



# ART HISTORY INSIGHTS

## NOVEMBER 2020

The monthly newsletter that brings you selected articles of interest and opinion from the world of art history and visual culture. This issue focuses on art in relation to war and conflict, which was the theme of our recent online Ways of Seeing Week for Alevel students and teachers.

### WOMEN WAR ARTISTS

The first official British war artists' scheme was set up by the government in 1916. It was initially started for propaganda purposes but evolved into a memorialising scheme that commissioned artists to explore aspects of conflict. Although several female artists were approached none of them completed commissions for the official schemes. However, the Imperial War Museum did commission ten female artists through its Women's Work Sub-Committee, which had been set up to record the varied contributions of women to the war effort. Here is an introduction to six women war artists.

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/6-stunning-first-world-war-artworks-by-women-war-artists>

### ART DURING WARTIME

'Black Bodies in Propaganda: The Art of the War Poster', was an exhibition at the Penn Museum, that examined how images—primarily of African and African-American men—were used to mobilize Africans and African Americans in times of war. Find out more about how governments utilise

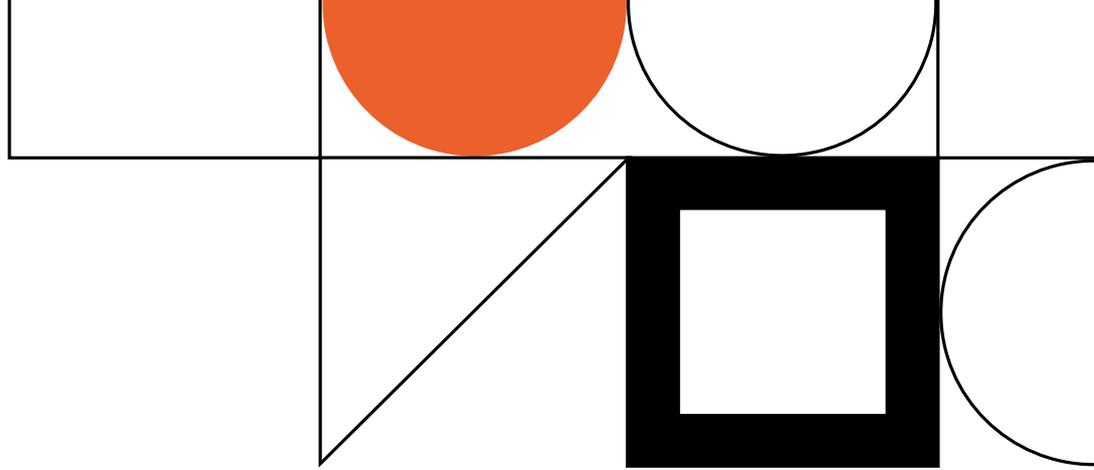
the talents of artists to develop pictorial publicity and propaganda to transform and mobilise peoples to support war efforts.

<https://www.penn.museum/sites/expedition/art-during-wartime/>

### OLIVE EDIS FIRST WORLD WAR ARTIST

Olive Edis was born in 1876 and took up photography in 1900, and continued to work as a professional photographer until her death in 1955. She was a pioneer of new photographic techniques, and was one of the first people in the UK to use the Lumiere Brothers' autochrome colour process. Edis was also one of the first women to be accepted as a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society. In 1918, Edis was commissioned by the Imperial War Museum to document the lives of women working on the front lines. She was the first British woman to be commissioned as an official war artist, and only the fifth official photographer to visit Europe to cover WW1.

<https://oliveedisproject.wordpress.com/about-olive-edis/>



## GET UP, STAND UP NOW

After WWII, Britain encouraged immigration from commonwealth countries, largely to help rebuild the country as there was a shortage of labour at the time. The Windrush ship carried 492 migrants to Britain promising prosperity and employment. 'Get Up, Stand Up Now' was an exhibition that took place last year at Somerset House. It presented Black British art's response to the Windrush scandal.

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/jun/02/get-up-stand-up-now-zak-ove-black-british-art>

## KATHE KOLLWITZ

When we think of socially engaged art of war and conflict we should think of German artist Kathe Kollwitz. For instance, Kollwitz was taken with the notion of female revolutionaries and was fascinated with the story of "Black Anna," the instigator of a 16th-century, widespread peasant rebellion. Reminiscent, perhaps of Eugène Delacroix's 1830 *Liberty Leading the People* in which the personification of liberty is a woman who leads people of various social classes onwards towards freedom. Yet, Delacroix's woman is an idealised type who leads with her sexuality and maternity centralised. Kollwitz, in contrast, maintains female agency in her work.

<https://m.theartstory.org/artist/kollwitz-kathe/artworks/>

## SINO-JAPANESE WAR BLOCK PRINTS

The energy and artistic skill of the best war prints are all the more remarkable when we keep in mind the haste of their composition. Japanese block printer, Kiyochika, is considered one of the most esteemed of these artists, who is calculated to have produced more than seventy triptychs during the brief ten month Sino-Japanese War.

[https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/throwing\\_off\\_asia\\_02/toa\\_essay02.html](https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/throwing_off_asia_02/toa_essay02.html)

## EVELYN DUNBAR SECOND WORLD WAR ARTIST

Evelyn Mary Dunbar (1906 - 1960) was a British artist, illustrator and teacher. Notable for recording women's contributions to World War II, particularly that of the Women's Land Army, she was the only woman working for the War Artists' Advisory Committee on a full-time salaried basis. Dunbar was modest regarding her achievements and outside of the post-war mainstream art world which has led to some neglect of her work until recent years. She painted murals at Brockley County Secondary School, and was a member of the Society of Mural Painters. After the war she painted portraits, allegorical pictures and especially landscapes.

<https://pallant.org.uk/evelyn-dunbar-such-a-gifted-painter/>

## YOUR INSIGHTS

We promote a broad and inclusive art history, and look to engage with as wide an audience as possible. Please get in touch with articles you think may be of interest for our newsletter. We welcome all content suggestions.

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