

# Neither Spectator Nor Audience

DOROTHEE ADER sheds light on the impact of the Great War on the influential German type designer Rudolf Koch.

*Earlier this year, Port Moody Station Museum hosted an exhibition of 40 works of art by the German type designer Rudolf Koch, an influential craftsman and artist whose work influenced Hermann Zapf, among others. When the exhibition closed at the end of May, Dorothee Ader of the Klingspor Museum in Offenbach, Germany, came to accompany the works home to the museum's collection. She gave a presentation to a small audience during her visit regarding the work of Rudolf Koch, with a particular emphasis on the influence of his experiences in the First World War. The following is an edited version of her comments.*

—Peter Mitham, editor

RUDOLF KOCH LIVED AND WORKED with great energy in many different areas, but his purest and greatest pleasure was the making of letters. That, at least, is what he said about his ambitions. Personally, I have the impression that Koch's work, his oeuvre, engages deeply with the spirit and ideas of his time. His works are influenced by his personal ideas, but they also reflect the historical surroundings and offer vivid insights into both the person and the times in which he lived. We can see this in his drawings of the First World War, but also in his typefaces, in his tapestries, in his illustrated books. And I think it is a quite fascinating aspect of his work.

Rudolf Koch was born in 1876 in Nuremberg and he found success as an illustrator in Leipzig until he applied, at the end of 1905, to an advertisement from the Rudhard'sche Schriftgießerei, a type foundry in Offenbach. The foundry was looking for new craftsmen and artists to join the foundry, "to support the owner in elaborating on new ideas, knowledgeable gentlemen who appreciate the arts."

By 1905, Koch had already experimented with type design. He had the idea to develop

a new kind of type by studying old types and forming the characters by using a broad-edged pen. So he was actually writing by hand, like calligraphy, and had the idea to transform it into type for printing. The classic Gothic forms would be somehow smoother, more organic, which corresponded to the ideas of Jugendstil or Art Nouveau in these days. Koch replied to the advertisement, and at the beginning of 1906 he moved with his whole family to Offenbach to start his new job in the type foundry.

The small type foundry had been bought in 1892 by Karl Klingspor, the owner of a tobacco factory, for his sons, Karl and Wilhelm Klingspor. Within a few years the two brothers were able to turn this rundown company into a world-renowned enterprise. Karl Jr. developed the idea to see typography and type design as a creative process, so he started to commission artists and painters to design new typefaces. In 1900, the type foundry published the brush-written Eckmann type, which was a huge success, and the insignificant type foundry became instantly famous. The typeface is distinguished by quite round forms, so you can imagine the brush for writing, and it became the most important typeface of the time.

The Eckmann type was also interesting for international print shops, so the specimen book demonstrated the typeface with French words, too. The choice of words used in the typeface always reveals the marketing strategy. We can see these very German names, like Bismarck, Richard Wagner and his opera *Parzifal* in the first line, but also Paris, one of the capitals of Art Nouveau. The typeface was positioned as modern, and somehow arty, but also suitable for commercial purposes. Encouraged by this success, Klingspor engaged more noted artists, such as Peter Behrens, Heinrich Vogeler and Otto Hupp. Behrens was a famous German architect, and he designed a typeface that combined the



*The brush-written Eckmann type.*

organic forms of Jugendstil with a very strong vertical line. You can even find some of his ornaments and decorative initials in house designs of these years. So this typeface reminds us of buildings or structures with its vertical design.

#### EARLY BLACKLETTER FONTS

In 1906, as mentioned, Koch joined this open-minded and modern company. It had changed its name the same year to Gebrüder Klingspor (Brothers Klingspor). Koch worked for Klingspor until his death in 1934 and became the most important type designer of the company, developing over 20 different typefaces. His first was a blackletter, called Deutsche Schrift. It appeared in 1910. Koch developed this typeface over several years, beginning with handwriting—that was his thing, to write the letters by hand with a pen—and he describes the design as follows: “In the example presented here, the designer worked long and devotedly using a broad quill pen to develop a typestyle which pays justice to this tool, and is otherwise in all respects as simple and pure as possible.”

