WHO DO WE SAY WE ARE?

Irish Art 1922|2022

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FOREWORD

1922 was a seminal year for Ireland and the concept of Irishness: the modern Irish state was founded; James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Ireland's first modernist novel, was published in Paris; and the Irish Race Congress, a consequential gathering and accompanying art exhibition that served as a reckoning moment for Irish identity politics, was held in the French capital.

Ireland's art, our music and literature, have always played a central role in the assertion and representation of Irish nation and state internationally. In 2022, as part of Ireland's official commemorative decade of centenaries, the Irish Government is supporting *States of Modernity*, an ambitious series of interlinked cultural events and exhibitions taking place in the Midwest US, Ireland, and European capitals to reflect on the events of 100 years ago, to examine the journey Ireland and Irish identity have travelled over the past century of statehood, and to look ahead to Ireland's next century.

Who Do We Say We Are? Irish Art 1922 | 2022 in the Snite Museum of Art is a central element of *States of Modernity*. It approaches 1922 not as a resolved moment in time, but a starting point for careful exploration of Irishness and Irish art through the first century of Irish statehood. It animates the themes of the *Exposition d'Art Irlandais*, so expertly recreated online by Trinity College Dublin, and shows how they have been interpreted by Irish artists throughout the past century. Its exploration of Irish art and identity is enriched by a musical response to the artworks and themes of the exhibition composed chiefly by the peerless Liz Carroll and curated both by her and by Marty Fahey of The O'Brien Collection. *Who Do We Say We Are? Irish Art 1922 | 2022* and its musical accompaniment make a unique contribution to Ireland's commemorative program, and to our understanding of the relationship between Irish art and identity as the Irish State enters her second century.

The Irish Government is grateful for the tireless and inspired work of our partners in this exploration of the forging of modern Ireland and Irish identity, including: Cheryl Snay and David Acton at the Snite Museum of Art, Marty Fahey and the O'Brien Family of The O'Brien Collection, Patrick Griffin and Mary Hendriksen of the Keough-Naughton Institute, Ciaran O'Neill and Billy Shortall of Trinity College Dublin, and Nora Hickey M'Sichili of the Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris. My thanks also to my colleagues in the Department of Foreign Affairs, Eugene Downes, Sarah Keating, and Nik Quaife for their contributions.

Kevin Byrne, Consul General
Consulate General of Ireland to the
Midwestern US

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A VERY SINCERE THANKS to the following people and organizations who have enabled this project to come to life: John and Pat O'Brien, Carmel O'Brien Brennan, Jim O'Brien and Mark Moore of The O'Brien Collection; the team at the The University of Notre Dame: at the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies, Patrick Griffin, Mary Hendriksen; at the Snite Museum of Art, Joseph Becherer, David Acton, Bridget Hoyt and, especially, Cheryl Snay, for the partnership and encouragement over many long months of planning. Billy Shortall and Ciaran O'Neill, at Trinity College Dublin are owed a special mention for the genesis of this idea and for bringing it to our attention.

A special note of appreciation must go out to the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Irish Government (DFA) who have been wonderful, professional colleagues, and supporters of this project–THANK YOU to: Ambassador Daniel Mulhall, Kevin Byrne, Brian O'Brien, Eugene Downes, Sarah Keating, Ragnar Almquist, Nik Quaife, and Sandra Hamilton.

As is so often the case in projects of this scope and complexity, there are so many people who have lent encouragement and advice throughout, which enabled "things to happen" that might not otherwise have happened: Arabella Bishop, David Britton, Liz Carroll, Diana Copperwhite, Colin Davidson, Aileen Dillane, Patti Fahey, James Hanley, Róisín Kennedy, Charlie Minter, Sineád Mc Coole, Louise Morgan, Andrew O'Brien, Hughie O'Donoghue, Nicholas Orchard, Brendan Rooney, Frances Ruane, and Steve Zick come to mind.

Always ready to lend a hand, ODA Creative Partners, Julie Dunlop, Patti Johnson and Derrick Alderman shaped the "look and feel" of both this exhibit catalog and its accompanying CD.

Finally, the essayists and other contributors have provided great insights into the paintings and photographs in this exhibit and, therewith, into the following topics: the Paris Congress of 1922 and its context, the trajectory of Irish art and the position of Irish artists in the marketplace and the relationship between "art" and "the Arts" especially as it is reflected in Irish music and by means of other artistic collaborations. These contributions prove the point that the deep, rich well of "the Arts" is an effective means by which we generate, investigate, challenge and communicate our notions about Irish identity, not only in the past and into the present but also as we imagine and shape the future of our shared cultural ethos.

Marty Fahey

DEDICATION

"You use a glass mirror to see your face; you use works of art to see your soul."

George Bernard Shaw

This exhibit seeks to answer the title question, *Who Do We Say We Are?* Inspired by the wisdom inherent in GB Shaw's quote, we feel privileged to be a partner in searching for the answers where they can most readily be found, in the combined creative and artistic expressions of our Irish heritage.

Because the Arts *(literature, poetry, music, singing, dancing, performing arts, drawing, painting, sculpture, architecture, decorative/applied arts, photography, etc.)* emanate from "deep wells" within us, they have a unique ability to express and to reflect the deeper parts of us to ourselves. Identity–both personal and societal–is teased out and formed in these exercises and expressions of creative endeavor. The hope of the partners responsible for this exhibition is that the paintings, images, and words gathered here–along with the specially composed and curated melodies associated with them–will serve as Shaw suggested, to illuminate the soul of Irish identity over the last one hundred years.

By taking as its starting point the *Exposition d' Art Irlandais* that took place in Paris during the month of January in 1922, the exhibit picks a pivotal moment in the birth of the Irish Free State for its inquiries. In so doing, it sheds a light on how the newly formed government understood its primary diplomatic missions: to remind the world of Ireland's ancient, rich, and unique culture and to declare for itself a long-awaited national sovereignty that was worthy of worldwide recognition and support. We hope that you enjoy the artistic explorations into the enduring cultural themes that were conveyed through the Arts at that time, and we also hope that the artworks, essays, and music chosen for this exhibit invite you to reflect on the trajectory of Irish art and culture since then.

Finally, we hope that this exhibit sparks a desire for further multidisciplinary engagements between the branches of Irish creative expression and that the abiding dynamism within the Arts enables us all to more fully understand and appreciate the rich, deep, and ever-evolving nature of "Irishness."

"…That all the arts be united again, painting and literature, poetry and music. Bless synthesis…"

William Butler Yeats, 1937

John and Pat O'Brien
The O'Brien Collection

INTRODUCTION

Explorations of identity and, by extension, individuality, are central to the history of art. Since pre-history, what was created in pigment or of stone has ultimately said a great deal about "we" and "I." The audience addressed was, of course, of its time but ultimately, across time. Although this thoughtful and carefully considered publication accompanies the landmark exhibition, *Who Do We Say We Are? Irish Art 1922 | 2022*, it is a significant contribution to our larger understanding of Irish art—often overlooked in chapters on the larger history of Modern and Contemporary Art.

In recent years, the study of the history of art from the early twentieth century to the present has greatly broadened to be more global, more inclusive. This has often meant necessarily looking beyond the European and American canon at the world. But it has also meant looking beyond the traditional centers of cultural activity in Europe and America, and the traditional roster of makers therein. For many cultural enthusiasts, extraordinary Irish artists are still a discovery, a revelation. This said, many of the artists included in this volume and in these exceptional collections, graciously and gratefully expand our horizons.

As the very title of the exhibition indicates, this project is about 1922 and 2022. The efforts of the exhibition proper and this publication illuminate within both modernist and contemporary visions. This happens all too infrequently in major museum exhibitions, and we at the University of Notre Dame are honored to have this exhibition presented at the Snite Museum of Art, soon to be reborn as the Raclin Murphy Museum of Art in 2023. In fact, there is a certain poetry that this exhibition will be the climactic, final presentation in our current facility. What an amazing coincidence that at a university and in a museum that so treasures Irish culture,

a project of such dimensions is intrinsically and extrinsically historic. All of this is certainly made more meaningful as it has been achieved through friendship, collegiality and warmth.

Cornerstone to this endeavor are the internationally renowned O'Brien Collection in Chicago and the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies at the University of Notre Dame. Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien and their family have been kind and generous lenders to the museum on numerous occasions and their curator, Marty Fahey, has been a steadfast and creative resource at every turn. At the Keough-Naughton Institute, Director Patrick Griffin, and Assistant Director Mary Hendriksen remain wise counselors, eager co-workers and friends. Additional Notre Dame contributors include Lisa Caulfield, the director of Kylemore Abbey Global Centre in Ireland and Aedin Clements, Irish Studies librarian, Hesburgh Libraries.

In addition to the power of the aforementioned O'Brien paintings, we must also acknowledge a recent addition to the Museum's permanent collection of an exquisite painting by Walter Osborne made possible by the Keough Family Foundation. Further the notion of identity into landscape and photography, we are delighted to present a suite of rural landscapes by the celebrated photographer Amelia Stein, RHA, through the generosity of the Milly and Fritz Kaeser Endowment for Photography.

Taken together for a project of this scope, we are honored to have the support of the Office of the Consul General of Ireland to the Midwestern United States. Kevin Byrne, Consul General, and Sarah Keating, Vice Consul, have been enthusiasts of this project since its inception. In Ireland, we are grateful to Ciaran O'Neill, Ussher Associate Professor in Nineteenth Century History & Deputy Director, Trinity Long Room Hub; Róisín Kennedy, Assistant Professor, School of Art History and Cultural Policy, University College, Dublin; Billy Shorthall, Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin and Aileen Dillane, Senior Lecturer in Music, Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, the University of Limerick.

At the Museum, I am most grateful to the entire staff for taking on such an important project—especially in the midst of a period of great planning and change. Curators Cheryl Snay and David Acton have generously offered their expertise and vision. Further thanks to those that have offered direct hands-on contribution to the project including: Matthew Bean, Gina Costa, Bridget Hoyt, Ann Knoll, Victoria Perdomo, Ramiro Rodriguez, Kyle Thorne, Graduate Assistant Grace Hamilton, and Ellen Hurst, copy editor.

Although acknowledged above, a well-deserved spotlight must shine upon Marty Fahey and Cheryl Snay for striking the match and tending the fire of this exhibition and project. May it burn brightly for generations to come.

Joseph Antenucci Becherer, PhD
Director and Curator of Sculpture
Snite Museum of Art

ESSAYS

EXPOSITION D'ART IRLANDAIS 1922

Dr. William Shortall
Trinity College Dublin

Introduction

The Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921 was one of the defining events that led to the establishment of the modern Irish State. It ended the War of Independence with the British, but not on the terms that Irish nationalists desired or expected. It partitioned the country and left the twenty-six-county Irish Free State as a dominion of the British Empire. Fervent disagreement between pro- and anti-treatyites resulted in the Civil War that began in June 1922 and lasted for eleven months. It left the nascent State unsure if it had a viable future. During this period of uncertainty, the State sought to assert its independence and its unique identity and to confirm its sovereignty nationally and internationally.

The political movement for independence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is inextricably linked to the rise of cultural nationalism, exemplified in the Irish Literary Revival, and to the establishment of organisations such as the Gaelic Athletic Association and Gaelic League. Three of the seven signatures on the 1916 Proclamation were published poets, and it is difficult to identify a politician of the period who was not culturally engaged.[1]

In an effort to affirm the Irish Free State and announce its arrival onto the world stage in 1922, then Irish Minister of Fine Arts in the revolutionary Dáil, George Noble Count Plunkett, father of Joseph M. Plunkett, an executed leader of the failed 1916 Easter Rising, sought to present the official grand narrative of Irish cultural history in Paris in January 1922. It included concerts of Irish music, performances of Irish plays, a series of lectures on Irish life and culture, and its centrepiece, a seminal exhibition of Irish art.

The Irish government pursued a "propaganda value" from the exhibition of three hundred Irish art works.[2] Exhibits for the French capital were selected by Count Plunkett, with the assistance of the internationally renowned artist John Lavery; Art O'Briain, Irish envoy in London; members of the Society of Dublin Painters; Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland; and exhibition organisers in Paris.[3]

World Congress of the Irish Race

The cultural display was held in conjunction with the World Congress of the Irish Race, also known by its Gaelic title, Aonach na nGaedeal, which was opened in the Hotel Continental, Paris by the Irish envoy in the city, Seán T. O'Kelly on January 21, 1922. This Paris conference, planned during the War of Independence and its aftermath, took place just two weeks after the Anglo-Irish Treaty was acrimoniously approved by the Dáil.

The week-long Congress brought Irish diaspora delegates and an international audience together to discuss Irish affairs and establish a central organisation to coordinate worldwide diaspora activity and support for the Irish State. The opening date was specifically chosen to commemorate the anniversary of the Republican Dáil, which, although declared illegal by the British government, met for the first time three years earlier in the Mansion House.

The primary purpose of the Congress was to persuade the international community through showcasing Irish culture, values, and ideas to support their claims for national sovereignty. Although a deal was signed with Britain there was uncertainty and mistrust, and many political issues were unresolved.[4] In particular, Irish politicians continued to hold out the possibility of an all-island country. Positioning this event internationally visibly demonstrated that "the Irish question [is an] international one and not a mere matter of internal English politics."[5] In doing so, the Irish authorities sought support from other nations in putting pressure on Britain to solve outstanding issues.

Also, Paris was chosen as the venue because it was seen by many as the cultural capital of the world. While cultural expression was one of the leading features of Irish nationalism pre-1916, this was the first time art and culture were used to position the country internationally as an independent State. It was a bold statement by a new State. By demonstrating the range, and quality of Irish culture and contemporary art and design, the State presented a public display of artistic independence to support its claims of political independence.

By showcasing Irish sovereignty and cultural uniqueness on a foreign stage, the new Irish State presented a self-defined, political view of itself, saying "this is who we are and this is how we see ourselves." At this stage, no other country had recognised the Irish Free State and this early deployment of soft power and cultural diplomacy was an effort to win international recognition. Politically, the Treaty had divided the Dáil, which was made up of individuals who were previously united in their common national and international political objectives. Art and cultural expression was something both sides of the divide could embrace and support. Pro-treaty George Gavan Duffy, Minister for Foreign Affairs, wrote to anti-treaty leader Eamon de Valera on January 12. He explained that the Race Congress was "mainly of a cultural and artistic character" and he thought that it was wise "to send a delegation representing Ireland [that would] avoid party politics" and would "represent fairly the two parties [sides] in An Dáil".[6] However the acrimony of the Treaty debate continued in Paris and, despite it being primarily a cultural event, politics dominated the contemporary and historical reports.[7]

About 250 people, including 100 official delegates representing their respective national organisations, attended from various parts of the world including Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, England, Italy, Java, Newfoundland, New Zealand, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, and the United States.[8] Included among the many prominent Irish politicians in attendance were three future Irish presidents, Douglas Hyde, Seán T. O'Kelly, and Eamon de Valera.

Congrès Irlandais à Paris, January 1922. Group includes Seán T. O'Kelly, Eoin MacNeill, Eamon de Valera, Countess Markievicz, Mary MacSwiney, Harry Boland, Douglas Hyde, and Jack B. Yeats.

Cultural Program

The cultural program of the Congress was under the remit of Plunkett as Minister of Fine Arts. A series of ten lectures by identified experts on various aspects of Irish cultural life included, Jack B. Yeats speaking on modern Irish art, his brother William on Irish literature, Douglas Hyde on the Gaelic League, Eoin MacNeill on Irish history, Evelyn Gleeson on Irish arts and crafts. Others spoke on agriculture, economics, religion, music, and Gaelic sports. In keeping with the theme of the Congress, all presentations were nationalist in tone and content.

The Congress used large and luxurious venues as a visible statement of prosperity, pride, and ambition.[9] It projected a confident new State, and self-determining nation on a world stage, bringing the Irish Free State, unshackled from Britain, into Europe and further legitimising the internationalism of the Irish independence movement.

On Friday, January 27, there was an evening of Irish theatre staged for the attendees in the opulent Salle Hoche. Two plays were performed, *The Rising of the Moon* (1907) by Lady Gregory and *Riders to the Sea* (1903/4) by John Millington Synge. Performed by an amateur Irish drama group based in Paris and billed as the "Dramatic Section of the Irish Club of Paris," the former is a short patriotic play, dealing with conflicting loyalties in Anglo-Irish relations. Synge's work is also a one-act play, a tragedy set on Inis Meáin in the West of Ireland and deals with the island's inhabitants' travails against the brutality of the sea.

Two evenings of Irish music on the theme of Irish struggles for independence consisted of ballads, hymns, and various airs played on a range of traditional Irish musical instruments, fiddle, flute, and whistle and were staged in the Salle de Fêtes, Hotel Continental. Chief organiser of the musical evenings, Arthur Darley, also delivered the lecture on Irish music and re-enforced the nationalistic aspirations of the concerts, declaring that Ireland never bowed to a conqueror and after centuries of suffering and persecution still "gloriously preserved" her life and music and "she will once more be the land of song."

Musical pieces performed were patriotic and related to Irish liberation, they recalled past battles and dashed hopes of political freedom and English atrocities. This is exampled by "Hymn on the Battlefield" written by Irish revolutionary, politician and artist, Countess Markievicz, and which was sung by Gerald Crofts who fought in Dublin during the 1916 Easter Rising. The piece, dedicated to the Irish Citizen Army, invoked past Irish martyrs,

> *"Tone is our battle-cry,*
> *Emmet inspires us,*
> *Those who for freedom fall,*
> *Never shall die."*

One significant contemporary piece played both nights was "String quartets, dedicated to the memory of Terence MacSwiney."[10] MacSwiney, Irish republican and Lord Mayor of Cork, died on hunger strike in October 1920 in Brixton Prison, England, in protest to charges of sedition brought by the British authorities. His death highlighted the Irish political struggle to a worldwide audience. MacSwiney's sister Mary attended the Congress.

Many of the thirty-seven pieces performed were older airs, such as "Follow Me Up to Carlow," an Irish folk song commemorating the defeat of an army of three thousand English soldiers in 1580 or James Clarence Mangan's poetic verse "My Dark Rosaleen" written in 1846 at the height of the Famine. "Rosaleen" is an allegory for Ireland and references a litany of her sufferings.

The associated exhibition of Irish art and design ran for a month at another important venue, the Galeries Barbazanges on Rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré. It was a large influential modern gallery noted for its contemporary art shows. The display cost the financially perilous Irish Free State almost half the total Congress expenditure.[11]

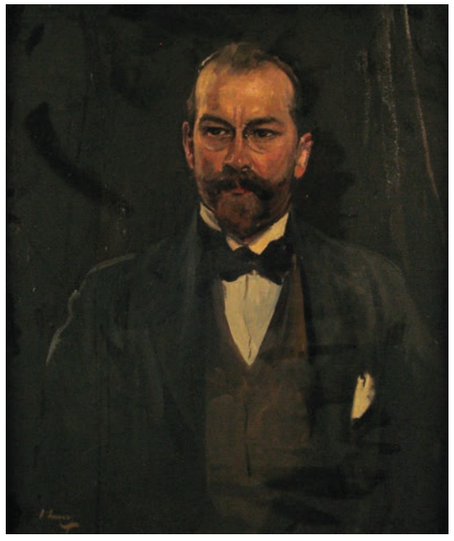
William Conor, RHA, RUA (1881–1968), ***Lambeg Drummers***, Oil on board, 76 x 62 cm. Private Collection.

The exhibition was opened by Léonce Bénédite, curator of the Musée du Luxembourg, on behalf of the French Minister for Fine Art. Ninety-four Irish artists, craftspeople and societies, the majority of whom were contemporary, exhibited 281 exhibits in various media.[12] Despite the realities of the political landscape post the War of Independence, the Paris art exhibition displayed work by artists and craftspeople from across Ireland's four provinces. All traditions from across the island were represented, projecting the ideal that art and culture were not partitioned. It also reflected the government's difficulty in accepting the existence of, or the absoluteness of, partition. However, over the following decade, the geographic and political realities of a divided country would be acknowledged and sustained as works associated with the six counties were censored or rejected from future State-sponsored exhibitions. For example, in 1922 William Conor exhibited a politically contentious painting of an orange order parade in Belfast, however, the same subject matter was rejected ten years later.[13] E. M. O'Rourke Dickey exhibited a work entitled *Northern Landscape* in Paris; ten years later images of six-county beauty spots would also be rejected. In the current show,

Basil Blackshaw's painting of a humble Belfast council house, *Joe Bell's Council House* (1984), from The O'Brien Collection, reflects the broader view of the Paris exhibition.

Also included in 1922 was the work of the internationally renowned Irish-born, English-based painter John Lavery. Of particular significance were his "pictures of modern Irish history," including political portraits of Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins, and Gavan Duffy, among others.[14] Painted at a time when the Dáil was declared illegal by the British administration; here its members were presented as legitimate statesmen of a functioning State, a riposte to the well-worn colonial narrative of the Irish being incapable of self-government. Lavery's portraits exhibited in Paris refuted these clichés.

Another Lavery painting, *The Blessing of the Flag* (1921), depicts the archbishop of Dublin, blessing the Irish tri-color and thus symbolically, baptising the new State. It also serves as a portent for the growing alliance of church and State. Kneeling before the flag, unofficial at the time of the painting's creation, is a soldier in the uniform of the Irish Free State. The moment of consecrating the flag symbolises the birth of a nation, one with a Catholic identity. During the Congress, de Valera and his supporters hired cars and mounted them with Irish tri-colors. In a cavalcade followed by the French gendarmerie, they toured places of Irish interest and religious sites in the city.[15] One of the most prominent, overt, national propaganda symbols that asserts national identity is a sovereign country's flag. Today the Irish flag features in every official occasion, national celebrations, military or sporting occasions. The opening words of the 1916 Proclamation states "Irishmen and Irishwomen: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her



John Lavery, RHA, RA, RSA (1856–1941), ***George Gavan Duffy***, 1921, Oil on canvas, 76.9 x 63.9 cm. Collection: Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin.

John Lavery, RHA, RA, RSA (1856–1941), ***The Blessing of the Colours***, c.1922, Oil on canvas, 101.8 x 76.3 cm. Crawford Gallery. It was this version of the painting that was exhibited in Paris, 1922, rather than the version held today in Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin.

Jack B Yeats, RHA (1871–1957), ***Bachelor's Walk, In Memory***, 1915, Oil on canvas, 45.7 x 61 cm. Collection National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.

freedom." Artist Lily Williams' painting in the current show, *Hibernia* (1916; The O'Brien Collection), similarly invoked the Irish tri-color as an aspirational symbol of independence and identity.

Lavery's painting of Terence MacSwiney's requiem Mass in London, titled in the exhibition *Funérailles du Lord-Maire de Cork* (1920), depicts his cortege with sunlight illuminating the Irish flag on the coffin. When first shown in the Glasgow Arts Club, this painting was called *Southwark Cathedral, London 1920*. The ambiguous title led to the painting being described simply as "a detailed study of St George's Cathedral, Southwark" by contemporary critics.[16] Re-titled and in the politically charged atmosphere of the Paris Congress, it, like many of the other works on view, represented the age-long violent and fractured relationship between nationalist Ireland and Britain.

Another artist represented in the Snite Museum of Art show is Jack B. Yeats. In 1922 he exhibited his work *Bachelor's Walk, In Memory* (1915).[17] It recalled an event, witnessed by the artist, of a woman leaving flowers at the spot where English soldiers had shot dead four unarmed Dubliners and wounded more than thirty others in 1914. The central Cathleen Ní Houlihan-type figure is accompanied by a boy, a metaphor for the new State looking to the future. Although painted seven years earlier, Yeats decided to show this work for the first time at the Congress in Paris, presumably because its messages of sacrificial death, rebirth, and hope for the future resonated with Ireland's situation. The destiny of Ireland, however imperfect, was beginning to unfold from its recent trouble and that message was conveyed in this urban scene. The display of such images was designed to garner international support in ongoing negotiations with the British to recognise and fully secure Irish independence.

Countess Markievicz attended the Congress and was represented in the show with six works. She called for a response to the racism Irish people had been subjected to under British rule, and she challenged its inferred colonial superiority. She was referring to cartoons relating to Irish political and social life as presented in English newspapers and magazines from the 1800s.[18] These presented Irish people as simian, drunken, aggressive, and racially inferior to the English coloniser. These popular

LEFT
Patrick Tuohy, RHA (1894–1930), ***Young Mayo Peasant***, 1912, Oil on canvas, 91.5 x 53.4 cm. Collection: Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin.

RIGHT
Countess Markievicz (1868–1927), ***Young Irish Amazonians***, c. 1919, Watercolour on paper, 17.8 x 25.4 cm. Collection: Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin.

images asserted that Ireland was a violent and indolent society, incapable of self-government and was reliant on a benevolent England to rule and protect the country. This negative image of Irishness propagated in British media was counteracted in the exhibition. Exampled by Patrick Tuohy's subtle painting, *Young Mayo Peasant* (1912), it blurred the distinction of the political portrait, images of the political struggle for independence, and romantic depictions of those that occupy the Irish rural landscape. The subject, a poor but confident youth, with his and his country's future laid out before him. This piece, with its rich use of colour and direct composition, presented a sensitive representation of a rural Irish youth and provided a riposte to earlier Irish peasant constructs.[19] Other artists also portrayed Irish people as proud and hardworking in distinctive Irish landscapes, conferring on them the right to own and work the land they inhabit. In the the Snite Museum show, Charles Lamb's sensitive early 1920s portrait of a hardworking west of Ireland man shows a proud and determined individual with his tools at the ready for working the bog. Refuting the clichéd cartoons, Lamb painted what he saw. Similarly, Seán Keating's *King O'Toole* (1930; The O'Brien Collection) places the titular character in the distinctive Wicklow landscape from which his ancestors were dispossessed.

In Paris, the organisers also selected genre scenes and iconic, affirming images of Irish life that ranged from Seán Keating's painting of Irish revolutionaries, *Sur leur garde (Ar a gCoimead)* (1921), willing to take on the might of the British Empire, to Leo Whelan's *A Kerry Cobbler* (c. 1920). Elizabeth Yeats' Cuala prints, designed by her brother Jack, of Irish life were populated with distinctive Irish rural types wearing wide-brimmed hats and shawls. They depicted distinctive Irish landscapes, and traditional Irish events such as horse racing on the strand in Sligo. These implied that Ireland was an ancient nation, one with a distinctive culture, and a thriving society capable of, and demanding, self-determination.

