

Elizabeth Keith and Ulric van den Bogaerde's Illustrations for the *Times's Japanese and Russia Supplements*: Artistic Mediations, 1914-1917

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This paper explores how the evocative black and white line drawings produced by two British artists, Elizabeth Keith (1887-1956) and Ulric van den Bogaerde (1892-1972), for the *Times* newspaper's *Japanese (TJS)* and *Russia Supplements (TRS)*, not only played an important role in enhancing their aesthetic appeal, but also in articulating the ambiguities and complexities of the deeply entangled imperial discourses to which Britain, Russia, and Japan were party in the early twentieth century. It suggests that Keith's professional medium of choice, the Japanese woodblock print or *ukiyo-e*, belied her political and spiritual sympathy for two of Japan's foremost colonial prizes, Formosa (Taiwan) and Chōsen (Korea)—latent sympathies which were already present in the first exhibition of her art work at The Peers Club in Tokyo,¹ and the accompanying publication, *Grin and Bear It* (1917). The contradictions between her aesthetic admiration of Japan on the one hand, and instinctive identification with the peoples subjected to Japan's colonial ambitions on the other, mirrored contradictions inherent in her artistic composition too. Drawing from life on location in the East, by comparison with the *TJS* line drawings, her later print portraits appear posed and carefully contrived. Keith's numerous contributions to the *TJS*, which was officially backed by the Japanese Government in a campaign to re-invigorate the fading spirit of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, imbued it with much needed credibility through the 'authenticity' and intimacy of the expatriate eye, against a backdrop of public criticism that the *Times* received for peddling pro-Japanese propaganda. By contrast, the London-based in-house artist-pressman Ulric van den Bogaerde's contributions to both supplements must be understood in the context of the commencement of his professional career, immediately preceding work on the *Times's* monumental *History of the War*, and subsequent appointment as its first Art Editor. Conceived as a vehicle for Northcliffe to awaken British companies to commercial opportunities in Russia, and forming part of a sustained multi-paper project to support the British imperial project *writ large*, Bogaerde's illustrations were drawn from photographs and his artistic imagination, resulting in a less vivid, but more consistent style, offering another perspective of the many contours of imperial rivalries.

¹ Exhibited 22-24 November 1917.