The characters are at first sight a mixture of classical Gothic and Schwabacher alphabets but without their geometric regularity. It’s actually a very lively and vigorous typeface with dynamic strokes, but it’s also established enough to fulfill different kinds of necessities when using it. Fritz Korge wrote in 1911 about this Koch type:

This new typeface is strong and distinctive, free and lively. It comes to us, sits down and,



*The Deutsche Schrift.*

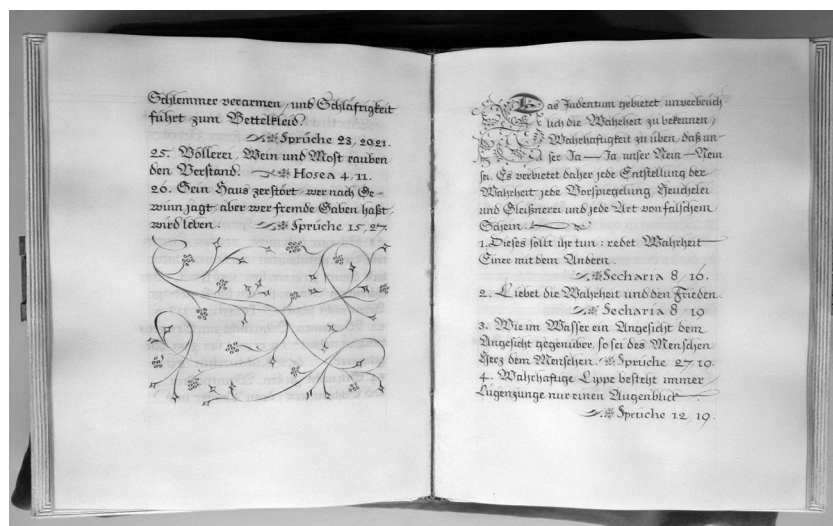
with a cheerful glance and a wide smile, says: My name is Koch; I feel very comfortable here . . . . We are also seeing larger works (Nibelungen, Gudruns Song, The Four Gospels) set in Koch type which have been produced with a real sense of simplicity and Sublimity. . . . A signal is given [by this type] for a Bible to be printed which will be perceived by living and future generations—type for the language of Luther, the prose of Lessing, Gottsched, Fichte, Reuter.

Korge describes the new typeface as strong and distinctive on the one hand; free, lively and cheerful on the other hand. So it's a kind of blend of a conservative steadiness that reminds of German type history, and of a new spirit of freedom and liberation within the old boundaries. It's quite interesting that Korge refers to Nibelungen, Gudruns Song, Martin Luther, Lessing, Gottsched—all these very German identity-establishing authors and literature, and when we look at the type specimen, we also see these connections in the choice of words. The words mean huntsman, building or structure, battle, and the German town Dresden. In the 1910s, a new quite conservative, nationalistic spirit arose in Germany that was quite widespread throughout society.

The still-young German nation sought some national identity, and Koch had, as most

Germans at that time, a strong love for his home country and certain historical achievements that he wanted to preserve and to defend. The *Nibelungenlied*, for example, was seen as the German national epic in the 19th century, and Koch's blackletter is also a symbol of the new nationalistic, or maybe patriotic idea and its signification in Germany at that time. The type foundry even called this typeface *Deutsche Schrift*—German type, German script—so it's some kind of incarnation of German spirit in type design. The blackletter is actually historically rooted, and Koch refers to this history in the new design, and really touches a nerve with this refreshed tradition. He acts in the spirit of the time, and the *Deutsche Schrift* was therefore a great success for the type foundry, even though a broad discussion among type designers and printers took place in these days about the use of Roman or German letters. Koch always defended the German script, which he described as beautiful, and it took him 10 more years to design his first Roman alphabet for Klingspor. From before the First World War until the 1920s, he stuck to this German tradition of blackletter developed from handwriting.

But not all of his designs breathe this almost brutally elaborated attachment to the past. In 1914, before the onset of the war, Koch issued a very light, almost romantic type, called *Frühling*



*Koch's Handbook of Judaism for Siegfried Guggenheim.*

(Spring). It is written with a narrow kind of pen, so it is very delicate, and it is very interesting to see how Koch developed the light forms in his drafts: “Strong upstrokes and downstrokes, and large capital letters give it an appearance of lightness. The lively gentleness and gracefulness are what makes it special. Printed carefully on very white paper, composed loosely and open, it can be used anytime one is looking to create an elegant effect, and seeking delicate restraint.”