The distinctiveness, vibrancy, and value of contemporary Irish culture was ably displayed in Paris in theatre and music concerts and by portraits of Ireland's literati in paint and bronze. Albert Power (1881–1945) exhibited busts of writers W. B. Yeats, Lord Dunsany, and James Stephens. Dermod O'Brien's (1865–1945) painted portrait of playwright Lennox Robinson was entitled *Robinson Lennox (auteur de 'Patriotes' et 'le Chef Perdu')* (1918). Including the name of his nationalistic-themed plays in the painting's title outlined Robinson's nationalist credentials and marked the portrait with the exhibition's political leitmotif. Irish writers have long had connections with Paris, none more so than James Joyce, whose *Ulysses* was first published in the city in February 1922. Demonstrating the interconnectedness of Irish and international writing, during the Congress, James Joyce and Nora Barnacle dined with W. B. and George Yeats and Ezra and Dorothy Pound.[20] Yeats had read extracts from *Ulysses* published in *The Little Review* and it is likely that the novel was discussed. The Parisian-Irish literary connections were to continue most notably when future Nobel laureate Samuel Beckett arrived in Paris in 1928. The seminal Beckett portrait, *Image of Beckett* (1994), on show in the Snite Museum exhibition from The O'Brien Collection was painted by his artist friend Louis le Brocquy.

The arts and crafts exhibits in Paris, which included stained glass by Harry Clarke and Wilhelmina Geddes, and embroidery by Lily Yeats, were originally intended to be displayed with pre- and early Christian objects from the National Museum to demonstrate an unbroken continuum of Irish visual and material culture through the ages. Contemporary design found its antecedents in high-art objects from medieval times.[21] Historical and modern design were presented as examples of what de Valera termed at the Congress "the genius in the race," and the "magnificent culture, the grand things the [Irish] nation could give to the world."[22]

That Irish artists and craftspeople dovetailed the political aspirations of the Congress organisers is exampled by their unanimous eschewing of their Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA) and Royal Academy (RA) member designations. The Royal titles would have been at odds with the theme of the Congress and the exhibition's aim to create a political and cultural distance from the United Kingdom. The title "Royal" was excluded from the catalogue entries.

A testament to the quality of the art on show is how many works, in private ownership at the time, are now in national collections.[23] The French government purchased one of Paul Henry's now trademark, then progressive, Irish landscapes for its national collection.[24] That a painting of a uniquely Irish scene entered an important French collection was viewed as authenticating Irish art, and its recognition helped to achieve the political and "propaganda value" so keenly sought by Irish politicians and the other organisers. *Reflections across the Bog* (1919-21) in the Snite Museum show, belongs to the same group of paintings exhibited by Henry in Paris.[25] Commenting on the Parisian exhibition, the distinguished French critic Arsène Alexandre singled out Henry's paintings and saw landscape as the primary source for an Irish School of Art. Landscape has continued to be a dominant theme in Irish art.

Susan Mary (Lily) Yeats (1886–1949), ***The Moon***, c. 1918, Silk embroidery on blue poplin ground, 24 x 36 cm. Private Collection.

Who Did the Paris 1922 Exhibition Say We Were?

The 1922 Congress exhibition in Paris presented Ireland as a unique and ancient nation with a cultural history that grew from medieval times, and whose legacy continued to inform and inspire contemporary Irish arts and crafts.

With regards to the fine arts, Arsène Alexandre asserted in the exhibition catalogue that landscape and genre scenes were evidence of the uniqueness of the Irish landscape and the independent Irish Race. As a renowned international art critic, Alexandre's external expert voice was welcomed and valued by the Irish delegation. The purchasing of a West of Ireland scene by Paul Henry by the French government was viewed as a validation not only of contemporary Irish art, but also of Ireland as an independent cultural—and political—entity.

Jack B. Yeats, Henry, and the other artists' works were presented as acts of decolonization of the Irish visual imagination, presenting images of people and landscape that spoke to Ireland and its supporters, not English audiences. The political portraits following European conventions, indicated a functioning government, and a nation capable of self-government. Images of everyday Irish life in prints and paintings asserted that the Irish Free State was functioning and progressing.

Paul Henry (1877–1958), ***A West of Ireland village (Un village de l'ouest de l'Irlande)***, 1921, Oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm. Collection: Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

Seán Keating (1889–1977), ***Good Evenin' Miss***, 1921, Oil on canvas. Private Collection.

The self portrait of Keating and his wife, *Good Evenin' Miss* (1921), both attired in uniquely Irish dress, set in an Irish landscape, is of the painter in his own place. Many would contend that Keating was as close as the Irish national movement would come to having an official artist. Here, as in much of his work and that shown in Paris in 1922 represents the personal in the political. Both figures are dressed in West of Ireland, Aran Islands garb, underlining the identification of the West with a rugged and uncompromising Irish authenticity, creating an iconic image of how the new nationalistic Ireland saw itself. Saying this is who we are, and this is how we see ourselves.

Conclusion

The spectacle in Paris was the start of an emergent internationalist approach to Irish cultural policy. As the Irish government would continue to fund participation in cultural exhibitions at home and abroad, the political agenda behind these events changed over time from asserting sovereignty and defining a nation taking its place in the world to promoting trade.

This approach to cultural policy in the early years of the Irish Free State was formalised with the establishment of the Cultural Relations Committee in 1949.[26] Seán McBride as Minister for External Affairs, saw the promotion of Irish culture abroad as important to "the material and economic development" and a help "in the economic and political tasks which we have to face" in Ireland.[27] He added,

> *whether it be in the field of international politics, foreign trade or tourism, one of the first tasks that has to be achieved is to make the people of other countries interested in our island and to make them feel kindly towards us… the best way to attract tourists from other countries is to interest them in our culture, in our history and in our scenery… show them what we make, how we live and what we have to sell.*

SEAN KEATING — « BONJOUR, MADEMOISELLE »

Seán Keating, ***Bonjour, Mademoiselle*** as it appeared in a contemporary exhibition review in *L'Art et Les Artistes*, Numéro 25, Mars 1922.

Based on an understanding that Ireland "punches above its weight" in cultural activity globally, the Irish government continues to promote Irish culture, art, and music to serve Irish interests in the international arena. Initiating a successful two-year campaign in 2018 for Ireland to win a United Nations Security Council seat for the 2021–22 term, over one hundred ambassadors attended a concert by Irish band U2 in Madison Square Garden, New York, as guests of Ireland. Like the presentation of the grand narrative of Irish cultural history in Paris in 1922 it was part of a government effort to show the best of Ireland.

The Snite Museum exhibition, *Who Do We Say We Are? Irish Art 1922 | 2022*, responds to the *Exposition d'Art Irlandais Paris 1922* and is part of a broader initiative by the University of Notre Dame; The O'Brien Collection, Chicago; Trinity College Dublin; the Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris; and the University of Paris-Sorbonne to celebrate Irish cultural achievement and is supported by the Irish government.

[1] These were Patrick Pearse, Joseph M. Plunkett, and Thomas MacDonagh.

[2] NLI. Count Plunkett Papers, 1648–1940. Draft letter from Plunkett to de Valera, November 26, 1921.

[3] The principal organisers in Paris were Irish-Canadian Katherine Hughes, National Organizer for the Irish Self-Determination League in Canada, and Thomas Hughes Kelly, a wealthy Irish-American member of Friends of Irish Freedom an American-Irish republican support organisation.

[4] Aspects of Independence were subject to ongoing negotiation at this stage and there were many unresolved issues, for example, British troops were still present in the State, Britain retained control of certain ports, negotiating the border was an issue and there was a narrative in some newspapers of Britain retaking control.

[5] NLI. MS 17,650/5/2. Joseph McGarrity Papers, 1789–1971. Position noted at an earlier local Irish Race convention.

[6] UCD archives, Papers of Desmond and Mabel FitzGerald. P80/704 Letter dated January 12, 1922 from George Gavan Duffy, Minister for Foreign Affairs, to de Valera inviting him to nominate four Congress delegates.

[7] Dermot Keogh, "The Treaty Split and the Paris Irish Race Convention." *Études Irlandaises*, 1987, No. 2, Vol 12, 165–170 and Gerard Keown "The Irish Race Conference, 1922, Reconsidered" in *Irish Historical Studies*. Cambridge University Press. Vol. 32, No. 127 (May, 2001). 365–376.

[8] The most accurate figures are in the papers of the diplomatic archives in Nantes. Estimates for attendances at each session ranges from 150 to 250. National Library of Ireland, Diarmid Coffey, Coffey & Chenevix Trench Papers, MS 46,312 /2 "Minutes of the World Congress of the Irish Race held at Paris during the week ending January 28th 1922" (20pp), (January 1922). See also Fine Ghaedheal, *Imteaċta Aonaiġe na n-Gaedeal ib-Páris, eanair*, 1922, *Proceedings of the Irish Race Congress in Paris, January, 1922*, (Dublin: Cahill & Company, 1922), 19–22. Delegates had voting rights.

[9] The main congress venue was the Hotel Continental. Other venues included the Grand Hotel (secretariat and accommodation), Palais D'Orsay hotel (opening reception), Salle Hoche (theatre and grand ball), and Galeries Barbazanges (art exhibition).

[10] Composed by Swan Hennessey, an Irish American based in Paris and friend of MacSwiney.

[11] The gallery showed the work of avant-garde artists such as Picasso, Modigliani, Gauguin, Matisse, Chagall, and Dufy. The gallery closed in 1928.

[12] *Exposition d'art Irlandais [exhibition Catalogue]: Ouverte Du 28 Janvier Au 25 Février 1922*. Paris: Galeries Barbazanges, 1922.

[13] The Irish government sent an art exhibition as part of its official display to the Chicago Century of Progress event in 1933 and censored some artworks because they did not meet certain criteria.

[14] NLI. MS 8461 34. Art O'Briain papers, c.1900–c.1945. Letter O'Briain to Lavery. December 10, 1921. Art O'Briain was Dáil Éireann's first envoy to London, where he played a major role in the Irish Self-Determination League of Great Britain and patronised many London-Irish cultural events. There was extensive correspondence about the exhibition between Kelly and O'Briain with Lavery. Both were particularly anxious to secure the loan of his "Pictures of modern Irish history." O'Briain along with Erskine Childers was Lavery's contact when he painted the portraits of the treaty delegates in 1921. O'Briain and Kelly considered Lavery similarly painting the Race Congress delegates and although the artist attended the exhibition in Paris the portraits never materialised. Lavery exhibited eight paintings in the exhibition.

[15] The Irish tri-color was flown over the GPO in 1916, used by the Free State in 1921, but was only formally confirmed as Ireland's national flag in Bunreacht na hÉireann (Constitution of Ireland) in 1937.

[16] *Aberdeen Journal* (March 19, 1921), cited by Claire Crowley in the National Gallery of Ireland, Blogpost 3, October 27, A Dark Episode from Irish History, accessed on December 11, 2016.

[17] Jack Yeats exhibited four paintings and numerous prints produced by Cuala Industries.

[18] L. Perry Curtis, *Apes and Angels: the Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), rev. ed.

[19] This work is now in the Hugh Lane Gallery. That Tuohy saw this painting as more than a portrait is evidenced by his entering this in the Genre class in the 1922 Aonach Tailteann art exhibition.

[20] Richard Ellmann, "Joyce and Yeats," *The Kenyon Review* 12, no. 4 (Autumn 1950), 633.

[21] NLI. Count Plunkett Papers, 1648–1940. Letter Thomas Hughes Kelly to Plunkett, November 23, 1921.

[22] Anon, "Congress Banquet. Mr. De Valera's address." *Cork Examiner*, January 25, 1922. 5.

[23] Art works exhibited by William Conor, Grace Henry, Paul Henry, Nathaniel Hone, Seán Keating, John Lavery, William Leech, Countess Markievicz, Dermot O'Brien, Sarah Purser, Patrick Tuohy, Charles Shannon, Estella Solomons, Leo Whelan, Jack B. Yeats, John Hughes, Albert Power, and Oliver Sheppard exhibited in the exhibition are now in important public collections.

[24] Titled *Village dans l'ouest de l'Irlande (A West of Ireland Village)*, Oil on canvas, 66 x 82cm and painted over 1920/21 (catalogue number 29) was a typical west of Ireland scene. It is now in the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

[25] Paul Henry exhibited six paintings in the exhibition.

[26] The Cultural Relations Committee was established in 1949 to promote Irish art and culture internationally. The Arts Council which promotes art and culture nationally was established two years later in 1951.

[27] Anon, "Ireland Photographed for Exhibition Tour" in *Irish Times*, December 29, 1950. 7.

WHO DO WE SAY WE ARE? IRISH ART 1922|2022

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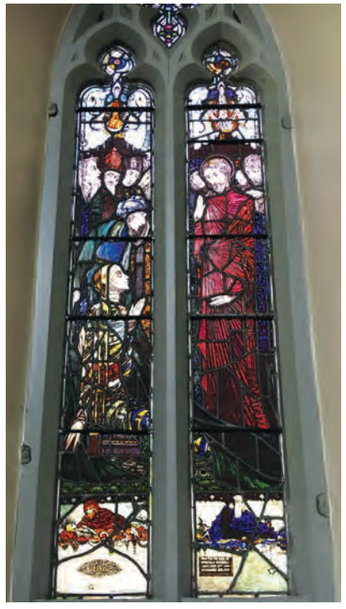
Since the foundation of the Irish State and the partition of the island of Ireland in 1922, dramatic changes have occurred in the production and reception of visual art, as well as in the social fabric of Ireland, north and south. This essay offers a broad overview of visual art in the new Irish State from 1922 to 2022. In addition to outlining some exemplary artists and artworks, it reflects on the broader relationship between visual art and the Irish State. The latter's attitude toward art was at times opportunistic and, for many decades, the Irish political establishment was indifferent to the wider educational and institutional contexts in which art was made and viewed. It commissioned art for international venues, and from the late 1940s set up of official bodies that aimed to support artists, often with a focus on the image of the State abroad rather than the more complex challenge of nurturing a meaningful engagement with art at home. The availability of art education to all sections of society and the proper funding and management of public museums and collections are essential for enabling access to visual art. It is through such institutional support that the production of the artwork is allowed to connect with the wider national environment. Alternative networks of dissemination that facilitated the patronage of art and critical debate of it in the wider media compensated for official neglect in Ireland. Over the course of the last century, private artist-led initiatives, exhibition societies, organisations, commercial galleries, and advocates of visual art have helped to nurture Irish art and to facilitate a broader awareness of it amongst the Irish public.

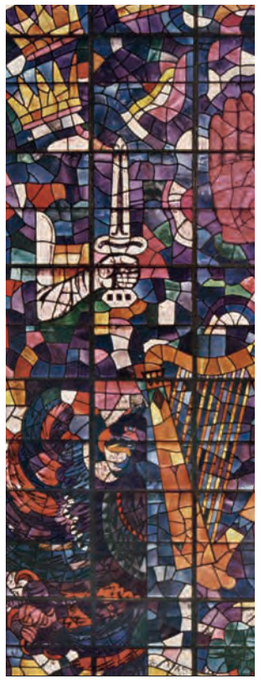
1922–49

The lack of access to art education and properly funded art galleries marginalised visual art in Irish cultural life in the early decades of the Irish Free State. The climate of censorship and cultural isolation that prevailed in the immediate post-independence period discouraged wider awareness of modernism, the dominant international art movement, amongst the general population. Modernism, however, infiltrated many facets of visual culture, architecture, and the designed environment, including, for example, public buildings and official publications.[1] There was, nevertheless, official apathy toward visual art. The Free State's education system discouraged equal engagement with visual art when, in 1922, it dropped drawing as a compulsory subject at primary school level. Art was not put back into the national school curriculum until 1971. Furthermore, until the introduction of free second-level education in 1967, only those attending private religious-run schools could avail of art classes.[2] This had long-term implications for public awareness of the relevance of art.

Primarily associated with the more prosperous echelons of Irish society, there was a lively art scene in Dublin and a knowledge of Modern art in art circles in Free State Ireland, and in Northern Ireland.[3] Mainie Jellett and Evie Hone introduced abstract art directly from Paris where they had worked with the cubist painter Albert Gleizes in 1922–23. Numerous Irish artists, mainly women, studied in Paris in the 1920s and 1930s where they were part of international art networks and where they learned the aesthetic language of cubism and expressionism. Their work was exhibited at the Society of Dublin Painters, a small exhibition society and gallery, founded in 1920. Jack B. Yeats and Paul Henry were involved in the establishment of this space although both also became members of the Royal Hibernian Academy. Their more realistic work, such as Henry's monumental paintings of the West of Ireland as seen in *Reflections across the Bog* (1919-21, The O'Brien Collection), appealed to a broad section of the art-going public. The latter work, with its black turf stacks and large expanse of sky filled with pink and grey clouds and vertical rain, combines realism with a masterful understanding of colour and form. Inevitably, the abstract work of Jellett met with ridicule, but the less severe manifestations of Modern art seen in her subsequent more figurative work and in the application of Modern art to Irish landscapes and subjects in the work of Norah McGuinness, Grace Henry, and others was greatly admired by the Irish art world, including critics and writers who contributed reviews to a wide range of newspapers and periodicals.[4] Its popularity in these contexts demonstrates the need for art to be modern in style but also to relate to local concerns. This was partly a backlash against the stereotyping and the marginalisation of Irish life in British colonial contexts of the past. It also reflected the desire on the part of artists to relate their work to specifically Irish experiences. Most of these artists returned after their time in London and Paris to spend their lives in Ireland, rather than pursue careers abroad. The latter suggests genuine patriotism, demonstrated in Jellett's dynamic cubist inspired *The Land, Éire* (1940, The O'Brien Collection) and a strong connection to Ireland through networks of family and friendship. For many their practice and work belonged within this context, appealing to Irish audiences and collectors and was primarily intended to make sense of or to critique life in post-independence Ireland. In contrast to the timeless representations of the fishermen and farmers of the West of Ireland in the paintings of Seán Keating and Charles Lamb, the flattening of form in this more modernist art acknowledges the contemporary impact of modernity. Even the ostensibly romantic work of Jack B. Yeats, such as *In Tir na nÓg* (1936, The O'Brien Collection) where a modern youth reads and daydreams of Irish mythology, conveys the present in its materiality. The rich and varied application of pigment and intense colour takes precedence over the narrative, forcing the viewer to recognize the construction of the painting itself and its effects. All is tenuous and fabricated, and we are actively deterred from totally retreating into fantasy.

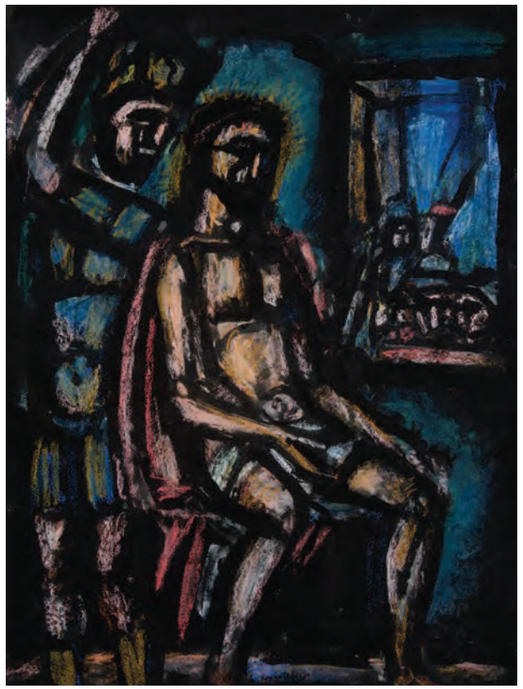


Harry Clarke, ***The Widow's Son***, 1924, stained glass window, Sts. Peter and Paul, Roman Catholic Church, Balbriggan.



Evie Hone, ***Four Green Fields***, 1939, stained glass window, 640 x 234 cm. Government Buildings, Merrion Square, Dublin, Office of Public Works.

The stained glass of Harry Clarke, Hone, and Michael Healy provided a living art gallery throughout many churches in Ireland as well as the USA, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Africa. Irish stained glass, a legacy of the Arts and Crafts movement, in which everything was handmade by the artist, was recognised internationally for its high level of craftsmanship and originality. Clarke's reputation as one of the most significant Irish artists of his day was secured in 1917 when his spectacular windows for the Honan Chapel in Cork were unveiled. He invented a distinctive iconography for his Irish saints that departed radically from the eclectic productions supplied by German and British firms for many Catholic churches in Ireland. Clarke created a world of his own, through which passed strange figures, insubstantial and disquieting, figures whose frailty bear with difficulty the almost insupportable burden of their glittering ornament."[5] Aside from religious buildings, his glass was also installed in secular contexts such as Bewley's Café on Grafton Street in Dublin. Unfortunately, his most ambitious undertaking, the *Geneva Window*, commissioned by the Department of Industry and Commerce in 1927 for the International Labour Organisation in Geneva, fell afoul of the cabinet for its inclusion of sexual imagery and references to the work of censored Irish writers. It eventually found an appreciative home at The Wolfsonian museum in Miami in 1988. Hone's window *Four Green Fields* (1939, OPW) was also commissioned by the Department of Industry and Commerce and was displayed in the Irish Pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair. Its less contentious subject, the coats of arms of the four provinces of Ireland, provided an anti-partition image. Its simplified floating forms and bold colours exuded a modern confident vision of Ireland that suited the bold modernist design of Michael Scott's pavilion.[6] Hone's window was installed in Government Buildings in Merrion Square in 1991, having spent



George Rouault, ***Christ and the Soldier***, 1930, Gouache, crayon and ink on paper, 63.5 x 48.2 cm. Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin.

much of the previous fifty years in storage and as the backdrop of the CIE offices in Dublin city centre.

Official indifference to art institutions and public access to art was alleviated by private organizations, most notably the Friends of the National Collections of Ireland, which was founded in 1924 by the artist Sarah Purser.[7] It donated works of art to museums throughout the island and continues to do so today. During the late 1930s and 1940s, it was an advocate of modern continental art and donated such work to the Dublin Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, the only museum of modern art in the country. Founded by Hugh Lane in 1908, the gallery reopened in a refurbished building, provided by Dublin Corporation, in 1933. As the gallery had no purchasing budget, it was entirely reliant on donations to develop its collection. In 1942, a major public controversy resulted from the Friends' offer of a painting by the leading French Catholic artist, Georges Rouault, to the gallery. His small gouache painting, *Christ and the Soldier*, was refused by the Municipal Gallery's acquisitions committee whose xenophobic remarks were published in the press. While Rouault's work was not accepted until 1956, the debate reflected growing demand for access to modern continental art in Ireland.[8] The cultural isolation of World War II had a dramatic impact on the exhibition of contemporary art in Dublin. There was an influx of foreign and Irish artists into Dublin. Admirers of modern art were no longer able to travel abroad and there was consequently a growing market in contemporary Irish art. In 1943 the Irish Exhibition of Living Art (IELA), an annual exhibition forum for modern art by Irish and international artists, was founded. This continued to be a major event on the Irish art calendar, eclipsing the more traditional Royal Hibernian Academy exhibition until its demise in the late 1980s.

1949–71

Ireland declared itself a republic in April 1949, and the resulting awareness of outside perceptions of the State encouraged the promotion of a distinctive Irish art. Seán MacBride, Minister of External Affairs, set up the Cultural Relations Committee in 1947 to advise him on cultural issues and particularly on projects, such as exhibitions that would promote Irish identity abroad. The most important aspect of the committee's activities was organising exhibitions of contemporary Irish art for foreign destinations. These included a touring exhibition of Irish art in the United States and Canada in 1950[9] and participation at the Venice Biennale, the prestigious international exhibition of modern art. The principal advice on these projects came from the subcommittee on Visual Art, which was chaired for many years by the modernist architect Michael Scott.[10]

Between 1950 and 1962 Ireland took part in the Venice Biennale on four occasions. Nano Reid and Norah McGuinness, artists who had trained in Paris and London and who had a distinctive Modern approach, represented the country in 1950. Amongst the work included was Reid's *Friday Fare* (1945, Private Collection), a vivid painting of a food-laden table situated within a Bohemian flat filled with books and artworks and references to a cosmopolitan world. The painting, a phenomenological exploration of space, surveys a myriad of tactile and visual surfaces.

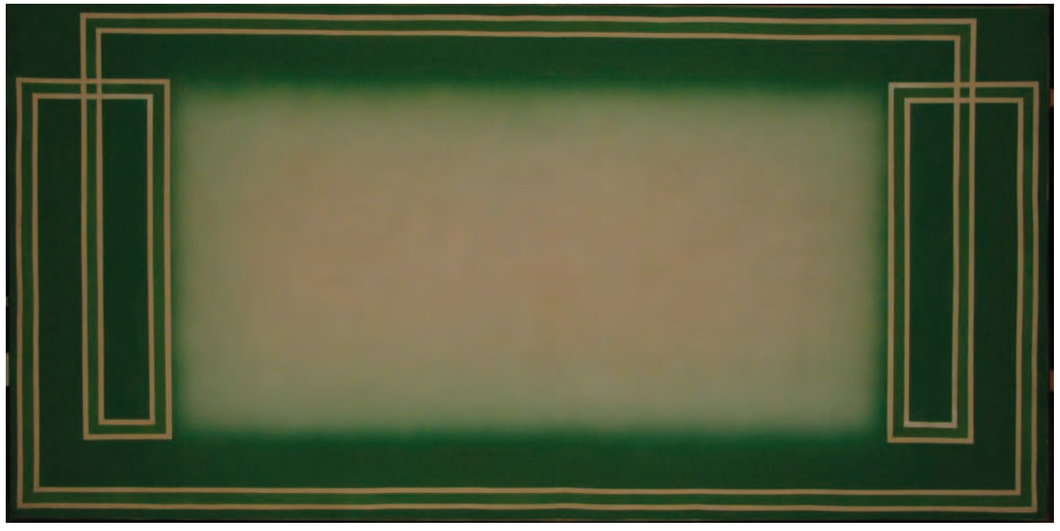
TOP
Louis le Brocquy: ***A Family***, 1951,
Oil on canvas, 120 x 240 cm.
National Gallery of Ireland.

BOTTOM
Nano Reid, ***Friday Fare***, 1945,
Oil on board, 51 x 61 cm.
Private Collection.

Patrick Scott, ***Device***, 1960, 160 x 91 cm. Tempera on board,
The O'Brien Collection.

