

Reading Between the Lines: Elizabeth Keith's and Ulric van den Bogaerde's Illustrations for the  
*Times's Japanese and Russia Supplements*

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This article explores how the evocative black and white illustrations 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)*, played an important role in articulating the ambiguities and complexities of imperial discourses to which Britain, Russia, and Japan were party in the early twentieth century. It suggests that Miss 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 present in the first exhibition of her art work at The Peers Club in Tokyo,<sup>1</sup> 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 Japanese-backed *TJS*, 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. Her *TJS* contributions can be rewardingly studied alongside further contributions to her brother-in-law's *The New East* (1917), a reciprocal Foreign Office publishing venture. In contrast to Miss Keith's work, the London-based in-house artist-pressman Ulric van den Bogaerde's contributions to both the *TJS* and *TRS*, can be understood in the context of the commencement of his professional career, and the Northcliffe-inspired, government backed, campaign to exploit commercial opportunities in Russia. His contrasting artistic *modus operandi*, invariably drawing from photographs, books, and simply his artistic imagination, seems to say something larger about the status of the two imperial relationships, Britain-Japan and Britain-Russia.

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<sup>1</sup> Exhibited 22-24 November 1917.