



**Image:** Harry Clarke, *The Fall of the House of Usher* (detail), 1923. Collection Crawford Art Gallery, Cork.

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## **Other Worlds: Harry Clarke Watercolours**

14 December 2022 – 19 March 2023

Crawford Art Gallery's annual celebration of Harry Clarke returns!

For a limited time only, visitors are invited to explore visionary artist Harry Clarke's unique imagination in OTHER WORLDS, a new exhibition at Cork's Crawford Art Gallery.

Renowned for his book illustrations and stained-glass works, Clarke had an extraordinary capacity for conjuring images, often from literary sources, and bringing often romantic or macabre worlds into being.

Curator of the exhibition, Dr Michael Waldron, says: "Harry Clarke was a consummate world-builder and storyteller in the sense that, through his extraordinary work, he visually realised the fictional worlds of John Keats, Edgar Allan Poe, and others."

'If we look back a century,' Waldron continues, '1923 was a busy year for Clarke. He had accepted a commission by Harold Jacob (Jacob's Biscuits) to create *The Eve of St Agnes* stained-glass window. The artist's watercolour studies for these are featured in the exhibition. In that year, he was also

making illustrations for Poe's *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* and the exhibition features those for *Marie Rogêt* and *The Fall of the House of Usher*.

It is unsurprising that, on 28 May 1923, Clarke wrote to the then Crawford Municipal School of Art declining an invitation to deliver a lecture 'owing to pressure on his time.' A year later, the Gibson Bequest Committee agreed to buy the 23 watercolours and illustrations now featured in the current exhibition.

In addition to Harry Clarke, OTHER WORLDS features the work of artists Pauline Bewick, Stephen Brandes, Salvador Dalí, Jan de Fouw, Stanley William Hayter, Brianna Hurley, William Otway McCannell, Xaver Schilling, and Noreen Spillane.

Dalí's coloured lithograph, *Four Dreams of Paradise: Romantic* (c.1972), and *Fourteen Steps to Nowhere* (1982) by the late Pauline Bewick complement Clarke's journeys into fictional worlds.

At a time when we are tentatively poised on the cusp of the 'metaverse' – an immersive virtual world – this exhibition draws together the work of several artists to consider how visual art participates in world-building.

## **ENDS**

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### **About Harry Clarke:**

Harry Clarke (1889-1931) was a remarkably talented and distinctive book illustrator and stained-glass artist. His contributions to the Irish Arts and Craft Movement, as well as the Celtic Revival, have ensured his lasting reputation, while his extraordinary handling of colour and minute, often grotesque detail has won him widespread acclaim. The exhibition coincides with Clarke's anniversary on 6 January.

Clarke's watercolour studies for his famed *Eve of St Agnes* stained-glass window (now in the collection of Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin) were purchased from the artist in 1924 through the Gibson Bequest Fund, a generous act of philanthropy made to Crawford Art Gallery in 1919. They are augmented in the collection by 5 original book illustrations drawn from the works of Edgar Allan Poe and Robert Graves, and Clarke's earliest known works in stained glass: three prize-winning panels from 1910-1911. He would win his first major commission, the Honan Chapel (University College Cork), just a few years later.

### **More about Crawford Art Gallery**

Crawford Art Gallery is an Irish national cultural institution, dedicated to contemporary and historic visual art, located in a significant heritage building in the heart of Cork city. Offering a vibrant and dynamic programme of temporary exhibitions, it also houses a collection of national importance which tells a compelling story of Cork and Ireland over the last three centuries.

Originally built in 1724 as the city's Custom House, the Gallery is home to the famous **Canova Casts**, gifted to Cork two centuries ago. Featured in the gallery's collection of more than 3,000 objects are contemporary artists Aideen Barry, Gerard Byrne, Maud Cotter, Dorothy Cross, Tacita Dean, and Sean Scully as well as much-loved works by Irish artists James Barry, Harry Clarke, Mainie Jellett, Seán Keating, Daniel Maclise, Norah McGuinness, Edith Somerville, and Jack B. Yeats.

An oasis of calm and tranquillity, Crawford Art Gallery is open seven days a week, free to enter, and a must-see for locals and tourists alike. Welcoming over 265,000 visitors annually, the Gallery recently opened **The Green Room at the Crawford** café, serving the best of local Cork and Irish produce, treated with a light hand by chefs committed to simplicity and flavour.

## **Opening Hours**

Monday–Saturday 10:00am–5:00pm

Late opening Thursdays until 8:00pm

Sundays / Bank Holidays 11:00am – 4:00pm

Entry Free

## **Free Tours**

Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays 2:00pm

Thursdays 6:30pm

*This project is in support of the Night-Time Economy and funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.*



**An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,  
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán**  
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