Louis le Brocquy, who had been based in London since 1946, and the sculptor Hilary Heron represented Ireland at Venice in 1956, when le Brocquy's *A Family* (1951, National Gallery of Ireland) won a major prize. This ambitious work depicting three detached nude figures in a subdued grey-brown palette was, according to the artist, "conceived … in the face of atomic threat, social upheaval and refugees of World War II and its aftermath … "[11] Having been refused by the Dublin Municipal Gallery in 1952, it was donated to the National Gallery of Ireland in 2002, a recognition of the stature of le Brocquy as a major twentieth-century Irish artist. In 1960 Patrick Scott, an architect turned artist, was selected. His architectural background enabled him to acquaint himself with modernism more readily than a conventional art school education would have in Ireland at this time. His innate awareness of engineering and the aesthetics of structure and space are evident in his proto-abstract paintings. A posthumous exhibition of the work of Jack B. Yeats was shown in Venice in 1962. While this exhibition was restaged in Dublin, the others were not shown in Ireland and nor were they widely discussed in the Irish media. There was a strong feeling amongst critics that official effort and resources should be directed toward educating the Irish public about art rather than attempting to promote it to a foreign audience.[12]

Thomas Bodkin's *Report on the Arts in Ireland* (1949) led directly to the setting up of the Arts Council of Ireland in 1951. The council, whose members included Michael Scott and the collector Basil Goulding, favoured the promotion of modern over academic art. When Fr. Donal O'Sullivan became director in 1960, the Taoiseach Sean Lemass asked



Micheal Farrell, ***White Void Upheld***, Oil on canvas, 120 x 240 cm. Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin.

him to give greater attention to the visual arts "to balance the overwhelming literary bias of the Irish artistic reputation."[13] The council's policy of buying and sponsoring exhibitions of modern Irish art intensified in the coming years. Between 1960 and 1968 it acquired 455 paintings by ninety-two artists.[14] It also administered the Macaulay Fellowship, inaugurated in 1959, which enabled emerging artists to travel to the United States or London, where the experience of seeing international modern art in situ had a profound impact on their work.[15] The staging of *Rosc '67*, the first in a series of major exhibitions of modern art, was an ambitious and successful coup for the promotion of international art in Ireland. The brainchild of Michael Scott and James Johnson Sweeney, the American curator, it presented the work of the fifty best international artists in a four-year cycle. It reinforced the competitive nature of contemporary Irish art, which was already beginning to prioritise international critical and commercial success above more social or utopian criteria. While it gave the Irish public and artists the opportunity of seeing large-scale modern art in Dublin, the fact that Irish artists were excluded from *Rosc '67* and *Rosc '71* reinforced the provincial status of Irish visual art and confirmed it to the Irish and international public.[16]

The outward economic policies of the 1960s encouraged the development of Irish industry, which was in turn supportive of Irish art. The leading collectors and players in the art world included the businessman Basil Goulding and the marketing executive Gordon Lambert. Carroll's tobacco company sponsored annual prizes at the IELA from 1964 onward, encouraging bolder and more abstract art to feature in the exhibitions. One recurring winner was Micheal Farrell who painted large abstract works such as *White Void Upheld* that were radical in their rejection of mysticism and sentiment. His work combined a knowledge of Celtic art with new materials and an exposure to non-objective art that he knew from living in London and New York. When British troops were brought into Derry and Belfast in August 1969 in the wake of the Civil Rights movement, Farrell proclaimed that he would not let his work be shown in any gallery supported by the Unionist regime, including Britain, where the government had condoned events in the North.[17] His subsequent work moved away from abstraction into increasingly figurative paintings that made direct reference to the escalating violence on the island.

Activism among artists was also evident in the various sit-ins and lockouts that took place in the National College of Art in Dublin from 1969 to 1971. The ensuing National College of Art and Design bill led to extensive parliamentary and media debate about the college and Irish art education in general.[18] While students and the Independent Artists, a group founded in 1960, protested against the elitist nature of the Irish art world, those few artists who were making money were able to avail of the new tax-free status for artists introduced by Charles Haughey, Minister of Finance, in 1969.

1972–91

On January 22, 1972, Ireland's accession treaty to the EEC (EU) was signed. Despite this optimistic turn, civil order in Northern Ireland was on the verge of collapse. On January 30, 1972, British troops shot dead thirteen protestors in Derry, an event that resulted in widespread anger throughout the island. Three days later, the British embassy in Dublin was burned down. In November Brian O'Doherty performed *Maze* at the IELA, a direct response to Bloody Sunday. A solicitor read O'Doherty's name change document to those assembled,

> *"From this date artworks by*
> *Brian O'Doherty will be signed*
> *PATRICK IRELAND until such*
> *time as the British military presence*
> *is removed from Northern Ireland*
> *and all citizens granted their civil rights."*

Ireland was carried out on a stretcher, dressed in white and his body was painted from each end in green and orange, until the two colours became completely mixed.[19]

The increasing participation of Irish artists in conceptual and time-based practices in conjunction with the reform of the National College of Art resulted in an overhaul of the dynamics of visual art in Ireland. Art students now engaged in project-based learning and critical thinking rather than the acquisition of mechanical skills. The visits of the German artist Joseph Beuys to Ireland in the 1970s had a profound impact on the adoption of performance and participatory practices amongst younger artists. Performance artists Nigel Rolfe, Alastair McLennan, and Anne Seagrave moved to Ireland where they instigated innovative practices amongst students and outside the official frameworks of the museum or gallery.[20] The Art and Research Exchange, founded in Belfast in 1979, and the Project Arts Centre in Dublin, originally opened in 1967, provided key venues for these practices.[21]

One example of the conceptual turn in Irish art is evident in James Coleman's *Strongbow* (1978). This consists of a fibreglass replica of Strongbow's effigy in Christchurch cathedral accompanied by a television screen showing a video of two clapping hands, one green and one red. It was originally shown in the Project where the dark theatricality of the space created a sense of tension and spectacle in which the viewer becomes an integral part of the installation. Rather than having a fixed intention in terms of the meaning that the work will produce, it takes on the idea that the work of art should ask questions, rather than provide answers. Coleman's work makes a much more universal statement about the relationship between history and the present than more conventional representations of specific events could ever achieve.

Painting was revived in the neo-expressionism of the 1980s, which made fashionable an aspect of Irish art practice that went back to the figurative and explorative work of the Independent Artists. Patrick Graham's *Ire/land III* (1982, Dublin City Gallery) was made in the aftermath of the 1981 IRA hunger strikes. The painting shows an emaciated cadaver, laid out on a funeral bier. Its arm extends downwards to a large shamrock, a symbol of Irish nationalism and of Christianity. Below three religious

LEFT
Patrick Graham, ***Ire/land III***, 1982, Oil on canvas, 183 x 122 cm. Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin.

RIGHT
James Coleman, ***Strongbow***, 1978, Resin cast, plaster mould, Sony monitor, audio equipment and speakers, IMMA.

icons are juxtaposed with Republican heroes James Connolly, Robert Emmet, and Patrick Pearse, all of whom died violently for their country. Through the expressionistic way in the painting is constructed, including the scrawled text "And I understand," the work acknowledges the artist's emotional and conflicted response to extreme Republicanism while revealing the latter's cynical use of the symbolism of martyrdom.

Graham's approach differs from the objective, sometimes clinical, sometimes humorous response to the Troubles found in the work of contemporary Northern Irish artists. According to Brian McAvera, their work replaces earlier innocent visual art tactics with "strategies of subtext, using oblique angles of approach."[22] An example is the large mural *Night Canvas* by John Kindness, painted in situ for an exhibition in Dublin in 1987. The cartoon-like forms depict a sectarian murder and situate the conflict within an urban, working class setting. Its sources are popular comics and cartoons, the mural tradition of Northern Ireland as well as modern art, including the photomontages of the German Dadaist John Heartfield. Joan Fowler sees such work as emerging from "a search for meaning within a particular location rather than as a reaction to the Troubles … "[23] The parameters of art production were now informed by new ideas of criticality that necessitated a more interrogative and self-reflective attitude on the part of the artist.

This criticality is evident in the imposing sculpture *Waiting* (1981, Hugh Lane Gallery) by the southern Irish artist, Kathy Prendergast. The three seated, partially formed ghostly female figures are made of fibreglass and look as though they could have been cast from the pediment of some Greek temple. They suggest conventional notions of femininity such as passivity and patience while retaining a monumental presence. Behind them is a large board covered with transparent dress patterns that allude to the idea of construction and the wider formation of identity. While the elements work in playful tension with each other, *Waiting* subtly scrutinises the diminished position of women in Irish society. The female body has continued to be the focus of the work of several significant Irish artists.

1991–2022

IMMA, the Irish Museum of Modern Art, opened in 1991. Under the directorship of Declan McGonagle (1990–2001), IMMA was a new kind of institution in Irish cultural life. McGonagle argued that the museum should contribute to the transformation of existing social and cultural values rather than solidifying establishment viewpoints. IMMA's exhibitions set Irish art directly within international contexts and demonstrated that contemporary art generally, and not just in Ireland, was concerned with issues of gender and identity, the role of memory and place, and the wider impact of late capitalism on communities. The museum benefited from the fact that the centre-periphery model associated with modernism no longer held sway and Irish art was no more liable to being dismissed as subsidiary to some outside dominant form of art production.

IMMA's short history has coincided with massive social changes. In 1995 the Republic of Ireland, now experiencing an economic boom, became a country of net emigration for the first time. This was followed by the peace process in Northern Ireland and referenda introducing divorce (1995), same-sex marriage (2015), and abortion rights (2018). This social revolution away from the previously prurient attitudes toward sexuality and reproduction was prompted by the demise of the authority of the Catholic Church in Ireland, caused by the disclosure of widespread institutional abuse of unmarried mothers and their children over many decades in church run establishments. The

LEFT
John Kindness, ***Night Canvas(s)***, 1987, Acrylic on canvas, 609.6 x 243.8 cm. Courtesy of artist.

RIGHT
Kathy Prendergast, ***Waiting***, 1981, Fibreglass resin, parquet flooring and sewing patterns, 184 x 230 cm. Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin.

prosperity of the Celtic Tiger era (1995–2008) was followed by a devastating economic collapse, the social repercussions of which are still raging. More recently Brexit (2016), the pandemic, and the climate crisis have become major public concerns. Irish art responds to these calamities in diverse ways.

Willie Doherty's work began by imposing text on black and white photographs of his native Derry in the 1980s. Over the past decades his practice has developed into the production of colourful, richly textured moving imagery with voiceovers that impart a profound sense of tension. Like his earlier work, this exposes the problematic relationship between word and image. The setting of his film *Ghost Story* (2007) is the landscape of post-conflict Northern Ireland, which is presented as unresolved and haunted by the trauma of the past and the guilt of the present. The extended shot moves along a tree lined path while the narrator recounts his memories of past events and people. The underlying violence, the fallibility of memory, and the role of narrative are crucial themes that make Doherty's work meaningful to viewers beyond the island of Ireland and beyond the specific contexts of the Northern Irish conflict.

The incarceration of vulnerable Irish women, the silence over abortion and childbirth outside of marriage, and the related censorship of the female body have been addressed in several performative works since 1991. Amanda Coogan's *Yellow* (2008) is a performance of four hours' duration in which the artist, wearing a large yellow dress, continuously scrubs her skirt in a bucket of soapy water. The bubbles form a crown, like a halo, around her head.[24] This is one of several artworks that refer directly to the mistreatment of generations of Irish women in the Magdalen Laundries. It uses art practice to scrutinize official histories and, in this case, to reinstate the female body back into Irish cultural life.

Willie Doherty, ***Ghost Story***, 2007, Video, high definition, projection, colour and sound, Tate.

Artists played a direct role in the success of the Repeal the Eighth Amendment Campaign that resulted in the right to abortion being accepted into the Irish Constitution in 2018. The Artists' Campaign to Repeal the Eighth Amendment was formed in 2015 and it staged events, participated in marches, and provided banners and designs for the campaign. The successful repeal logo, widely seen on sweatshirts, was designed by the artist Anna Cosgrave.[25] Artists have also been active in driving for social change in Northern Ireland.[26]

Conclusion

Since the 1970s Irish art practice has been increasingly diverse and reflective of the pluralistic nature of the contemporary art world. Artists have benefitted from the growing prosperity of Ireland, from new ways of thinking about art practice as an expanded field, and new frameworks for producing and exhibiting art beyond conventional gallery spaces. Currently Irish art ranges from the production of large-scale installations, painting, prints, photography, to time-based art enacted in museums and in non-art venues. Despite the economic uncertainty and the restrictions imposed on the exhibiting of art by the pandemic, the production of art in Ireland continues to enrich cultural life through the original perspectives that it brings to all aspects of contemporary experience, big and small, within Ireland and in the wider world.

Amanda Coogan, ***Yellow***, 2008, performance, IMMA.

[1] L. King and E. Sisson, eds., *Ireland, Design and Visual Culture: Negotiating Modernity, 1922–1992* (Cork University Press, 2011); Sorcha O'Brien, *Powering the Nation: The Shannon Scheme and the Electrification of Ireland* (Irish Academic Press, 2017).

[2] Helen O'Donoghue, "Education and the Visual Arts," in C. Marshall and P. Murray, eds., *Art and Architecture of Ireland 5, Twentieth Century* (Yale University Press, 2014), 152–57. See also B. Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities: The State and Arts in Independent Ireland* (Arts Council of Ireland, 1991), 50.

[3] S.B. Kennedy, *Irish Art and Modernism 1880–1950* (Institute of Irish Studies, Belfast, 1991).

[4] B. Arnold, *Mainie Jellett and the Modern Movement in Ireland* (Yale University Press, 1991); S. Kissane, ed., *Analysing Cubism* (IMMA; Crawford Art Gallery, 2013); R. Kennedy, *Art and the Nation State. The Reception of Modern Art in Ireland* (Liverpool University Press, 2021).

[5] Constantine Curran quoted in Nicola Gordon Bowe, "Introduction. Early Twentieth-Century Irish Stained Glass in Context in David Caron, ed., *Gazetteer of Irish Stained Glass* (Irish Academic Press, rev. ed. 2021), 20.

[6] N. Sheaff, "The Shamrock Building," *Irish Arts Review* 1, no. 1, 1984, 26–29.

[7] The Thomas Haverty Bequest Fund was also crucial in enabling public museums and galleries to acquire works of art by living Irish artists.

[8] Kennedy, *Art and the Nation State*, 70–79.

[9] The exhibition of Contemporary Irish Art travelled to Providence, Boston, and Ottowa. Elizabeth Curran, *Exhibition of Contemporary Irish Painting North America* (Cultural Relations Committee, Dublin, 1950).

[10] D. Walker, *Michael Scott (architect)* (Gandon Editions, Kinsale, 1995), 170.

[11] Louis le Brocquy quoted in S. Bhreathnach Lynch, "Louis le Brocquy's A Family: An Unwholesome and Satanic Distortion of Natural Beauty," *Recirca.com* (September 2002). See Kennedy, *Art and the Nation State*, 137–51.

[12] See for example P. Hickey, "Art," *The Leader*, 1 July 1950, 18.

[13] D. Walker, *Modern Art in Ireland*, (Lilliput Press, Dublin, 1997), 56.

[14] *An Chomhairle Ealaíon. 16th Annual Report*, 31 March 1968, 2.

[15] Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, 134. The winners included Noel Sheridan, Brian King, Micheal Farrell, John Burke, and Brian Henderson.

[16] P. Shortt, *The Poetry of Vision: The Rosc Art Exhibitions* 1967–1988 (Irish Academic Press, 2016).

[17] "Living Art Show Goes to Cork," *Irish Times*, 21 August 1969, 11. Farrell spoke on receiving a Carroll's Prize at the 1969 IELA.

[18] John Turpin, *A School of Art in Dublin Since the 18th Century* (Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1995), 539–48.

[19] See B. Moore-McCann, "The Politics of Identity, Place, and Memory in Contemporary Irish Art," in N. Kelly, ed., *Art and Politics. The Imagination of Opposition in Europe* (R4 Publishing, Dublin, 2004), 25–31. In 2008 a performance at IMMA, *The Burial of Patrick Ireland*, concluded this gesture.

[20] Carman Szabo, "Performance Art," in P. Murphy, ed., *Art and Architecture of Ireland 3, Sculpture 1600–2000* (Yale University Press, 2014), 492–95.

[21] Maeve Connolly, "Time-Based Art," in P. Murphy, ed., *Art and Architecture of Ireland 3*, (Yale University Press, 2014) 530–33.

[22] Brian McAvera, *Directions Out* (Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, 1987).

[23] Joan Fowler, *Micky Donnelly: Paintings, Drawings, Prints* (Orchard Gallery, Derry, 1987).

[24] E.L. Putnam, Not Just "A Life Within the Home," *Performance Research*, 22:4, (2017), 61–70, DOI: 10.1080/13528165.2017.1374708.

[25] Suzanna Chan, "Speaking of Silence, Speaking of Art, Abortion and Ireland," *Irish Studies Review* 27, no. 1, 73–93, DOI: 10.1080/09670882.2018.1560892.

[26] The Belfast activist group, Array Collective won the 2021 Turner Prize for "their hopeful and dynamic artwork which addresses urgent social and political issues affecting Northern Ireland with humour, seriousness and beauty." tate.org.uk/press/press-releases/array-collective-win-turner-prize-2021

THE IRISH ARTIST IN THE WORLD: CULTURE, MARKETS, AND MODERNITY

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What was the position of the Irish artist in 1922 and to what extent could their work be authentically channelled or packaged as distinctly Irish? In the history of Irish art and literature, 1922 is the peak year of modernism as well as a key stage in Ireland's long journey to modernity. It offers us a hinge point in history and memory. Like 1798 and 1916, 1922 is a single year that inspires book-length studies, helps to bookend survey texts, and can be used as a widely understood shorthand in popular culture to denote the beginning of an emergent Irish identity in the political and social imaginary.[1] This Irish identity neither emerged nor stabilised in a vacuum. Those interested in articulating a separate identity for the Irish in 1922 had to contend with the intensity of its connections to other, more influential polities and powers and, in particular, across three competing cultural cities—Paris, London, and New York. The city was the arbiter of the modern, and these three cities represented the biggest influence on a provincial and emergent Irish culture either side of independence. Each offered a very different sort of sanctuary to the Irish, but especially to those involved in cultural production of various types. Artists and writers came from a variety of backgrounds, but all were engaged in highly precarious work dependent on patronage, prevailing fashion, and market dynamics, and all had to reckon highly variable income. The Irish artist and writer then is a figure the historian can learn much from: a bellwether for the transnational and global forces that shape Irish identity at the beginning of the Irish Free State. In what follows, I wish to explore the dilemmas faced by these people and the processes that shaped the dimensions of Irish cultural production either side of 1922.

In early 1922 it must have seemed that Paris represented the future of Irish culture. In January and February of that year, we can find the political class of Ireland gathering in Paris for a political think-in at the Congrès Mondial de Irlandais, alongside a programme of cultural events designed to show the world that Irish culture could establish itself on the world stage. A prominent art exhibit at Galerie Barbazanges ran alongside the Congress for a month and collected what we now recognise to be the canonical artists and works of the Irish Free State. James Joyce published what most scholars consider to be the first Irish modernist novel, *Ulysses*, in the same month as the exhibition. The Irish designer Eileen Gray opened Galerie Jean Desert on the rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré, just around the corner. In one short month it seemed that the cream of Irish politics, art, literature, and design all converged in Paris, proof perhaps that a future existed for Ireland outside the confines of the Anglo-American. A pathway that diverged from the colonial ties of London one side of the Atlantic, and the vulgar nouveau riche appeal of New York on the other. Not even the most charitable reading of the Franco-Irish relationship post 1922 could argue that this turned out to be correct. To explain, we need to think carefully about the overlapping processes of Anglicisation, Americanisation, and Irish nationalism in the context of a globalising world characterised by the fall of empires and the emergence of many comparable small nations all desirous of the same recognition that Ireland was competing for in Paris in 1922. The Irish artist was at all times affected by the transnational flow of ideas and the art market, and this essay intends to focus on their positionality in relation to these broad forces before and after 1922.

Modernity and the City

The connection between the city and the aspirant artist or writer is a fundamental one: The market for their work, as well as the conditions of its production and exhibition or publication, were all urban in context through the nineteenth century. The trajectory of those writers not born in substantial cities is generally to drift toward one from the provinces in search of a literary market, readership, and a density of economic and social ties that can contribute in their search for a professional and artistic identity. The spatial basis of *Bildung* is almost always one that involves consolidation and emergence in the city. For Irish writers, that city was traditionally London, especially during the colonial period and the Union that followed it, but in practice it was influential long beyond the partial independence of Ireland in 1922, though in competition with both Paris and New York. Joe Cleary has written perceptively of the 1920s as the moment where the balance of power in the English literary world shifted away from English practitioners. As Cleary sees it, the combined efforts of the Irish and American writers and intellectuals in this period "diminished nineteenth century deference to London," transforming it into just "one more node" in a complex system of literary transmission.[2] Irish authors played a leading part in this power grab, exemplified by the award of the Nobel Prize to both George Bernard Shaw and William Butler Yeats in 1925 and 1923 respectively. This postcolonial decentring of London in the Anglophone literary world was not neatly mirrored in the visual arts, which remained more stubbornly centred on Paris.

It was perhaps only during the cultural revival of the late nineteenth century that Paris became a serious proposition for Irish writers, and then only a small number of them. The Irish literary world revolved around the London publishing market, and for much of the early decades following Union in 1801 that was also true for the visual arts. Fintan Cullen has argued that to attempt to delineate a distinctive "Irish School" of visual art is to "ignore the dominance of a British—primarily English, at that —visual presence in the experience of art in or about Ireland in the nineteenth century."[3] He is also careful to point out what he sees as a separate strand of European and Catholic influences that informed the work of sculptors like John Hogan and painters like Alfred Elmore. Tom Walker sees the issue less bluntly than Cullen, and in his prehistory of Irish modernism he takes seriously the idea of a distinctly Irish cultural field from the 1880s, one that was much influenced by the aesthetic principles of Walter Pater as it was by the more prosaic work of political agitation and the Irish revival.[4] It is instructive that he locates figures such as George Noble Plunkett, the person who selected some of the works exhibited in Paris in 1922, within this cosmopolitan framework.

Plunkett was in later life the Director of the National Museum of Ireland and later a Teachta Dála 1918–27, including a stint as Minister for Fine Arts 1921–22. As a younger man he had edited *Hibernia*, an arts journal that aimed to "extend popular cultivated opinion in Ireland." That it survived only a very short run was indicative of the tiny market in Ireland for arts criticism. Plunkett was educated in Jesuit schools in Nice and Clongowes Wood before entering Trinity College Dublin, and descended from a wealthy Catholic elite family. He had published standard biographies of Botticelli and Pinelli, as well as a study of architecture in Dublin.[5] Plunkett was made a Papal Count in the mid-1880s and his life trajectory is instructive to those of us interested in how the Irish canon of art emerged. Where Plunkett was both profoundly Catholic and avowedly cosmopolitan as a young adult in the early revival era, his viewpoint hardened to some extent during the fraught decades that followed, and by 1922 his sense of what could qualify as sufficiently "Irish" for propagandic purposes had demonstrably narrowed.

Plunkett was wealthy and well connected: an influential figure in the tiny arts world of Dublin. The artists who he helped to canonize were generally not, and their lives are arguably better and more realistic bellwethers for the effects of modernity and cosmopolitanism on Irish culture.

Paris eclipsed London as the leading global city in the production of art, especially in the late nineteenth century when the city was at the apex of its importance in European cultural life. More than any other city between 1870 and the 1920s, Paris had become the "multiethnic and multicultural capital of the visual arts" and thus Irish artists were only one of many legible expatriate communities in the city, each contributing to the cosmopolitan ideal of Paris as a global city of culture, but also to their own "national" traditions and schools of art.[6] In this way, many ostensibly provincial and isolated traditions of art were in fact forged in the transnational and diversified milieu of a city such as Paris, where artists, architects, designers, and writers all converged to learn from their masters and from each other at a formative stage of their artistic journeys. It also happened at a key moment in the economics of cultural production, as the visual arts transitioned from institutional and patronage-based activity typified by the academy and the salon to the decidedly "modern" and much more free-market system that revolved around the dealer and critic.[7]

The exhibition at Paris in 1922 was, as Billy Shortall has shown, arguably the key moment in modern Irish art history, particularly as it involved a convergence of politics, art, and propaganda to advocate for the existence of an Irish school of art that was distinguishable and different from any British school.[8] That the exhibition happened in Paris was doubly important, offering a non-Anglophone umbrella under which the so-called Irish School could shelter. The events of 1922 illustrate the contingency of such decisions, and as we reckon with it a century later it seems obvious that it was an isolated and somewhat anachronistic moment in time and space, soon to be overtaken by the three dominant forces that affect Irish culture in the decades either side of that year: Anglicisation, Americanisation, and Irish nationalism. All three can be considered under the broad banner of imperialism and modernity.

Imperialism, Modernism, and Irish Modernity

The classic critique of modernism is that it privileges Eurocentric ideas of progress and is inexorably tied to the idea of European and Anglophone dominance in the world. In other words, it is an artistic movement that unthinkingly exalts Westernisation and imperialism. Even its temporal boundaries—once considered sacrosanct from 1890–1940s—have been productively attacked.[9] The appearance of so many Irish figures at its very core, then, has always been confusing. Ireland, after all, is England's first colony, and its people famously derided, underestimated, and systematically impoverished as a result of this unequal relationship. That Ireland produced several key figures in the modernist canon such as Wilde, Joyce, Gray, Yeats, and Beckett is therefore something of a puzzle. Recent publications have sought to expand the meaning of Irish modernism beyond this restricted canon, and have even queried the original membership.[10] The idea of the elective cosmopolitan is of course central to the self-fashioned identity of many of the Irish modernist authors, from Wilde and Joyce to the Left Bank modernists like Samuel Beckett. To be cosmopolitan and Irish meant leaving Ireland, and through the period of Irish modernity no other European population left "home" in such vast quantities. Thus, the Irish artist joined the mass exodus of the Irish from Ireland.

By 1890, more than 40 percent of those born in Ireland resided elsewhere in the world. It was no longer an elite experience to feel oneself a citizen of the world. This mass movement of the Irish—to America in particular—dates from the economic crisis of 1816–19, with more than 400,000 Irish departing for America in the decade prior to the Famine, which only served to more deeply embed the pattern in Irish culture along with a collapse in population that the island has never recovered from. Between 1851 and 1901, the United States was the destination for between 80 and 94 percent of Irish migrants.[11] Smaller numbers of Irish people moved to Australia, and later to New Zealand. British North America was a consistent destination, and tens of thousands migrated to Britain every year, albeit in a confusing mixture of permanent settlement and more casual and seasonal patterns poorly captured by the crude censal data at our disposal. This distribution was also profoundly affected by class dynamics, with bourgeois and elite Irish much more likely to take advantage of the professional advantages of access to the British Empire, or to migrate to Europe, something which had been in decline since well before the French Revolution.[12] The experience of being a "modern" Irish person, then, necessitated an interaction with the wider world, but what elements informed that experience? And what differentiated the artist's professional and personal experience of the world?

The Irish Artist between Paris and London

Christine Casey has recently argued that Irish art and architecture prior to the late nineteenth century was characterised by two distinct processes in dialogue: the premium placed on "foreign," or imported, artistry and a growing sophistication of artistic production at home from the middle of the eighteenth century.[13] Irish big houses were designed by star architects from abroad, their ceilings stuccoed by Italian craftsmen and their walls adorned with paintings sourced via the Grand Tour. Pickings were slim for the Irish artist through the long eighteenth century and by the second half of the nineteenth century, when most of the artists shown in Paris were born, the three most important elements in their formation consisted of the ecosystems of Paris and London, and the more provincial training available in Dublin. All three were affected by the absolute dominance of European colonialism in the world during this period, whether they aligned with it or defined their work in opposition to it.

