

# Basic Detail Report

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## No. 10 "The Triumph of Democracy" [From 'The Great War Britains Efforts And Ideals shown in a series of lithographic prints: 'The Ideals' series]

Date

1917

### Primary Maker

William Rothenstein

### Medium

Lithograph on paper

### Dimensions

43.2 x 71.1 cm

### Description

This is a five 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 10. Rothenstein was an early advocate of the idea of an Official War Artists scheme and was especially keen that the contribution of soldiers from India to the Allied cause be recorded. While he was praised for his work helping with the badly wounded following a particularly heavy campaign in March 1918, his artistic portrayal of the war was regarded as being less than successful. The earnestness with which he wished his work to serve a national purpose was seen by critics to have had instead a stifling effect on his style. Rothenstein here shows Democracy, personified as a female figure in white, having just been unchained by the young man on the right. She rushes to embrace a small child, a symbol of hope, being carried from the trenches on the shoulders of a soldier. On the left, the figure of 'tyrant Imperialism', as described by The Studio in 1917, is dressed in German uniform, and has been disarmed and is being handcuffed by a British soldier.<sup>13</sup> Rothenstein places all this action in a landscape setting with male and female, young and old. Rather than the surrounding countryside being churned up by trench warfare and explosives, there is a idealistic image of a farmer ploughing a field led by a white horse. The inscription included at the bottom of the work elaborates on this aspiration for the future where having fought the good fight there is 'the hope of fruitful service for all.' When the war ended many of the skilled tasks taken on by women during the war reverted to men upon their return. In Britain, the right to vote was granted in 1918 to only some women who fulfilled certain criteria. Universal franchise was eventually established in 1928. Jessica O'Donnell 2014 To the left a soldier can be seen tying another soldier's hands behind his back, his knife lies on the ground

beside him; in the centre a woman dressed in white holds her arms outstretched towards a child sitting on an armed soldier's shoulders; standing on the right are two farmers, while in the background a farmer and horse can be seen ploughing the land. 'While democracy is unchained, tyranny is bound & from the trenches is brought the hope of fruitful service for all' is printed along the bottom of the print.