

Press Release Crawford Art Gallery

22 February 2012

The Crawford Art Gallery is delighted to announce the donation by the State of thirty-nine works by Irish artists to the Gallery's permanent collection. This wonderful news for the Crawford results from a recent decision by AIB to transfer key works from its art collection to the ownership of the State. Minister of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Jimmy Deenihan confirmed yesterday that the works will now form part of the Crawford collection: "I am delighted to mark this occasion of the donation by AIB of thirty-nine of the finest works from its corporate art collection to the State, to add to the National Collection. I have decided that those works will be held by the Crawford Gallery, Cork."

Crawford chairman John R. Bowen added his congratulations "Acquired by one of Ireland's leading financial institutions over many years, the AIB Art Collection is more than a group of paintings and sculptures originally intended to enhance bank premises. From the beginning a view and a vision of Irish life and culture that extended beyond financial matters was evident in the bank's ethos."

Gallery director Peter Murray said that this donation marks an important step in the development of the Crawford Art Gallery as a National Cultural Institution, and as one of the foremost museums of Irish art. The works being donated all date from either the late nineteenth century or the twentieth century. Among the thirty-nine works are three paintings by Jack B. Yeats, including his masterpiece *The Race on Hy Brazil*. There are paintings by Paul Henry, Gerard Dillon, William Leech, John Luke, Maurice MacGonigal, Walter Osborne, Sean Keating, Mainie Jellett, Patrick Collins and William Crozier. "The donation fills significant gaps in the Gallery's permanent collection, particularly in respect of the fine William Scott, and the Roderic O'Connor *Red Rocks at Pont Aven*, a wonderful Post-Impressionist painting." An exhibition of the works being donated will be opened by Minister Deenihan on March 5th, at the Crawford Art Gallery.

Minister Deenihan adds "AIB and the State have now embarked on a new path of partnership with regard to this beautiful collection. In addition to the donation by AIB of the thirty-nine works, it has also agreed to make available additional pieces from its collection for loan by the State to publicly funded galleries. At my request this will be done through the aegis of the Crawford Gallery, Cork. Today's decision will ensure that this collection can be viewed and appreciated by the public."

The Chairman of AIB, David Hodgkinson confirmed the good news: “We have worked with Minister Deenihan and his office with a view to ensuring that the pieces of historic and cultural interest are preserved and made more accessible to the Irish public. By donating significant artworks to the State and making the wider collection available for loan, we are achieving these important objectives. The development of the arts in Ireland has always been important to AIB. We are delighted that a wider audience will now have an opportunity of seeing some of our best loved artworks on exhibition in the Crawford Art Gallery in Cork.”

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