In Ireland the art market was comparatively small, and so were the options for aspirant artists to train.[14] 1731 marks the beginning of academical training in Ireland with the opening of the Dublin Society leading to drawing classes for men from the 1740s, expanding gradually into a network of state-funded Royal Dublin Society (RDS) schools at Cork, Belfast, and Dublin.[15] Women were excluded from the Royal Hibernian Academy classes until 1893. This meant that the only local option available to an aspiring female was at the RDS schools from 1849. This was made possible only by the imposition of the South Kensington system on the Irish schools.[16] In reality many of the more prominent Irish fine artists were trained in London and, to a lesser extent, Paris and its associated hinterlands through the nineteenth century, particularly those with private means.[17]

Recent reappraisals of the Irish novel have attempted to redress a longstanding underestimation of the importance of Paris to its development through the long nineteenth century, particularly in relation to female novelists from Sydney Owenson and Maria Edgeworth to Hannah Lynch, Edith Somerville, and Edna O'Brien.[18] Viennese Modernism was also significant in Irish high culture, but there was a distinct reason why a fame-hungry Oscar Wilde sought first to establish himself in Paris as an emerging artist in the early 1880s—it was the centre of the artistic industries.[19] Indeed, more than any other Irish artist or writer, Wilde's navigation of London, Paris, and New York reveals the underlying architecture of global celebrity culture and cultural production.

The established London route in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is well exemplified by Alfred Elmore (1815–71), born in Clonakilty to a middle class family and educated at the Royal Academy in London. His father was a friend of Daniel O'Connell, a central figure in British and Irish culture

in the 1830s when Elmore emerged as a talented young painter of mostly religious, classical, and historical scenes. His later work was occasionally more political, full of Victorian moralising. Elmore was clearly enriched by periods spent studying in Paris, Boulogne, Florence, and Rome, and can thus be best explained as an Irish artist anchored in London, drawing on both British and European traditions. His work is now almost entirely forgotten, and if referenced at all it tends to be as an exemplar of a mid-Victorian moralist. Caoimhín de Bhailís has recently argued for Elmore to be considered an "emancipationist" artist, at his peak in the O'Connellite. He was well connected in London artistic circles. Elmore was a member of The Garrick Club along with the better-known Daniel Maclise, and a member of the Byron Memorial Committee.[20] His work was filled with allusions to Catholic practice, and while Elmore was happy to critique Catholicism on occasion, his work was deeply informed by it.

Elmore is a good example of an Irish artist, whose work reminds us that the idea of a national tradition in art—the much-vaunted Irish School first exhibited in Paris—obscures the fact that most Irish artists were much broader in their tastes than that narrow frame allows. We are guided by the subsequent creation of the Irish canon in the 1920s, and that canon dictates who we can "see." When it came time to hang Irish artists in Paris in 1922, it is easy to see why Elmore and artists like him were passed over.

A recent reappraisal of the work of Rose Barton (1856–1925) by Kathryn Milligan confirms that she, too, suffers from the retrospective obscurity. The world of Barton was a mixture of mostly Dublin and London scenes seen through an atmospheric fog, and depictions of elite society in those cities referencing everything from military parades to balls given at the height of the Dublin season. In 1922, the very year in which power transferred from the Union to a new nationalist generation, to platform Irish scenes of this type was unthinkable despite their obvious claims to equal authenticity.[21] Conflicted as it was, the work of Barton and Elmore was certainly Irish but arguably more universal than political. Barton's work was heavily influenced by that of James McNeill Whistler, an American artist mostly working out of London but influenced by Gustave Courbet and other French artists. The selection criteria for the Paris exhibition, though lost to us, can be said to have excluded any artist with obvious Unionist sympathies, such as Barton, or was sold mostly within the Anglo market and thus seen to be ideologically compromised. It included some of those that had a predominance of Catholic iconography in their work, but only if their work was also somewhat nationalist in tone. The most *imperial* artist included in the Paris exhibition, arguably, was the Belfast-born John Lavery, whose earlier work had been a mixture of society portraiture and Orientalist vistas and whose conversion to Irish nationalism was, in fact, something that happened precipitously. Lavery's formative years were spent in Glasgow, but it was his work in Morocco and Tangiers that distinguished him in the first decade of the twentieth century. He was knighted in 1918 and few could have foreseen his later conversion to Irish nationalist themes.

The London schools were most important. Of the ninety-nine artists noted in the Dictionary of Irish Biography who were born in Ireland between 1850 and 1900, twenty-nine of them trained at one or more of the Royal College of Art, South Kensington; Slade School of Fine Art; Central School of Arts and Crafts; Wimbledon School of Art; Lambeth School of Art; or the Royal Academy in London. Other British cities played a more minor role, with several Irish artists training in one of Manchester School of Art or Laird School of Art. Irish artists such as Henry Allan and Dermod O'Brien also travelled to the Académie Royale in Antwerp in the 1880s where they rubbed shoulders with Vincent van Gogh and were influenced by the Hague School.[22] Walter Osborne followed the same path, and from Antwerp he travelled to Brittany where he honed a style that he then elaborated in his fifteen years in the South of England. Figures such as William Orpen and

Roderic O'Conor, ***The Farm, Provence***, 1913, 71 x 90 cm. Oil on canvas, The O'Brien Collection.

O'Brien enjoyed an outsized influence on Irish art through teaching positions at the RHA and Dublin Metropolitan School of Art, where twenty-eight of the Irish artists born in that half century received some training. In this way, "continental" training filtered down to the provincial contexts. Therefore, we can argue that even the artists trained solely in Ireland by Irish artists were exposed to European ideas, albeit sometimes filtered through an English lens.

The obvious alternative to London was Paris. Variously termed the "capital city of the nineteenth century" by Walter Benjamin, and the "capital of modernity" by David Harvey, Paris was still the epicentre of high cultural production in 1922, though stiff competition had by that time begun to emerge. The Irish relationship to Paris remains stubbornly understudied despite recent work by Matthew Reznicek on the Irish writer in Paris. A recent volume on the Irish relationship to the city focused overwhelmingly on literary and political connections to the exclusion of visual art.[23] Valérie Morisson has perceptively argued against this willful blindness to French influence in particular. For Morisson the folkloric trend that fueled Irish revivalist art was clearly influenced by European trends in naturalism and ethnographic work.[24]

Nathaniel Hone the Younger (1831–1917) is sometimes referenced as the Irish artist that created the fashion for a Parisian training, though of course even his namesake of the eighteenth century had exhibited there.[25] Hone connected Ireland to Barbizon via the ateliers of Paris, and though he resettled in Malahide following his years in the forests of Fontainebleau, his remarkable output has always been received in Ireland as somehow non-Irish. A Catholic contemporary—Roderic O'Conor—long suffered from the same mild reception in his homeland despite his prominence in the Pont-Aven circle. His featured work, *The Farm, Provence* (1913), is one of two dozen paintings from a productive period spent in Cassis in that year. His drift south was in keeping with the trend away from Brittany and toward Midi in Parisian artistic circles and thus despite its provincial setting it is, as with many of the 1922 exhibits in Paris, very much a product of cosmopolitan Paris, where it was first exhibited, as the market forces dictated.[26]

Those too obviously influenced by the cosmopolitan or universal training they received in Paris or its provincial outposts, then, were of little use to the developing "national" narrative of Irish art by the early 1920s.[27] This was especially the case if their output was not referencing Irish culture, politics,

Walter Osborne, ***At the Breakfast Table***, 1894, Oil on canvas, 51 x 61 cm. Snite Museum of Art.

Mainie Jellett, ***The Land, Éire***, 1940, Oil on canvas, 62 x 74.9 cm. The O'Brien Collection.

or history very directly. When it came time to ally politics with art, a painting of a Breton landscape or peasant was not of as much utility as a painting of an Irish one despite both works emerging from the same training and the same artistic school. Osborne, whose work featured in both the *Exposition d'Art Irlandais* in 1922 and in the present exhibition, was a case of an artist trained at a similar level to O'Conor, but whose work addressed Ireland only because he relocated to Dublin from England partly to care for his niece, Violet Stockley, along with his parents, all three of whom feature in *At the Breakfast Table* (1894).[28] Osborne's works evince a social conscience, but they are not especially nationalist, any more than O'Conor's work, leading to the dismissal of his urban studies by the influential critic Thomas Bodkin as somehow non-native, alien, or foreign. The perception that a continental training could sometimes contaminate an ill-defined Irish sensibility has remained influential in Irish art criticism. Mainie Jellett's work, like O'Conor's, was considered by many of her Irish peers as entirely too modern and universal to be considered within the frame of an emerging definition of an Irish School. Her advanced cubism derived from her association with Albert Gleizes and was derided as merely decorative by rivals like George Russell in the 1920s and 1930s. It wasn't until her later work returned to a more pointedly figurative and political tone that she gained Irish recognition. Her featured work, *The Land, Éire* (1940), was bought by the returning Irish rebel-intellectual Ernie O'Malley in 1941.[29]

Irish artists trained at the Académie des Beaux-Arts or, if female, at the Académie Colarossi or Académie Julian. Prominent artists to receive this most elite of training include Henry Jones Thaddeus, Mary Swanzy, Oliver Sheppard, John Hughes, Paul Henry, and Eileen Gray. Paul Henry's featured work, *Reflections across the Bog* (c. 1919–21), beautifully showcases the reciprocities between the cosmopolitan training of the Irish artist and the "national" framing of their work. Henry remains the reference point for modern Irish landscape, and thus it is doubly significant that his work was very obviously French-influenced in 1922. It was no accident that it was Henry's painting, of all those displayed at Galerie Barbazanges, that was purchased by a prestigious French collection. The exhibition in Paris raises several questions about those artists trained in France. Several were omitted that might well have been included: Aloysius O'Kelly, for example, whose anti-imperialist and nationalist political stances seem entirely in line with the goals of the exhibition.

The Irish Artist and the American Market

The "Americanisation" of Ireland is generally held to have reached the point of full saturation after the second world war, as was the case for the rest of Europe and much of what we now call the "Global North."[30] The term is an imprecise one, signifying a growing cultural and economic dominance of the world that prefigured the absolute preeminence of the United States as the economic and cultural arbiter of the second half of the twentieth century.[31] In the Irish context the late David Fitzpatrick has made a compelling case for us to consider Ireland as an Americanised culture even earlier than this, pointing to the intensity of the social, economic, and cultural connections between (in particular) the West of Ireland and the United States from the late nineteenth century onward and allowing for a longer interaction with the Atlantic world since the seventeenth century.[32] By the late nineteenth century this contact was constant, from the small money order remittances that sustained the precarious communities on the western seaboard to the effect on the music and literature of the region.

Most accounts that track and trace the Americanisation of Ireland concentrate on cinema from the 1920s onward, or on post-1945 currents that swept across Europe.[33] It is part of a wider process of Americanisation of much of the world throughout the later nineteenth century, reaching a peak in the post 1945 period.[34] At the beginning of the twentieth century it had become commonplace for Europeans to refer to *l'americanisation du monde*, and the rapid translation and republication of William T. Stead's seminal book *The Americanization of the World* (1902) in Paris and Berlin showed there was a public appetite for an acknowledged phenomenon.[35]

If Irish artists were generally trained in the milieu of Paris or London, at the turn of the twentieth century it was becoming clear that the market their work was to be sold in was going to be greatly affected by American wealth and taste. Jack B. Yeats was an early adopter of this trend, selling his work to the Irish-American patron John Quinn in the early 1900s. Quinn's appearance in the Irish art scene was a harbinger of these new forces at play in the Irish art and literary scene, building on the Irish presence at various world fairs and international exhibitions in the major American cities. Between 1902 and 1904 he commissioned or purchased

Paul Henry, ***Reflections across the Bog***, 1919-1921, Oil on canvas, 62 x 74 cm. The O'Brien Collection.

dozens of works from, in particular, John Butler Yeats and his son Jack, as well as from Nathaniel Hone and George Russell. He sponsored the Abbey Theatre, founded the Irish Literary Society in New York, and organised several major exhibitions of Irish art in that city in 1904 and 1905, and again in 1913, though with mixed results.[36] His sustained support of Irish art did much to sustain it through a difficult period, but it was clear that in the first three decades or so of the twentieth century the market for Irish works was very limited indeed. This would change in the late 1920s and early 1930s when all things Irish became—though briefly—quite popular across the cultural world of the United States. American cinema replaced the figure of "Bridget" with that of a "Colleen," the latter a much more attractive stereotype of the Irish woman.[37] By the 1920s, Hollywood was beginning to foreground the Irish woman as part of the "the ascendant myth of ethnic assimilation."[38] Irish artists would, just like Irish writers and actors, be swept up in this Irish wave.

Conclusion

In 1929 Helen Hackett staged an exhibition of Irish art in her 57th Street gallery in New York. Now seen as a seminal moment, the twenty-five exhibitors in the show included a familiar mix of artists like Paul Henry and Seán Keating, and it was a financial and critical success.[39] A smaller exhibition in early 1930 featured Hilda Roberts and Charles Lamb, and was followed up with a solo show by Keating in December of that year, boosted by a catalogue essay furnished by John Lavery. On a roll, Keating followed up with a solo show at the other New York gallery that had popped up in the early 1930s, Pairic Farrell's Irish Art Rooms, whose honorary president was George Russell. Keating's work *King O'Toole* (1930) dates from this exact moment of American boosterism, which would last until the later 1930s and provide an outlet for the works of many Irish artists in addition to Keating.[40]

Lavery's 1930 essay on Keating suppressed the importance of his academic training under Orpen and instead presented him as an artist "unfettered by any worn out tradition or convention, a painter of his own times in his own manner, a splendid recorder of the present and a maker of history, not a repeater of an oft old tale."[41] In this subtle shift, we see an Irish artist who had adroitly walked the fine transitional line between British and imperial market and Irish national concerns, handing the baton over to a more directly nationalist artist in Keating, whose work would command attention in the emerging, more confident, Irish-American market. That market opportunity did not last. There is no permanent home for Irish art in the United States—no museum or gallery devoted to it. Instead, the story of Irish art in the United States is one of an insecure foothold, dependent to some degree on the relative wealth, generosity, and positionality of first, second, and third generation Irish-Americans.

The position of the Irish artist remained a precarious one long after 1922. Market- and patron-dependent, with narrow options domestically for training, the Irish artist innovates from within and without. Irish recognition, whether in the form of critical or commercial success, can generally be a question of how political one's work is, or how centrally an Irish national identity is to a particular artist's "branding," or self-fashioning. In this way, a contemporary artist like Sean Scully may occupy significant permanent real estate in Irish art despite being brought up in London and domiciled in the South of France and selling abstract art with no obvious Irish reference point to a global market. Scully, whose work now occupies a large purpose-built room in Dublin City Gallery: The Hugh Lane. The creation of a lucrative market for Irish art has, ironically enough, been a feature of the rise in general wealth in Ireland through the Celtic Tiger era of the 1990s and early 2000s, when prices for Irish art began to rise precipitously. This market centres, ironically enough, on London, then Dublin, with major houses like Sotheby's and Christie's running annual art sales since the mid-1990s.

1 See for example Tom Garvin, 1922: *The Birth of Irish Democracy* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1996); Terence Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922 to the Present* (Cornell, 1985); Catriona Clear, *Social Change and Everyday Life in Ireland 1850–1922* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

2 Joe Cleary, *Modernism, Empire, World Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 3–4.

3 Fintan Cullen, *Ireland on Show: Art, Union, and Nationhood* (Ashgate, 2012), 64; see also Sighle Breathnach Kennedy, "An Irish School of Art? Depictions of the Landscape in a Critical Period, 1880–1930," in Carla King, ed., *Famine Land and Culture in Ireland* (Dublin: UCD Press, 2000), 153–167.

4 Tom Walker, "The Culture of Art in 1880s Ireland and the Genealogy of Irish Modernism," *Irish Studies Review* 26, no. 3 (2018), 304–317.

5 D.R. O'Connor Lysaght, "George Noble Plunkett (1851–1948)," *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009); Mairead Carew, "George Noble, Count Plunkett: Irish 'Catholic Celt' and Renaissance Man," *Discovery Research Programme* 9 (2018), 18–32.

6 Karen L. Carter and Susan Waller, eds., *Foreign Artists and Communities in Modern Paris, 1870–1914: Strangers in Paradise* (Routledge, 2015), 2.

7 Harrison C. White and Cynthia A. White, *Canvases and Careers: Institutional Change in the French Painting World* (University of Chicago Press: 1993, orig. 1965); Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich, "Networked: The Art Market in the Nineteenth Century," in Michell Facos, ed., *A Companion to Nineteenth Century Art* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2018), 83–102; Nicholas Green, "Circuits of Production, Circuits of Consumption: The Case of Mid-Nineteenth-Century French Art Dealing," *Art Journal* 48, no. 1 (1989), 29–34.

8 William Shortall, "Art and the Irish Free State—visualizing nationhood (1922–1934)," (PhD, Trinity College Dublin, 2020), 99–100.

9 See for example Susan Stanford Friedman, "Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies," *Modernism/modernity* 13, no. 3 (2006), 425–443.

10 Gregory Castle and Patrick Bixby, eds., *A History of Irish Modernism* (Cambridge University Press, 2019); Paul Fagan, John Greane, and Tamara Radak, eds., *Irish Modernisms: Gaps, Conjectures, Possibilities* (Bloomsbury, 2021).

11 Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* (Toronto: P.D. Meany Co., 1996), 56; Kevin Kenny, "Irish Migration c. 1845–1900," *The Cambridge History of Ireland* 3 (2018).

12 For excellent summaries of these patterns see Liam Chambers, "The Irish in Europe in the Eighteenth Century, 1691–1815," in James Kelly, ed., *The Cambridge History of Ireland* 3 (2018); Barry Crosbie, "Ireland and Empire in the Nineteenth Century," in James Kelly, ed., The Cambridge History of Ireland 3 (2018).

13 Christine Casey, "Irish Art and Architecture in the Long Eighteenth Century," James Kelly, ed., *The Cambridge History of Ireland* 3 (2018).

14 For the Dublin art market see David Dickson, *Dublin: The Making of a Capital City* (Belknap, 2014), 304–5.

15 For a useful overview of the options and routes available see both "Art Institutions and Training in Ireland and Abroad" in Andrew Carpenter et al, *Art and Architecture of Ireland, Volume II: Painting 1600–1900* (Royal Irish Academy, 2015), 23–49 and the Introduction to that volume.

16 Síghle Breathnach-Lynch and Julie-Anne Stevens, "The Irish Artist: Crossing the Rubicon," in Deborah Cherry and Janice Helland, eds., *Local/Global: Women Artists in the Nineteenth Century* (Routledge, 2006), 137–154; John Turpin, "The Education of Irish Artists 1877–1975," *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* (Dublin, 1997).

17 Jeanne Sheehy, "The Training and Professional Life of Irish Women Artists before the Twentieth Century," in *Irish Women Artists from the Eighteenth Century to the Present Day* (NGI, 1987), 71-78.

18 Matthew L. Reznicek, *The European Metropolis: Paris and Nineteenth Century Irish Women Novelists* (Clemson University Press, 2017); Ciaran O'Neill and Mai Yatani, "Ambition and the City: Irish Women Novelists 1890–1910," in Anna Pilz and Whitney Standlee, eds., *Irish Women's Writing 1878–1922: Advancing the Cause of Liberty* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), 100–20; Faith Binckes and Katherine Laing, *Hannah Lynch 1859-1904: Irish Writer, Cosmopolitan, New Woman* (Cork University Press, 2019).

19 Matthew Sturgis, *Oscar Wilde* (London: Head of Zeus, 2018).

20 For more on Maclise see Nancy Weston, *Daniel Maclise: Irish Artist in Victorian London* (Four Courts Press, 2001). On Elmore see Caoimhín de Bhailís, "Alfred Elmore: Life, Work and Context," (PhD, UCC, 2017).

21 Kathryn Milligan, *Painting Dublin: Visualising a Changing City* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 65–95.

22 Rebecca Minch, "Henry Allan, 1865–1912," *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); Jeanne Sheehy, "The Flight from South Kensington: British Artists at the Antwerp Academy 1877–1885," Art History 20, no. 1 (1997), 124–153.

23 Pierre Joannon and Kevin Whelan, eds., *Paris: Capital of Irish Culture* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017).

24 Valérie Morisson, "The Guise of Irishness: Irish Ethnographic and Folkloric Paintings from a European Perspective, 1880–1930," in *Revue Miroirs* 2 (2015), Irlande: Identité et interculturalité / Ireland: Identity and Interculturality (dir. Bairbre Ní Chiosáin et Charlotte Rault revuemiroirs.fr/larevue.html. (Accessed October 12, 2021).

25 *Nathaniel Hone: Travels of a Landscape Artist*, 2019, National Gallery of Ireland, 2019.

26 Jonathan Benington, *Roderic O'Conor: A Biography* (Irish Academic Press, 1992), 121.

27 Marie Bourke and Sarah Edmondson, *Irish Artists Painting in France 1860–1915* (Dublin: National Gallery of Ireland, 2013); Julian Campbell, *The Irish Impressionists: Irish Artists in France and Belgium 1850–1914* (Dublin: National Gallery of Ireland, 1984).

28 Jeanne Sheehy, *Walter Osborne* (Gifford and Craven, 1974), 136.

29 Mary Cosgrove, "Ernie O'Malley: Art and Modernism in Ireland," *Éire-Ireland* 40, no. 2 (2005), 85–103.

30 Stephanie Rains, *The Irish-American in popular culture, 1945–2000* (Irish Academic Press, 2007); Diane Negra, The Irish in Us: Irishness, Performativity, and Popular Culture (Duke University Press, 2006).

[31] Mel Van Elteren, *Americanism and Americanization: A Critical History of Domestic and Global Influence* (McFarland, 2006); Neil Campbell et al, eds., *Issues in Americanisation and Culture* (Edinburgh University Press, 2004); Philip Gassert, "The Spectre of Americanization: Western Europe in the American Century," in Dan Stone, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 182–201.

[32] David Fitzpatrick, *The Americanisation of Ireland: Migration and Settlement 1841–1925* (Cambridge University Press, 2020).

[33] Stephanie Rains, *The Irish-American in Popular Culture, 1945–2000* (Irish Academic Press, 2007); Stephanie Rains, "Celtic Kitsch: Irish-America and Irish Material Culture," *Circa* 107 (2004): 52–57; Diane Negra, *The Irish in Us: Irishness, Performativity, and Popular Culture* (Duke University Press, 2006).

[34] Mel Van Elteren, *Americanism and Americanization: A Critical History of Domestic and Global Influence* (McFarland, 2006); Neil Campbell et al, eds., *Issues in Americanisation and Culture* (Edinburgh University Press, 2004); Richard White "A Backwater Awash: The Australian Experience of Americanisation," *Theory, Culture & Society* 1, no. 3 (1983), 108–122.

[35] Philip Gassert, "The Spectre of Americanization: Western Europe in the American Century," in Dan Stone, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 182–201 at 182.

[36] B. L. Reid, *The Man from New York*. See also a summary in Éimear O'Connor, *Art, Ireland, and the Irish Diaspora: Chicago, Dublin, New York 1893–1939, Culture, Connections, and Controversies* (Irish Academic Press, 2020), 44–49, 58–65.

[37] I owe this point to Catherine Healy, "Kitchen Politics: A Cultural History of Irish Domestic Servants in England and the United States c. 1870–1945" (PhD, Trinity College Dublin, 2022).

[38] Peter Flynn, "How Bridget Was Framed: The Irish Domestic in Early American Cinema, 1895–1917," *Cinema Journal*, 50, no. 2 (Winter, 2011), 12–13, 19.

[39] O'Connor, *Art, Ireland, and the Irish Diaspora*, 188–192.

[40] Christina Kennedy, "King O'Toole" in Adele Dalsimer and Vera Kreilkamp, eds., *America's Eye: Irish Painting from the Collection of Brian P. Burns* (Boston College Museum of Art, 1996), 96.

[41] Éimear O'Connor, "America Called: The Helen Hackett Gallery and the Irish Art Rooms, 1924–1934," *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua* 15, no. 4 (2011), 16–33 at 29.

SOUNDING OUT IRISH IDENTITY: MUSIC, ART, AND SOCIAL LIFE (THEN AND NOW)

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Music and Irish Identity

Music has long been at the center of expressions of Irishness.[1] The inclusion of music in the 1922 Irish Race Congress in Paris was not the first example of the use of music in soft diplomacy and it would not be the last. Throughout the century that followed, music has been continuously deployed as part of the Irish government's Department of Foreign Affairs missions, most recently through specifically designed Irish consulate initiatives drawing on the arts. Music is a powerful resource; its *time-bound* and *timeless* qualities, its ability to reach across historical and geographic divides, and the way it structures feelings, all tie it profoundly to expressions of identity. In 1922, the nascent state was keen to display its uniqueness and its legitimate pedigree as a nation eager to takes its rightful place in Europe and the world. With hundreds of years of oral tradition, numerous collections of music by antiquarians and others that had inspired generations of Western Art composers, and contemporary compositions at the ready, music was always going to play a role in the event. But its impact went beyond mere entertainment. If a nation is, in part, defined by the richness of its culture, then Ireland was ready and willing to illustrate its cornucopia of heritage. These musical performances were not simply "catalogues" of impressive repertoires, however. They also operated on the somatic level; music's capacity to arouse emotions and spirits in the performance moment was crucial. How many of you have had your souls stirred by a beautiful song or a mournful tune? A song of rebellion can rouse the spirit; a set of jigs can harken back to older times, connecting the current moment in a thread of continuity to past iterations that speaks to longevity, perseverance, indomitability, and, in the case of the Irish nation state, inevitability. If, as Jacques Attali has argued, music does not simply reflect, but rather predicts society, then Ireland had hundreds of years of such predictions already in its broad and deep repertoires.[2]

The place of music in the narrative of "Ireland" writ large and its relationship to the emerging Free State is important to acknowledge. Irish traditional music is a dynamic music that, more than any other genre, has carried the burden of indexing the nation, sometimes to the chagrin of those who were frustrated by the lack of emergence of a distinctly Irish voice within the European Art tradition.[3] But how could it not, with so many patriots also songwriters and performers of Irish music? In the struggle for freedom and the subsequent post-colonial context of Ireland, a rejection of "the Other" (in line with *Conradh's* president, Douglas Hyde's "de-Anglicisation of Ireland" project) continued into the middle of the twentieth century. But perhaps Eamon de Valera's "comely maidens" dancing at the crossroads image was less conservative than he intended and was made more to appeal to those supporting (politically and especially economically) Ireland from a diasporic setting, especially the United States, where the largest Irish diaspora resides to this day. This tension between what constitutes Ireland "at home" and "abroad" was at the heart of the 1922 Race Congress and it is a tension that continues to find complex and contested expression in the Ireland of today. Ireland is not, as Fintan O'Toole has pointed out, an island defined by geographic boundaries but rather by the journeys made to and from it, given its history of outward and, more recently, inward migration.[4] There have been seismic shifts too in more recent times, as debates about who gets included and excluded find expression in the creative arts. The Ireland of 2022 has a thriving contemporary music scene, and a variety of institutions to support it. But there is no doubt that for a long time, Irish traditional music took center stage in the expression of a Gaelic, Catholic, and largely rural nation, when its urban and diasporic practitioners were excluded from official renderings.