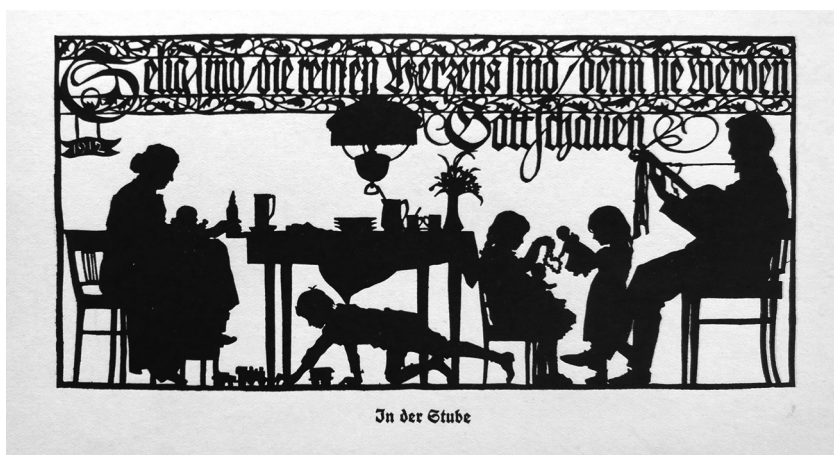
Even though Koch was a type designer at first hand, he always had in mind the artistic synthesis of type design, typography, material and illustration. In 1914, a few months before *Frühling* was issued, he gave a beautifully written *Handbook of Judaism* to one of his best friends, Siegfried Guggenheim, a Jewish lawyer who lived and worked in Offenbach. Guggenheim was not only a very close friend, he was also a patron of Koch's art. The *Handbook of Judaism* is an exceptionally beautiful book with a binding from white leather. It's written on parchment, in the fragile, most tactile Fraktur blackletter (it's written by hand), that reminds strongly of the light strokes of the typeface *Frühling*. The lightness and the delicacy of handwriting fascinates, corresponding with the tender ornamentation in blue, red and green and golden hues that Koch generously dispersed across the pages. The work is clearly influenced by the flowery tendrils in late Gothic book illumination. In the late Gothic period, especially in books of hours, you find the beginning of detailed floral

depiction, and Koch proves one more time his fine instinct to connect some historically gained mastery to some new ideas of type design.

#### DOMESTIC SILHOUETTES

Koch's increasingly notable work for the Klingspor type foundry was interrupted in 1914 by the outbreak of the First World War. In August 1915, Koch joined the army. He was 38 years old and he had a large family, as you can see in his drawings and scissor cuts of these days. In the years between 1911 and 1915, Koch cut an ingenious series of silhouettes from thin black paper. He called them *Schattenbilder* (shadow pictures), and in one silhouette from 1912 he allowed a very private view into his family life. We see Rudolf playing the guitar, his wife Rosa with the youngest daughter Lore sitting on her lap, the oldest son Paul, six years old, playing with his railway set under the table, and the two daughters Margarete (Gretel) and Ursula (Ursel). Koch shows a very lively depiction of his everyday family life. One can almost hear his children talking and playing, and the peacefulness of the scene is touching. You can also see Koch's deep religiousness in this cutting; above the picture it says, in German, “Selig sind, die reinen Herzens sind; denn sie werden Gott schauen” (Blest are the pure-hearted; they shall [see] God). Koch's Christianity was strong and undogmatic, and strongly linked to his life and work.

There were other memories of the family



---

*Koch's Schattenbilder (shadow picture) offers a rare private view into his family life.*

that Koch wanted to preserve, such as a day in September 1911 when his daughter Ursel had her first braids done. These *Schattenbilder* show Koch's ability to perceive the small things in life and his desire to preserve these memories. The silhouettes weren't made to be published; they were a private activity, a way to establish a personal culture of remembrance. In 1934, Ernst Kellner wrote about the silhouettes, "During the quiet hours on a restful Sunday, the master captured these scenes of his domestic life for his own pleasure and only for himself and his family. They were only published when he had considerable emotional distance from his early work, resulting from his experience of three years of military service at the very front of the war."

Indeed, the 28 silhouettes Koch made were originally published in 1918 in a limited edition of 150 copies. In February 1915, the political development enters the shadow pictures, the *Schattenbilder*. One picture illustrates the patriotic but still civilian Koch carrying a flagpole out of the door, presumably to set it up as a sign of delight because the headline says, "Wieder 50.000 Russen!" (Another 50,000 Russians!), which can be seen as a comment on the war reporting of these days [Germany was then engaged in an offensive against Russia, the Second Battle of the Masurian Lakes].

Koch followed the political developments with a patriotic spirit, and a few months later, in August 1915, joined the army. Several German artists and intellectuals perceived the First World War as a purifying event, a chance for a fresh restart in politics, and Koch felt the urge to support his home country. When he joined the war, about one million soldiers had already died at the front lines. He later wrote, "During the war, I became a grenadier in Berlin and was sent to Serbia [from October 1915], France [from February 1916] and Russia [from July 1917] always with the fighting troops, and always as a common soldier. What I gained in experience by this period of my life is not to be expressed in words, but [a] careful observer of my work will notice the change that this period brought about in me." (It's important to keep these words in mind.)

