



No. 39 "Acetylene welder" [From 'The Great War: Britain's Efforts And Ideals shown in a series of lithographic prints: 'Building Aircraft' series]

Date

1917

Primary Maker

Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson

Medium

Lithograph on paper

Dimensions

40 x 29.9 cm

Description

This planographic print (lithograph) on paper, is part of a series entitled 'The Great War: Britain's Efforts And Ideals shown in a series of lithographic prints: 'Building Ships' 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 39. Two female factory workers are shown welding. The light omitted from the welding illuminates their faces and allows to viewer to see their goggles and cloth-wrapped hair. Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson was born in Britain He attended St John's Wood School of Art 1907-8, the Slade School 1908-12 and the Academie Julian, Paris, 1912-13, where he shared a studio with Modigliani, worked at the Cercle Russe and made friends with Severini. Interested in Cubism and Futurism, he was one of the first English artists to be deeply influenced by new developments in Europe at that time; his work was included in the Post-Impressionists and Futurists exhibition at the Dore Gallery in 1913. During World War I, he served in France for the Red Cross and the Royal Army Medical Corps. His experiences during the war became a primary subject for his work. These unpleasant interpretations of trench warfare were acclaimed at his solo exhibition, held in 1916 at the Leicester Galleries in London. Nevinson returned to France in 1917 and began working as an Official War Artist and a year, he held another one-man exhibition in London. After the war, he abandoned Futurism and began creating more traditional work. By the time Nevinson wrote to the Department of Information in April 1917 asking to contribute to the Efforts and Ideals series, his reputation was well established in both England the United States of America, and he was readily accepted. His chief advocate was another contributor, Muirhead Bone, who was a friend and admirer of Nevinson's although as was the case with many of his artistic colleagues, Nevinson turned against Bone and labelled him "Bonehead Muir." Of all the lithographs produced for Efforts and Ideals, Nevinson's were

especially admired. These prints document visually the process of building aircraft with three images that show making the engine, assembling parts and welding the pieces together to the flight of the aircraft. The subject suited Nevinson's Futurist style and when exhibited one critic wrote that Nevinson "contrives to make the visitor almost giddy" and another wrote that he possessed "the power of expressing sensations rather than visual facts." Two of the most striking images are Acetylene Welder and Assembling Parts and both show the contribution that women workers made to the war effort.