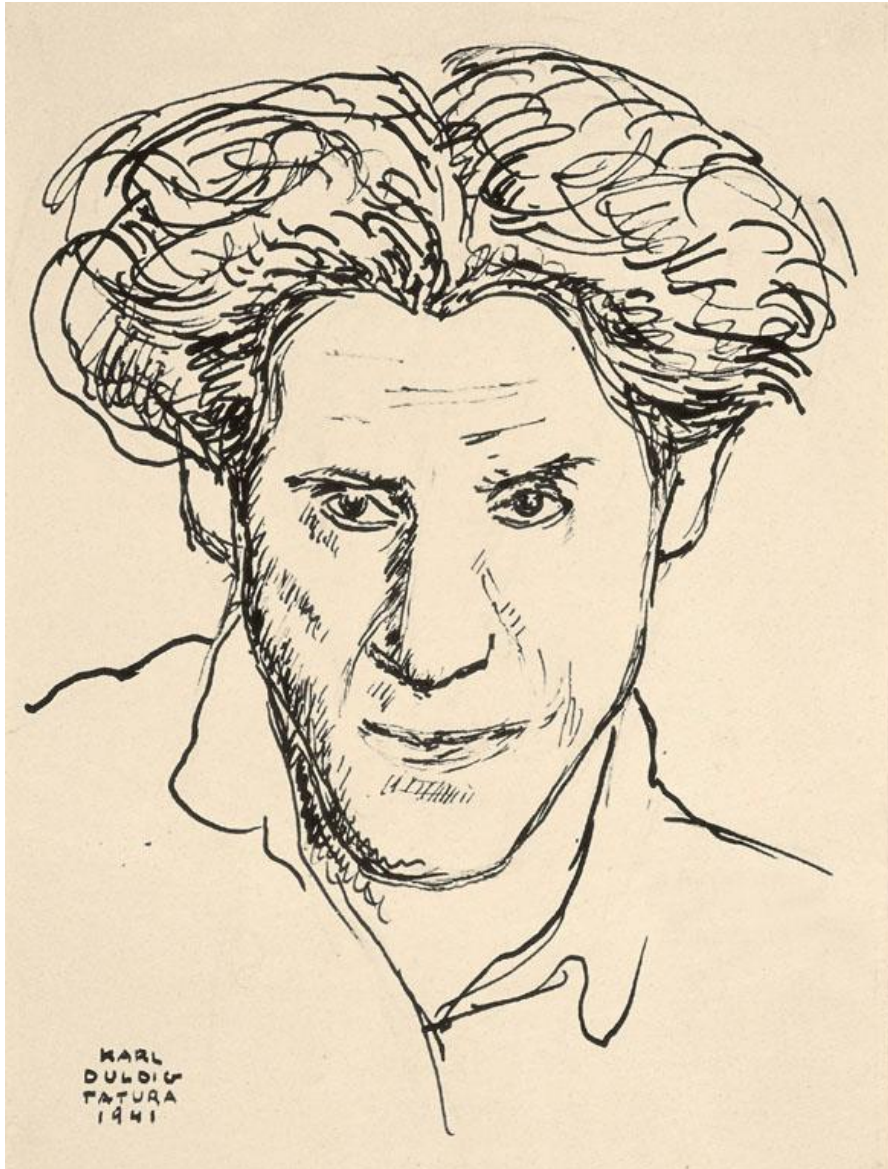


# Art Behind the Wire

## Education Kit



THE DULDIG STUDIO



Karl Duldig *Self Portrait*, 1941 © Duldig Studio

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Graphic Design  
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Melinda Mockridge  
Stefan Damschke  
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**Education Kit**  
**VCE History Unit 1**  
**Twentieth Century History 1900-1945**

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# Teacher Notes

## Introduction

### The Duldig Studio

The Duldig Studio in East Malvern is the former home and studio of internationally recognised sculptor Karl Duldig (1902 – 1986) and his wife, artist and inventor Slawa Duldig (née Horowitz) (1902 -1975). In 1996 it opened as a public museum and art gallery with their daughter, Eva, as its founding director. It houses an extensive collection of art, decorative art and archival material concerning their life and work and was set up to care for, give public access to and educate about the collection. Another important aim of the Gallery is to ‘inspire creative journeys’ using the Duldig story of persistence in the face of great obstacles and lifelong creativity to encourage similar creative journeys for others. The experience of visiting the museum and seeing and understanding Karl and Slawa’s story, and the extraordinary body of work displayed is unique- and inspirational, for both young and older visitors.

