

*Captivating Brightness* **IMMA** in Connemara

CLIFDEN ARTS FESTIVAL 19-30 SEPTEMBER 2012

*Captivating Brightness*  
IMMA in Connemara

Published on the occasion of the exhibition *Captivating Brightness*,  
IMMA in Connemara, 19–30 September 2012, Kavanagh's old SuperValu,  
Clifden, Co. Galway.

*Captivating Brightness* is curated by  
Johanne Mullan, National Programmer,  
Irish Museum of Modern Art.

Front cover image:

Paul Henry - *Lake and Blue Mountains of Connemara*

Undated, Oil on canvas, 40 x 60 cm

Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art

Heritage Gift from the McClelland Collection

by Noel and Anne Marie Smyth, 2004, IMMA.1178 MCCL

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There exists a visual and artistic ‘map’ of Connemara and the west that could coexist happily with the work of the great scholar Tim Robinson, a visual map of what Richard Kearney has called ‘the fifth province’ of the mind. This exhibition is a stepping-stone on that road of artistic cartography.

The artists represented here have all been exposed to and influenced by what Seamus Heaney has called the *Captivating Brightness* that is Connemara and the west of Ireland.

Some of the works are obviously west of Ireland inspired, such as the iconic Paul Henrys and the Gerard Dillons. Other works are not overtly ‘of’ the landscape or people but the artists have blossomed through their time spent in the west and indeed this *Captivating Brightness* has given sustenance to their work and creative energies.

Patrick Scott came to Renvyle in the 1940s, Mainie Jellett spent time on the Aran Islands, Louis le Brocquy had spent summers crab fishing in Ballyconneely. The pacifist painters Kenneth Hall and Basil Rakoczi found refuge from impending war in Europe in a cottage near Leenane. Gerard Dillon, James MacIntyre and Arthur Armstrong made Inishlacken their home. Dorothy Cross literally uses the Connemara landscape and seascape in her work; Barrie Cooke’s Great Irish Elk must have roamed the Twelve Bens in prehistoric times. Even Lucien Freud could not resist capturing the boats at rest near Cashel pier.

It is the ethos of this exhibition to celebrate this artistic love affair with the west by bringing together a group of artists that have exhibited at IMMA and allowing these works to return to the place where many of them first saw the light of day.

It is to IMMA’s credit that they have allowed these works to breathe in the Connemara air and travel west to Clifden. It demonstrates the inclusive nature of this institution and its openness to giving art back to the people. Some of the works in this exhibition will be familiar and accessible, others will be challenging and new but all hold a place in our national artistic heritage and for the first time are gathered together outside Dublin in a place that played a part in their creation.

Desmond Lally  
*Arts Committee; Clifden Community Arts Festival*



CAMILLE SOUTER

*Old Wheel Gate Entrance to Estate*

1967 , Oil on paper, 50.4 x 32.8 cm,  
Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art  
Gordon Lambert Trust, 1992,  
IMMA.384 GL



CAMILLE SOUTER - *Off to the West*

1964, Oil on board, 57 x 80 cm, Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art, Heritage Gift by the Bank of Ireland from the Bank of Ireland collection, 2008, IMMA.2621



RICHARD LONG - *Kilkenny Limestone Circle*

1991, Limestone, 400cm diameter, Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art  
Purchase, 1991, IMMA.18

DOROTHY CROSS - *Saddle*

1993, Saddle, cow's udder, metal stand, 118 x 56 x 56 cm,  
Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art, Purchase,  
1994, IMMA.448





MICHAEL CRAIG-MARTIN - *Film*

1963, 16 mm Bolex transferred to DVD,  
Dimensions variable, Collection Irish Museum  
of Modern Art, Gift, the artist, 2005, IMMA.1831