Koch was on sick leave from May 1916 to January 1917, as the hard work, the long

marches, the cold and the wet had drained him of strength. He nevertheless returned to the front line, and described his duty to support his country and his comrades. Koch constantly recalled his experiences in the war. He wrote letters to his friends and family (some are still in the museum's collection); he wrote a diary in retrospect in 1919, which was published by the Insel Verlag shortly after his death in 1934; and he produced 195 drawings he kept in his home. His friend Siegfried Guggenheim wrote in 1934 about Koch's experiences:

Koch was profoundly stirred by his experiences as an infantryman. This man, a craftsman in the shop, a precision worker with a magnifying glass, a calligrapher bent over his parchment like a monk, a man who was creating with his whole heart, how did he stand the stress of battle, and the soulless impersonality of army life? He writes of this in a language unadorned and frank in every word, as was his nature. After he had come home, he went over his wartime letters and drawings, and recorded his experiences. The bound manuscript lay in his home as a legacy for his children and only a few friends knew of it.

Once again, Koch preserved some important personal memory for his family—his wife and his children. One drawing in the museum's collection Koch dedicated to his friend Siegfried Guggenheim. He wrote, "In memoriam, 1914–1918: in memory of the tough war years on his true friend's birthday in 1919." The second page shows Guggenheim as an angel with wide wings and a huge horn of plenty in his arms: potatoes, books, bread, chocolate, meat, and a very typical German sausage are falling towards the ground where part of the family Koch—Rosa, Lore, Ursel, Gretel and Paul—are waiting the release. Rudolf is marching away with the other soldiers, waving goodbye to his family, conscious of the support and protection Guggenheim provides for the family Koch. Koch calls his friend Guggenheim in the dedication "the true Eckart," which refers to the fairy-tale character from medieval literature (translating the name, it means something like "The Strong Fighter").



*A drawing Koch dedicated to his friend Siegfried Guggenheim.*

The friendship with Guggenheim is documented in similar letters that Koch wrote from the front lines. One of them shows the conditions Koch had to deal with in a remarkably funny way: the first page shows the soldier Koch at the front line in Serbia using a tree as a toilet; page 2, a wooden latrine in Hungary; and page 3, on a wooden latrine in France. The fourth page features the soldier's dream: he is asleep, his uniform, backpack and helmet standing aside. The mice are running beneath the bed, but his dream shows the warm, comfortable restroom in the Tulpenhofstraße 54 in Offenbach, the home of his friend Guggenheim. Koch even sketched the electric light bulb and the central heating system.

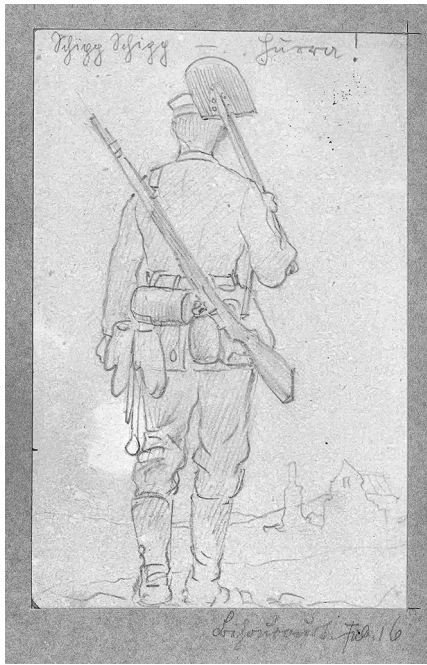
So Guggenheim took care of the Koch family while Rudolf remained at the front lines for several months. In 1918, Koch began to write down his memories, explaining:

I have described this part of my life for my children and grandchildren, because what I experienced seemed important enough to be mentioned and might appear unremarkable to someone who fought in the war. For my

descendants it holds, I hope, a number of remarkable memories because I wish with all my heart that they will be spared the experience of living through such bitter and difficult times. I also feel a need to show them that as an honest man I did my part and I was proud and happy to be in arms from 1915 to 1917.

Remarkably, Koch frequently points out how much he had learned in war. For example, "I found when I emerged from this misery, I had developed a strong and stable feeling of self-assurance, a stronger confidence in myself, and a joyful hope for the future."

In his letters and his war diary, Koch constantly tried to reassure himself and his family of the positive effects the war might have on him, such as a new confidence, stronger faith in God, the knowledge of true fellowship with his comrades, and the hope he was able to find in the most dreadful situations. These memories were initially written down for his family, but Siegfried Guggenheim initiated their publication in 1934, shortly after Koch's death.



