

For Immediate Release

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**Spring printmaking suite runs March 24 – May 9, 2009 and features Käthe Kollwitz.**

Käthe Kollwitz (1867 – 1945) is recognized as one of the premier artists of the early twentieth century. She is known primarily for her emphasis on the social content of her work, but this often overshadows her technical and artistic mastery. The Northern Illinois University Art Museum presents *Käthe Kollwitz: Images of Death and Life* a selection of original etchings, woodcuts and lithographs that span her long career and showcase her unmistakable graphic style, empathic humanity and mordant social commentary.

Kollwitz's social consciousness, which could be characterized as "critical humanitarianism", separated her from Modernist artists who wanted to minimize the importance of subject matter in favor of concerns of form and color. She fully accepted the social function of art, writing in her journal: "I am content that my art should have purpose outside itself...It is my duty to voice the sufferings...the never ending sufferings heaped mountain high...I would like to exert influence in these times when human beings are so perplexed and in need of help."

Kollwitz was no stranger to human suffering; she lived in Germany where her husband ran a free medical clinic for many years. She survived two world wars, although she had a son and grandson that did not. She watched in horror at the Nazis came to power. Her prints and drawings bear witness to the daily ordeals of this period in history, not by depicting the perpetrators, but rather the inherent strength and dignity in all of her subjects.

This exhibition was curated by Peter Olson, Assistant Director, and is part of our spring printmaking suite that also includes contemporary posters by Jay Ryan; hand printed, hand bound books by David Johnson; and a retrospective of the distinguished career of printmaker and NIU Professor Emeritus, David Driesbach. The reception for the spring printmaking suite will be Thursday April 2, from 4:30 – 7:00 p.m. David Driesbach will present a lecture that evening in room 315, Altgeld Hall, at 6:00 p.m.

The NIU Art Museum is located on the first floor, west end of Altgeld Hall, the "castle," at the northwest corner of College and Castle Drives on the NIU campus in DeKalb. The galleries are open to the public Tuesday – Friday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Saturday 12 noon – 4 p.m., and by appointment for group tours. Special Sunday hours will be held on March 29 from 10:30 – 1:00 in conjunction with the Southern Graphics Council Conference trip to DeKalb for a day of print exhibitions. Exhibitions are free; donations are appreciated. Pay parking is available in the Visitor's Lot on Carroll Avenue and at metered spots in front of Altgeld Hall. Free parking is available on Saturdays and during receptions and visiting artist lectures in the lot northeast of Gilbert and College Drives. The exhibitions of the NIU Art Museum are funded in part by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, the Friends of the NIU Art Museum, and the Arts Fund 21.

For more information please visit our website: [www.niu.edu/artmuseum](http://www.niu.edu/artmuseum), telephone 815-753-1936 or e-mail [darntzen@niu.edu](mailto:darntzen@niu.edu). Photographs are available upon request.