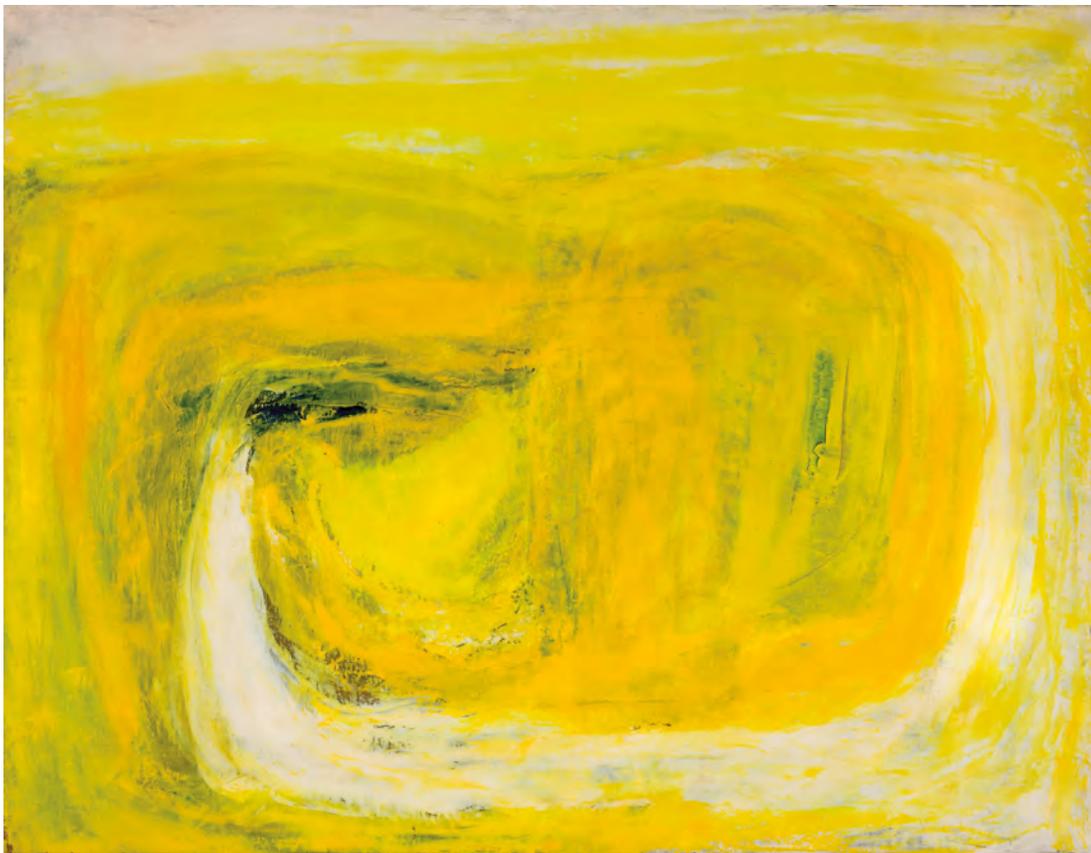
PAUL HENRY - *Killarney, Co. Kerry*

Undated, Oil on canvas, 40 x 60 cm, Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art, Heritage Gift from the McClelland Collection by Noel and Anne Marie Smyth, 2004, IMMA.1179 MCCL



PAUL HENRY - *Lake and Blue Mountains of Connemara*

Undated, Oil on canvas, 40 x 60 cm, Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art  
Heritage Gift from the McClelland Collection, by Noel and Anne Marie Smyth, 2004, IMMA.1178 MCCL



SEAN MCSWEENEY - *The White Road to the Sea*

1965, Oil on canvas, 80 x 107 cm, Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art, Heritage Gift by the Bank of Ireland from the Bank of Ireland collection, 2008, IMMA.2608



JACK BUTLER YEATS - *The Traditional Singer*

1945, Oil on board, 22,5 x 35,5 cm, Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art, Heritage Gift from the McClelland Collection by Noel and Anne Marie Smyth, 2004, IMMA.1182 MCCL

