

Dame Laura Knight RA



SOLD

Sketch for The Nuremberg Trial

Reference: 11041

KAREN TAYLOR

FINE ART

Dimensions:

Height: 56 cm / 22 in
Width: 38 cm / 15 in

Signed and inscribed l.r.: Laura Knight/1946, Nuremberg, charcoal and watercolour

56 x 38 cm.; 22 x 15 inches

Provenance

Sotheby's, Olympia 4 July 2002, lot 237, where bought by the present owner;

Private collection, U.K.

Exhibited

Laura Knight: A Panoramic View, MK Gallery, Milton Keynes, 9 October 2021-20 February 2022, ill. p. 190

Knight suggested painting the Nuremberg Trial to the War Artists Advisory Committee in December 1945, and in early 1946 she flew to Frankfurt.

The War Crimes Trial for Nazi war criminals was held in the Central Courts of Justice in Nuremberg. Knight attended the trial and made studies from a press box. She made several sketches for the finished oil (in the Imperial War Museum) and her letters to her husband Harold express the intense emotion generated at the Trial:

'I am trying my hardest for a dynamic and rather terrible build-up of the design, hoping that the placing of the masses, even apart from the detail, will convey in some way the sensation that not only I but everyone appears to feel... in it there is much pity- pity perhaps that the human creature could sink to such baseness as these poor creatures have done'.

This drawing shows the back row of prisoners at the trial with Albert Speer, Konstantin von Neurath, Foreign Minister until 1938, and Hans Fritzche, the broadcaster and head of the radio division, at the very end of the row. Speer, Hitler's favoured architect and Minister of Armaments was sentenced to twenty years imprisonment and Von Neurath to fifteen years. Fritzsche was acquitted.

Hermann Goering was the end of the first row of prisoners with his own guard, next to Rudolph Hess, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Wilhelm Keitel, Alfred Rosenberg, Hans Frank, Julius Streicher, Wilhelm Frick, Walther Funk and Hjalmar Schacht. At the other end of the back row, depicted in this drawing, sat Karl Doenitz, and next to him Erich Raeder, Baldur von Schirach, Fritz Sauckel, Alfred Jodl, Franz von Papen and Arthur Seyss-Inquart.

Two less finished sketches for the Nuremberg Trial are currently on loan to the Ben Uri Gallery, London.