### The current exhibition

*Art behind the Wire* is the third temporary exhibition presented by the Gallery. The first, *The Duldigs in Vienna* coincided with the 2011 National Gallery of Victoria exhibition, *Vienna and the Early Twentieth Century*. The Second, *A Malayan Bungalow*, covered the Duldig family’s brief but successful experiences in Singapore, after travelling from Vienna fleeing Nazism in 1939.

In 2013 a Shrine of Remembrance exhibition, *The Enemy Within*, told the story of the experiences of prisoners of war and internees in Australia during World War II. This exhibition tells the real life story of those internees, mainly families, sent from Singapore in 1940. It is the story of one family in particular - Karl Duldig, his wife Slawa (née Horowitz) and their daughter Eva. The exhibition covers the war years, 1940 to 1945 and tells of how they and the other internees in Compounds C and D coped, how internment affected them, under what circumstances they were finally released and how they managed to create a new life for themselves. It also tells of the public and government reactions to their situations. Aspects of their story, particularly their reception in Australia, have parallels with the situation of asylum seekers today, and may help us understand present reactions to refugees as the most recent manifestation of the threads of fear, but also tolerance, that run through from past to present.

The exhibition displays Karl Duldig’s art during the period 1940- 1945 and gives insights into the artistic process, and how individuals deal with dislocation and trauma. Drawings, sculptures and documents are displayed. Letters, articles and appeals offer an opportunity to examine the complexity of viewpoints at that time about their situation, and how the larger events of history affect the lives of individuals such as the Duldigs.

This original, primary source material is able to tell us much about this period of crisis and conflict, Australian social life and cultural expression. The 52 page exhibition publication, which includes a catalogue, details the Duldigs’ story of internment, public and governmental attitudes towards them and the circumstances of their final release. Additional material in the publication gives insight into camp conditions and individuals associated with the Duldigs, as well as the Dunera story and the Australian Army’s 8<sup>th</sup> Employment Company which Karl joined as a condition of release. The publication is the key background resource for the exhibition.

## The Duldig story in brief

Karl Duldig was born in Poland in 1902. Karl's family moved to Vienna when he was 12. Both were students at the Kunstgewerbeschule Vienna (College of Arts and Crafts) under esteemed sculptor Anton Hanak and both also attended the Sculpture School of the Academy of Fine Arts. Both Karl and Slawa began successful careers, marrying in 1931. Slawa successfully invented, then patented and sold the first 'foldable' umbrella. Karl's sculpture practice was cut short when Austria was declared part of Greater Germany after the rise of Nazism. In 1938 Karl travelled to Switzerland where he was later joined by his wife, and baby daughter Eva. They travelled east, as many other refugees did at that time, to Singapore, joining family already there. In Singapore Karl established his own studio and sculpture school and received major commissions. At the outbreak of war they, as German nationals, were declared enemy aliens and subsequently deported for internment in Australia, under an agreement between the British Straits Settlements authorities and the Australian Government. This was despite it being acknowledged by the British Government that they were genuine refugees. Their story is shared by hundreds of others, mostly families, who were also sent to Australia, with the Duldigs, and interned in Tatura internment camp.

The internees appealed their situation, without success. The Australian Government was clear that they would not be released. Fear of 'fifth columnists', or spies, created negative publicity, shaping public opinion against their plight. After the fall of Singapore in early 1942 and the Australian Government's acknowledgement that more personnel were needed to maintain essential services while servicemen were fighting overseas Karl, and other men from the camp, were able to join the Army in non-combatant roles as part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Employment Company of the Australian Army. The inappropriateness of having children confined was also a consideration. Though released, the family were still considered enemy aliens and subject to strict parole conditions. Their legitimacy as refugees was finally acknowledged in late 1943, when they were granted status as 'refugee aliens'. Despite these obstacles Karl continued to work throughout this period, completing work while in the Army, exhibiting in group and solo exhibitions, and starting a thriving pottery business with Slawa to supplement their income from teaching. In 1946 they became Australian citizens and later developed teaching careers and Karl a successful sculpture practice. For more than four decades in Melbourne Karl Duldig was active as an exhibiting artist, teacher and mentor. In 1956 his peers voted him Victorian Sculptor of the Year.

He was a passionate advocate for sculpture in public places and his final commission, the Raoul Wallenberg Monument (Kew Junction) was unveiled in 1985.

