

Klaus Meyer 'Family Photograph' In Memoriam



Klaus Meyer was a German Jew who came to England just before the Second World War in 1938. After the war, he discovered that his mother, his brother, Ulrich, and his wife, Anne-Marie, had died in the concentration camp at Auschwitz in Poland, where almost one million Jews from all over Europe were killed. Meyer made this woodcut as a commemoration forty years after they died, in 1982.

The fence and the date – 'in Memoriam 1942' – tell the viewer that this is not the usual care-free portrait found in many family photo albums; it is a bold reminder of family members lost in the prison camps of WWII.

Why is it called Family Photograph? What message is the artist trying to give?



Meyer has created this art work by using two separate printing techniques. First, he has made the faces by carving them into lino and printing them with ink. Then, the posts and barbed wire were made by carving into wood and printing on top of the lino cut.



How is Meyer revealing the story of what happened to his family through this art work?



The post holders that secure the barbed wire look like Nazi helmets. What might the artist have intended by making this comparison?