It is important to underscore, however, that far from being simply a reactionary and insular genre, Irish traditional music was and remains a global music. It travelled far and wide long before the establishment of the Free State. Old harp airs collected by organist Edward Bunting at the 1792 Belfast Harp Festival found their way into the song books of Thomas Moore, who in turn saw his publications disseminated across the world, especially in North America. Subsequently, Irish melodic contours and themes went on to inform the compositions of the father of American song, Stephen Foster.[5] North American ears became accustomed to these shapes, sounds, and ideas and in time, they were absorbed into "American" music. Irish traditional music had also found expression in the great European traditions, through song adaptations by Ludwig van Beethoven in Germany along with numerous English composers who sought inspiration from "the folk."[6] Sonically expressed Irishness had the power to invoke the nation and the perceived national characteristics, however essentialized or stereotyped, of Irish people. Music had the capacity to engender recognition, familiarity, and, ideally, empathy.

Dublin–Paris–Chicago

The focus on traditional music in this essay has a second, more focused dimension; the specially commissioned soundtrack that comes with this exhibition; the CD operates as a musical complement to its missions. By including traditional music that featured in the 1922 Paris program, along with new compositions inspired by the pieces displayed then, and from the following hundred years, Irish traditional music is revealed as historical and contemporary, literal and metaphorical, and capable of accommodating difference and change in dynamic ways while maintaining its core sound and multiple possibilities of meaning across space and time.

There have been precedents for the inclusion of music in exhibitions of this nature and it speaks to specific agents that route this connection between Paris and Dublin via Chicago and the Midwest. In 2015, the Art Institute of Chicago held an exhibition *Ireland: Crossroads of Art and Design, 1690–1840*, and the exhibition's materials and themes were sonically negotiated to render an eighteenth-century soundscape with a decidedly twenty-first century inflection.[7] The project was led by the curator of The O'Brien Collection, Marty Fahey, with fellow musicians and composers Liz Carroll and Liz Knowles leading the composition and arrangements. In that recording, fifteen tracks were either paired directly with an exhibit artefact or Art Institute room theme, or "alluded" to the aesthetics of the period more broadly. Tracks oscillated between music collected and published in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland from such well-known antiquarians and collectors as Edward Bunting, George Petrie, and Canon James Goodman.[8] The careful and deliberate juxtaposition of "authentic" old and "authentically" new music from the Irish tradition was a long-standing and creative emplacement strategy deployed by Carroll, and the CD accompanying the 2022 exhibition draws on the same template and creative energy. Key to this approach to creating a soundtrack is not being fixed in time and not endeavoring to "recreate" the performance moment "back then." Yet at the same time, the soundtrack accompanying *Who Do We Say We Are? Irish Art 1922 | 2022* weaves past and present together in dynamic and creative ways. Music exists in the performance moment. It has a specific quality to animate time and is delimited by it. It has an immediacy and a profoundly affective dimension. This mission to combine art and music comes from a deep desire by Fahey to see all facets and modalities of Irish creativity in dialogue, to enhance and enrich

our understanding of identity as informed by the historical, sociocultural, political, creative, and affective contexts. That such an impetus should come from a Chicago base speaks to the connective tissue between Ireland and its diaspora, something so prevalent in the 1922 Congress. The remainder of this essay, then, seeks to do a third job: to honor that mission by bringing traditional music and art, specifically paintings, into dialogue, to illustrate how much more we can learn from both, even with the simplest shift in perspective.

Irish Music, Irish Art, Irish Life

If painting was seen as Art with a capital A, Irish traditional music was, until quite recently, still viewed more as a craft or folk tradition. Painters tended to go to Europe to train and to gain valuable experiences and experiment with form, while it was perceived that traditional musicians largely stayed home and within "the round" in the Irish music: that two-part across thirty-two-bar, repetitive structure found across the various traditional dance music forms. Neither, of course, is fully true and does not accommodate stories of musicians going to different parts of the world, including New York City, where many became central to the burgeoning ethnic music recording industry of the 1920s and '30s, playing in clubs with musicians shaped by ragtime and jazz. Figures like the composer Seán Ó Riada felt hugely drawn to the continent, specifically to Paris, where he spent days in the company of other intellectuals of the present, while tracing the paths of great figures in literature such as Samuel Beckett and James Joyce. His eventual pivot from Western Art music techniques to fully embrace his passion for Irish traditional music indexed precisely the considerable sway that traditional music held in Ireland. But at the same time, it was not a return to something regional or parochial. In the late 1950s, Ó Riada stated that Irish music was not European at all; it was "Oriental."[9] By doing this, he was laying claim to similarity to many of the great dynastic traditions across the world. Yet from the 1950s to the 1980s, many studies on Irish traditional tended to focus inward and exclude important sites of production such as the diaspora, as the discourse became more nativist.[10] Such accounts of Anglo-Irish or English collectors of Irish traditional music from the nineteenth century reveal perspectives of native scholars who appreciated these "outsider" efforts, while simultaneously criticizing these people for not really understanding the native perspective/musicality.

Similarly, fears of the British as colonizing "Other" continued to be perpetuated in high-profile discussion amongst practitioners and the intelligentsia of the Irish music scene in the first Crossroads conference on "Tradition and Innovation" in 1996, where traditional flute player Seamus Tansey warned against the "mongrelisation" of Irish music, which he feared would be lost in "copulating" with so-called foreign influences, thereby rendering the music that emerged from the soil and landscape inauthentic.[11] Some have creatively and fictively speculated what "might have been," had an Irish avant-garde collaborated more fully with traditional music practitioners.[12] But there was, in fact, constant experimentation with traditional music by practitioners in the second half of the twentieth century, from embracing Celtic imaginaries and sounds, to rock and roll; reggae grooves, to Hindustani classical structures and sonic elements; ambient electronic and jazz, to hip-hop and soul.[13] The Irish musical landscape of 2022 is informed by global as much as local trends and reflects the diverse society that Ireland has become within its borders along with the continued strong connections with diaspora so cherished in the 1922 Congress.[14] In fact, without the creative interventions of members of the diaspora, including Francis O'Neill—whose collections of Irish music in Chicago helped both sustain the Irish tradition and to bring it to new people—much of the music might have been lost.[15] It is apposite to acknowledge that O'Neill's last collection of Irish music, entitled "Waifs and Strays," was published the same year as the Paris Congress and that the very first Irish Race Congress was, in fact, held in his adopted city of Chicago in 1881.

Local Irish traditional music practices still maintain strong links to the past and to heritage repertoires and sounds, but musicians from all places prove hugely adaptable to performance contexts and are capable of a spectrum of sounds and settings, ensuring Irish traditional music remains relevant. The Irish art world, it could be said, has reflected many similar trends. If artists went abroad to open their eyes and minds, they also brought those perspectives home and embedded new modernism in the twentieth century scene; Mainie Jellett and the White Stag hugely influenced the composer and member Brian Boydell in the 1940s in his approach to contemporary music.[16] Ina Boyle, who found ways to adopt Irish melodies into sweeping Romantic textures, is now enjoying a renaissance with the performance of her works, some for the first time.[17] Aloys Fleischman (1910–92), who was Professor of Music at University College Cork, drew on the native tradition in his many works while simultaneously collecting and editing his huge Irish music "Sources" project that has left an indelible mark on Irish music production and education.[18] Meanwhile, Claddagh Records excelled in album artwork design by including works of Edward Delaney and Louis le Brocquy on recordings by The Chieftains, led by Gareth de Brún's mission for cultural dialogue and equal acceptance for the traditional arts. Artist Jim Fitzpatrick illustrated how newer art forms could draw on ancient Celtic traditions and represent Irish folk rock that spoke to the historical moment. Families of great traditional musicians also produced great artists such as John B. Vallely, whose paintings reflect the dynamic world of Irish traditional music production, while his nephew, singer and flute player Fintan Vallely, edited the *Companion to Irish Traditional Music* tome that allows us to engage with the rich history of the Irish tradition over the centuries and across multiple geographies and related practices.[19]

Up Close with Irish Music Paintings

A closer look at a small selection of paintings from The O'Brien Collection tells us much about how Irish music and Irish art developed from the late nineteenth to early twenty-first centuries in dialogue with each other in many circumstances, and in twin paths in other cases. These paintings also help us better understand the *context* from which they emerged. In turn, an understanding of the history and function of Irish music offers greater insight into the paintings. For example, there can be details in a painting that provide invaluable information and even evidence about musicians and music practices that can enrich our knowledge of a culture at a particular place in time. Iconography is the study of images and symbols and how they are interpreted, while musical iconography focuses on instruments. Given the importance and ubiquity of the harp in Irish cultural life over the centuries, many scholars have studied modes of harp representation in paintings and material culture, while offering multiple ways of interpreting its symbolism, especially from a political perspective (i.e., the harp representing conquered Ireland; the harp as a symbol of freedom).[20]

James Christopher Timbrell, ***Carolan, The Irish Bard***, 1840–44, Oil on canvas, 100 x 145 cm. The O'Brien Collection.

This painting by James Christopher Timbrell (1807–50) speaks to many of the challenges and potential misconceptions faced by those in attendance at the Paris Congress in the ways in which it dealt with issues of colonisation and its sectarian dimension. In Timbrell's painting *Carolan, The Irish Bard*, the famed blind Irish harpist (1670–1738) of the long eighteenth century is front and center, as someone of his bardic stature should be. In the older order of Gaelic Ireland, the *cruitaire*, or harp player, occupied an elevated position, along with the reactaire, or poet, at the chieftain's table and played a central role in composing praise songs, honoring visitors, and keeping the history, genealogy, and mythology of the family alive in performance and memory. Though Carolan was operating in a different era, he continued to represent many of these qualities and was afforded much the same dignity and patronage, in both Protestant and Catholic houses. The tableau represents a famous encounter between Carolan and the continental Baroque composer Geminiani (1687–1782), Timbrell painted this long after the supposed historical meeting, drawing on various accounts by writers, so it is debatable how much documentary evidence can be fully authenticated in this representation. But undoubtedly, in terms of being inspired by this significant story, Timbrell imbues the painting with considerable symbolism. Using the template of da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, itself a widely understood artistic/compositional reference model at the time, he places Carolan at the center and has the various actors responding to his musicking around him. There are some contextual details that prove critical in understanding how music was received at the time, how Carolan might have played, and whom he would have entertained. The armor hanging in the room, the dress codes of the various people, and the presence of an Irish clergyman all suggest that this is a Gaelic house and that Carolan provided music for different social and ethnic groupings in his era. For the music scholar, this painting brings to life a musical moment, with some people paying attention, others looking elsewhere, but Carolan focused entirely on his own rendition. It underscores that Carolan is a blind musician, something that we know from records of the time and, in the dueling with Geminiani, it illustrates just how much Carolan's own music was in dialogue with "high art music" of the time, given that Geminiani was a celebrated Italian violinist. It is worth noting that the Italian is partially concealed, suggesting that Carolan's music is superior. To this day, Carolan's music continues to be played and revered by Irish musicians and critically, it connects to continental traditions as much as it reveals an indigenous flavour. The painting also disrupts simple binaries of Protestant-Catholic, rich-poor, coloniser-native by illustrating the complex ways in which music ecosystems and social lives were intertwined.

If Timbrell's painting comes from a more detailed and representative tradition of rendering subjects in their context, this painting by William Conor (1881–1968) differs considerably, not just in terms of form, but also subject matter. Three rambunctious young men are on the streets in a village, with one playing a tune from a one row accordion. The melodeon became quite popular in the twentieth century, when instruments from other parts of the world started to be mass produced and made their way to Irish shores with visitors, returning emigrants, and traders. The sheer joy and exuberance of making music while playfully engaging with young and clearly happy women who look on the merrymaking speaks to the important role of Irish music in the social life of Irish people. The instrument is arguably rendered in more detail than anything else in the painting, underscoring its position front and center of the composition, thus speaking to its power as a conduit and vehicle in creating this effervescent moment. Capturing the dynamics of music in flow is often as much about modes of reception as it is about the players themselves, though as the following two paintings illustrate, homing in on the performer reveals a multitude.

William Conor, ***The Melodeon Player***, 1921–22, Oil on canvas, 38 x 30 cm. The O'Brien Collection.

Jack B. Yeats, ***Singing, Oh, Had I the Wings of a Swallow***, 1925, Oil on canvas, 61 x 91 cm. The O'Brien Collection.

A kind of ecstasy born out in the creation or reception of a live sound sings from the canvas of this painting by Jack B. Yeats (1871–1957). Yeats' protagonist is a female Irish Traveller performing on the train, whom he recalled meeting infrequently while en route to Sligo from Dublin. Yeats often depicted members of the Traveller community, celebrating their traditions and ways of life. The performer here seems to pay little heed to her surroundings as she sings to an audience in the hope of receiving some money, her form of patronage. Yet she also appears oblivious to all around her as she sings with her eyes closed. Is it a means of avoiding eye contact with settled folk, or a way of embodying a kind of performative authenticity? It might be all of these but also, most likely, it is an expression of interiority and of inhabiting of the musical moment that so many musicians experience when making music. The blurring of the moving train sees form and context disappear in the painting, heightening this sense of flow. But, perhaps, her eyes are closed not to be judged as she loses herself in the performance moment. Irish traditional music has long been a place of inclusion (some might say fetishization) for Irish Travellers but wider Irish society has not embraced Travellers in the same way. [21] This painting is both a reminder of the rich cultural heritage and tradition-bearing practices of Irish Travellers as well as their continued exclusion. But on balance, it is also hopeful, for as others of Yeats' era looked to supposedly untouched natives of the Aran Islands for the epitome of a non-sectarian and noble Irishness that hadn't succumbed too fully to the Church's restrictive ways, this appreciation of a Traveller woman's voice potentially speaks to a continued search for an Ireland that could represent *all* that live in it.

Sometimes artworks have a very specific relationship with music-making. A North Indian *ragamala* from the Hindustani tradition, for example, is both a pictorial representation of cultural/religious life, as well as a directive on what musical mode to deploy, along with the structures and rules that apply to it in composition and improvisation. No such codified correlation exists between Irish paintings and Irish music, though there are modes also in Irish music, connected to medieval church modes and folk music practices, but with their own flavor. The ancient modes of *suantraí*, *geantraí,* and *goltraí*—sleeping, happiness, and sorrow—speak to the various emotive states of Irish music. But even if such modes are not encoded in paintings, one can understand much about the musical process and being in the moment from this painting by John B. Vallely (1941–). Structure and form are sublimated in favor of the dynamic flow of the music. The featured musicians fully occupy this universe of sound. They do not even need to face each other. The fiddle player is, perhaps, being somewhat differential to the pipes player, facing toward his body and to where the sound is emanating, but there is a decided absence of a fixed gaze. It is clearly the sound that is drawing him in this direction. Meanwhile, the piper sits contentedly in his world, fully engaged and fully present in sound and gesture and nothing else. Context is not required. The music *is* the context. In the moment of performance for the self (and perhaps an audience—it doesn't matter, and generally sessions of music are for the performers more than for anyone else), the sheer dynamism of play and interaction is what counts; boundless, borderless creativity.[22]

John B. Vallely, ***Johnny Doran playing with a travelling fiddler (aka The Session)***, 1980s, Oil on canvas, 76 x 102 cm. The O'Brien Collection.

These are but four examples from a large collection of paintings than may be instructively interpreted through the lens of Irish music history and performance, lending greater impact to both, ideally. The degree to which the artefacts and musical choices at the 1922 Congress in Paris were laden with such semiotic and metaphorical meanings is something we can only surmise; the other essays in this catalogue offer compelling perspectives on this. What we can say is that these art forms did not work in isolation. They were there to represent the best of this emergent Free State that had long understood itself as a nation of people with a rich past and a newly articulated Irish identity finally.

Sounding Out the Past and the Present (1922–2022)

For the artists and arrangers creating the accompanying music soundtrack to *Who Do We Say We Are? Irish Art 1922 | 2022*, some of the original music from the Congress in Paris is featured, juxtaposed with new compositions inspired by other pieces from the exhibition. As with the *Ireland: Crossroads of Art and Design* CD from 2015, this unique approach does something very important in terms of history and memory. Rather than taking a chronological and teleological approach to time, it weaves in and out, doubles back, renders the past in the present within the performance moment, while honoring the past as traditional music always does. In doing so, it offers a different and, one might argue, native episteme that embodies different conceptions of time, duration, and cycles; history essentially repeats itself, just as "the round" structure in Irish music does, but with variations. And like with Carolan, the composer/arranger takes center stage with original contributions from Carroll, Fahey, and Knowles, amongst others.

On the evenings of the 23rd and 25th of January 1922, tunes played at the Congress included "The Rakes of Mallow," a song and polka popular to this day that can be traced back to a publication from London in 1748 and most likely further back still in the oral tradition. In an echo of the Conor painting previously discussed, it refers to fun-loving men from a Cork town. Another historical piece played at the Congress and featured in this collection is "Savourneen Deelish/A Mhuirnín Dílis," my dear beloved, a phrase that starts several Irish songs and that can be traced back to pre-1860s.[23] More comprehensive details on these and other featured items can be found in the liner notes. Pieces performed at the Congress not featured in the CD include "Lament for Patrick Sarsfield," most likely with words by Alfred Perceval Graves and music by Charles Villiers Stanford, that references the death of the failed Jacobite leader in 1693. Another piece of note is the quartet "Lament for Terence McSwiney," which draws its inspiration from the Cork mayor and MP who died by hunger strike in 1920.[24] Composed by Swan Hennessy (1866–1929), the Irish American spent most of his life in Paris and changed his style from German Romanticism to French Impressionism with a distinct "Celtic" feel, embracing Breton and Irish influences. As for the tunes specially composed for the 2022 exhibition, these include jigs, reels, airs, and marches, each of which is paired with an inspiring piece from the exhibition, and all of which are in dialogue with both past forms and current traditional music compositional styles and influences.

Humming and Ruminations

Echoing and extending many of the ambitions of the 1922 Irish Race Congress in Paris, Ireland's Global Diaspora strategy (2020–2025) reimagines Ireland and all connected to it worldwide in a multidirectional and inclusive way, acknowledging Irish citizens of other ethnic heritages; Irish citizens abroad; people of Irish ethnic heritage worldwide; and crucially, people with an attachment to Ireland and its cultures, framed as "affinity diaspora."[25] The Department of Foreign Affairs, particularly in the USA, but also elsewhere, has been at the forefront of supporting diverse and inclusive cultural missions, including working with Glucksman Ireland House in NYU on the "Black, Brown, and Green" seminar series and with "Douglass in Ireland" celebrations, drawing attention to the work of the African American slavery abolitionist. Ireland's relationship with France has grown stronger in the wake of Brexit and the long-standing connections with the Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris, which regularly hosts creatives of all artistic disciplines, helps to forge greater ties between the two republics.

Irish traditional music and others forms of Irish music remain a locus of expressions of solidarity. During the Covid pandemic and the lockdown of 2020, Other Voices held several livestreamed events, one of which featured spoken word and hip-hop artist Denise Chaila performing with her crew in the National Gallery of Ireland, the visual and sonic impact of which was not lost as the Zambian-born artist performed in front of paintings largely of and by white men. Her song "Duel Citizenship" speaks to the challenges of belonging in Ireland but also to the possibilities, as this same artist was given the task of interviewing the President of Ireland for *Hot Press* magazine.[26] The renewed Black Lives Matter movement of 2020 following the murder of George Floyd impacted Ireland too, as Black Irish creatives and their allies moved the issue of racism center stage in Irish life. Meanwhile, the punitive and largely discredited Direct Provision centers for refugees continue to be the primary mechanism through which the State engages with those seeking asylum. Travellers too, while acknowledged finally as a distinct ethnic group, have a long way to journey before they experience true equality and structural change. But there have been many gains as well. Ireland has enshrined gay marriage, securing equal rights for many (not all) of its queer subjects, though challenges around "coming out" remain within the Irish music scene.[27] The bodily autonomy of women has been secured more fully in the past number of years, even as the legacy of coercive control and its concomitant trauma continues to be dealt with in the present by the government. Within traditional music circles, the influence of the #MeToo movement has resulted in the emergence of new organisations to support women from harassment and for greater gender representation, including the musician-led initiatives, Fair Plé and #MiseFosta.

So, who do we say we are now? One hundred years on, there are new divisions written upon older sectarian wounds that have yet to be fully healed, freshly reopened by Brexit. Yet, despite the challenges, optimism remains and artists from all genres and backgrounds continue to produce critically engaged performances that place issues of identity, and how it might be reimagined to the forefront of performances and discourse. If the nation's promise to cherish all men and women equally has been broken, in carceral mother and baby homes, in healthcare settings, in access to affordable housing, and in many other contexts, it is not irreparable. Broken threads of trust are rewoven into the fabric of a dynamic and changing society. Art and music continue to help suture wounds while leaving the scars visible because it is important not to forget. Art, broadly conceived, represents our grappling with the ugly truths as well as with the stories of resilience and joy, countering essentialism and exceptionalism on that journey. In the end, to understand art and music is to put them in dialogue, with a gaze and an open ear and heart that is cosmopolitan, inclusive, thoughtful, and hopeful, and one that is unafraid to critique and show us who we really are, in order to make the necessary and painful changes to become who we want to be.

[1] Helen O'Shea, *The Making of Irish Traditional Music*, (Cork University Press, 2011). See also Gerry Smyth, *Music and Irish Identity: Celtic Tiger Blues*, (Routledge, 2016). O'Shea's work provides a broad historical context for the development of Irish traditional music with many critical interventions, while Smyth focuses on popular and classical genres and their relationship to the wider cultural milieu. Also see ed. Harry White and Barra Boydell, *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland*, (UCD Press, 2013).

[2] Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, (University of Minnesota Press, 1985).

[3] Harry White, *The Keeper's Recital: Music and Cultural History in Ireland*, (Cork University Press, 1998).

[4] Fintan O'Toole, *The Lie of the Land* (Verso, 1998). For up to date statistics and sociological perspectives on inward migration and the changing demographics of Ireland, seen Brian Fanning's *Migration and the Making of Ireland* (UCD Press, 2018), and *Diverse Republic* (UCD Press, 2021).

[5] Charles Hamm, *Yesterdays: Popular Song in America*, (W. Norton, 1979). Also see W. H. A. Williams, *'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream: The Image of Ireland and Irish-Americans in American Popular Song Lyrics, 1800–1920*, (University of Illinois Press, 1996). Hamm performs an analysis of Irish melodic traces in American composition while Williams tracks Irish themes and stereotypes in popular music.

[6] Tomás Ó Súilleabháin, Margaret O'Sullivan Farrell, and Dan Farrelly, *Beethoven's Irish Songs Revisited: Texts Chosen by Tomás Ó Súilleabháin Edited by Margaret O'Sullivan Farrell*, (Peter Lang, 2018).

[7] Aileen Dillane, "Crossroads of Art and Design: Musically Curating and Mediating Irish Cultural Artifacts in Chicago," in ed. M. Ní Fhuartháin and V. Cummins, *Éire-Ireland* Special Edition "Notes/Notaí on Music and Ireland," vol. 54:1 & 2 (2019), pp.82–109.

[8] Edward Bunting *The Ancient Music of Ireland Arranged for the Piano Forte: To Which is Prefixed a Dissertation on the Irish Harp and Harpers, Including an Account of the Old Melodies of Ireland* (Hodges and Smith, 1840); George Petrie, *The Petrie Collection of The Ancient Music of Ireland: Arranged for the Piano-Forte, Vol I.* (M. H. Gill, 1855); ed. Hugh Shiels, *Tunes of the Munster Pipers: Irish Traditional Music from the James Goodman Manuscripts, Vol 1*, (Irish Traditional Music Archive, 1998); eds. Hugh and Lisa Shiels, *Tunes of the Munster Pipers: Irish Traditional Music from the James Goodman Manuscripts, Vol 2*, (Irish Traditional Music Archive, 2013).

[9] Seán Ó Riada, *Our Musical Heritage*, (Dolmen Press, 1982), 2. The book is based on a radio programme of the same name from which excerpts were selected.

[10] Tomás Ó Canainn, *Traditional Music in Ireland*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978). A lecturer in physics and uilleann piper, Ó Canainn's book also provides interesting discussion on Irish musical aesthetics.

[11] Seamus Tansey "Irish Traditional Music—the melody of Ireland's soul; it's (sic) evolution from the environment, land and people," in ed. F. Vallely *Crosbealach on Cheoil/Crossroads Conference: Tradition and Change in Irish Traditional Music 1996*, (Whinstone Press, 1999), pp.211-3.

[12] ed. Jennifer Walshe, *Historical Documents of the Irish Avant-Garde*, (Aisteach, 2015). Walshe is a prolific contemporary composer who was elected to Aosdána, the Irish association of artists, in 2020.

[13] In particular see Susan Motherway, *The Globalisation of Irish Traditional Song Performance*. (Ashgate, 2013); John O'Flynn, *The Irishness of Irish Music* (Ashgate, 2009).

[14] ed. Áine Mangaoang, John O'Flynn, and Lonán Ó Briain, *Made in Ireland: Studies in Popular Music*, (Routledge, 2020). This ground-breaking volume covers a range of mainstream and less popular genres across different time periods and with emphases on the socio-historical and political contexts.

[15] Nicholas Carolan, *A Harvest Saved: Francis O'Neill and Irish Music in Chicago*, (Ossian, 1998).

[16] Barra Boydell, *Rebellious Ferment: A Dublin Musical Memoir and Diary* (Atrium, 2018). Barra Boydell is the son of the composer and Professor Emeritus of Music at Maynooth University.

[17] Ita Beausang and Séamus De Barra. *Ina Boyle (1889–1967): A Composer's Life*, (Cork University Press, 2018).

[18] ed. Aloys Fleischman, *Sources of Irish Traditional Music c. 1600–1855: An Annotated Catalogue of Prints and Manuscripts, 1583–1885*, (Routledge, 1998).

[19] ed. Fintan Vallely, *The Companion to Irish Traditional Music*, 2nd ed, (Cork University Press, 2011).

[20] Mary Louise O'Donnell, *Ireland's Harp: The Shaping of Irish Identity c. 1700–1880*, (UCD Press, 2014). See also Barra Boydell, "The Female Harp: The Irish Harp in 18th And Early 19th Century Romantic Nationalism" in RCMI Newsletter 20:1, 1995, 10-17. For more on the relationship between music and painting, see Barra Boydell, *Music and Paintings in the National Gallery of Ireland*, (National Gallery of Ireland, 1985).

[21] Rosaleen McDonagh, *Unsettled* (Skeen Press, 2021). McDonagh is one of a number of Traveller women whose writing is receiving considerable critical acclaim currently. Traveller writers, artists and activists continue to seek recognition of the very real struggles experienced by Travellers in Ireland today. Sindy Joyce, for example, is the first Traveller woman (or Mincéir, as she prefers) to be invited onto the Council of State by President Michael D. Higgins and the first Mincéir woman to receive a PhD (in Sociology, from the University of Limerick).