*Koch's drawings from the battlefield.*

#### DRAWINGS DISCOVERED!

The 195 drawings Koch made during the war and kept in his home passed into oblivion until 2014, when a letter reached the Klingspor Museum. A man called Friedrich Meyer told us of a collection of drawings made by Rudolf Koch. He had inherited the drawings from his aunt, Brigitta Meyer, who had died in 2011 and had been a close friend of Koch's youngest daughter, Lore. Lore and Brigitta Meyer must have met as young women; Brigitta Meyer had become deacon of the Christuskirche [Christ Church] in Mannheim, where Lore had lived from the Second World War until the end of her life in 1986. You might imagine our astonishment concerning these precious lost war memories of Rudolf Koch, and the museum fortunately managed to acquire these 195 drawings with the help of the Marschner Foundation in Offenbach four years ago.

As nobody even knew about these drawings until four years ago, we wanted to understand them properly. We have the published memories of Koch's time as a soldier, and the drawings are all dated, so it's possible to match some of the drawings to historical events and the places Koch served as a soldier.

The drawings seem to be a kind of diary in pictures. He usually made a sketch every other day. The sketches were done on very thin, poor paper, the so-called Feldpostbrief (soldiers' stationery). He took whatever material was available and drew with different kinds of pencils. It's quite interesting to see what he chose as motifs. We see everyday life in the barracks and on the march. One drawing from February 1916, shortly before he had to go home due to his sickness and exhaustion, shows a soldier with his spade to dig trenches. Koch's somewhat sarcastic comment is "Schippe, schippe hurra," a wordplay that refers to the German "Hip, hip hurra"—a kind of cheer—and the spade is the German *Schippe*, so it's something like "Dig, dig hurrah!" which is surprisingly funny in the given conditions.

In the drawings of his time in Russia, we see his comrades packing and cooking. We see details of his surroundings—buildings and landscapes—we see flowers and plants, and even his somewhat boring perspective out of the trench, the clover and dandelions. We see his comrades, and sometimes we feel some kind of sadness, maybe, like the awareness of near death and the vulnerability of life, but we never see the cruelty

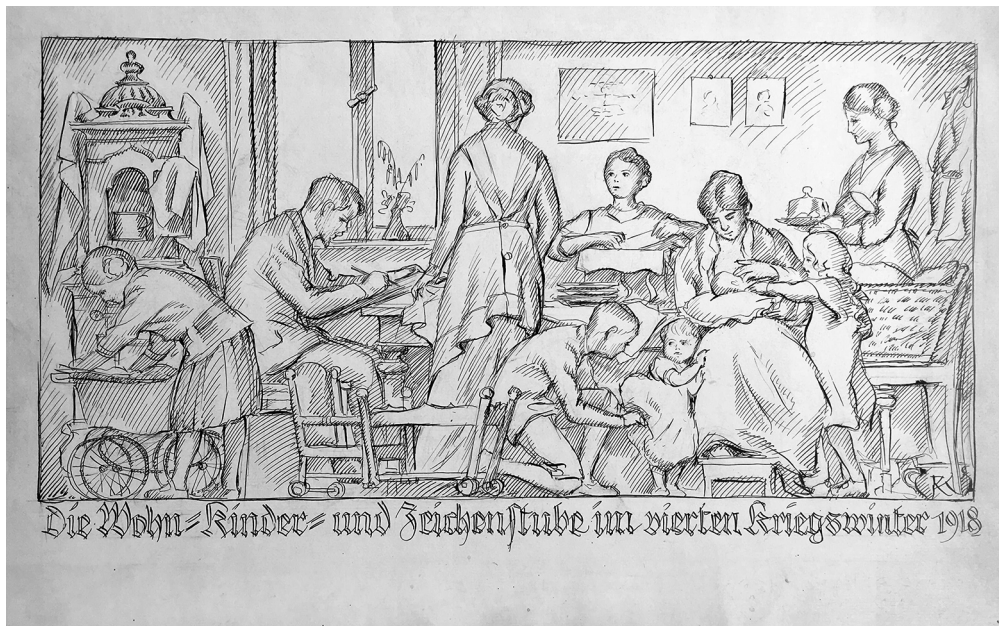
of war. We never really see death or violence. We know that Koch must have witnessed battles, seen people dying and even killed people. He reported these things in his war memories. The text is full of details of comradeship and hunger and of gruesome battles, yet there is some kind of artificial distance he might have gained while writing, but we don't witness these memories in his drawings.