## Curriculum Links

This exhibition links with study of VCE Unit 1 – 20<sup>th</sup> Century History: 1900-1945

### Area of Study 1 – Crisis and Conflict

#### Outcome 1

‘On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse and explain the development of a political crisis and conflict in the period 1900 to 1945.’

*The exhibition covers the period of conflict which was the Second World War and illustrates how the conflict had an impact on individuals through particular political ideas such as nationalism and race, through means such as rhetoric and propaganda.*

#### Key Knowledge

In particular

- ‘the means by which individuals, organisations and groups of people attempted to establish and legitimise particular political ideas; for example, rhetoric and propaganda, education, symbols, appeals to the past, appeals to nationalistic sentiment’

#### Key Skills

- Create, annotate and interpret maps;
- Use key concepts relevant to the selected historical context; such as culture, nationalism, internationalism, race, ideology, gender and class;
- Analyse written and visual evidence;
- Synthesise evidence to draw conclusions;
- Present historical material using historical conventions such as quotations, bibliography and footnotes

## Area of Study 2 – Social Life

### Outcome 2

‘On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse and discuss patterns of social life and the factors which influenced changes to social life in the first half of the twentieth century.’

*The exhibition illustrates change and continuity in social life through the story of the internees from Singapore, the role of race and nationality in social experience and the factors influencing changes in social life.*

### Key Knowledge

In particular

- change and continuity in the patterns of social life experienced by different groups in the first half of the twentieth century;
- the role of class, race, ethnicity, political affiliation, nationality in social experience; for example, persecution of the Jews by the Nazis
- factors influencing changes in social life especially economic, political developments; for example, warfare and invasion,
- the way in which groups and communities organised to protect and advance their political, social and economic interests; for example, nationalist and patriotic groups.

### Key Skills

- Create, annotate and interpret maps;
- Use key concepts relevant to the selected historical context; such as culture, nationalism, internationalism, race, ideology, gender and class;
- Analyse written and visual evidence;
- Synthesise evidence to draw conclusions;
- Present historical material using historical conventions such as quotations, bibliography and footnotes.

## Area of Study 3 – Cultural Expression

### Outcome 3

‘On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the relationship between the historical context and a cultural expression of the period from 1900 to 1945.’

*The exhibition deals with the way in which the work of the refugee artist Karl Duldig was influenced by the context of World War II.*

### Key Knowledge

- The work of a cultural or artistic movement, group or individual in the first half of the twentieth century.
- Responses to, or the effect of, the work of the movement, group or individual; for example, was it celebrated, reviled, censored, universally popular or known only to the avant-garde?
- The relationship between cultural expression and political, social or economic developments of the period.

### Key Skills

- Locate and select relevant sources;
- Analyse written and visual evidence;
- Construct an argument using a range of sources;
- Present material using historical conventions such as quotations, footnotes and a bibliography.

# Student Learning Activities

## VCE 20<sup>th</sup> Century History Unit 1

### Suggested Assessment tasks include:

- analytical exercises • annotated maps; • short reports; • essays; • oral presentations; • multimedia presentations; • film reviews; • biographical studies; • tests; • responses to literature.

At least one of the assessment tasks must be presented in a written form and one must involve an analysis of visual evidence, preferably a film.

### Outcome 1 – Crisis and Conflict: Possible learning activities

- Look at the newspapers available on Trove for the time of the Singapore internees arrival. Describe the language and the points of view presented, and analyse any differences between reports. Explain why the reports might be different?
- Look at Primary Sources 1 to 4 and compare the arguments presented. According to each source what are the arguments for and against of having refugees stay in Australia?
- Using internet resources, create a map of the journey the Duldigs took to Australia, from Poland via Austria and Singapore. Write a brief story explaining when and why they moved from each place including political events in that took place at that time.
- Debate the premise, *Australians' attitudes to asylum seekers has not changed since the Second World War.*

### Outcome 2 – Social Life: Possible learning activities

- Research and write a brief account of the experiences of the British internees sent to Australia in September 1940 on the Dunera. View the film, 'The Dunera Boys'. Write a review, in the light of your research, answering the questions- How accurate is the film? In what ways can film shape our understanding of history and does this matter?
- Look at Duldig archives documents and analyse how the internees saw their situation over time. Compare this to how they were viewed by others in Australia, and explain how these viewpoints differ and possible reasons for this.
- Read the accounts by Dunera internee Frank Borkenhau of being interned in Britain and Australia and the account by Felix Werder of his internment in Australia . Analyse how each writer highlights the impact that political, social or economic change had on their life. In your discussion explain:
  - the historical context of the extract
  - the profile of the individual whose life is being described; including information on age, class, race, and ethnicity if appropriate
  - the impact the social, economic and political change had upon aspects of everyday life for this individual as shown in this extract
  - how this picture of everyday life compares with other historical representations.
- Research two of the following individuals who influenced social life in Australia during this period and explain what influence they had:

Labor M.P. Arthur Calwell    Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies    Labor M.P. Dr.  
H.V.Evatt    Prime Minister John Curtin    Miss Ada Constance Duncan



### **Outcome 3 – Cultural Expression: Possible learning Activities**

- Using the work of Karl Duldig during the war years make a visual depiction of his experiences for presentation as a scrap book or multimedia presentation. Explain how his war experiences changed his art.
- Research the lives of either internee artist Karl Duldig or Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack. Present this as a written report.
- Choose the work of two artists. Research how the experience or trauma of war can affect artists and present this as a power point report, with illustrations.

## Resources

The exhibition and accompanying publication, *Art Behind the Wire*, are the primary resources for these education materials. Below are primary source documents related to the suggested learning activities. All articles are available on TROVE, the online platform of the National Library of Australia. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/>

### Primary Source Documents

#### Newspaper articles which reported the internees' arrival:

- 'More aliens arrive. Internment in Australia. Women and babies', **Sydney Morning Herald** 28 September, 1940, p.14 (**photos, page 16**) 'More internees arrive in Sydney'
- 'Second lot of German internees arrive –taken over by strong guard' **Singleton Argus**, 30 September, 1940.
- 'More internees reach Australia –Well-Dressed Sydney arrivals' **The Sun**, 28 September, 1940 (**Photo**) 'Too dangerous to be left in Britain'.
- 'More internees arrive –Adults, Children' **The Argus**, Melbourne 28 September, 1940
- 'Internees arrive- Many married couples' **The Mercury**, Hobart 28 September, 1940
- 'Luxury Internees arrive' **Daily Telegraph** 28 September, 1940 (**Photo**).
- 'Shorts, prams in scene as internees arrive' **Barrier Miner**, Broken Hill, 27 September, 1940.
- 'Behaved well. Internees arrived', **Examiner** (Launceston), 28 September, 1940.

#### Primary Source material – Opinions comparison

- Letter to Editor, 'Internees from Britain', **Sydney Morning Herald**, 19 July, 1940. TROVE
- 'Treatment of refugees. An Appeal for Justice. Cruel Propaganda', **Sydney Morning Herald**, 1 August, 1940. TROVE
- Letter from the Governor General, Lord Gowrie to King George VI, 4 November, 1940., National Library of Australia, MS 2852. Available at [https://www.nla.gov.au/sites/default/files/db\\_transcription\\_booklet.pdf](https://www.nla.gov.au/sites/default/files/db_transcription_booklet.pdf) ( from N.L.A exhibition, *The Dunera Boys 70 years on*).
- Letter to Editor, 'R.S.S.I.L.A and Refugees', **Sydney Morning Herald**, 1 August, 1940. TROVE

#### Duldig Archive documents

- Appeal to Governor General 1941
- Appeal by Karl Duldig
- Tatura ist ein Paradies doc
- Naturalisation doc

#### First person accounts of internment experiences

- Felix Werder, available at: <http://judaica.library.usyd.edu.au/histories/Boaz.html>
- Frank Borkenhau, ' Interned by British. A Refugee's Story. Hatred of Germany', *Geraldton Guardian and Express*, 7 February, 1942 available on TROVE .
- Bern Brent, [https://www.nla.gov.au/sites/default/files/db\\_transcription\\_booklet.pdf](https://www.nla.gov.au/sites/default/files/db_transcription_booklet.pdf) (from N.L.A exhibition, *The Dunera Boys 70 years on*)

#### Art in internment

- Karl Duldig, *Fragment*, c.1940 (photo of sculpture available on Duldig Studio website)

- Tatura camp drawings (at Studio, selection on Duldig Studio website)
- Concert covers by Ludwig Meilich ( in *Art behind the Wire* publication)
- Other art produced in the internment camps, by eg. Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack, Fred Lowen, Friedrich (Fred) Schonbach, Klaus Friedeberger.

