this is the cry of the victim."

For example, her works "Mother and Son", "Bread", "Woman Captured by Death" all show the power of human nature at the end of human life, the glorious image of motherhood, In particular, the third work in her group of "Farmer Wars" completed in 1902-1908, "Scythe Grinding", shows a suffering woman holding a sickle under a lamp, her hands strong and tight, holding the sickle, the eyes were firm and angry, not seeing the fear and helplessness of women in chaos and inhuman wars. Let us think about what makes such a weak, loving woman take up arms, regardless of the danger of life, and rise up like a warrior. as if experiencing despair, nothing can be lost after the desperate struggle. In the works of Kaethe Kollwitz, the effect of light and shadow is used to dye the tense and inspiring atmosphere. The face, eyes and hands are extremely real. It is absolutely decisive, While expressing anger, it also expresses the sympathy and compassion of women to women by Kaethe Kollwitz. Great works are not only to make viewers feel the same, but more importantly to inspire people's behavior. Under the relentless oppression of capitalism and the cruel persecution of war, they inspire everyone to resist. this is a rebellion against oppression, inequality, and the eternal theme of the human world and artistic expression.



《Scythe Grinding》



《Bread》

5. The Heart of Great Harmony

The works of Kaethe Kollwitz transcend time and space, and the significance of his works transcends the times and nationality. Whether it is the era of material deprivation or the era of rich modern material life and advanced technology, whether it is a country of different races, or culture, values, and other nations, The happiness, equality, motherly love, harmony, peace, and justice pursued by Kaethe Kollwitz in art are themes that run through the entire human society.

For example: 1938 bronze sculpture "Mother's Tower". This work is based on the hands of Kaethe Kollwitz. In her many works, the hands always reflect different emotions: The cross-shaped hand hidden in the horizon in "The Riot" hidden in the German History Museum, the clenched hand in "The People's Union Protects German War and Prisoners of War", the pensive hand in "Social Reform" The hand she shaped bears resistance, protection, helplessness, despair, and anger, and she also hopes that her hands can soothe the suffering people, as wrote on her tombstone: "Rest in her palms", her heart of great harmony has influenced the development of world art.

6. Conclusion

Kollwitz is artistic for the heart of great harmony! She cares about the fate of humankind, and uses art works to awaken people, inspire people, shelter suffering people with her tender hands, and use the paintbrush to voice the world. Her works are the greatest poetry of modern, Kaethe Kollwitz conquered the world with a "knife and pen", shining an immortal glory in the history of art.

References

- [1] Klein, H.A. ,Klein,wrote,M.The Art Life of Kollwitz(Translated by Gu Shilong.Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1987).
- [2] Ding Jingtang, Wang Guanquan:Lu Xun and Kaethe Kollwitz[J].Journal of Shandong Normal University (Social Science Edition,1978)p.06.
- [3] Qiao Lijun: The Art Life of German Printmaker Kollwitz[J].(Beauty and times,2010)P.11.
- [4] Cai Yongping: Exploring the Black and White Vision of Kaethe Kollwitz[J].(New West,2014).
- [5] Liu Xinxin: The Image of a Mother in Kollwitz[J].(Popular Literature,2011).
- [6] Dou Xuelin:The Relationship between Kollwitz Art and the Working Mass[J].(Manager,2011.11).