



No. 55 "On the Land: Ploughing" [From 'The Great War: Britain's Efforts And Ideals shown in a series of lithographic prints: 'Women's Work' series]

Date

1917

Primary Maker

Archibald Standish Hartrick

Medium

Lithograph on paper

Dimensions

50.8 x 40.7 cm

Description

This is a 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: 'Women's Work' 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 55. This print depicts two women ploughing; one facing the viewer in the foreground, and another facing away from the viewer in the background. Two horses pulling the plough can be seen in the background. Birds can be seen gathering in the distance. Archibald Hartrick was born in Bangalore, India, the son of an army officer. His mother brought him to Scotland in 1866, where he was educated in Edinburgh, studying medicine at the University. He later studied at the Slade School of Fine Art, London and in the late 1880s travelled to Paris and Pont-Aven becoming friendly with Gauguin, Van Gogh and Toulouse-Lautrec. Lithography was his main medium and although his work showed delicate and sensitive draughtsmanship the results tended to be worthy rather than brilliant. He illustrated a number of books and wrote and published *Lithography as a Fine Art* in 1932. The brief of Women's Work, given to A.S. Hartrick was to show the varied contribution women made to the war effort on the Home Front. Hartrick made his drawings from life and showed women undertaking a diversity of jobs that were normally done by men including working the land, munitions work, or becoming bus conductors and railway workers. Working in the munitions factory, which involved both skilled and unskilled work, was especially dangerous. Hartrick recalled that he had to take off his shoes before entering the TNT packing area lest a spark from a nail would cause an explosion. The subject of the drawing *Dangerous Work (Packing TNT)* was a pretty girl who preferred to wear a napkin around her mouth and nose rather than the uncomfortable metal snout supplied by the army. Like most other workers, her face and hair were stained yellow due to chemical inhalation. Some believed that the

best all round workers were former housemaids but women from all strata of society undertook essential work from policing, to heading up medical institutions to running air factories. At the private view of these lithographs at the Fine Arts Society in Bond Street, Hartrick recalled a fashionably dressed young woman coming up to him, unrecognisable from the young woman in overalls and headscarf he had drawn. The daughter of a Colonel, she worked alongside her mother in a factory. Women's suffrage had not yet been granted in Britain, and considering that women were doing vital and skilled work well, many wondered what would happen after the war. In many instances, however, the refrain of 'only for the duration of the war' became the dominant response. Hartrick also recalled the lack of rejoicing at the end of the war. He said 'like a nightmare, the War sat on the heads of everybody, and it seemed as if we would never be rid of it, but at last it had passed, and for long nobody cared to recall any thoughts of it.' Hartrick's own wife suffered a breakdown due to the anxiety of living through war time and the continuous threat of bombing raids.