[22] Recent correspondence between one of the 2022 exhibition curators, Marty Fahey and the painter J.B. Vallely, has revealed that *The Session* was not the original name of the painting but somehow picked up this designation along the way. Vallely also revealed that the uilleann pipes player is based on celebrated Traveller piper Johnny Doran, and the fiddler is inspired by John Kelly, with whom he played.

[23] Williams, *T'was Only An Irishman's Dream*, p. 34.

[24] Axel Klein, *"Music for MacSwiney" in History Ireland* 28:2 (2020), 32–4.

[25] Dept of Foreign Affairs. *Global Ireland: Ireland's Diaspora Strategy 2020–2025*, (Government of Ireland, 2020).

[26] Denise Chaila, "Denise Chaila in Conversation with President Michael D. Higgins," *Hot Press* 45, no. 6 (2021), 16–21.

[27] Aileen Dillane and Nic Gareiss, *"The Lion, The Witch and The Closet': Hetero-normative Institutional Research and Performance Practices and the Queering of 'Traditions,'"* in ed. G. Barz and W. Chen's *Queering the Field: Sounding Out Ethnomusicology*, (Oxford University Press, 2019), pp.245–66. Also see Tes Slominski, *Trad Nation: Gender, Sexuality and Race in Irish Traditional Music*, (Wesleyan University Press, 2020).

"Music, miraculous rhetoric, that speakest sense,
Without a tongue, excelling eloquence
With what ease might thy errors be excused,
Wert thou as truly lov'd as thou'rt abused,
Though dull souls neglect, and some reprove thee,
Thy sway I honor, because angels love thee.

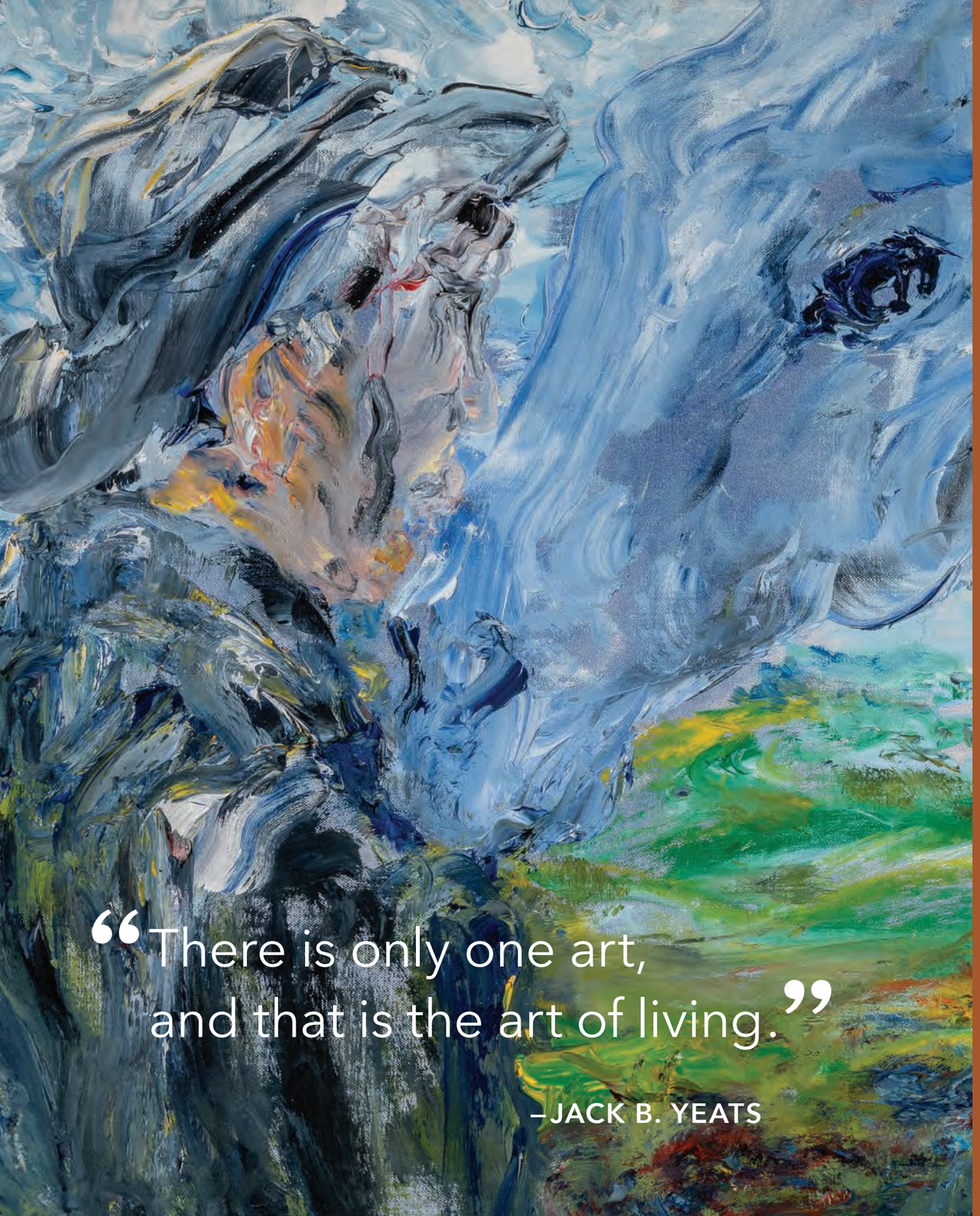
Music, how powerful is thy charm
That can the fiercest rage disarm,
Calm passions in the human breast,
And bring new hope to a mind distrest;
With amorous thoughts the soul inspire,
Or kindle up a warlike fire,
So great is music's power.

Inflamed by music soldiers fight,
Inspired by music poets write;
Music can heal the lover's wounds,
And calm fierce rage by gentle sounds;
Philosophy attempts in vain,
What music can with ease attain,
So great is music's power."

–UNATTRIBUTED

Irish Folk Music, Capt. Francis O'Neill.
Chicago: The Regan Printing House,
1910 (p.7)

PAINTINGS


“There is only one art,
and that is the art of living.”
– JACK B. YEATS

PAUL HENRY (1876–1958)

Reflections across the Bog, 1919–1921
Oil on canvas, 24.25" x 29.25" (62 x 74 cm)
The O'Brien Collection.

Trained in Belfast and later in Paris, Paul Henry's atmospheric style was thought to have been heavily influenced by his time spent studying with James McNeill Whistler who, like many influential painters of the day, operated an Academy for aspiring artists in Paris. Henry and his artist wife, Grace Mitchell, met while in art school in Paris after which they moved to London and married. After spending years working in London as artists/illustrators, the Henrys moved to Achill Island off the west coast of Mayo in 1910. Their long sojourn there inspired and resulted in many of their more well-known pieces of art.

Created shortly after leaving Achill in 1919, ***Reflections across the Bog*** was painted somewhere in the West of Ireland, a region that Henry became most famous—even synonymous—for illustrating in his work. It is widely felt amongst art commentators that the image(s) of the West of Ireland that many can conjure in their imagination today—indeed during any time in the last one hundred years—often involves a visual memory of an encounter with a Paul Henry painting or print. Several of his paintings were used by the railway lines and by the Irish government as posters to encourage travel and so his widely distributed images and style became familiar to many both within and outside of Ireland.

There is something very Henry-esque about ***Reflections across the Bog***: the scale, and activity of the sky pressing down on the landscape which in this case, shows evidence of human activity (stacks of turf) but without being inhabited—a picturesque but lonely landscape.

Though it seems counterintuitive to imagine this, paintings in the canon of Irish art rarely depict rain or scenes where it is actively raining: as such this is a noteworthy exception. Sheets of mist and gently blowing rain emanate from the clouds, criss-crossing in a pattern for the viewer, which conjures an almost visceral awareness of the near ever-presence of moisture in the Irish sky.

MAINIE JELLETT (1897–1944)

The Land, Éire, 1940
Oil on canvas, 24.5" x 29.5" (62 x 74.9 cm)
The O'Brien Collection.

Few artists have wielded the kind of "out-sized" influence that Mainie Jellett has had over both the introduction and subsequent development of Modernist ideas and ideals within the canon of Irish art.

Along with her contemporaries, namely Evie Hone and Mary Swanzy, Jellett pioneered the use of Cubist ideas gleaned from her time in Paris and applied these insights to highly personalized interpretations of her chosen subject matters. Jellett's longest-running artistic pursuit was in the area of Cubism and Abstraction as she saw its honesty of interpretation as an antidote to Academic Realism, which had dominated the artistic landscape for so long. She also saw that this approach most mirrored the great Irish art of the seventh to ninth centuries. She theorized, wrote, and spoke widely on these topics. Part of the theorizing led to a respect for the creation of movement within a two-dimensional approach (rather than a perspective driven approach) to the picture plane. Together with Hone and working alongside the French Cubist painter Albert Gleizes, they established the "ground rules" to guide their work:

"How did they begin? By turning aside from all that was being practiced in the academic schools; by discarding the Renaissance conception of painting as illustration or as decorative anecdote. The Cubists looked to the Italian painters before the time of Raphael for guidance and inspiration.

The discarding of perspective and the return to the two-dimensional surface was the first principle on which they began to work. It was this, together with the elimination of 'the subject,' which caused the first reaction against Cubism. By 'subject' they meant representation of things seen—landscape, natural objects, people. ...This banishment of the two essential points of Renaissance painting—single perspective and the subject—changed the whole face of art. It created a revolution in all the arts; in literature as well as in the plastic arts. With the discarding of subject went sentiment and sentimentality. It left the researchers to experiment with colour, form and rhythm according the laws governing the medium they were working on...."

*"**Translation and rotation** were deemed to be the method by which an artist could achieve movement and rhythm and by the magic of line and colour, make paintings a song for the eye which touches the heart and captures the mind."*

– From the foreword to ***Mainie Jellett—The Artist's Vision***, edited by Eileen MacCarville, 1958

Along with several other influential artists, Jellett was one of the founders of the IELA—The Irish Exhibition of Living Artists in 1943, founded for the purpose of giving a platform to and demanding respect for Irish Modernists whose work was either being ignored or rejected by more conservative art societies at the time. Sadly she died before their first exhibit in 1944.

In accordance with her Cubist leanings, ***The Land, Éire*** is not a traditional interpretation of a *singular or particular view*; rather, it is a Modernist amalgamation of Ireland's typical landscape features all assembled artfully together.

Jellett also believed strongly that "the artist" should participate in the re-imagining of beauty in all its forms, not just in painting, but in the other branches of aesthetics as well—*the decorative arts, architecture, stage-sets, interior design, etc.* As such, she also produced some wonderful designs for rugs—some of which are still reproduced and available today.

"...The direction of the mind and hand of the artist is needed to substitute beauty for ugliness."

– From the foreword to ***Mainie Jellett—The Artist's Vision***, edited by Eileen MacCarville, 1958

PATRICK GRAHAM (1943–)

Approaching Storm, 2007
Oil on canvas, 72" x 80.3" (183 x 204 cm)
The O'Brien Collection.

Patrick Graham was born in Mullingar, Co. Westmeath in 1943.

He is revered by Irish artists, is internationally acclaimed, and has been the subject of many exhibits around the world. Elected to the prestigious arts organization Aosdána in 1986, Graham was later awarded the President's Gold Medal, *Oireachtas Art Exhibition* 1987.

For many years, he had a house and studio along the North Mayo coastline, the drama of which is not as well-known as the coastlines of other more well-travelled counties. ***Approaching Storm*** is an apt title for this piece as we can almost feel that something significant is coming, but as yet, still just out of view. Writing about the painting in an essay several years ago, Niall MacMonagle had the following to say:

"This magnificent painting…gives us a bird's eye view of a rugged, dramatic coastline. In the foreground a solid cliff face is loosely, fluently rendered. Low down, a cave's dark opening contrasts with a sunlit grassy stretch on the cliff top and the gleam of silver sandy beaches in the distance, along the coast, lures and delights the eye. We are on the edge of the North Atlantic and it's captured here translucently…."

This is modern landscape painting writ large, where the stark, rugged setting and aerial vantage point come together beautifully to depict the unpredictable weather of the West of Ireland. The monumental scale of the canvas adds a poignant sense of promixity and immediacy to the scene for the viewer.

ELIZABETH "LILY" WILLIAMS (1874–1940)

Hibernia, 1916
Pastel on paper, 25.752" x 16.5" (65 x 42 cm)
The O'Brien Collection.

This evocative portrait of ***Hibernia*** by Lily Williams was painted at time of war in Ireland. In 1916 at Easter, a Rising had taken place in Dublin and in other locations. It was quickly suppressed and the leaders those who described themselves as the Provisional Government of Irish Republic were executed. At this moment the artist, who had been closely associated with those involved, chose this subject matter. Hibernia, (the Roman name for Ireland) is depicted as a young woman with red hair gracefully held in place by a band suggestive of leaves, writing with a quill on paper or parchment. A romantic timeless study, yet a hundred years ago it was a bold statement of self-determination, indeed its creation has been described by curator of The O'Brien Collection, Marty Fahey, as an "outright act of sedition." He has suggested that the subject could be composing a Proclamation or the constitution to come. The figure is draped here in the tri-color, which was not Ireland's flag in 1916 as the country was still part of the British Empire. This flag had flown from the roof of the Royal College of Surgeons when it had been occupied by Oglaigh na hÉireann during Easter Week, when Constance de Markievicz, also an artist, was second-in-command. The sitter is unknown, the provenance of the painting a mystery.

Elizabeth Josephine Williams (known as Lily) grew up in Dublin, the sixth of eleven[1] children. Her parents were William Henry Wilkinson and his wife Margaret (née Moppett). Her father was a Chief Clerk Chemist, and two of her brothers also became Chemists, two others entered the Protestant Clergy. The girls of the family showed artistic ability: Norah and Florence became art embroiderers while Lily became an artist. She studied first with Mary Manning and later attended the Metropolitan School of Art. When she exhibited in 1904, Lily was reported in the press as having a skill in feminine portraits in watercolour and that she was "clever in poses and expression." [2] Lily had a studio in Pembroke Street and she gave art classes, and painted portraits and landscapes.

Between 1903 and 1909 she exhibited with the *Young Irish Artists*, many of those young artists were active in the revolutionary movement. By 1911 Lily and her sisters Norah and Flo were learning Irish and these cultural circles led them like many others into nationalist politics. She and her siblings, Norah, Flo, and her brother Jack, lived in 11 Lower Beechwood Avenue Ranelagh where a secret room was built. Her studio was also used for men on the run during the campaign for independence, and on one occasion Eamon de Valera used it to hide in.[3]

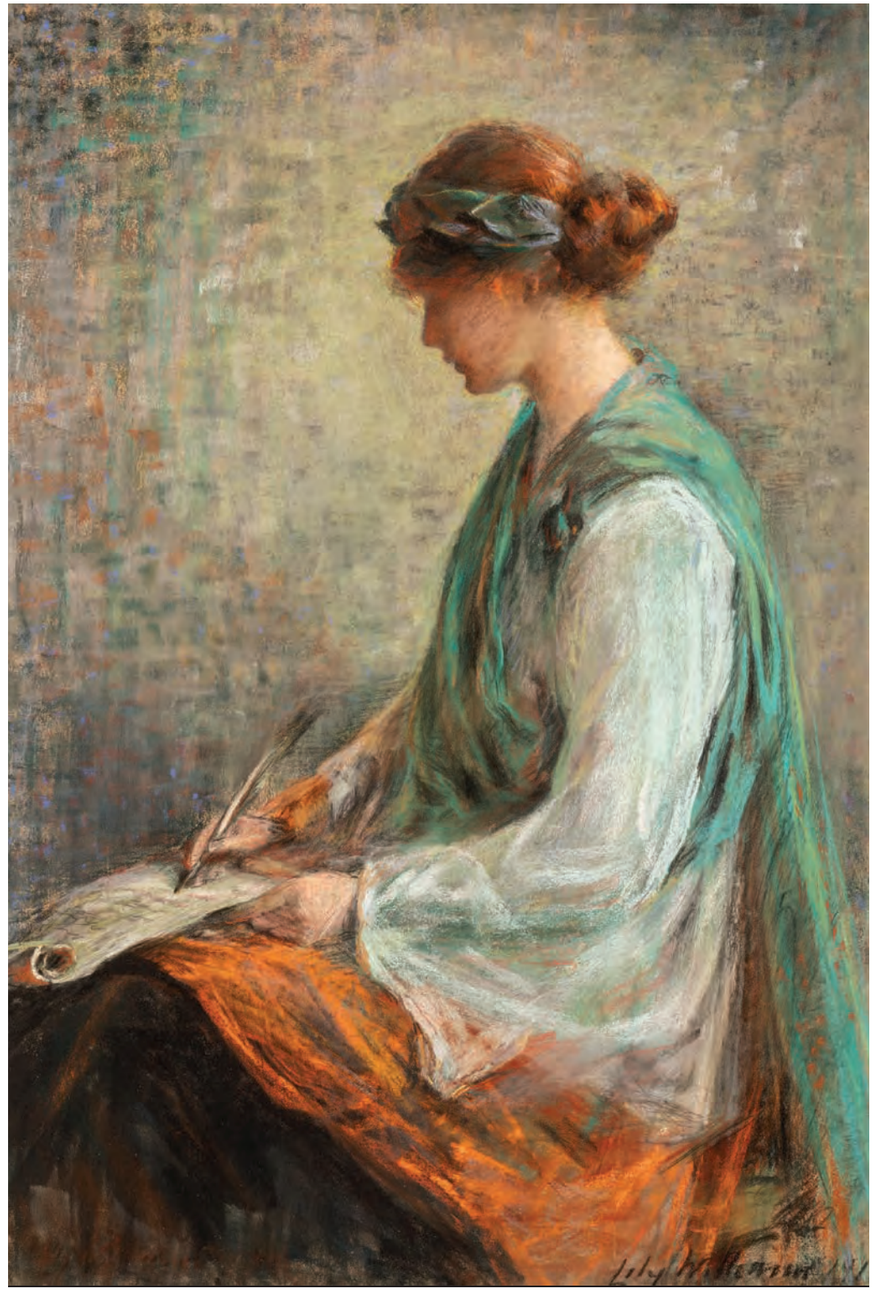
In 1922 she designed a stamp for the newly created Irish Free State, based on the design of the Cross of Cong. Lily Williams was elected Associate of the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1929 and exhibited there annually for the next decade. In 1933 she contributed to an Irish Exhibition in Chicago. In 1944 there was a retrospective at the Grafton Academy of her work.

– Dr. Sinéad McCoole

1 Her siblings Charles Moppett (known as Charlie) b. 1866, Norah Alicia b. 1867, George Duniam b. 1869, Henry (known as Harry) b. 1870, Rochfort b. 1873-1877, Florence b. 1876, William Pakenham b. 1877, John Halstead (known as Jack), Marrable b. 1879, and Francis b. 1881-1887.

2 *Evening Herald*, November 5, 1904.

3 Fred Williams discovered this when he cleared the house in the 1940s, a hidden room whose door was concealed by a wardrobe. Williams family genealogy, uploaded by a private user, geni.com.



HUGHIE O'DONOGHUE (1953–)

Revolution Cottage, 2015
Oil on canvas, 43.3" x 56.75" (123 x 144 cm)
The O'Brien Collection.

Born in Manchester, England, to Irish parents, Hughie O'Donoghue spent many summers in Co. Mayo with his mother's family. On one such trip, his mother took him to see Padraig Pearse's summer getaway, a quaint cottage in Rosmuc, Co. Galway. He recalls being struck by the sheer contrast of the bucolic setting for the cottage alongside the awareness that thoughts of Revolution—resulting in the Easter Uprising—were pondered therein when Pearse was in residence during his summer breaks from teaching between 1903 and 1915.

As pointed out by curator, Cheryl Snay, about this piece, ***Revolution Cottage*** is an expression of the artist's concern with *"ideas of place and identity in relation to historical and personal meaning that connect him with his heritage."*

O'Donoghue has commented that discovering meaning and reflecting that with imagery in his art are often akin to an archeological dig, where rather than being a process of addition of line and color to a canvas, the image is a result of an emotional and artistic "excavation" and editing process which eventually enables the imagery to emerge. That artful editing is on splendid display in ***Revolution Cottage,*** which juxtaposes both the typical pastoral countryside setting of Pearse's cottage with a modernist evocation of the Irish tri-color flag, itself suggestive of the life and world-changing patriotism that blossomed and matured inside of him while there.

"Somehow or other the world changing events of 1916 need to remain urgent in our imagination and not selectively used in a partial story. Politicians and historians are usually summoned to put into words our understanding of the importance of past time. However, John Ruskin believed that the most reliable version of seminal events may well be that given by the poet or artist. Artists should have no vested interests to satisfy, audiences to keep happy, patrons or sponsors to please, arts council boxes to tick. The fugitive nature of truth is the goal.

One of the motifs in my work is the fragmentary and partial sense that we have of events of the recent past. One hundred years is a graspable amount of time, it has a human scale that we can measure. For the very young it is an unimaginable immensity of space, but as the decades pass, we can begin to understand its dimension and to 'weigh it' in relation to our own memories.

I did not want to make a painting of a cottage that was 'picturesque' so cropped the image to emphasize the shapes of the roof and walls and to try and give the picture a solidity and density to achieve the sensation of image/motif held in tension with the factuality/ object qualities of the work.

The painting was made on linen canvas and built up in many layers of oil paint, a lot of attention was focused on the cottage door which was repeatedly glazed and over painted to emphasize the physicality of the paint. The idea of a color scheme that reflected the Irish Tri-color occurred to me only while I was making the painting. The picture also features an abstracted black bird which is a distinctive presence in the landscape of the west of Ireland and indeed gave its name to the early tribes that inhabited this part of Connaught." [1]

– Hughie O'Donoghue, December, 2021

[1] Email exchange between Marty Fahey and Hughie O'Donoghue, December, 2021.

PATRICK HENNESSY (1915–1980)

Farewell to Ireland, 1963
Oil on canvas, 49" x 39" (124.5 x 99 cm)
The O'Brien Collection.

It is difficult to overstate the positive impact of JFK's official visit to Ireland in 1963. He was one of our own. He addressed our parliament as effortlessly as he took tea and cake with his relatives in New Ross. He was Catholic and young, handsome and charismatic, more movie star than statesman. And we loved him. In one short trip he honoured his heritage at home while saluting our diaspora abroad. He made us proud that our descendants and our living relatives made and were making America a great nation. He departed like countless souls before, but not before promising to return in the springtime. Again the narrative was new. Farewell now did not mean goodbye.

Although Patrick Hennessy used a stock press photograph he judiciously cropped the image, making for a more impactful composition. He placed the President firmly to one side removing any distracting background detail. He straightened and slightly elongated his back, as JFK's posture was at times compromised by chronic pain, thereby making him appear stronger and more imposing. Finally, he edited the outstretched arms and hands into a more clear arrangement in the lower third of the painting. The more vertical dimensions of Hennessy's canvas and his clever fine tuning of the composition of the original photograph made the image more immediate and underscored the adulation the President was held in on every part of his visit. This final moment at Shannon, our gateway to the States, shows an almost deified persona ascending Mount Olympus rather than the stairs to Air Force One.

There is a second painting by Hennessy in the departure lounge at Shannon Airport which seems to be a companion piece to ***Farewell to Ireland***. It shows President Kennedy from the front waving to people out of shot. Behind him stands a group of Irish dignitaries, including An Taoiseach, Sean Lemass. Although more conventional in composition, it has a Hennessy hallmark of a dramatically foregrounded central figure with secondary figures significantly smaller in scale. Hennessy was an inspired choice for these commemorative canvasses. He was unmatched for his remarkable technical prowess as a painter. His depictions of still lifes, landscapes, people, and animals were marked by their astonishing verisimilitude. His pictures were characterised by convincing surfaces, close tonal harmonies, lush colour schemes, and sophisticated compositions. No artist likes to work from a secondary source alone, but in this case Hennessy had only the press photographs from the day from which to work. Notwithstanding, he made them his own and transformed black and white reportage into an iconic painted moment.

— James Hanley

MARTIN GALE (1949–)

Women's Work, 2000
Oil on canvas, 42" x 48" (107 x 122 cm)
The O'Brien Collection.

"As always, there is a sense that the scene depicted in the painting is not giving the viewer the full story. There is more to the tale, glimpsed just beyond the picture frame. The mildly unsettling open-ended narratives of Gale's works allows the viewer to insert themselves into the work–it is we who meet the lone man walking towards us on a country road, who come across an owl perched precariously on a fence post, and feel the tropical sun on our backs amidst the lush vegetation of Sri Lanka. But what lies around the corner?"

– The Taylor Galleries

If one of the purposes of art is to provoke–thoughts, questions, feelings–then ***Women's Work*** succeeds at first glance. The composition immediately begs the question, "What is happening here?"

Painted in a style that is very realistic and being both a landscape and a portrait painting, it compels us to inquire into the uncertainty that seems to ripple both above and beneath the surface at the level of the paintings' meaning. *Is there a specific narrative at work? Are there multiple narratives at work?* It is, perhaps, key to the power of the piece that my answer, your answer and the next person's answer, might all be different, but each will carry its own personal and emotional weight and we will all remember the piece because of the connections those questions provoked for us.

In the context of this exhibit, the interaction between people and the landscape–in reality or in reminiscences–and the evidence of looking back, looking forward, the old and the new, "getting on with it", i.e., the work, as the Irish say….are all in evidence here. The imagery in the painting itself seems to ask the title question, ***"Who do we say we are?"***

On the subject of titles, the name given to the painting by the artist, is provocative itself: roles for men and women used to be quite circumscribed and such phrases as "women's work" were widely understood, even if the assumptions underlying the phrase was not as widely accepted as such. Is the title simply recalling the presumptions and proscriptions of that era or *challenging* the notions behind them? It turns out that both interpretations are accurate. Martin Gale himself has commented that he often encountered a patriarchal strain in the rural areas of Ireland where men might head out for an evening with friends whereas the women were left to continue their long day's work into the evening hours without the "end of day" respite that men seemed to so readily afford themselves. The architecture may represent the old vs. the new; and changes are coming–there is a visible storm in that sky above.

COLIN DAVIDSON (1968–)

Portrait of Jim O'Brien (JCO), 2014
Oil on canvas, 50" x 46" (122 x 101.5 cm)
The O'Brien Collection.

Colin Davidson is a contemporary artist, living and working near Belfast, Northern Ireland. Since graduating in 1991 from the University of Ulster with a first-class honors degree, he has structured his practice in themes, and since 2010 his focus has been on painting grand scale portraits, which have won widespread recognition and many international awards.

"Since 2010, Davidson has specialized in oversized realist portraits that, with heavy brush strokes and imprecise application, appear to capture the essence of its subject as if by accident. Look long enough, and you'd swear they'll blink…."

"…I cringe at the term portrait painter, Davidson says. In galleries across the world, the sitter is looking out at us, aware that we are in the room. That factors into our engagement with the painting.