## Timeline

### 1939

**27<sup>th</sup> April** – Karl Duldig, Slawa Duldig (née Horowitz) and daughter Eva arrive in Singapore, having fled Austria in 1938, after its annexation by Nazi controlled Germany.

**3<sup>rd</sup> September** – The United Kingdom and its allies declare war on Germany, and the Duldigs are told that, as enemy aliens, they are to be removed from Singapore, part of the British controlled Straits Settlements.

### 1940

**17 September** – Karl Duldig, Slawa Duldig assemble at the Sikh Police Barracks, Pearls Hill, Singapore with other ‘enemy alien’ families, for travel to internment in Australia the following day.

**25 September** – Arrival of troop ship HMT Queen Mary in Sydney Harbour carrying German (mostly Jewish) and Italian internees. This was three weeks after the arrival of the internees sent from Britain aboard the HMT Dunera.

**27 September** – travel by train and bus to Tatura Internment Camp 3, Compound D.

**29 September** – the first of many appeals for release was sent by the internees.

### 1941

**7 October** – Curtin Labor Government gains power with the support of two Independent members of the House of Representatives.

**17 November** – War Cabinet considers the release of internees and agrees, under strict conditions.

**7 December** – Pearl Harbor, Hawaii is bombed by Japanese forces.

### 1942

**8 February** – Fall of Singapore to Japan begins.

**7 April** – Karl released to join 8<sup>th</sup> Employment Company (8<sup>th</sup> A.E.C.).

**14 May** – Slawa and Eva released from Camp and go to Melbourne.

**27 July** – Karl’s brother, Ignaz and mother killed by Nazis at Przemysl, Poland.

**September** – Karl is discharged from Army, and commences work at Sunshine Potteries.

## 1943

**26 January** – 6 February, Karl exhibits in the *All Australian Exhibition of Art by Australians in the Services* at the Athenaeum Gallery, Melbourne.

**June** – Karl employed by Victory Publicity as a lithographer

**December** – Duldigs are granted their application to be considered ‘refugee aliens’, rather than enemy aliens.

## 1944

**April** – Slawa begins teaching at Korowa Anglican Girls’ School.

**August** – Paris is liberated from the Nazis.

**11 October** – Karl is offered employment at Mentone Grammar School.

**12 October** – The family is granted permission to remain permanently in Australia.

**November** – Slawa re-establishes contact with her sister Rella in Paris.

## 1945

**9 January** – The family receive permit acknowledging them as having ‘landed’ in Australia.

**15 August** – Japan surrenders, after atomic bombs are dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

**2 September** – V. P. day –Victory in the Pacific Day.

**6 September** – Singapore returned to British control.

**October** – Karl holds first solo exhibition at Kosminsky Galleries, Melbourne.

## 1946

**November** – Karl and Slawa are granted naturalisation.

## Further Reading

Australian Dictionary of Biography online: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/>

Bartrop, Paul 1993, 'Incompatible with Security: Enemy Alien Internees from Singapore in Australia, 1940 – 45' *Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, vol XII, Part 1, pp.149 – 169.

Factor, June n.d. 'Forgotten Soldiers: Aliens in the Australian Army's Employment Companies during World War II', [http:// www.yosselbirstein.org/pdf/eng/other/Forgotten\\_Soldiers.pdf](http://www.yosselbirstein.org/pdf/eng/other/Forgotten_Soldiers.pdf)

Hasluck, Paul 1965, 'The Wartime Treatment of Aliens' (Appendix 4) in *Australia in the War of 1939 – 45, Series 4, Civil, Vol. 1, The Government and the People, 1939-41*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, [https://www.awm.gov.au/histories/second\\_world\\_war/AWMOHWW2/Civil/Vol1/](https://www.awm.gov.au/histories/second_world_war/AWMOHWW2/Civil/Vol1/)

Inglis, Ken 2012 podcast, 'The Dunera Boys in History and Memory' <http://www.ajhs.info/podcast/>

Kiddell, Helen 2011, *The Duldig Studio – a history*, The Duldig Gallery Inc., Melbourne

NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, 2014 Israel and Judaism Studies - Enemy Aliens in Australia - "The Dunera Affair", <http://www.ijs.org.au/The-Dunera-Affair/default.aspx>.

National Library of Australia 2010 *The Dunera Boys – 70 years on*, Exhibition transcription booklet, [http://www.nla.gov.au/sites/default/files/db\\_transcription\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.nla.gov.au/sites/default/files/db_transcription_booklet.pdf)