On July 5, 1917, he wrote in his memories, "I've read of a painter, who stays at the frontline to draw the war. I couldn't do that. Either I'm in as a soldier who bears all the burdens and hazards or I'm out. As spectator, as audience of the agony of my fellows I couldn't face up any soldier anymore." Koch was convinced of the duty he had to fulfill as a soldier for his comrades, for his home country, and he was convinced the atrocities he had to endure were a divine task for him. God wouldn't have given it to him if he hadn't been able to bear it. On the first page of his war memories he introduces himself with the German words "Ich lebe, und weiß nicht wie lange. I gehe, und weiß nicht wohin. Mich wundert, dass ich oft fröhlich bin" (I live, and know not how long. I go, and know not where. It surprises me, how often I am happy).

Koch completely resigned himself to his fate,

and his religious sensibilities strengthened him. All he was supposed to do was recall the places he had been to and the comrades he had known as a kind of reminder, but not a critical one. The drawings had initially been made for his family, to see where the husband, the absent father had been all these months; I personally have the impression that the motifs of the drawings are chosen to write a personal account: a memory he designed for himself and for his family, a memory of the enduring experiences. This wasn't true for other of his comrades. Some signed a drawing of Koch and expressed their own feelings and impressions in short sentences. Most of them look at their homeland full of loyalty, but there are also critical opinions and the deep desire for peace. There are, for example, "Long nights, same meals, I wish that the war would have already been forgotten." Or "Cut the killing, we want peace," or "Dear God, send us peace."

But most of the drawings show a restrained documentation; they are almost peaceful memories, and not until back home in Offenbach after the war did a sudden force and surprising violence start to appear in Koch's work. In winter 1917 his army service ended with a medical discharge, and he returned to work at Klingspor



*Koch's illustration generates warm and positive feelings, despite the difficult living conditions.*



in February 1918. In this very year he wrote his manuscript of war memories for his family, and in the winter of 1918 he drew his family and himself in a living room. We see Koch joined in cramped quarters, women working, and his four children playing in between. The crowded room may have resulted from the appropriation of numerous homes for billeting Allied troops (the area was occupied for a brief period at the end of 1918).

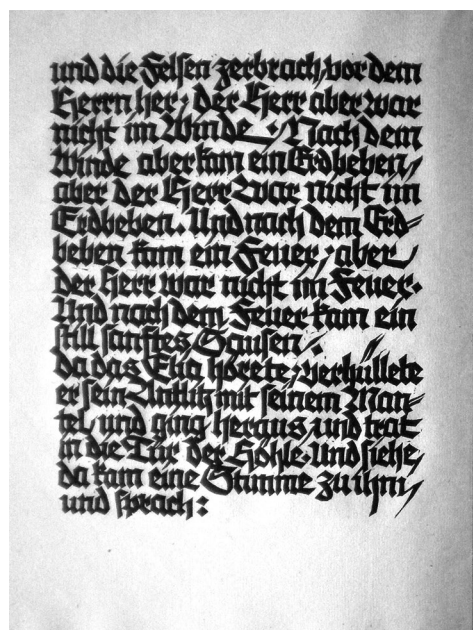
Similar to the silhouettes and the drawings in wartime, this sketch shows his excellent sense of line and composition. We can almost feel the warmth of the bodies, hear the people talking, and in this illustration, even though the living conditions are quite cramped, I think it's quite typical that Koch generates a warm and positive feeling in this illustration, even though the living conditions must have been extremely hard. There is this longing for harmony even in one of the cruellest times of history, but there must have also been some constant pressure beneath the surface of Koch's faithfulness and devotion.

#### POST-WAR RELIGIOUS TEXTS

In 1919, his creative life became busier than ever and among other things he started to realize Biblical texts in woodcuts. He became

a church council member in the congregation of the Friedenskirche (Church of Peace) in Offenbach, and his uncommissioned work focused on the Christian message. From 1919 on, Koch frequently turned to the pre-Gutenberg practice of the *Einblattholzschmitte*, the block book that incorporates on one block of wood the illustration and the lettering. Similar to the prophets, he wanted something to tremble and be alive in his lettering, and the woodcuts generated a forceful and lively impression.

A page from *Elijah* from 1919 shows a very dynamic, almost expressionistic style in the lettering and in the illustration. We see Elijah almost blinded by the force of the divine presence that asks, "What are you doing here Elijah?" and Elijah says that he's looking for God. The text tells the story of Elijah waiting for God, who shows himself not in the storm, not in the earthquake or in the fire but in the quiet "swish." Elijah covers his head to face God, and Koch shapes him in this humble position. But I personally see also fear—the need to protect himself against the hazard and storms outside. Koch was always sensitive in drawing human bodies and depicting the emotional condition the person might be in. This Elijah is somebody who surrenders to a



A woodcut from *Elijah*.

greater force and endures pain to meet God—a situation that Koch describes in his wartime experiences as well. There might be some feelings of despair and fear in these woodcuts that Koch couldn't express in his wartime drawings, but they might have stirred him nevertheless.