"But I wanted to turn that on its head and wait for the moment in the encounter when the sitter was seemingly unaware of me being in the room, or of the viewer looking at the painting, so we're almost intruding on a private moment. That's the polar opposite of what classical portraits were about." [1]

As well as numerous private commissions, Davidson's portrait sitters have included well-known public figures such as Brad Pitt, Ed Sheeran, Liam Neeson, Brian Friel, Sir Kenneth Branagh, Christy Moore, and Seamus Heaney. His work is held in many public and corporate collections worldwide, including Queen's University Belfast, the Ulster Museum (Belfast), Standard Life (London), the National Gallery of Ireland (Dublin), the Standard Chartered Bank of Asia, the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery (Washington DC) and the National Portrait Gallery (London). Davidson's recent exhibition of portrait paintings, *Silent Testimony*, reveals the stories of eighteen people who are connected by their individual experiences of loss through the Troubles—a turbulent thirty-year period in Northern Ireland from the late 1960s onwards. This critically acclaimed body of work was on show at the Ulster Museum Belfast during 2015, before embarking on a tour that included the Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris, Dublin Castle, and the United Nations NYC. In December 2015 he was commissioned by *TIME* Magazine to paint the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, for the cover for its 'Person of the Year' issue." [2]

Two years after this ***Portrait of Jim O'Brien*** was painted, Davidson was invited to paint an official portrait of Queen Elizabeth II, which was unveiled later that year by The Queen in London. In 2019 his official portrait of President Bill Clinton was unveiled by the past President in New York and in 2020 his portrait of Irish President Michael D. Higgins was unveiled in Dublin.

"Whether it's the queen or a person on the street, I make each of these paintings the same size, to show that we're all equal, that there's a shared humanity. So they're all around 50 inches by 50 inches each, and I care equally about capturing their likenesses." [3]

[1] *The Irish Independent*, Artist Colin Davidson: 'I cringe at the term portrait painter', by Shilpa Ganatra, July 2, 2017

[2] colindavidson.com

[3] *The Irish Independent*, Artist Colin Davidson: 'I cringe at the term portrait painter', by Shilpa Ganatra, July 2, 2017

CHARLES LAMB (1893–1964)

The Turf Cutter, mid to late 1920s
Oil on canvas, 36" x 26" (91.5 x 66 cm)
The O'Brien Collection.

Charles Lamb, born in Portadown, Co. Armagh began his painting career as a house painter in his father's decorating firm. Between 1913 and 1922, he attended the Belfast School of Art and then the Metropolitan School of Art in Dublin where his prominent mentors included Margaret Clarke, James Sleator, Patrick Tuohy, and Seán Keating, themselves all noted students of the great painter and teacher, William Orpen. The influence of this tutelage, especially in the direct engaging gaze of the subject, is evident in ***The Turf Cutter***.

At a time when artists and writers were intent on identifying and expressing the so-called authentic Irish identity and essence (aka "Irishness"), as espoused by the likes of Padraig Pearse, Eamon de Valera, and many members of the new Free State government, Lamb and Keating—like so many artists before and after them—were drawn to the mythical West of Ireland. It was here that the customs and characteristics they were in search of were still to be found in their most pristine and vibrant form, yet to be sullied or diluted by the encroachment of modernity and modern ways.

Time spent in Brittany, France, in the 1920s further sensitized Lamb to the nuances of rural customs and culture. He eventually settled and remained in and around Carraroe in Connemara, Galway starting in 1935, where he raised his family, painted and offered summer school sessions for aspiring young painters. Having spent so much time in this area, Lamb was not a visitor but rather more like a native: his work is imbued with that sense of easy familiarity and nuanced knowledge that informed his choice of his subjects, his observations and then the paintings themselves. ***The Turf Cutter*** captures some of the characteristics of the resilience and ruggedness of the people of Connemara: they possessed a self-assured straightforwardness, which was fortified by a deep religious faith and perseverance in the face of daily hard work and adversity.

Unusually, the sitter is known to us thanks to the recollections of Charles Lamb's daughter, Lailli Lamb de Buitlear, who remembers that this was a portrait of a neighbor, *"…Cóill Rua O Connaire from An Cheathrú Rua (Carraroe). He was a lovely man. He lived in Bothar Buí (village) just on the left, the first cottage that you passed—there with his dainty wife called Peige Liam."* [1] Lamb depicted O Connaire in a couple of other paintings.

Lamb records two ends of the turf cutting cycle in this painting: the *sleán*, the distinctive spade for cutting the turf from the bog and the woven *creel* on his back, used only when the turf had sufficiently dried and to carry it back home from the bog as fuel for heat and for cooking.

One can easily imagine ***The Turf Cutter*** as a model for the "authentic Irishness" that Lamb and his fellow artists were seeking.

[1] Email exchange between Lailli Lamb de Buitlear, David Britton, and Marty Fahey, Fall 2020.

LOUIS LE BROCQUY (1916–2012)

Image of Beckett, 1994
Oil on canvas, 46" x 35" (142 x 89 cm)
The O'Brien Collection.

Though quite skilled as such early in his career, Le Brocquy never thought of himself as a "portrait artist" in the sense that this designation had applied for centuries. Portraiture has often been concerned with creating a likeness of someone's *image* that falls comfortably in a realm between accuracy and flattery and that also gives a glimpse of the person behind the image—an evocation that is inward looking but anchored on the external visage.

The *Head Series*, which began in 1964 and grew and developed into a thematic preoccupation for him until 2007, was such a profound development in that genre, that it led the Irish writer John Montague to comment on Le Brocquy's reinvention of the very concept and practice of portraiture. His approach turned the practice of portraiture around, so to speak, by attempting to construct the image from within, focusing instead on capturing the essence of the personality primarily and arriving at the emerging image of the person as a secondary consequence. Portraiture in the traditional sense was static, i.e, capturing only a moment in time; Le Brocquy's hope, by comparison was to capture the ongoing existential life force emanating from behind the facial features.

In this pursuit, Le Brocquy was guided in part by a belief in Celtic mythology that the head was the container of the soul—and that his role as an artist was to reveal that unique soulfulness of his subjects. Many of his subjects were well-known literary and creative personalities: W.B. Yeats, James Joyce, Seamus Heaney, Francis Bacon, and Bono, for example.

What makes this portrait so poignant and compelling is that is arose out of a long-standing friendship with Samuel Beckett and was informed by decades of discussions, visits, and collaborations together. One wonders if his closeness to Beckett made it more or less difficult to faithfully capture the nuances—the "Beckett-ness" of which he was so intimately aware.

There were several previous iterations of this portrait of Beckett: this one, however, adds in an image of the writer's hands, deemed by Le Brocquy to be essential to an understanding of the uniqueness of his friend who used his large hands often as a way to express his ideas in lively conversations and, indeed, to express his unique genius in the written word.

RODERIC O'CONOR (1860–1940)

The Farm, Provence, 1913
Oil on canvas, 28" x 35.5" (71 x 90 cm)
The O'Brien Collection.

Roderic O'Conor is widely regarded as Ireland's first "Modernist" painter given his early exposure to and adoption of the avant-garde Impressionist and Post-Impressionist influences which, starting in 1883, he encountered in Belgium and France. His work is without equal amongst his fellow Irish artists, either during or, indeed, after his life.

Being from a family of substantial means in Roscommon, he was educated in England and then travelled widely. His travels took him from Ireland to Antwerp, Belgium, in 1883, then to the influential artist colony of Pont Aven in Brittany in 1891, France, and then on to Paris in 1904. Leaving Paris in 1913, he settled for a long stay in the southern French Mediterranean coastal town of Cassis. His experiences and relationships along the way influenced and shaped his perspective and work: in evidence here is his familiarity with the work of Van Gogh and with Paul Gauguin, the latter of which he shared a personal friendship.

The distinctive sun-drenched warm light of this region resulted in a burst of creativity for O'Conor and ***The Farm, Provence*** is part of the body of work he produced and exhibited at this stage in his career.

The villa pictured was his rented home while in the region and it is painted against the dramatic backdrop of the mountainous region of the Montagne de la Canaille. The light in this region heightened one's awareness of color and this painting is evidence of that, bursting as it is with lush, warm contrasting tones. One can almost feel the warmth that this painting exudes—even the lonely, unattended plow in the middle of the field is rendered in bright green—an unlikely actual color for the plow but, thanks to O'Conor, it too is enjoying its moment in the sun.

"…Roderic O'Conor (1860–1940) is unique among his Irish colleagues as the only Irishman who became an artist in the international scene, and was associated with the Post-Impressionists. Because of his hermit-like existence in the last decades of his life, O'Conor's reputation has been relatively slow to emerge, and certainly in Ireland, until thirty years ago, the only works known by him were one or two acquired by Hugh Lane for the Municipal Gallery." [1]

O'Conor's reputation has risen sharply since that quote was penned in 2002. His evocative and intense use of color has given his work a singular status in the canon of Irish art and his place amongst "the greats" in the wider world of art is also assured.

[1] ***Ireland's Painters: 1600-1940***, Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, (p. 263)

DIANA COPPERWHITE (1969–)

Inner Garden State, 2019
Oil on canvas, 47.2" x 70.8" (120 x 180 cm)
The O'Brien Collection.

Amongst the queries that guide Diana Copperwhite's vision and practice are the essential questions of how we "construct" that which we call "real." How do we perceive things? How does our perception change over time? What are the effects on our emotions during and after our act(s) of perception? The apprehension and appreciation of art is both a mental and an emotional experience with the latter often being the most impactful.

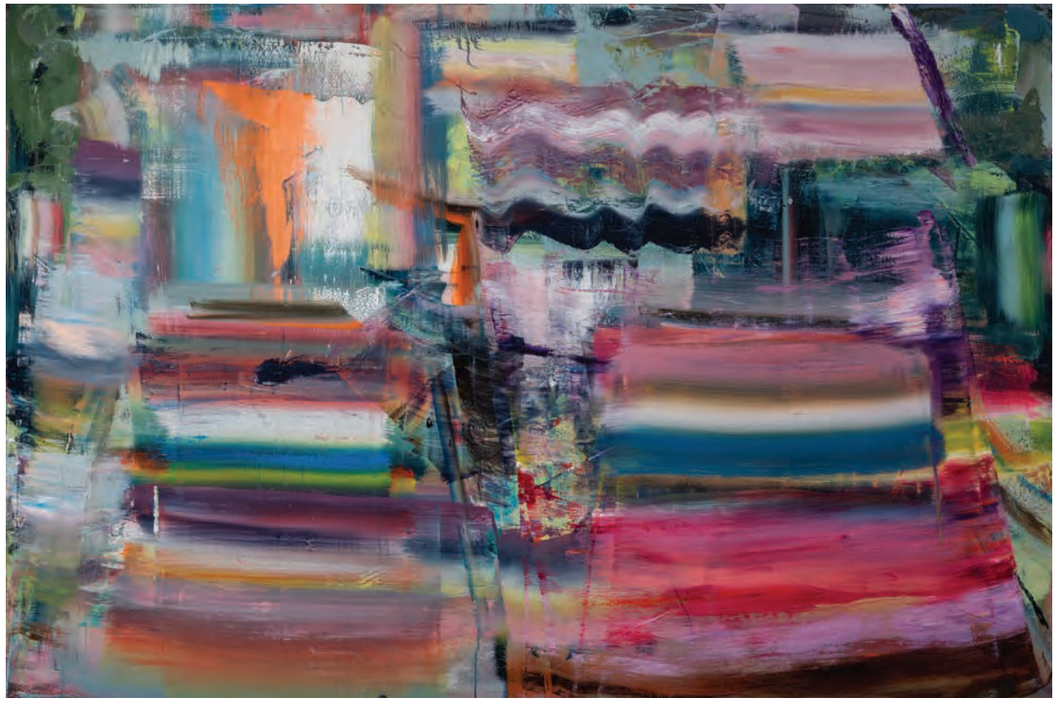
There are times when, even though we cannot trace the imagery back to an objectively identifiable representation, the visceral effects are clear and profound; there are even times when a need to identify a specific representation in a piece can interfere with the emotional response that awaits us there. At such times it is wise to recall the words of Jackson Pollock when commenting on the response(s) to his own work:

"If people would just look at the paintings, I don't think they would have any trouble enjoying them. It's like looking at a bed of flowers, you don't tear your hair out over what it means."

Color and form that advances and retreats; lines and shapes being carefully juxtaposed–like a wonderful wordless melody–these are all discreet and interwoven moments of perception, awareness, and appreciation that have power and value in their own right. Revealing the raw power of beauty, like a garden itself, Copperwhite's paintwork is lyrical, fluid, subtle, and strong all at the one time.

The artist herself had the following to say about this piece:

*"The painting **Inner Garden State** was made with a series of other paintings over the last few years such as The Floating World, and The Ghost of Yesterday. My work is informed by so many things around me, but for this series of paintings, I was looking at the idea of gardens, wild nature and at how this is represented in reality and virtually. This created a fusion of memories, of different places and experiences both real and imagined.*



Rows of brush marks are deliberate and solid; they glow and vibrate and become like rows of glowing code or echo the sensation of a musical scale. The painting process mimics an organic growth pattern, paint is layered and scraped away leaving traces of what went before. The light is internal, the light found in the west of Ireland and the light that is generated by the constant glow of the electricity of glowing screens.

There is a pull for me between beautiful order and beautiful chaos, the colonized and un-colonized beauty. The need to impose order and cultivate landscape found in beautiful formal gardens amongst other things and the wild unspoilt beautiful landscape such as the Connemara landscape.

This pull between opposing forces creates tension, an unanswerable quandary.

This creates a framework for these paintings." [1]

[1] Email exchange between Diana Copperwhite and Marty Fahey regarding this work, December 2021.

WALTER OSBORNE (IRISH, 1859–1903)

At the Breakfast Table, 1894

Oil on canvas, 20" x 24" (canvas), 29 1/4" x 33 3/8" (frame), (51 x 61 cm)
Signed, lower left "Walter Osborne 94" in brown paint

Snite Museum of Art, Donald and Marilyn Keough Foundation Fund, 2019.029

On the surface, Walter Osborne's impressionist painting of a domestic interior is a quiet ode to family and homecoming. Upon further reflection, however, he depicts an Irish fin-de-siècle modernity fraught with questions of identity, imperialism, emigration, class, and gender roles.

Osborne gives us entry to the dining room of his parents' home in Rathmines, a suburb of Dublin, where we see his mother, father, and orphaned niece, Violet Stockley, taking a simple breakfast in the early morning light filtering through lace sheers. The child sitting in her high chair is the only figure who engages the viewer. The room is neatly, but modestly, appointed with a white linen table cloth, heavy fringed curtains over lace sheers, a silver teapot, a plate of bread, white dishes, and a pottery jug filled with a bouquet of flowers.

Most obvious is the empty George II mahogany chair and place setting in the foreground, which has sometimes been interpreted as an allusion to the missing family member. The artist's sister, Violet, reportedly the life of the household before her marriage, emigrated to Canada with her new husband, William Stockley. She died in childbirth, prompting the widower to send the infant back to Ireland to be raised by his in-laws.

Osborne returned from England where he had started his career as a landscape artist to help his aging parents with the task of child rearing. To support them financially, he turned his talent towards portraiture, first using his family as models. With its depth of feeling, subtle palette, and deft brushwork, ***At the Breakfast Table*** warrants the pride the artist felt when he wrote that it was the "best picture" he had done.

– Cheryl Snay, Snite Museum of Art

BASIL BLACKSHAW (1932–2016)

Joe Bell's Council House, 1984
Oil on canvas, 48" x 40" (122 x 101.5 cm)
The O'Brien Collection.

Most artists go through stages of growth and development, sometimes suddenly moving on from long established points of view in their practice to fresh ideas about life, their place in it, and the perspective from which they choose to represent their experiences–this painting by Basil Blackshaw sits within such a "threshold" milestone moment in his career.

In an essay about this painting, journalist, author, and Blackshaw afficionado, Eamonn Mallie, recounts how the artist encountered this important moment as a result of an illness–for which he was hospitalized–followed shortly thereafter by a devastating fire in his studio. The combination of these pivotal events left Blackshaw, it seems, with a profound need and desire to look steadfastly forward rather than back with the results materializing to dramatic effect on his canvasses. His prior work, more literal and figurative in style, gave way to much freer and more abstract iterations of the world around him. In this work, the recognizable form of the typical Belfast council house are present and familiar even though articulated details as such are scant.

Council houses began to populate the Belfast landscape after World War II, when a substantial migration from surrounding rural areas into the urban environs started to occur. The existing housing stock was inadequate to the burgeoning demands and so government-subsidized, semi-detached housing was deemed to be the most efficient solution. For many, sharing a common indoor wall *(note the vertical blue line in the center of the building)* with a new neighbor was utterly foreign to the rural, private, detached lifestyle they left behind on small farmsteads. But the tradeoffs–*electricity, indoor plumbing, more reliable heating, and more proximate access to shopping*–were believed to be a significant step forward in the minds of many of the occupants. These council houses soon became a sought-after commodity and in that context, the "supply/demand" calculus was readily utilized as a tool by politicians to dole out favors to their favorite constituents. So prevalent was this practice, that the rampant favoritism imbedded in the application process–which heavily favored Protestant over Catholic applicants, regardless of need–became a key ingredient in the widespread civil unrest euphemistically referred to as "The Troubles" in Belfast and in Northern Ireland starting in 1969.

Joe Bell's Council House must then be seen in the context of the pivotal moment it represents, not just in Blackshaw's career but also in light of its iconographic treatment of a heavily contested topic within the wider and deeper subject of civil rights in Northern Ireland.

JACK B. YEATS (1871–1957)

Until We Meet Again, 1949
Oil on canvas, 18" x 24" (44.5 x 59.5 cm)
The O'Brien Collection.

"The true artist has painted the picture because he wishes to hold again for his own pleasure—and for always—a moment, and because he is impelled … by his human affection to pass on the moment to his fellows, and to those that come after him."

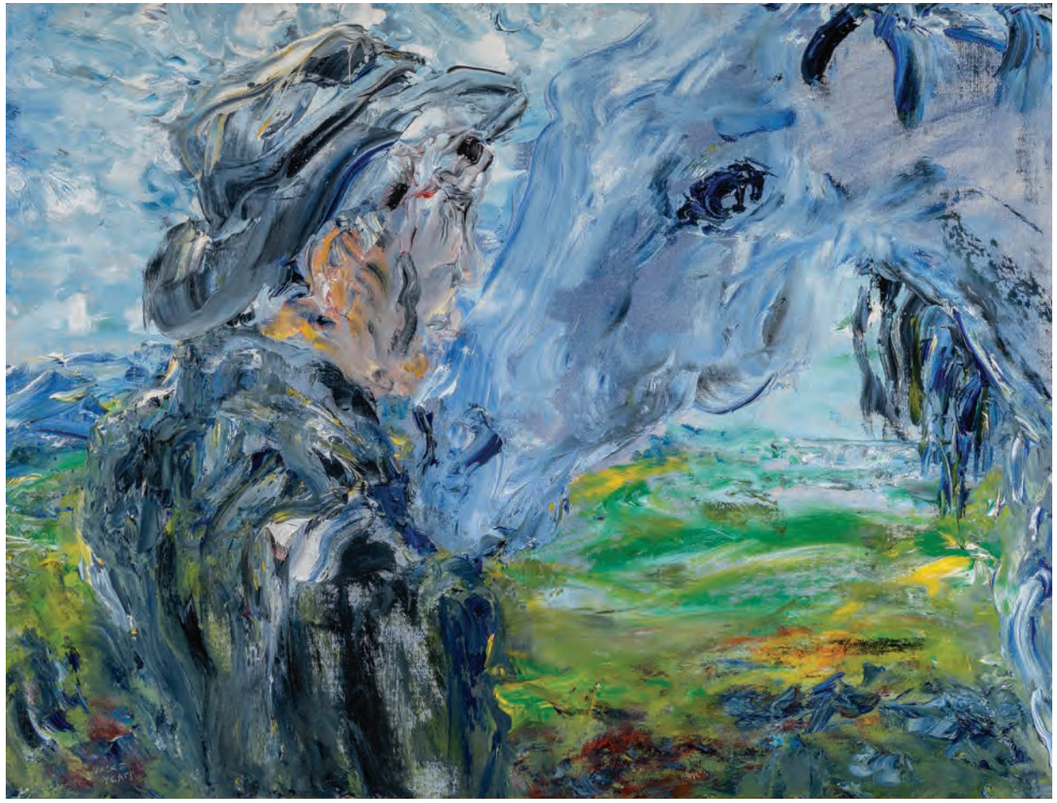
– Jack B. Yeats

Painted in 1949, ***Until We Meet Again***, personifies Jack Butler Yeats' wonderfully expressionistic style of the late 1940s when he created some of his most sought after paintings. Characterized by dynamic brushstrokes and thick impasto, Yeats' treatment of the medium can readily be compared to the paintings of his European Expressionist contemporaries, most notably the work of his good friend, Oskar Kokoschka. With background, horse, and human merging and dissolving into one another, ***Until We Meet Again*** takes on an almost visionary or dream-like quality. It has been suggested that the wealth of emotion in the gestures and expressions within this picture are representative of the reflections on mortality of an aging artist, affected by the death of his wife, Cottie, who died in 1947, and the death of his sister in 1949, as well as by the war which had ended only a few years earlier. The title of this painting, ***Until We Meet Again***, may be a further indication of this.

Until We Meet Again depicts a quiet moment of intimacy between the male figure and his equine companion. The artist has chosen to focus in on the subject matter and thus incorporate the viewer closely into the pictorial space. This proximity not only grants an added sense of tenderness but lends a more abstract quality to the painting. Yeats crops his composition so that it focuses exclusively upon the head and shoulders of the man—who is partially turned away from the viewer—and the horse's head, as they face one another. Behind the figure is a loosely depicted landscape, with suggestions of the sea in the middle distance. Compositionally, this painting can be likened to an earlier picture executed by Yeats in 1936, titled *The Eye of Affection* (private collection; see H. Pyle, no. 475), in which only part of the head of the horse is depicted, as seen here, and it may well have been a source of inspiration to the artist.

The enigmatic relationship between horse and human, as depicted in this work, was a theme that continually fascinated Yeats throughout his career as an artist. Reared in the Irish countryside, he credited his love for animals, especially the horse, to his rural upbringing in Sligo. Comparable works of this period, such as *Come*, 1948; *Youth*, 1946 (private collection); *Age*, 1943 (private collection); and *The View*, 1949 (private collection), likewise show Yeats' interest in, and exploration of, this subject matter.

But possibly the work that can be emotionally most closely associated with ***Until We Meet Again*** is *My Beautiful, My Beautiful*, 1953 (private collection), which uses the same close framing of the horse and its owner, set eye to eye, to convey with great pathos and sensitivity the heightened emotion of the moment.



Until We Meet Again can be seen as a metaphor of the deep spiritual kinship that exists between horse and man, at the meeting point of land and ocean, looking past the material realm of the everyday to a world beyond where they can be reunited. Hilary Pyle comments:

"As he grew older, Yeats' landscapes became progressively more visionary, so that earth, water, air and light seemed all to reach some metaphysical plane where the physical world is allied with the heavenly. The landscapes are still recognizably Irish in their coloring, and in their changeable weather … But emotionally Yeats seemed to gather up the countryside which he had studied in detail as a young man, and transform through a personal ecstasy this land he loved so deeply." [1]

– Nicholas Orchard, Christies

[1] Hilary Pyle, Yeats: *Portrait of an Artistic Family* (London: Merrell Publishers Ltd., 1997), 260.

JACK B. YEATS (1871–1957)

In Tir na nÓg, 1936
Oil on canvas, 24" x 36" (61 x 91 cm)
The O'Brien Collection.

"It is not only delightful and original in its technique and in its superb craftsmanship, but there is a whimsical, imaginative quality in this picture that puts it in harmony with the most poetic conceptions of Tir na nÓg. Here we feel the essential Tir na nÓg, that dream world of loveliness and youth."

– *Evening Herald*, 20 April 1936, "Royal Hibernian Academy Exhibition Review"

In Tir na nÓg depicts a boy lying on a grassy bank, reading a book. He glances away from the pages, towards his vibrant surroundings of flowers, grasses, and water. Above his head the cascading branches of a tree, create a natural canopy. Behind the reader, on the banks of the river, a fantastic scene of figures and ships takes place. Men and women stand on the shoreline or embark in their boats while an elegant, antiquated galleon marks the horizon line. This is reminiscent of other fantasy paintings by Jack B. Yeats such as *A Race in Hy Brazil* (1937, Crawford Art Gallery), which also makes reference to a mythological island. It calls to mind the works of the French rococo painter, Antoine Watteau, such as his *Pilgrimage to Cythera*, (1718–19, Charlottenburg Palace, Berlin). In this and other paintings by Watteau, noblemen and women travel to Cythère, the place where the goddess of love, Venus, was said to have been born. The works suggest the transience of human emotions. The writer Samuel Beckett, a close friend of Yeats, noted the comparison between the two artists when he referred at the time, to Yeats' work as becoming "Watteauer and Watteauer." [1]

Tir na nÓg is the legendary land of youth, a mythological island, believed to be off the west coast of Ireland, to which according to folklore, the lovers Niamh and Oisín, eloped. W B. Yeats, Jack's elder brother, described it in his *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (1888) as the:

"Country of the Young, for age and death have not found it; neither tears nor loud laughter have gone near it."

One of W. B. Yeats' most famous poems, The *Wanderings of Oisín* (1889), recounts the travels and adventures of Oisín through the mystical isles of Tir na nÓg. The subject clearly appealed to Jack Yeats also. In 1943 he painted another major work connected to the myth, *A Blackbird bathing in Tir na nÓg* (1943, private collection).

The boy in Yeats' painting is not Oisín nor a Celtic warrior but a modern figure. He may be a self-portrait of the artist as a youth, according to Hilary Pyle. [2] His body and face is sculpted out of thick paint and his smiling expression conveys the pleasure of this moment, when he is caught between the sensual delights of nature on a summer's day, and the imaginative stimulation of a storybook filled with great tales and adventures.

The emotional intensity of the painting is conveyed through its rich colors, most notably the combination of blues and greens, a favorite mixture in Yeats' paintings of the 1930s. The rich and varied application of pigment creates a capricious surface, full of movement and life. It emphasizes the tenuous position of the main figure, the youth, whose enjoyment of real and imagined form is only temporary. There is a suggestion that the pulsating landscape and myths will continue after he has gone. But the physicality of the vigorous brushwork and the power of the color takes precedence over the narrative, forcing the viewer to engage in the sheer exuberance of the construction of the painting itself and its effects.

– Dr. Róisín Kennedy

1 Thomas MacGreevy, *Jack B. Yeats: An Appreciation and an Interpretation* (Dublin: Victor Waddington Publications, 1945), 15.

2 HIlary Pyle, *Jack B. Yeats, A Catalogue Raisonné of the Oil Paintings* (Canongate Books, 1992), no. 491.

SEÁN KEATING (1889–1977)

King O'Toole, 1930
Oil on canvas, 26" x 30" (66 x 76 cm)
The O'Brien Collection.