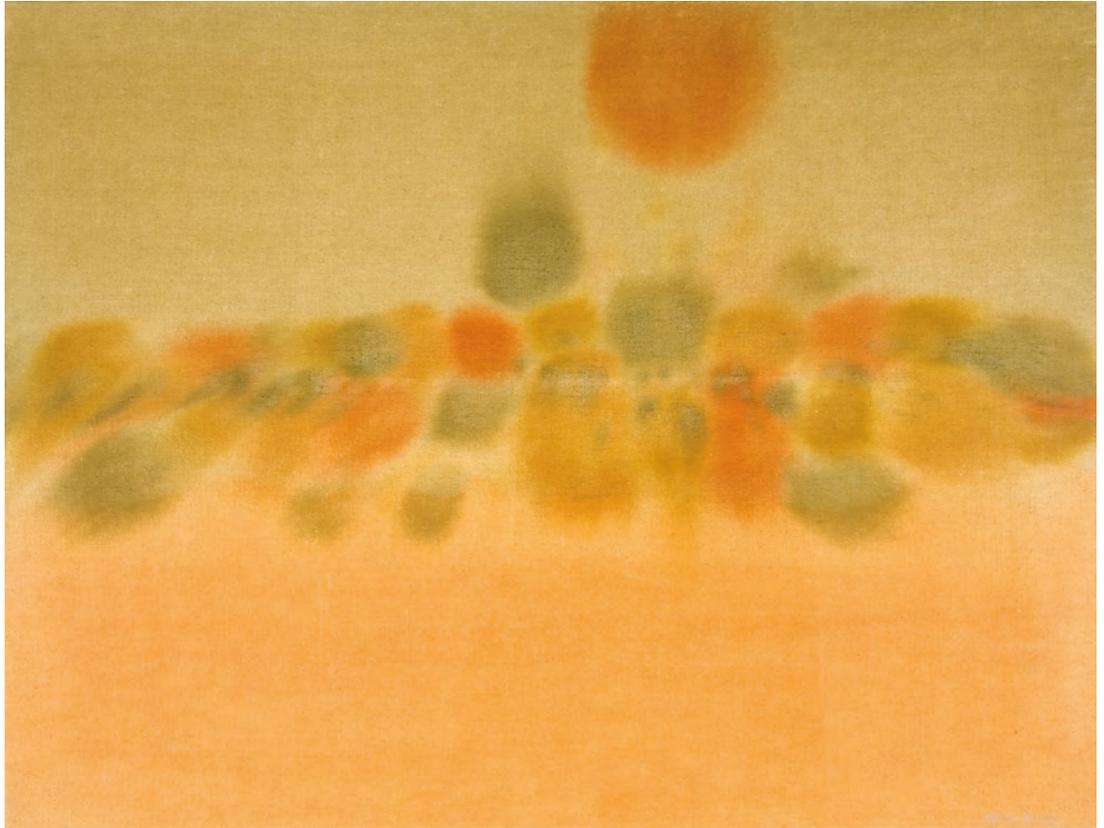


PATRICK SCOTT  
*Chinese Landscape*

1986, Tempera and gold leaf on canvas,  
130 x 130 cm, Collection Irish Museum  
of Modern Art, Donation,  
Maire and Maurice Foley,  
2000, IMMA.1485 FD

PATRICK SCOTT  
*Autumnal Landscape*

1964, Oil on canvas,  
65 x 100 cm,  
Collection Irish Museum  
of Modern Art, Heritage  
Gift by the Bank of  
Ireland from the Bank of  
Ireland collection, 2008,  
IMMA.2615





BARRIE COOKE  
*Megaceros Hibernicus*

1983, Oil on canvas,  
168.5 x 183 cm,  
Collection Irish Museum  
of Modern Art, Gordon  
Lambert Trust, 1992,  
IMMA.173 GL



GERARD DILLON  
*Old Man and Dog*

c. 1950, Oil on board, 18 x 38 cm, Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art, Heritage Gift by the Bank of Ireland from the Bank of Ireland collection, 2008, IMMA.2601

## Acknowledgements

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The title *Captivating Brightness* is taken from a poem *Ballynahinch Lake* by Seamus Heaney. First published by Ballynahinch Castle in 1999 and later included in *Electric Light* published by Faber and Faber in 2001. We are grateful to Seamus Heaney for allowing us to use his words.

We would also like to thank the exhibition team from Clifden Community Arts Festival and IMMA: John Durning, Visual Arts Coordinator; Des Lally; Brendan Flynn; Eamonn McLoughlin; Christina Kennedy, Senior Curator: Head of Collections; Johanne Mullan, National Programmer; Georgie Thompson, Assistant Curator, Collections; Nuria Carballiera, Registrar, Collections; Helen O'Donoghue, Senior Curator: Head of Education and Community Programmes; Barry Kehoe, Mediator Team; Cillian Hayes, Rob Dunne, Joe Stanley and the IMMA technical team.

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