

Robert Fishko, *Director*

KÄTHE KOLLWITZ

(1867-1945)

Die Klage (Grief), 1938-40

also known as *Lamentation, Memorial for Ernst Barlach*

bronze

10 1/2 x 10 1/2 x 3 3/4 inches

Model II.B.19, cast after 1960

signed (incised) on left side "Kollwitz"

stamped with two-part foundry mark on lower right edge "H.Noack Berlin"

Catalogue Raisonné No. 38, II.B.19

Provenance

Collection of Bella Fishko, New York

Forum Gallery, New York

(by descent from the above)



Literature

Seeler, Annette. *Käthe Kollwitz, Die Plastik: Catalogue Raisonné of Sculpture*, [Köln: Käthe Kollwitz Museum Köln, and Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2016], no. 38, Illustrated.

Sujo, Glenn. *Legacies of Silence: Visual Arts and Holocaust Memory*, (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2001), p. 12-13, no. 3, Illustrated (a different cast).

Note

In an excerpt from *Legacies of Silence: Visual Arts and Holocaust Memories*, author Glenn Sujo writes:

“Kollwitz’s bronze relief, *Lamentation*, 1938-40, offers so clear a demonstration of the expressive mobility of the human face while its scale draws us into an intimacy with the artist’s grief. Earlier, Kollwitz had explored the informing conjunction of her hands and face in *Self-portrait*, 1924 [British Museum, London]. Here the shaft of an arm and a curved

hand appear to support the weight of her head...*Lamentation* is a more resolute statement of the construction of identity. The artist's powerfully modeled hands are stilled, one pressed against her mouth, as if to silence it, the other shielding her left eye. Her right eye remains closed, refusing to countenance the loss of life – though she may yet hear the victims' piercing cries, as sight gives way to the acuity of hearing. No longer able to shield herself with the visible, unwilling to magnify or betray the victims' suffering with utterances, she is drawn instead to the drone of the world no longer present. *Lamentation* is both a profound statement of witness and a foreshadowing of future deaths (and Kollwitz's loss was compounded by the death in action of her grandson Peter in 1942).

Kollwitz dedicated this work to the memory of her near contemporary, the figurative sculptor Ernst Barlach (1870-1937). The artists shared a profound humanism and soon found themselves at odds with the Nazis. Barlach's *War Memorial*, 1927, for the cathedral at Gustrow was removed some weeks after its unveiling and smelted down. A second commission for the cathedral at Magdeburg provoked wide-spread condemnation and was removed from view in 1933, the year that Käthe Kollwitz was stripped of her professor's title and forced to resign her post at the Akademie der Kunst in Berlin. Copies of Barlach's album *Zeichnungen* (containing a selection of his drawings) were seized and destroyed by the Gestapo. Similar measures were aimed at writers and intellectuals on the left and right. Banished from their places of work, forced into exile or interned in concentration camps, they were ultimately silenced. In this climate of intolerance, Germany spiraled into an unprecedented barbarity."

Käthe Kollwitz, Die Plastik: Catalogue Raisonné of Sculpture lists this cast as Model II.B.19. There are 27 casts of Model II.B, which are stucco and bronze castings from the Hermann Noack picture foundry, Berlin, cast after 1960/61 via lost wax casting process.