Seán Keating was born in Limerick. He moved to Dublin in 1911 to study at the Metropolitan School of Art under the tutelage of the great artist and teacher, William Orpen. He went on to become Orpen's most famous student and eventually travelled to London to be his studio assistant.

Keating's style owes much to his mentor and narratively, his work could be described as "Social Realist", "Romantic" and in an Irish sociopolitical context, "Republican" and even "Propagandist."

Core to Keating's beliefs was the notion of "the Citizen Hero"–the belief that the average citizen, by virtue of their hard work, hard-won wisdom, resilient character and pluck, could and would achieve a type of personal lifestyle and, working together, a caliber of noble "statehood" in Ireland of which they could finally be proud–one that both reflected and rewarded their virtues, patience, and industry. Many of Keating's images of such (extra) "ordinary" men and women are visibly imbued with evidence of these character traits. If ever there was a prime example redolent of these characteristics in Keating's oeuvre, it is ***King O'Toole***.

By the late 1920s, Keating maintained a studio in the Wicklow mountains just outside of the town of Enniskerry. Over time a local resident and shepherd, Joe O'Toole, became a regular visitor to Keating's studio when en-route to the local Mart (Market Day) to sell his sheep. His countenance and character impressed Keating enough that he used O'Toole as the subject for a couple of sketches and for two paintings–*Holy Joe in the Mountains* (McLean Museum and Art Gallery-Scotland) and the present piece, ***King O'Toole***.

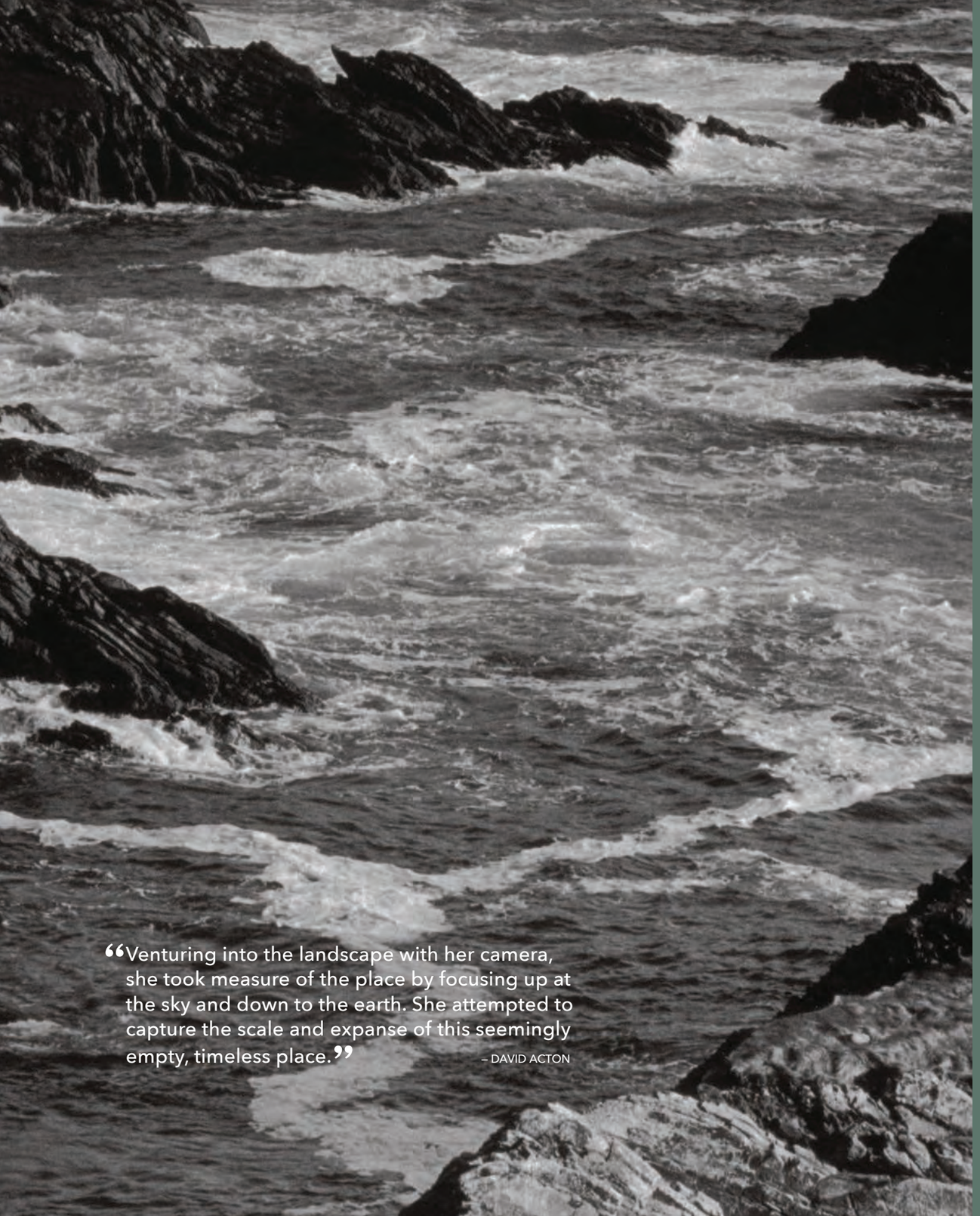
It seems that Joe was a descendent of the famous O'Toole clan that once held sway in the valleys of Glencree and Glendalough hundreds of years previously, before being ignominiously dispossessed of their lands and influence by the ancestors of the (then) current landowners at the prominent Powerscourt demesne nearby. It also seems that in addition to visiting with Keating during his forays into town, and after selling his sheep, O'Toole would stop at the local pub to celebrate–or to lament–his transactions at the Mart. This stopover, in turn, led Joe–now fortified by drink–to pay unannounced visits to Powerscourt House for the purpose of recounting his long-simmering grievances with the family and their ancestors. It is said that he would march up the long avenue leading to the grand house, while "showering" the family with all manner of invective and verbal abuse relating to the unresolved grievances of the ancient O'Toole Clan. This spectacle invariably resulted in him being thrown in jail for a night, fined a nominal amount by Lord Powerscourt (who was also the local magistrate), and sent back to the hills again to "lick his wounds."

These episodes always had sequels, played out during subsequent visits to the Mart and attended by the same results: allegedly, this went on for several years.

Keating depicts O'Toole in a Velasquez-like Renaissance pose, somewhat disheveled but still mindful of his family's noble lineage and ruminating on the loss of that revered status.

Pipe in hand (his "pipe dream") one imagines "King O'Toole" hoping for the historic injustice to his family to be made right along with the restoration of his ancestral lands to the "Clan O'Toole."

PHOTOGRAPHS



“Venturing into the landscape with her camera, she took measure of the place by focusing up at the sky and down to the earth. She attempted to capture the scale and expanse of this seemingly empty, timeless place.”

– DAVID ACTON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMELIA STEIN

David Acton
Snite Museum of Art

The vigor of contemporary Irish art is reflected in a selection of photographs from the Snite Museum collection by Amelia Stein. Born and raised in Dublin, she was trained as an optician and still maintains the family optical shop while managing to achieve her creative work. She became celebrated late in the 1970s for her photographs of the dramatic and operatic theater in Dublin. Stein took still photographs of landmark productions at the Abbey and Peacock Theatres and the Wexford Festival Opera. She worked in a traditional style, creating gelatin silver prints from film that captured key moments onstage of widely varied productions. The artist quickly revealed a talent for capturing the power of performance in pose, expression, and stagecraft. Stein's photographs were used for publicity, as records of performance and production, and as music album covers. Stein also photographed many of the performers she met, portraying the country's greatest actors, singers, musicians, and playwrights by commission and in more casual settings.

Stein used her camera for more personal reasons following the death of her parents in 1997 and 2000. While sorting through their possessions, she found that shifting her attention to making photographs of modest but meaningful objects enabled her briefly to refocus her own emotion. A selection of these photographs was exhibited at the Limerick City Gallery of Art and at the Rubicon Gallery in Dublin, and later made up the photobook *Loss and Memory* (Stoney Road Press, 2002). The shift away from the human figure demonstrated the artist's power of evocation through formal and tonal means. She explored these skills in photographs of specimens and settings of the Palm House at the National Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin in Dublin. This Victorian iron and glass conservatory, built in 1883 to accommodate a growing national collection of tropical plants, had fallen into disrepair by the turn of the twenty-first century. Over two years prior to its restoration, Stein photographed the profusion of foliage in changing light, within a grand, crumbling building. *The Palm House* (The Lilliput Press, 2011) was later published, a photobook with an introduction by horticulturalist Brendan Sayers. In 2004, Stein became the first photographer to become an Artist Member of the Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA). Two years later she was elected to the exclusive Irish artists' association Aosdána. Soon she began the big project to represent all fifty of the current RHA members, portrayed in their studios amid the tools of their practice.

Around 2010, Stein began regularly to spend time away from Dublin, in the remote northwest County Mayo. Away from the city, its people, and immediate culture, in an expansive natural environment, she discovered yet another aspect of her creative potential. Venturing into the landscape with her camera, she took measure of the place by focusing up at the sky and down to the earth. She attempted to capture the scale and expanse of this seemingly empty, timeless place. The photographs evoke the activities of bygone inhabitants in old stone fences and deserted buildings. Some of the structures were abandoned, others used for storage, animal shelters, or lambing in the springtime. The artist contrasted the buildings' silent geometry with the dynamic weather patterns reflected in the vast skies of North Mayo, with soaring clouds. Her photographs capture challenge of living in this unforgiving terrain.

Stein also turned her camera on human excavation of the natural environment in agricultural remnants and the ongoing extracting of turf. The lowland topography of Ireland, like many northern regions, is covered with blanket bogs where, over millennia, the organic material of swamplands decayed and collected to a depth of three meters. This turf can be lifted from the earth in damp, manageable blocks and set out in open stacks to dry in the sunshine

Amelia Stein
White Sable, 2012
The Big Sky Series
Gelatin silver print
Snite Museum of Art, Milly and Fritz Kaeser Endowment for Photography, 2021.021.008

and wind, and the dried bricks can be burned in the fireplace. The photographer was fascinated by the formal quality of drying stacks of turf in the landscape and the distinctive marks of excavation left by the turf-cutters.

While observing these small terrestrial forms and surfaces at Portacloy, Stein was also photographing the landscape of northwest County Mayo on a grand scale, in an extended project exhibited and published in her photographic *Precipice and Logainmneacha (Placenames)* series. The shale and schist formations along this coast were shaped in geological activity 600 million years ago and are among the oldest geological formations in Britain. Shifting tectonic plates thrust precipitous cliffs and projecting stacks along the seaboard, while cleaving deep gullies and narrow inlets. To capture the grandeur of this landscape, Stein employed all her knowledge of optics, dramaturgy, and fleeting temperament. She found however that the work was physically and emotionally challenging. A simple walk along this coast can be cold and exhausting, especially for an artist used to the refuge and comradery of the theater and studio. Even in relative comfort, the demands of creativity are wearying. Courage and determination are required to carry camera equipment to the edge of a vertiginous cliff and wait there alone in frigid wind for ideal lighting conditions. Over time Stein developed a practice—with appropriate equipment and attire, patience, and a flask of tea—of capturing the immensity and drama of this sublime landscape.

The photographer met local historians Treasa Ní Ghearraigh and Uinsíonn Mac Graith in County Mayo who shared their studies of the historic placenames in this region where the Irish language is still spoken. Drawing upon historic publications and primary research, they methodically collected the common Irish names for the geographical features in the Barony of Erris. While some names describe the character of land or sea, many others refer to centuries-old tales, events, and memories. Indeed, many of the people and events are long forgotten. Stein organized many of her photographs according to the traditional placenames, evoking their ancient magic.

Port a'Chlóidh is today a cluster of stone cottages on the North Mayo coast without a shop or pub, isolated from the hinterland by a blanket bog. In centuries gone by, a wide inlet and natural harbor made Port a'Chlóidh a productive local fishing community. From its port, fishermen ventured to sea in long, gunwale currachs to catch herring, mackerel, and salmon. Centuries ago, it seems, they named the immense rock that projects from sea outside the harbor the Point of Deliverance. When stormy weather drove the fishermen ashore, they knew that reaching the rock would assure their safe arrival at home. Like many regional placenames, this was a practical and constant reminder of the benign dependence and struggle between the residents of North Mayo and the sea.

For centuries, inhabitants of the treeless expanses of Ireland, Scotland, and other northern regions have burned turf, or peat, for cooking and heat. Quarried from the surface of low-lying bogland, turf is the decayed vegetation of ancient marshlands

Amelia Stein
The Point of Deliverance (Pointe a'Tárrthaidh), North Mayo, 2017
Gelatin silver print
14.125 x 18.125" (35.9 x 46 cm)
Snite Museum of Art, Milly and Fritz Kaeser Endowment for Photography, 2021.021.007

Amelia Stein
Hand Cut Turf, Port a'Chlóidh, North Mayo, 2015
Gelatin silver print
14.125 x 14.125" (35.9 x 35.9 cm)
Snite Museum of Art, Milly and Fritz Kaeser Endowment for Photography, 2021.021.010

accumulated over centuries. In North Mayo it reaches down to a depth of about nine feet. Turf-cutters remove the damp material from the earth in blocks using a specialized spade called a *sleán*. Tractable bricks are lifted from the bog and stacked to dry in the sunshine and wind, ready for the fireplace when dry. Stein was taken by the formal quality of drying piles of peat in the landscape and the distinctive patterns of excavation left by individual turf-cutters. She recognized this activity as a form of sculpture and an individual laborer's way of cutting, stacking, or piling excavated blocks as individual styles. This notion is reflected in her vacant photographs of the bog. The photographer also made portraits of some of the turf-cutters she met at Port a'Chlóidh, at work and at rest, which were included in her *Erris* series of photographs.

FURTHER READING

Uinsíonn Mac Graith and Treasa Ní Ghearraigh, *Logainmneacha agusOidhreacht Dhún Chaocháin i mBarúntacht Iorrais, Condae Mhaigh Eo–The Placenames and Heritage of Dún Chaocháin in the Barony of Erris, County Mayo* (Comhar Dún Chaocháin Teo, 2020).

Brendan Sayers, *The Palm House*, photographs by Amelia Stein (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2011).

Amelia Stein, *Loss and Memory*, with introduction by Cólm Tóibin, limited edition prints (Dublin: Stoney Road Press, 2002).

Amelia Stein, *Precipice*, limited edition photobook (Dublin: Blink Editions, 2015).

Amelia Stein, *RHA 2009* (Dublin: Royal Hibernian Academy, 2009).

ABOVE
Amelia Stein
Stone Barn, 2012
Archival Gelatin Silver print, edition 20
15.75 x 19.69" (40 x 50 cm)
Snite Museum of Art, Milly and Fritz Kaeser Endowment for Photography, 2021.021.009

RIGHT, TOP
Amelia Stein
The Precipice of the Fox (Fothair a'tSionnaigh), 2017
Gelatin silver print
Snite Museum of Art, Milly and Fritz Kaeser Endowment for Photography, 2021.021.002

RIGHT, BOTTOM
Amelia Stein
The Bottom End of the Big Glen (Bun a' Ghleanna Mhóir), 2017
Gelatin silver print
Snite Museum of Art, Milly and Fritz Kaeser Endowment for Photography, 2021.021.005

Amelia Stein
Hand Cut Turf, Port a'Chlóidh, North Mayo 1, 2015
Gelatin silver print
Snite Museum of Art, Milly and Fritz Kaeser
Endowment for Photography, 2021.021.012

Amelia Stein
Hand Cut Turf, Port a'Chlóidh, North Mayo 2, 2015
Gelatin silver print
Snite Museum of Art, Milly and Fritz Kaeser
Endowment for Photography, 2021.021.011

Amelia Stein
Seán Thomáis's Parlour (Parlús Sheáin Thómais), 2017
Gelatin silver print
Snite Museum of Art, Milly and Fritz Kaeser Endowment for Photography, 2021.021.006

ABOVE
Amelia Stein
The Three Hags of the Promontory (Trí Chailleachaí an Dúna), 2017
Gelatin silver print
Snite Museum of Art, Milly and Fritz Kaeser Endowment for Photography, 2021.021.001

RIGHT, TOP
Amelia Stein
The Church Steeple and the Mass Server (An Cléireach, An Chlaicheach), 2017
Gelatin silver print
Snite Museum of Art, Milly and Fritz Kaeser Endowment for Photography, 2021.021.004

RIGHT, BOTTOM
Amelia Stein
The White Promontory (Rinn Bhán), 2017
Gelatin silver print
Snite Museum of Art, Milly and Fritz Kaeser Endowment for Photography, 2021.021.003

AFTERWORD

Who Do We Say We Are? Irish Art 1922 I 2022

1922 was a pivotal year for Ireland and Irish identity: the modern Irish state was founded; James Joyce's *Ulysses* was published in Paris; and the Irish Race Congress, a conference and accompanying art exhibition, was held in the French capital.

The Snite Museum of Art's exhibition *Who Do We Say We Are? Irish Art 1922 | 2022* ties all of these threads together. It encourages us to explore identities, national and individual, of 1922 and of the current moment. The paintings and photographs themselves are a revelation. Many collaborators have joined together to examine them, to offer insights and context, and to create a rich, multisensory experience around them.

I am pleased that the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies is a partner in this endeavour. Since its founding in 1992, the Institute's mission has been to explore Irish culture—in Ireland and around the world—in all of its manifestations. In the context of *Who Do We Say We Are? Irish Art 1922 | 2022*, the Institute's role has been one of forging connections and fostering ideas.

Three of this catalogue's authors—ethnomusicologist Aileen Dillane, historian Ciaran O'Neill, and art historian William Shortall—have been visiting fellows at the Institute. In fact, it was Ciaran O'Neill who first suggested that we focus our understanding of the Irish in 1922 and Irish art today in Paris.

At the time, the Snite was preparing for its landmark show, *Looking at the Stars: Irish Art at the University of Notre Dame*. As that exhibition demonstrated, when artists, collectors, curators, scholars, and musicians consider culture and identity together, the most interesting things happen.

Of course, we at the Institute, the Snite, and the University as a whole could do nothing without the support of many benefactors. In this instance, the paintings that form the cornerstone of the exhibition are from The O'Brien Collection. John and Patricia O'Brien have been generous to Notre Dame, particularly in their relationship with the Snite. They have welcomed Irish Studies faculty, students, and visitors to the collection many times. The collection's curator, Marty Fahey, has been a force behind this relationship.

Our gratitude extends to our colleagues at the Snite Museum of Art who worked to create the exhibition and to integrate its themes into the life of the University and the community: Joseph Becherer, Director and Curator of Sculpture; Cheryl Snay and David Acton, Curators; Bridget Hoyt, Curator of Education, Academic Programs; and the many staff members of the Snite Museum.

We thank the musicians and composers behind the music that is at the very heart of this exhibit: Liz Carroll and Marty Fahey; Seamus Egan, Owen Marshall, Jenna Moynihan, and Kyle Sanna of the Seamus Egan Project; Mick O'Brien, Aoife Ní Bhriain, and Emer Mayock of the Goodman Trio; and Màiri Chaimbeul, Damien Connolly, Colman Connolly, and Liz Knowles.

We are grateful as well to principals of our valued partner, Trinity College Dublin and its Long Room Hub, for providing much of the scholarly foundation of the exhibition. Our particular thanks goes to Long Room Hub Director Eve Patten and Deputy Director Ciaran O'Neill, and postdoctoral scholar William Shortall. Trinity has created a digital exhibit of the 1922 *Exposition d'Art Irlandais*.

We will continue exploring themes from both the 1922 and the current exhibition this summer when we join our Long Room Hub partner in Dublin for the graduate-student seminar "Irish Artifice: Art, Culture and Power in Paris, 1922."

Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs has also been instrumental in collaborations around 1922 and 2022. This exhibition, as well as many activities related to our 2022 "Global Ulysses" program, are constituent elements of the Department of Foreign Affairs' program "States of Modernity: Forging Ireland in Paris 1922–2022." We are working with the Department on conferences that will touch on themes of national and artistic identity to be held at Notre Dame, and in Dublin, Paris, and Rome. We owe particular thanks to Ambassador Daniel Mulhall; Eugene Downes, Cultural Director, Department of Foreign Affairs; and to Chicago Consul General Kevin Byrne and Vice Consul Sarah Keating for their support of these initiatives.

As we emerge, hopefully, from the pandemic, we are thrilled to have this opportunity to work with all of these collaborators and to consider Irish art and music in light of what it meant and what it means to be Irish. As the novelist John Banville noted in his visit to the Institute three years ago: "Art is both consolation and illumination." In acknowledgment of the creativity and efforts of all those who made this exhibition possible, I am grateful that both consolation and illumination are here in the galleries of the Snite Museum of Art.

Patrick Griffin
Madden-Hennebry Professor of
History and Director, Keough-Naughton
Institute for Irish Studies

AFTERWORD

Sotheby's

Sotheby's has a longstanding commitment to Irish Art. Over the course of many years and thousands of Irish artworks handled, one of the great joys has been illuminating audiences and engaging collectors in Ireland's rich artistic history and seeing the appreciation grow. Irish art has often been under the radar—yet it should be of no surprise that a country of internationally renowned musicians and writers also produced great artists. The works within *Who Do We Say We Are? Irish Art 1922 | 2022* are testament to that, and the significance of such exhibitions in bringing Irish art to a wider audience cannot be underestimated. That the exhibition focuses on artists of the past and the present is particularly resonant. In our Irish art sales, we include artists working today alongside previous generations, and in doing so they reveal how the visual arts in Ireland continue dynamically and vibrantly.

Sotheby's is honored to sponsor the present exhibition, which recognizes an important landmark in modern Irish history and the critical role of the visual arts in projecting and shaping a national identity, which of course continues to this day. The O'Brien Collection forms the crux of the exhibition, passionately assembled by John and Patricia O'Brien and curated by Marty Fahey. Through their commitment and their public vision for the collection, it is an important torchlight for Irish art in America. Organized in conjunction with the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Irish government, the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies and the Snite Museum of Art at the University of Notre Dame, and Trinity College Dublin, it is our pleasure to support their aims.

Charlie Minter
Head of Irish Art, Sotheby's

Arabella Bishop
Head of Sotheby's Ireland

CONTRIBUTORS

David Acton, PhD, is the Curator of Photographs at the Snite Museum of Art at the University of Notre Dame. A well-known scholar of American prints, he has also published extensively on Old Master prints, drawings, and photographs, including the recent two-volume *History of Photography at the University of Notre Dame*.

Joseph Antenucci Becherer, PhD, is the Director and Curator of Sculpture at the Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame. An internationally recognized scholar on Modern and Contemporary sculpture, he organized exhibitions and published widely. His next book, Christ Among Us: Sculptures of Jesus from Across the History of Art is due out in autumn 2022.

Aileen Dillane is an ethnomusicologist and Senior Lecturer in Music at the Irish World Academy, University of Limerick, where she also co-directs the Centre for the Study of Popular Music and Popular Culture. She was a visiting professor at the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies, University of Notre Dame, in 2016. Much of her work focuses on Irish and Irish American cultural production in Chicago and the Midwest.

Marty Fahey is the Curator for The O'Brien Collection and the editor for this exhibit catalog. As a composer and an Irish traditional musician, he brings a curatorial and a musical perspective to the appreciation of Irish art. These dual passions find monthly expression in Notre Dame's Keough-Naughton Institute's website series "*Irish Art-Amplified*" and in the companion CD for this project: *Who Do We Say We Are? Irish Art 1922 | 2022–THE MUSIC*.

Patrick Griffin is the Thomas Moore and Judy Livingston Director of the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies at the University of Notre Dame and the Madden-Hennebry Professor of History. He explores the intersection of colonial American and early modern Irish and British history, focusing on Atlantic-wide themes and dynamics. He also examines the ways in which Ireland, Britain and America were linked during the 17th and 18th centuries. He has studied revolution and rebellion, movement and migration, and colonization and violence in each society.

James Hanley was born in Dublin in 1965. He is a graduate of UCD and the NCAD. He works in a representational style in both painting and drawing and has completed many official portraits for institutions and organizations of the state. He was elected a member of the Royal Hibernian Academy in 2000 and to Aosdána in 2008. He also served as a governor and guardian of the board of the National Gallery of Ireland for six years.

Róisín Kennedy is lecturer in the School of Art History and Cultural Policy at University College Dublin. She is co-editor of *Harry Clarke and Artistic Visions of the New Irish State* (Irish Academic Press, 2018); *Censoring Art. Silencing the Artwork* (I.B. Tauris, 2018); and *Sources in Irish Art 2. A Reader* (Cork University Press, 2021). Her monograph, *Art and the Nation State. The Reception of Modern Art in Ireland,* was published by Liverpool University Press in 2021.

Sinéad Mc Coole is an Historian and Curator of a number of award-winning exhibitions including: '*Society and Politics*' (1996) and '*Passion and Politics—The Salon Revisited*' (2010) Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane. Historical Advisor for the Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme and has curated centenary exhibitions: *Mná* 1916 (2016) and *100 Years of Women in Politics and Public Life* (2018). A member of the Expert Advisory Group on the Government of Ireland Decade of Centenaries Programme since 2012.

Ciaran O'Neill is Ussher Associate Professor in History at Trinity College Dublin, and Deputy Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub. He was the O'Donnell Visiting Professor at the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies at University of Notre Dame for the Spring 2019 term.

Billy Shortall is an art historian and is currently the Ryan Gallagher Kennedy Research Fellow on the Cuala Press Project, Schooner Foundation, Trinity College Dublin. He was a visiting fellow in the Keough-Naughton Institute, Notre Dame University, during the Fall 2021 term. His research is focused on the intersection between art and politics in post-Independent Ireland and he has completed extensive research on the 1922 World Congress of the Irish Race in Paris.

Cheryl Snay earned her PhD from Penn State University with a dissertation on the nexus of art and politics in France from 1870 through 1900. She joined the Snite Museum in 2010 where her focus on nineteenth-century French visual culture and the role of the French academy in the production and consumption of art led to the reinstallation of the European galleries. She has organized exhibitions of Old Master drawings and prints in addition to thematic presentations of paintings, most recently Looking at the Stars: Irish Art at the University of Notre Dame.

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kennys.ie
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fourcourtspress.ie
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Speech at the Paris Conference, January 1922

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> “Painting is the fairest and the finest means of communication humanity has yet found because it is the most simple.”

> “A picture which is true is the memory of a moment which once was, as it appeared to the artist. No two people see the same thing in exactly the same way.”

> “When looking at a picture we should, for the time, forget all the other pictures we have ever seen…we should just think of the picture before us, and of the scene it represents, and if the artist succeeds in making us feel that we are present looking at the scene and the feeling about it as he felt, then the picture is a success. If the feelings of the artist were free and noble then our feelings will be free and noble.”

> “The true artist has painted the picture because he wishes to hold again for his own pleasure—and for always—a moment and because he is impelled—perhaps unconsciously, but nevertheless impelled—by his human affection to pass on the moment to his fellows, and to those who come after him.”

—JACK B. YEATS