

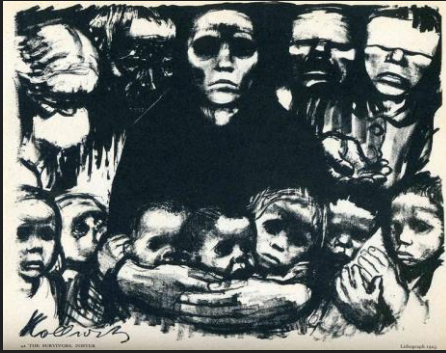
# Comparative Study of Andy Warhol and Kathe Kollwitz

Shalen Tully

For this case study, I will analyze Andy Warhol's "Twelve Electric Chairs" (1964) from his 'Death and Disaster Series' and two of Kathe Kollwitz works "The Survivors" (1923) and "The Volunteers" (1923). I will convey both artist's cultural and historical background to give context for their perspective on the themes present through their works. I will compare and contrast the formal qualities of each artist work - such as their use of **color**, **line**, **contrast**, and **repetition**, their artistic styles, and their approach to the theme of 'death' and its effect on society. Both artists have to an extent influenced the works I've made, such as the similar use of formal qualities and conceptual meanings. Through this comparative study, I plan on providing supporting evidence that highlights the recurring theme of death in the works that I analyze.

# Evaluation of Kathe Kollwitz's Cultural Significance

Kathe Kollwitz was a large contributor to the German Expressionist movement of the 20th Century. Her art cycle: "The Weavers and the Peasant War" focused on themes of war, poverty, and death during her life in Germany during World War I. During this period, her medium shifted from painting and sculpture to printmaking. In this new medium, she utilizes line, color, color-blocking, contrast, and composition with her traditional black and white color-palette to provoke emotions felt by those who've lived in war: sorrow, helplessness, and loss.



**The Survivors - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 55.88 x 68.58 cm

Kollwitz "The Survivors" provokes the loss and dread Germany's citizens felt during World War I, after witnessing and reaping the consequences of war, particularly death. The figures in the work all include black eye sockets to show their lack of a soul. Kollwitz is using this piece to communicate the idea that war and death only

leads to a loss in an individual's humanity. The middle figure, referred to as the Mother, is meant to represent Kathe Kollwitz. The color black can be associated with 'loss' and 'death'; the choice to have the woman in the middle of the frame wearing black is to show that she bears the tolls of death and loss the most. Her wrapping the children in her arms is an attempt to protect them from further harm; Kollwitz was communicating how community can help people heal from the effects of war.

Kollwitz "The Volunteers" shows the young citizens being taken to war by Death, who is leading the front banging on the drums. Most of Kollwitz's works expresses the victimization of citizens in war. Kollwitz other works usually focus on females affected by the war, but with "The Volunteers" she choose to show the impact that young men felt in fighting the war. This choice to include men instead of women came from Kollwitz two sons, Hans and Peter Kollwitz, both voluntarily enrolled in 1914. While Hans survived, Peter was killed in combat shortly after enlistment with his brother. In response to her son's death, Kollwitz made "The Volunteers" was made to express her unrest with Germany's citizens who had died fighting for the Fatherhood. In Kathe Kollwitz work, Death is a figure that can be seen as the drummer leading the men to battle; her intent behind having Death leading the march is to show how he is leading the people towards their imminent demise. The movement in the piece is created through the use of curved lines facing to the left-side of the frame and the composition of the figures starting from the bottom-right to the top-left. The central-figure of the work has his eyes closed, meant to represent the tragedy of men who volunteered to fight in war, but weren't able to see the selflessness of their sacrifice for the cause.



**The Volunteers - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 34.90 x 49.50 cm

# Analysis of Formal Qualities in Kathe Kollwitz's Art

Annotation of "The Volunteers" (1923)

The background of the piece is left empty to place emphasis on the subjects of the work: the people.

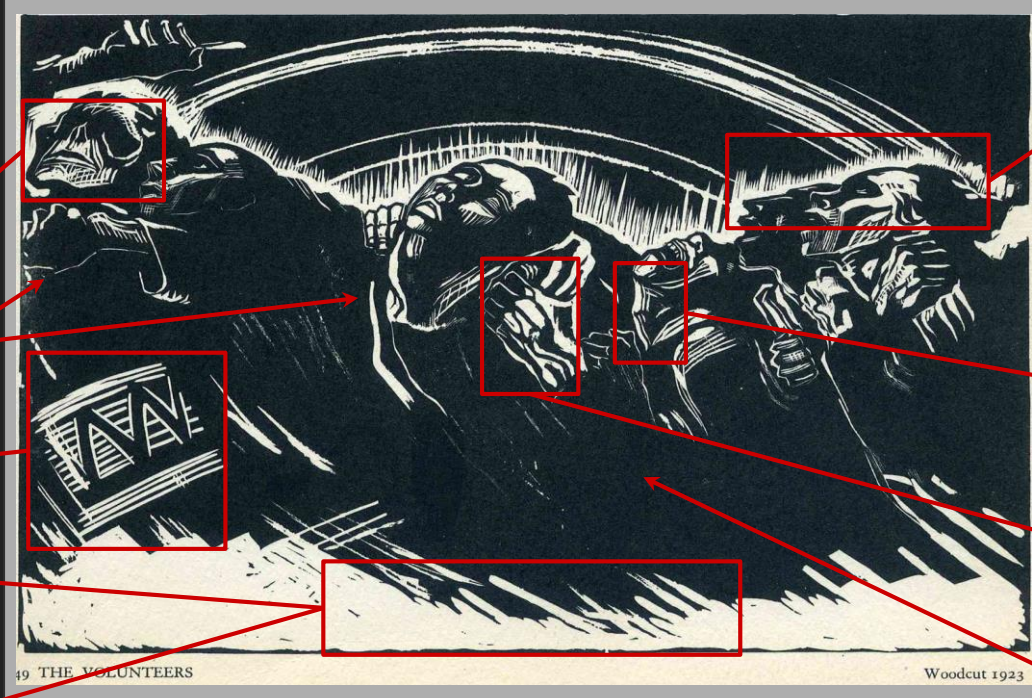
Cross-hatching is used to create form and texture in each of the characters faces.

White lines are used to define parts of the figures forms, such as arms, hands, and torso.

Line is used in repetition to make the form for the drum.

Angled line strokes in repetition along the bottom of the frame creates movement.

Along with the usage of black & white, the harsh cutting marks give this piece an unsettling tone.



Harsh, white line strokes are repeated to create contrast between the background and the figures.

The exclusion of any color other than black and white sets a muted, empty tone in the piece.

Kollwitz's exaggeration of the man's neck and expression provokes the emotions of dread and sadness.

The use of line and contrasting color in the figure's hand exhibits malnutrition.

The middle ground of the frame is black to put emphasis towards the figures in the work - made of white lines.

Kollwitzexpand\_more, Käthe. "The Volunteers, Käthe Kollwitz ^ Minneapolis Institute of Art." *The Volunteers, Käthe Kollwitz | Mia, Mia*, collections.artsmia.org/art/56193/the-volunteers-kaethe-kollwitz.

# Analysis of Formal Qualities in Kathe Kollwitz's Art

Annotation of "The Survivors" (1923)

Black is extensively used through the work's background to show the lingering effects of death.

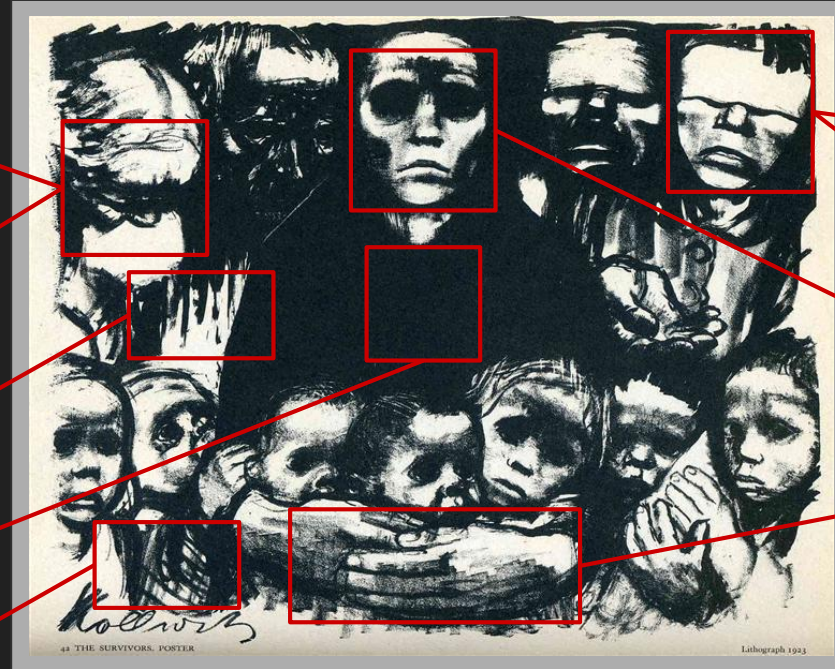
The exclusion of any color other than black and white sets a muted, empty tone in the piece.

The downward position of the woman's head, aided by the blackening of the figure's face, emphasizes the idea of painful loss and sorrow.

Harsh, scratchy lines in the background and foreground establish a harsh, uneasy tone.

Black on the middle figure's torso draws emphasis to the faces.

Use of cross-hatching method to create form and movement.



There's a lack of a detailed background to place emphasis on the subjects of the work: the people.

Bold, thick lines are used to create shape and form.

Highlighting and shading are emphasized through contrast of color-blocking.

The use of the color black underneath the woman's cheeks, eye sockets, and brow shows malnutrition.

Grainy texture (best seen in the hands) and creates a harsh tone in the piece.

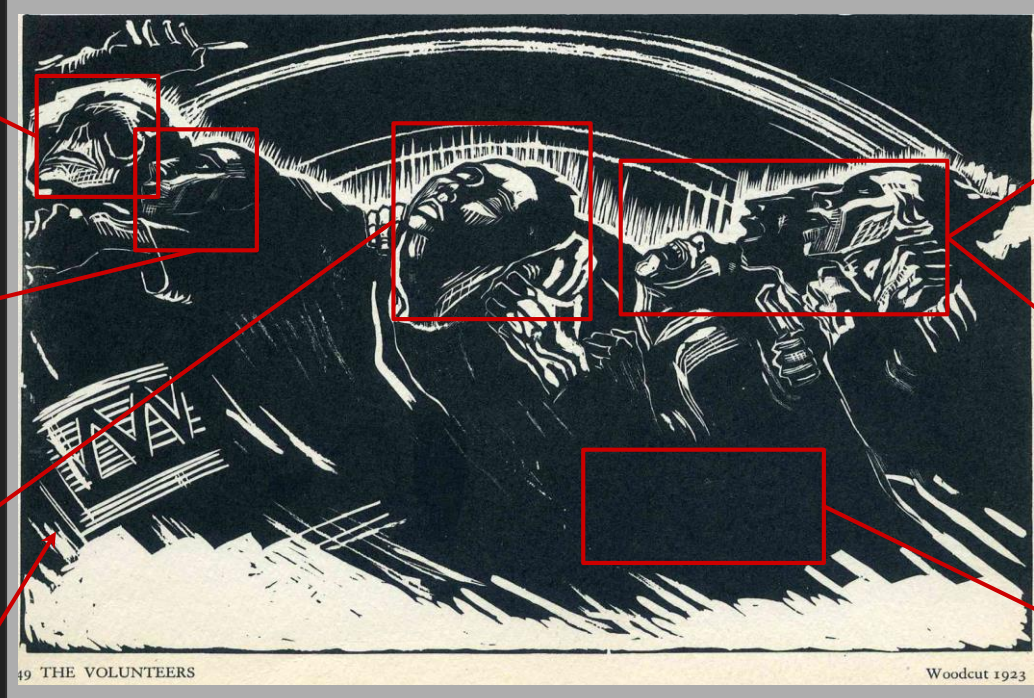
The placement of the woman in the middle of the frame, coincide the seven children equally spaced along the bottom and two adults by each of the woman's shoulders, creates a symmetrical balance in the work's composition.

Kollwitz, Kathe. "Die Überlebenden (The Survivors)." *MWeb Problem*.

[portlandartmuseum.us/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record.id](http://portlandartmuseum.us/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record.id)

# Interpretation of Function and Purpose in Kathe Kollwitz

Annotation of "The Volunteers" (1923)



Death's lack of eyes - instead narrow, empty sockets - shows that he (and the concept of death) is lifeless and devoid of humanity.

The man huddled under Death's arm is to show his embrace of death; the loss of his body conveys his inability to escape, and his black eyes show an absence of any humanity.

Kollwitz exaggerates the figures forms and expressions to show the physical toll experienced on the individual when facing death.

Death being the drummer is figurative in conveying the 'volunteers' are being marched directly to their death.

Kathe Kollwitz uses the repetition of the tired and defeated soldiers to make the viewer relate in their suffering and want it to stop as they march on towards their inevitable death.

The color white can be associated with 'good' and 'innocence'; the combination of the men's white faces to their black attire exhibits that the innocent are being directly affected by death.

The color black can be associated with 'death' and 'evil'. The figures all wearing black (or being a part of Death's robing) signifies their consumption from the idea of death and their suffering from it.

Kollwitzexpand\_more, Käthe. "The Volunteers, Käthe Kollwitz ^ Minneapolis Institute of Art." *The Volunteers, Käthe Kollwitz | Mia, Mia*, collections.artsmia.org/art/56193/the-volunteers-kaethe-kollwitz.

# Interpretation of Function and Purpose in Kathe Kollwitz Art

## Annotation of “The Survivors” (1923)

The use of highlighting and contrasting in Mother’s face shows her physical tolls from war.

The color black has a direct association with the meaning “death”. Mother in the middle of the frame wears a black shirt, showing that she has dealt with the tolls of war the most.

A recurring theme shown in Kollwitz work is black eyes and their relation to those who have witnessed or have been consumed by death.

Having 7 children displayed in the work emphasizes how war had taken away children’s childhood, & their innocence, hence the blackened eyes.



The women in the background have bandages wrapped over their eyes to convey their loss of sight; moreover their lack of will to bear witness to the consequences of war: death.

The woman extending her hand out shows her desire to be protected by “Mother” from the horrors of war.

The children’s hand is placed on the woman’s arm to show a desire for comfort and protection.

The woman in the center of the frame - referred to as ‘Mother’ - has her hands wrapped around three children to show comfort and protection from death.

Kollwitz, Kathe. “Die Überlebenden (The Survivors).” *MWeb Problem*.

[portlandartmuseum.us/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record/id](http://portlandartmuseum.us/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record/id)

# Evaluation of Andy Warhol's Cultural Significance



**Twelve Electric Chairs - Andy Warhol**  
1964 - 233.68 x 224.36 cm

Andy Warhol is recognized as one of the most important founding fathers of the Pop Art Movement and a revolutionist of art's interpretation and definition during the 20th Century. Warhol established a foundation between popular cultural understandings and of visual arts, and changed our interpretations of things considered common in society through his work. Many of Warhol's works use everyday objects, celebrities, and structures, and manipulates their meaning through the use of repetition, color, and scale. He uses these techniques in his "Death and Disaster Series" to make a statement on death's role in society.

Warhol's piece, "Twelve Electric Chairs", is one of the works he made during his "Death and Disaster Series" throughout the mid 20th century. This piece follows a recurring theme shown through other pieces in the series: 'death', displaying car accidents, plane crashes, suicides, and electric chairs. Notably, however, was how Warhol used these artworks to question death's institutionalized role in Western culture and society. "Twelve Electric Chairs" intentionally doesn't include human figures to diminish any personal connection that could be provoked from seeing a person, and instead only included the objects of which had killed the person to provide the needed context that someone died. This was done in pictures for newspapers during Warhol's time period, when public hangings and electric chair executions were publicly advertised. This idea of advertising is continued in Warhol's choice of screen-printing the work in repetition - similar to newspapers - and bold, vibrant colors seen on billboards and signs. The repetition of the electric chair was Warhol displaying the commonplace - but more importantly the acceptance

society. Warhol questions people's acceptance of death in "Twelve Electric Chairs" by placing the work's perspective in the eyes of the viewer, making the viewer themselves question if they're complicit in public death and execution.

# Analysis of Formal Qualities in Andy Warhol's Art

Annotation of "Twelve Electric Chairs" (1964)

Warhol uses a variety of different colors to misplace the negative emotions correlated with the electric chair, and in turn question or muddle the negative qualities we give it.

Grainy texture in the work's background creates a harsh, unsettling tone in the piece.

Repetition of the same image in the work to put emphasis on the subject: the electric chair.

Warhol uses the context of the subject itself: the electric chair, to create unease and discomfort.

The color black is used in the work's background as shading to show the lingering effects of death.



Image of the electric chair is in the perspective of the viewer.

Highlighting and shading are emphasized through contrast of color-blocking.

There's a lack of a detailed background to emphasize the subject.

Uses bright colors and bold, thick shapes to create form and shape.

Symmetrical balance is created in the work's composition through the placement of the electric chair in the middle of the frame.

Nechvatal, Joseph, and Joseph Nechvatal. "Death and Death and Death by Warhol." *Hyperallergic*, Hyperallergic, 24 June 2016, hyperallergic.com/306853/death-and-death-and-death-by-warhol/.



# Analysis of Function and Purpose in Andy Warhol's Art

## Annotation of "Twelve Electric Chairs" (1964)

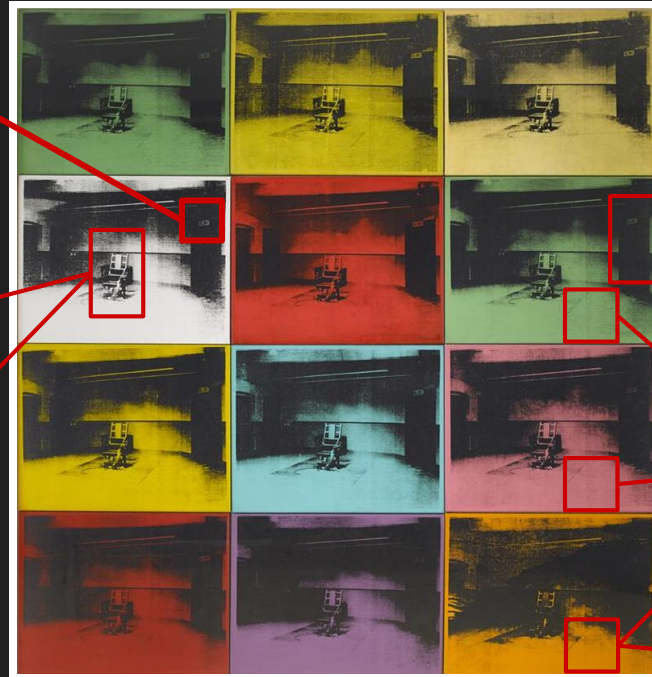
The "Silence" sign in the top-right corner of the background, in conjunction with the vibrant colors, has the viewer be told to withhold any emotion towards viewing death, creating an uneasy atmosphere.



Prior knowledge of the work's subject: the electric chair, is used by Warhol to directly relate the work to the idea of death.

The work's subject: the wheelchair, is a man-made object. Warhol's intent with displaying something man-made that kills is to show how society built and institutionalized death.

Repetition of the same image in the work to either intensify or dull the effects of the wheelchair - and by extension death - and its commonplace in society during the 20th Century.



Warhol puts the perspective of the work in the eyes of the viewer to question if the viewer is complicit in the act of killing someone and allowing its acceptance within society.

The usage of 'black' color-blocking in the background - a color associated with the idea of death - amplifies the quantity of institutionalized death.

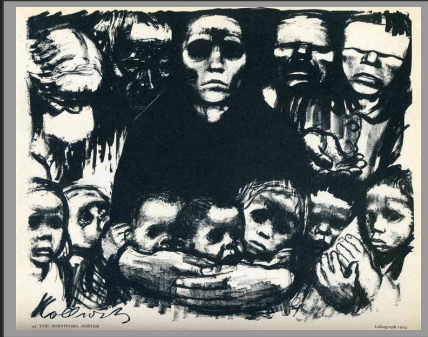
Bold colors and the work's graphic style are related to Pop Art and its use in advertising, intended to show how death is advertised and made commonplace by society.

Warhol's use of vibrant colors in each of the work's individual panels is used to challenge the viewer emotionally when in conjunction with the context of the wheelchair.

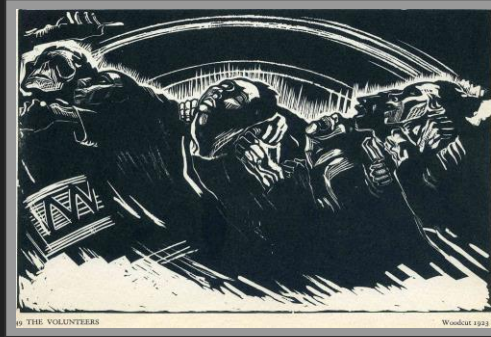
Nechvatal, Joseph, and Joseph Nechvatal. "Death and Death and Death by Warhol." *Hyperallergic*, Hyperallergic, 24 June 2016, [hyperallergic.com/306853/death-and-death-and-death-by-warhol/](http://hyperallergic.com/306853/death-and-death-and-death-by-warhol/).

# Comparing Artistic Styles

Kathe Kollwitz and Andy Warhol



**The Survivors - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 55.88 x 68.58 cm



**The Volunteers - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 34.90 x 49.50 cm

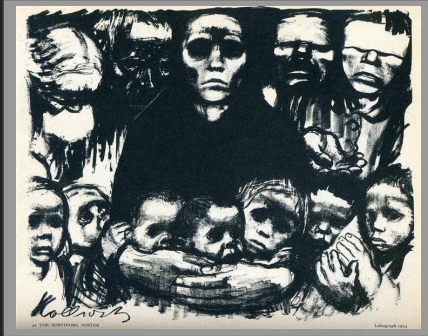


**Twelve Electric Chairs - Andy Warhol**  
1964 - 233.68 x 224.36 cm

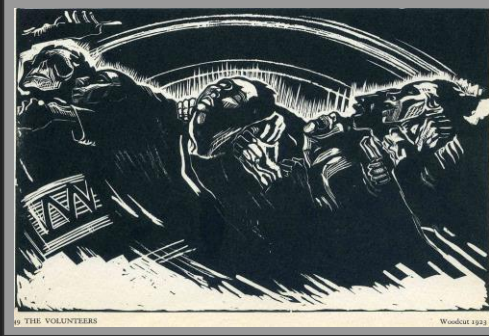
When comparing the two works, both of them have use contrast of their primary color(s) with black, which is used to define the edges of certain objects or spaces, in Kathe Kollwitz to define people from the black background, and in Warhol's the electric chairs from the black background of the room. Both of these artists also emphasize the extent of loss or death in their respective pieces through a mass in numbers of what has been lost. In both of Kathe Kollwitz works she uses the mass number of people to exemplify the far-reaching negativities of war - from adults to young kids. In Warhol's work the mass of electric chairs to exemplify the far-reaching negativities and emptiness that modern-day art has.

# Contrasting Artistic Styles

Kathe Kollwitz and Andy Warhol



**The Survivors - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 55.88 x 68.58 cm



**The Volunteers - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 34.90 x 49.50 cm

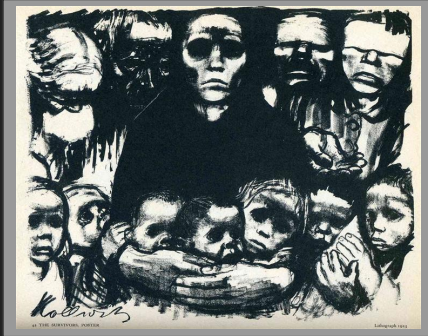


**Twelve Electric Chairs - Andy Warhol**  
1964 - 233.68 x 224.36 cm

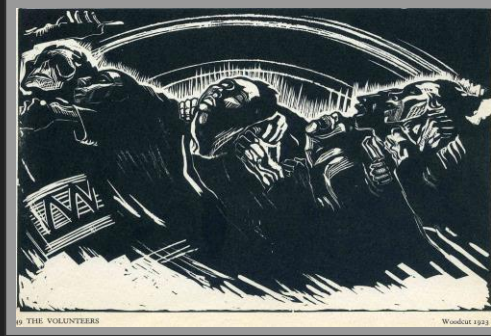
Kathe Kollwitz uses the contrast of black and white colors, and line to create form, depth, and highlights, such as the slim lines that are used in "The Survivors" to distinguish the middle female- figures shoulders from the background. This technique is also demonstrated in "The Volunteers", with white strokes used to give the people's heads, hands, and bodies form. She also does not use the repetition of an image to get her message across, but rather in the mass of people in the works.

# Contrasting Artistic Styles - Part 2

Kathe Kollwitz and Andy Warhol



**The Survivors - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 55.88 x 68.58 cm



**The Volunteers - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 34.90 x 49.50 cm

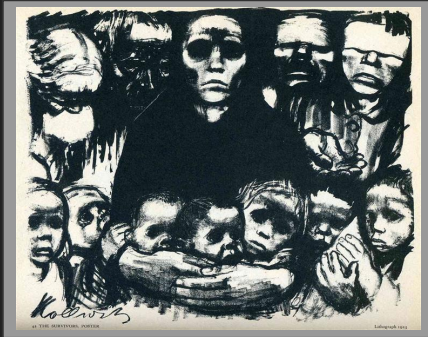


**Twelve Electric Chairs - Andy Warhol**  
1964 - 233.68 x 224.36 cm

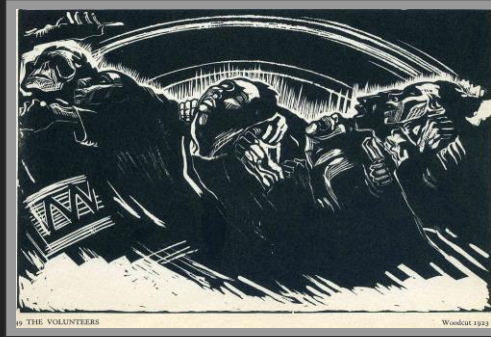
In contrast, Warhol uses the repetition of an electric-chair to equally destroy the value of art while also exemplifying how grand and large-scale its death is. His usage of the electric-chair in itself is meant to show that we - the people who strap others into the chair - are the ones that are killing art. He also - in contrast to Kathe Kollwitz, uses an assortment of colors - white, yellow, orange, red, green, blue, pink, and purple - to show that the emotion evoked from art is lost in the piece due to the conflict of differing emotions when put with the electric chair. He also doesn't use wood-carving as his medium, but rather photography and acrylic paint to make his works.

# Comparing the Use of Emotion

Kathe Kollwitz and Andy Warhol



**The Survivors - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 55.88 x 68.58 cm



**The Volunteers - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 34.90 x 49.50 cm

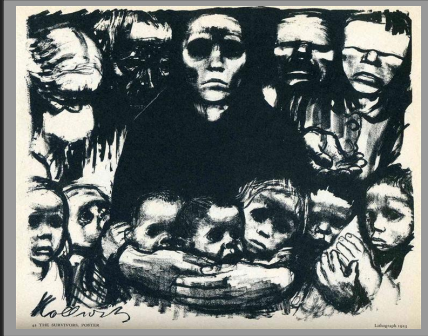


**Twelve Electric Chairs - Andy Warhol**  
1964 - 233.68 x 224.36 cm

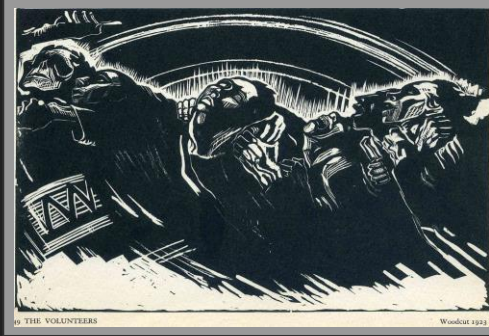
Both Andy Warhol and Kathe Kollwitz used these works as ways of expressing loss on both a personal and international level. They use clichés of loss through death through the exaggerated grieving facial expressions and the negative connotations connected with the electric chair. Both of the artists using a heavy amount of black in the background, not giving the piece any definitive location, making the pieces have uneasy and darker intentions.

# Contrasting the Use of Emotion

Kathe Kollwitz and Andy Warhol



**The Survivors - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 55.88 x 68.58 cm



**The Volunteers - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 34.90 x 49.50 cm

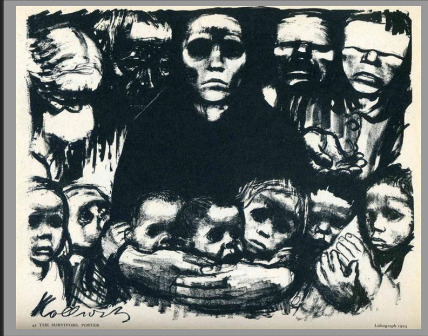


**Twelve Electric Chairs - Andy Warhol**  
1964 - 233.68 x 224.36 cm

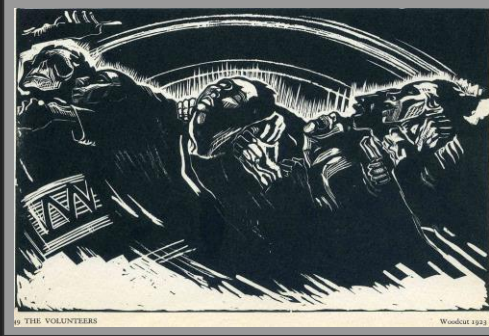
Kathe Kollwitz doesn't use repetition or the contrast the rules we've defined for art, but rather exaggerates them in order to emphasize the loss that people have felt from war. Her using only the colors of black and white make the piece evoke a feeling of emptiness; the black also being the dominant color over the white - in both the background and in the figures eyes - makes her pieces evoke an immense feeling of dread and loss, and that it has consumed them.

# Contrasting the Use of Emotion - Part 2

Kathe Kollwitz and Andy Warhol



**The Survivors - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 55.88 x 68.58 cm



**The Volunteers - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 34.90 x 49.50 cm



**Twelve Electric Chairs - Andy Warhol**  
1964 - 233.68 x 224.36 cm

For Warhol, in his works he muddles the clarity of the emotions attached to an electric chair - which are usually negative - through colors that evoke other emotions, and in turn flips the interpretation of emotions we correlate with color in art to demonstrate how the medium of art as a whole is “lost”. Instead of strictly displaying the “loss of something”, Warhol gives contradicting principles of art and design to confuse the viewer in how they should be feeling, and establishing the idea of art “being lost” in the viewer.

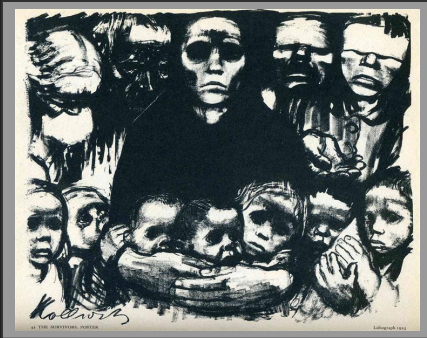
# Comparison of Personal Work to Kathe Kollwitz's Art

## Similarities:

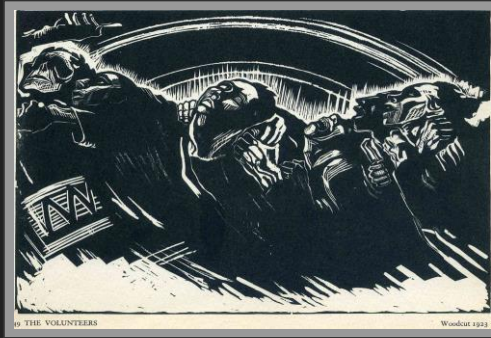
1. Kathe Kollwitz's and my own work use varying line-weights to create movement, and draw the viewer's attention to key objects in the frame.
2. Line is used in repetition to draw emphasis to key objects in the work.
3. All three pieces uses a monochromatic color-scheme of black and white to provoke feelings of emptiness, sorrow, and death from the figures present. The figures in the work wear or exhibit black to show how death has consumed them of their innocence and humanity.
4. Kathe Kollwitz's exaggeration in figures form - such as proportion, body-language, and characteristics - are similarly applied in my work to show the physical toll death holds on people.

## Differences:

1. The quantity of people in Kathe Kollwitz work to my own changes the viewer's perception of death's impact on society; Kollwitz shows it reaching a vast amount of people, while mine shows its impact on a single individual.
2. Whereas Kathe Kollwitz uses black-spotting as negative space to contrast from highlighted areas in white, my work uses white as negative space, and black to draw emphasis to key objects.
3. In Kollwitz work the color black is shown in the women's clothing and eye-socket to show the mental and physical toll of death, whereas in my own work black is only used in the figure's hair to convey how death solely affects him mentally.



**The Survivors - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 55.88 x 68.58 cm



**The Volunteers - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 34.90 x 49.50 cm



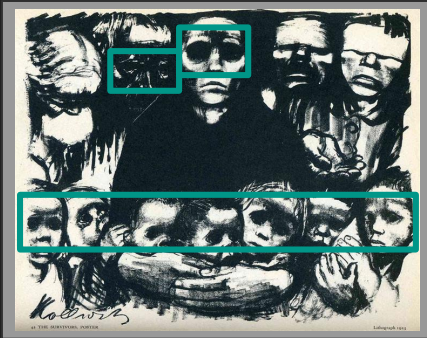
**Lone Survivor - Shalen Tully**  
2018 - 37.90 x 25.20 cm



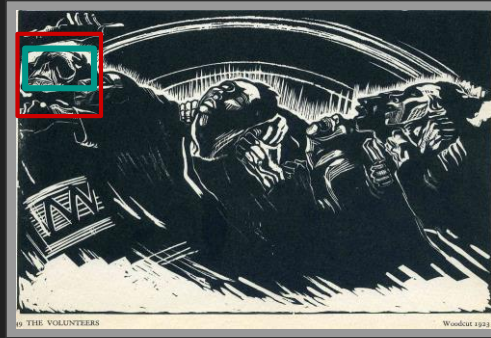
# Comparison of Personal Work to Kathe Kollwitz's Art

## Meanings and Concepts

In Kathe Kollwitz "The Survivors", "The Volunteers", and my work "Lone Survivor", each work exhibits a recurring theme of death, illustrating the repercussions of massacre. Both artists effectively use line, color, form, and repetition in their composition to show the physical and mental toll of those who've witnessed death. Both artist's use black - a color associated directly with 'death', and white - a color associated with 'good' and 'innocence', to show how death has affected the innocent. Kathe Kollwitz's "The Volunteers" uses the repetition of curved or angles white lines throughout to exaggerate each figure's form and convey the physical toll with marching towards their death; this is applied to my work "Lone Survivor", where the placement of the man's head and line that exaggerates his back showcase's extreme physical exhaustion from seeing death. The representation of the mental toll in these works', however, are approached differently. In Kathe Kollwitz "The Volunteers", the character Death has eye-sockets colored black, showing his lack of any personality or soul. Figures in her other works, such as "The Survivor's" also have recurring black eye-sockets to show that death has taken away their sense of being and living. In my piece "Lone Survivor", the mental toll of death is shown by the artist's intent to conceal the figure's face from the viewer, demonstrating to the viewer a lack of emotion or sense of being. Both artist's use their techniques to produce a similar disconnection between the figure's in their work and the viewer, showing that death's consequences on the human mind and body can only be understood to those who've seen it.



**The Survivors - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 55.88 x 68.58 cm



**The Volunteers - Kathe Kollwitz**  
1923 - 34.90 x 49.50 cm



**Lone Survivor - Shalen Tully**  
2018 - 37.90 x 25.20 cm

# Comparison of Personal Work to Andy Warhol's Art

## Similarities:

1. Similar thematic uses with "black"; the color is commonly tied to 'death', 'mourning', and 'sadness'. Andy Warhol and myself use black throughout the space and subjects to set the work's tone.
2. Emotion towards death is created through context of the works subjects.
3. Both artists use bold colors to draw attention towards the works subject, and creates a Pop Art style.
4. Both works use bright colors and bold, thick lines to create form.
5. Highlighting and shading are emphasized through contrast of color-blocking.
6. The focus of the works are in the middle, creating symmetrical balance and putting emphasis on the subject.
7. There's a lack of a detailed background to emphasize the subject.
8. All works are in the perspective of the audience / viewer, with the object or person facing them directly.



Twelve Electric Chairs - Andy Warhol  
1964 - 233.68 x 224.36 cm

## Differences:

1. "Twelve Electric Chairs" uses various colors in conjunction with black to either intensify or dull death's interpretation within society, whereas my work uses specifically red and white with black to focus on the negative connotations death has on the innocent.
2. Andy Warhol uses repetition of the electric chairs to create emphasis on death's commonplace and reach on the public, whereas my own work only includes one figure to highlight death's reach on the individual.
3. Different subjects to represent death and its emotions: electric chair and person.
4. Warhol's prints contain smooth transitions and gradients to define form, while my painting is blocky and contains line and shape to make form.
5. Warhol includes a background to help give space and tone, while my work uses only color in the background to create tone, but not space.



Complexity - Shalen Tully  
2017 - 91.44 x 91.44 cm

# Comparison of Personal Work to Andy Warhol's Art

## Meanings and Concepts



**Twelve Electric Chairs - Andy Warhol**  
1964 - 233.68 x 224.36 cm

In Andy Warhol's "Twelve Electric Chairs" and my work "Complexity", both works are a commentary on the institutionalization and commonplace of death within society and the emotional response from it. The use of bold, vibrant colors are used to provoke subjective emotion into the viewer, however, the application of the "silence" sign repeated throughout Warhol's piece and the closed mouth in my work tells the viewer to withhold any emotion while in the view of death. The color black in our artworks is connected to the idea of death; Warhol uses black to associate death with the electric chair and the surrounding environment, though in my own work uses black in color-blocking along the figure's clothing, shadow, and hair to reveal the physical and mental tolls death has on the individual. Warhol uses the absence of a person to make his message reached towards a broader audience and create less emotional attachment, while my work includes a single figure to create a personal connection to the viewer after experiencing death.



**Complexity - Shalen Tully**  
2017 - 91.44 x 91.44 cm

# Connection to All Three Artist's

Warhol, Kollwitz, and Shalen

Warhol, Kollwitz, and myself all focus on the theme of death and the emotions felt with it. Through our works we allow the viewer to recognize and understand the impact of death in our lives, and comment on how society has made it commonplace, institutionalized, and accepted by society. All works use a common color: black, to demonstrate the idea of death itself; in conjunction with the objects in each piece - the people and electric chairs, this formulates the negative emotional connotations connected to death. Warhol and Kollwitz use the repetition of objects - such as people and electric chairs - to show how many people were affected by death, whereas my own work only includes a single object to personalize death's effect on a single individual. A component throughout the three artist's is emotion - or rather the absence of emotion when in the presence of witnessing or mourning death. In Kathe Kollwitz "The Survivors" and "The Volunteers" she chooses to have her figures with blackened eye sockets and exhausted expressions to convey their lack of expression after seeing death. Andy Warhol's "Twelve Electric Chairs" conveys a lack of emotion through the omission of any figures present in the frame, therefore conveying no emotion in the presence of death. My own works lack emotion through the absence of any facial expressions; in "Lone Survivor" the characters face is hidden away behind his torso, and in "Complexity" there is no expression being communicated.

