

## **In Ireland, over 3,000 artworks are on the move**

For the attention of news desks, cultural editors:

In Ireland, over 3,000 historically important artworks are looking for a temporary home as the national art gallery that houses them is set to undergo reconstruction.

This would make a fantastic TV, print or online news segment for EU-facing current affairs programming and is a story that shines a light not only on one of contemporary Europe's smaller nations, but also on the history of a country that claimed Independence from British rule just over 100 years ago.

Cork City's Crawford Art Gallery is the only one of Ireland's National Cultural Institutions to be located outside of Dublin, meaning that it can purchase artworks for the National Collection.

But it's about to undergo an ambitious overhaul: a €29 million "once in a lifetime" renovation and extension that will see six stories added to the skyline above the original building, which dates to 1724.

This means that the gallery's treasured artworks, including some works of extreme political and historical significance, will need to be moved into storage for a period of two years.

Gallery curators and conservation staff will be working to ensure the safe, secure, climate-controlled storage of these rare works, providing a unique opportunity for filmed interviews and news pieces of relevance to European audiences.

The Crawford collection ranges from eighteenth-century Irish and European painting and sculpture through to contemporary video installations. At the heart of the collection is a collection of Greek and Roman sculpture casts, the so-called Canova Casts, brought to Cork in 1818 from the Vatican Museum in Rome.

Its home to paintings by important Irish 20<sup>th</sup> century figures including the painter Jack B. Yeats, brother of famed poet W. B. Yeats and described by Oskar Kokoschka as the 'greatest painter in the world.

Other artworks of note in the collection include: Sean Keating's *Men of the South*, painted at the beginning of the Irish State with real IRA men as models, *The Red Rose* by John Lavery, depicting his wife Lady Hazel Lavery who graced Irish banknotes 1928 until the 1970s and is rumoured to have had an affair with Michael Collins, one of Ireland's early rebel leaders. 21<sup>st</sup> century additions include photographer Murdo McCleod's famously chilling portrait of Cork-born international soccer star Roy Keane.

Crawford Art Gallery has been visited by the current King of England when he was the Prince of Wales in a visit in 2018, and has [hosted British historian Mary Beard](#) who filmed for her series *The Shock of the Nude*.

The work of decanting, packing and sending into storage all Crawford Art Gallery's artworks begins in earnest in spring of 2024, with building works set to start in September 2024. So there's plenty of time to share this amazing story with the world.

A folder of images is available at the link below and you can read more about Crawford Art Gallery's capital redevelopment plan [here](#).

Gallery director Mary McCarthy and expert curatorial staff are on hand for interviews and tours.

[www.crawfordartgallery.ie](http://www.crawfordartgallery.ie) Crawford Art Gallery, Emmet Place, Cork, Ireland.

Dyane Hanrahan Marketing & Communications Manager

E: [dyanehanrahan@crawfordartgallery.ie](mailto:dyanehanrahan@crawfordartgallery.ie) T +353 (0) 21 4907856 M +353 (0) 86 8278151

Ellie O'Byrne Press Officer

E: [press@crawfordartgallery.ie](mailto:press@crawfordartgallery.ie) M +353 (0)87125 8446

**Notes to Editor:** for extra images please click [here](#).

### **About Cork City:**

Cork City is the Republic of Ireland's second city, located on the south coast in the world's second largest natural harbour after Sydney harbour.

Known in Ireland as "The Rebel City" and ranked in the top 25 best cities to live in in 2023 by the international research and data website Numbeo, Cork was European Capital of Culture 2005 and has a fascinating history of resistance, rebellion and colonisation, most especially in the War of Independence against British rule that led to the founding of the Irish State in 1922.

### **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 over 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 tranquility, Crawford Art Gallery is open seven days a week, free to enter, and a must-see for locals and tourists alike.

**Opening Hours**

Monday–Saturday 10.00am–5.00pm Late opening Thursdays until 8.00pm Sundays and Bank Holidays Gallery: 11am - 4pm Entry Free

**Tours**

Free Tours Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays 2pm Free Tours on Thursday 6.30 pm . This project is in support of the Night-Time Economy and funded by The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

**Café: The Green Room**

A classic old world dining room in Cork’s cultural epicentre that mixes traditional food offerings alongside contemporary trends.

Open 7 days a week with opening times on [www.crawfordartgallery.ie](http://www.crawfordartgallery.ie)