

Press Release 03/12/20

Citizen Nowhere | Citizen Somewhere: The Imagined Nation

Until 5 April 2020

Supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Art, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media under the Decade of Centenaries 2012-2023 initiative

New major Exhibition at Crawford Art Gallery featuring national and international artists highlights the legacy of Terence MacSwiney's 74 day hunger strike and examines the idea of nation as an imaged state.

25 October 2020 is the centenary of the death of Terence MacSwiney (1879-1920), Lord Mayor of Cork, playwright and politician following his arrest on 12 August 1920 for being in possession of a police cipher.

Citizen Nowhere | Citizen Somewhere: The Imagined Nation focuses on the international legacy of his hunger strike and death, and examines the idea of nation as an imagined state to which MacSwiney's own essays, *Principles of Freedom*, aspired within an international context.

The exhibition begins with an illustrated timeline displaying local, national and international social and political crosscurrents in the lead up to and duration of MacSwiney's hunger strike. His traumatic dedication to the Irish Republican cause gave rise to mass demonstrations of support for MacSwiney and an independent Ireland in many cities across the world, including Barcelona, Buenos Aires, London and New York.

Providing an overview - which is by no means exhaustive – the display highlights some of the many individuals and countries which MacSwiney's principles and legacy inspired and influenced to stand against the rule of empire and/or assert independence, including Bhagat Singh (India), Guo Morou (China) and Marcus Garvey (West Indies & United States of America).

Inspired by MacSwiney's *Principles of Freedom*, published posthumously in 1921, and through the work of contemporary artists **Citizen Nowhere | Citizen Somewhere: The Imagined Nation** will also proffer the idea of nation as an imagined state. Elaine Hoey's video animation *Animated Positions* (2019) references 19th-century European nationalist paintings and explores the role of art in the portrayal of jingoistic nation building. Alban Muja's evocative and resonant film, *Family Album* (2019), involves individuals who were the unaware subjects of famous photography documentation during the Kosovo war (1998-1999). Muja sensitively interviews them about the circumstances of these photographs as well as how they affected the next years of their lives.

Anthony Haughey's project *Citizen* (2013) documents his continued working relationships with individuals and families who seek citizenship amongst the incongruous setting of an old holiday camp under the Irish Government's controversial Direct Provision strategy. Whilst two hundred years after it was painted, Rita Duffy re-imagines Théodore Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* (1818-19), within a striking prophetic context titled *Advent of the Inevitable* (2019) and she also offers insights to contemporary socio-politics in her acerbic series *The Emperor's New Clothes* (2020).

The works - digital video, installation, paintings, prints and photographs - explore the complexities of being a citizen of nowhere, under direct rule or as a refugee, to being a citizen of somewhere after liberation or the hope of achieving citizenship. As Hammad Nassar¹ commented recently in Cork, 'our current political discourse of citizen of nowhere and citizen of somewhere can be a poisonous and a troubling dichotomy'.

The exhibition also features David Goldblatt's *T.J. Johannesburg Photographs* series, John Lavery's iconic *Southwark Cathedral, London* (1920), perhaps for the first time exhibited in Cork, and works by Willie Doherty, Öyvind Fahlström, Gustave Metzger, Brian Mac Domhnaill, Séamus Murphy, Joan Miró, Li Qi and Liu Zemian alongside documentation, reproductions and source material drawn from Cork Public

¹ Hammad Nassar (Senior Research Fellow, Paul Mellon Centre, London) *Create National Networking Day*, Keynote Lecture, 27 September, 2019

Museum, The Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin, National Library of Ireland, TATE, the Victoria & Albert Museum, London and the Crawford Art Gallery Collection.

Terence MacSwiney's hunger strike was set against the backdrop of the democratic concept of 'self-determination' advocated by President Woodrow Wilson (USA) towards the end of the First World War. The international impact of MacSwiney's plight was such that some of the main protagonists, including MacSwiney's sisters, Mary (1872-1942) and Annie (1883-1954), alongside Art O'Briain (1872-1949) - Daíl Éireann Envoy to London, 1919-1920 and founder of the Irish Self-Determination League in London - were at the forefront of the international propaganda campaign to propagate the ideal of the independent Irish citizen. Indeed, MacSwiney's wife, Muriel MacSwiney (1892-1982), was also appropriated by the political machine, during her husband's strike and immediately after his death, as an advocate of the Republican movement. Her international position was such that she became the first woman to be awarded the Freedom of New York City in December 1920. Shown within this context Sir John Lavery's (1856-1941) painting of Muriel MacSwiney *The Widow, Mrs Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayoress of Cork* (1922) is a powerful portrait of a resilient woman.

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Notes to the editor:

New protocol for visitors <https://crawfordartgallery.ie/visit/>
Exhibitions currently on display <https://crawfordartgallery.ie/exhibitions/>
For additional imagery please contact marketing@crawfordartgallery.ie
Interview also available on request

Social Media:

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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 Customs House, the Gallery is home to the famous Canova Casts, gifted to Cork two centuries ago. Featured in the gallery's collection of 3,000 objects are contemporary artists 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 boasts an award-winning Café in stunning surroundings, serving fresh local produce for which Cork is famous.

Opening Hours

Monday–Saturday 10.00am–5.00pm

Late opening Thursdays until 8.00pm

Sundays and Bank Holidays

Gallery: 11am - 4pm

Entry Free



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media