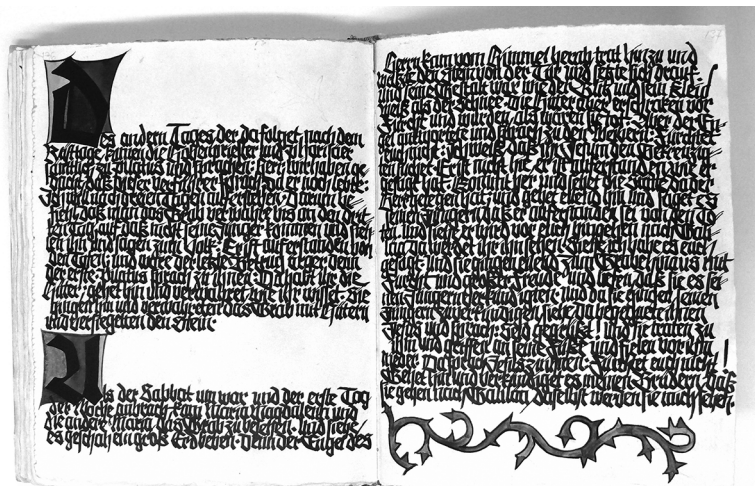
There is the strong wind that tears apart the mountains, a destroying force that reminds us of wartime destruction. We see the splintered wood and parts of the crushed landscape, and there is an unknown cloudiness and abstraction in the motif which is unusual for Koch, who has usually illustrated things as they are. In 1920, he expresses these feelings not just in the torn lettering of the woodcuts, but also in the words he chose: "Was hülfe es den Menschen, so er die ganze Welt gewönne, und nähme doch Schaden an seiner Seele?" (What does it profit a man to gain the whole world while damaging his own soul?) Not only the lettering seems torn, there are also conflicting emotions in the craftsman who strove to see the war and his experiences as a God-given task, but was not able to block out the cruelty and the personal damage that happened to him and many other people.

From 1920 to Easter 1921, Koch produced more impressive and time-consuming work than ever, even though he was still working at Klingspor. His lettering classes were well attended, he had a specialized group of letterers he was teaching,

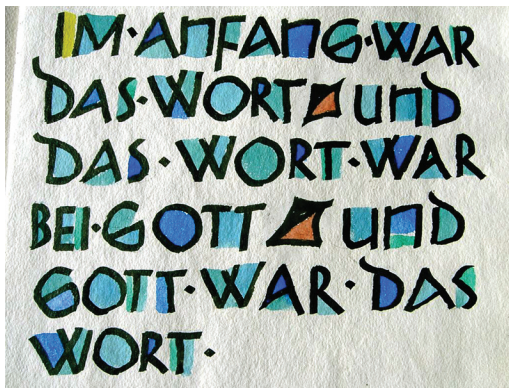
he was writing articles for publication, he had commercial work to design, and these days as his private activity, the Four Gospels were created, written by hand. It's very interesting to see the development Koch made in these four books from a quiet, traditionally handwritten book in the Evangelium Johannes, in 1920, which is even written on parchment, to the Gospel of Matthew in early 1921, which is already more expressive, and to the prologue to the gospel according to John, also created in 1921, in a bold style using Roman letters and this very swirly and otherworldly colouring in shades of blue and green. The words mean, "In the beginning was the word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The impression that Koch tried to be near God through his writing condenses in these lines. The word is with God and God is the word.

#### BOLDLY EXPRESSIVE TYPE

Koch made a note about these books: "Now the lettering was bold enough to embark on the largest of tasks: the wonderful treasure of the Gospels." Between 1920 and 1921, he composed these four books, each in different styles and with coloured initials. His desire to give expression to his own inner impulses resulted in the creation of lively characters, often spaced closely together, forming a strong dark mass that propelled him to seek new challenges. (That's what he himself said



Koch's expressive lettering in the Gospel of Matthew.



*Prologue to the gospel according to John.*

about his work.) It should come as no surprise that the giant aspects of readability and usefulness were totally disregarded in most of these works. All aspects of the lettering had to be executed in terms of expressiveness, and for this purpose it was necessary to turn the forms of the different characters into a rich decorative creation.

This is a quite surprising aspect for someone with the education of Koch. The purpose of his design work for the type foundry was to create types that were innovative, but of course readable. The type designs had to satisfy economic purposes, and Koch broke loose from these limitations in his artistic work to find a new way to express himself. This new idea to use the forms of the letters as the artistic expression is even more developed in the lettered crosses Koch made in 1922. This is a version of the Sermon on the Mount. It's almost not readable in its haunting tightness, and we can imagine the deepness of Koch's faith after he had survived the First World War. This impressive, almost three-foot-high Bergpredigt (Sermon on the Mount) is a project similar to the calligraphy of a monk, whose faith manifests in the writing. The lettering became an expression of Koch's religious intensity.

