



No. 4 "The Restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France" [From 'The Great War: Britain's Efforts And Ideals shown in a series of lithographic prints: 'The Ideals' series]

Date

1917

Primary Maker

Maurice Greiffenhagen

Medium

Lithograph on paper

Dimensions

76.5 x 51.4 cm

Description

This is a three colour planographic print (lithograph) on paper, and is part of a series entitled 'The Great War: Britain's Efforts And Ideals shown in a series of

lithographic prints: 'The Ideals' series. There are a total of six lithographs in this particular series, and in total there are ten series. The lithographs are numbered as if the entire ten series are one, so this print is number 4. This is a three colour lithographic print on paper which forms part of the Ideals collection. Many of the prints in this collection express specific territorial ambitions and are highly allegorical. It is likely that they were created to directly combat the general feeling of 'war weariness' felt among the British people after devastating loss of life at the Battle of the Somme in the summer of 1916. This print shows the figure of "Marianne" being embraced by two women. She is the national emblem of France, an iconic symbol of liberty and reason. Here "Marianne" carries a sword in her right hand and is wrapped in the French flag. The Ideal of the emancipation of Alsace-Lorraine is further emphasised by the Phrygian cap upon her head bearing a tricolour cockade. This bonnet rouge topped with the rosette is associated with revolutionary France and the fall of the Bastille. In artistic representations it is often used to signify liberation from all servitudes, the sign for unification of all enemies of despotism. The clinging embrace of the women in this print is reminiscent of the swooning clinch of the lovers in the flower garden of Greiffenhagen's earlier and much celebrated work, An Idyll. Far from the heady love scene of An Idyll, the women depicted in The Restoration of Alsace-Lorraine seem to swoon from grief or exhaustion. The women wear practical clothing made from utilitarian fabrics, gingham and cotton, perhaps emphasising simplicity and modesty, a further rejection of bourgeois ideals. In the left background fire and swirling smoke can be seen. There is a

tremulous quality to this print; it shows us a moment of respite after a battle. The scene is infused with the energy of the occasion; "Marianne's" demeanour is one of glory as she supports the women, enfolding them in the flag. Ruth Keating 2014 Maurice William Greiffenhagen was born in England. His parents had come to London from Denmark prior to his birth. He attended the RA schools, and exhibited at the RA, as well as other venues. He worked initially as an illustrator, being much associated with the author Rider Haggard (1856-1925), author of King Solomon's Mines. Greiffenhagen was a versatile artist, and artistically was much influenced by Whistler.