Two very strong examples of Koch's written crosses are undated, but likely date to the same years as the gospels. His private works of these years were distinguished by very deep religious feelings expressed not only in what he wrote but also in the unusually expressive and experimental script. Koch regarded himself as a craftsman, and therefore was not interested in expressing his own



*One of Koch's lettered crosses.*

feelings in his work as an artist would do. But the gospels and these crosses and the woodcuts of these years show, nevertheless, an internal turmoil that Koch tried to soothe using his faith.

The word which is written over and over again in this cross is the word "sin," and it's the first time I know that Koch has left the steadiness of the line while writing. The next cross is filled with specific sins like rage, murder, envy, taunt, superstition, vanity, adultery, and so on. The form of the cross stays very strong, but the words are fluttering and trembling inside. The cross form encloses these words, keeps them still, so the tremendous inner turmoil of the artist—I have to call him an artist, even though he wouldn't have liked it—is sealed in or is kept within the bounds by his faith. So writing, form and emotional content correlate more and more in Koch's later works, and he developed the most expressive style of his career in the years after the war.

It's quite fascinating to see these very different aspects of Koch's activities during these years. We have seen the type design and his work for Karl Klingspor, we have seen his personal life in his drawings and silhouettes, his religious ambitions,

and his effort to gain some kind of acceptance for the cruelty he witnessed in war while keeping his patriotic sense. Koch's art is quite eclectic, and our purpose at the Klingspor Museum is to communicate all these different aspects of books and writing in his work and in the work of the other artists in our collection. The museum was founded in 1953, based on Karl Klingspor's collection of books and graphic works, and for more than 50 years now its treasures have been steadily growing. Almost 80,000 works of the book and printing arts of the 20th and 21st centuries are stored in the library's shelves and drawers. The stock is constantly being expanded in practically all areas of the collection: print samples, calligraphy, tapestry, books, posters, and so on.

The immense oeuvre of Rudolf Koch, working in Offenbach from 1906 till 1934—his prints and handwritten manuscripts, along with his illustrations and type designs—are among these treasures. The exhibition changes about four times a year. Karl Klingspor's and Rudolf Koch's approach to type and lettering as an artistic medium is something we try to impart every day in our museum's work with children and adults. The digital version of Kabel, a Koch type design of 1927, has been used in our booklet for educational courses, and I sometimes think it would have been something Koch might have liked, to see his work still in the hands of young people 100 years later, a new generation finding its own expression in lettering.

#### FURTHER READING

Gerald Cinamon, *Rudolf Koch: Letterer, Type Designer, Teacher* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2000).

*Die Kriegserlebnisse des Grenadiers Rudolf Koch* (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1934).

.....  
 ↪ Dorothee Ader is responsible for museum education at the Klingspor Museum in Offenbach, Germany.

## Through Battle to Beauty

The arts help us understand war, PETER MITHAM says, but also bring peace to those who served.

PAPERBACK NOVELS SET during the Second World War were popular reading material for me as a teenager. But looking back, what stands out most is the short space of time between the end of the conflict and the time those novels were published—30 years or less. I was born closer to the end of the First World War than today's Millennials were to the end of the Second World War.

With mature hindsight, I wonder how many of those novels I enjoyed were written to relive a moment in history for those who were there as well as to appeal to an appetite for the stories themselves. There were so many then—Len Deighton, *Bomber* (1970), remains memorable, as well as Jack Higgins, *The Eagle Has Landed* (1975). I loved leafing through the series *World War II* from Time-Life. My uncle, who served with the 12th Manitoba Dragoons and was awarded the Military Cross for action following D-Day, had the whole set.

Shell shock and battle fatigue were familiar concepts, but the long-term effects of active service were less familiar. Most of the men I knew returned to civilian life, took up jobs, raised families and, to all appearances, coped. Photographers and war artists captured the experience of soldiers, but we heard less about veterans using art to convey their experiences in battle and life afterwards.

I have a folder of clippings from that time in my life, and leafing through it I see that art therapy wasn't unheard of. Writing in the *Montreal Gazette* in November 1980, James Quig recounts his visit with Edward Charles Mackisoc, an 80-year-old former sniper with the 24th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force—the Victoria Rifles. He signed up the same year as Rudolf Koch, and in 1980 was living at the veterans hospital in Ste. Anne de Bellevue. Quig found residents making music, and many haunted by their experiences. Mackisoc saw it daily: