

# Crawford Art Gallery



Marianne Keating *Land Path of Migration 3*

Press Release 24/06/2019

## **New film screenings at Crawford Art Gallery address the complex hidden histories of the Irish diaspora in the Caribbean**

In her multi-media installation *The Ocean Between* (21 June – 22 September), Marianne Keating addresses the complex hidden histories of the Irish diaspora in the Caribbean. In reconstructing the archival traces of the movement of Irish indentured labour from 1835 to 1842, and their resulting legacies in contemporary Jamaica and Barbados, she gives the previously muted or silent voices presence and purpose. Within the existing current cultural and political histories of Caribbean elite whiteness, Keating identifies an urgency of inserting the 'Irish whites' and 'poor whites' into existing accounts of dominated colonial 'Other'.

Tracing the migration of the Irish from ports including Cork, Limerick and Belfast, the Crawford Art Gallery itself is recalled as a site of departure through its earlier role as the Cork Customs House dating till the 1830s. Excavating the official government documents at the Irish, English, Jamaican and the Barbadian National Archives, alongside the on-site investigation of other remaining visual and material traces, Marianne Keating accumulates overlooked traces and disregarded accounts.

By analysing the gaps within the 'dominate master' narrative and the non-sequential manner in which its respective archive is navigated, Keating's research can move forward and backwards between time and place, and allows the gaps in one archive to be informed by that of another. Her extensive multi-disciplinary approach of the examination of oral, personal images and ignored or refuted histories, questions the legitimacy of the archive and falsification within the recorded image and text.

Landlessness (2017) is a dual screen film in which one video tells of the economic hardships of the Catholic Irish under British Colonial Rule and their resulting migration to Jamaica whilst the second video, which runs concurrently, explores the reason for the recruitment of indentured labourers and the resulting movement and arrival of the Irish in Jamaica and settlement. Keating juxtaposes images of Caribbean lush landscapes with explicit text narratives of Irish indentured labourers.

In *Better Must Come – A New Jamaica* (2019), Keating focuses on the legacies of Irish indentured labourers in contemporary Jamaica. Following the trajectory of Irish in Jamaica, this film focuses on two cousins Norman Washington Manley and Alexander Bustamante whose grandfathers worked on King Valley Estate, Jamaica. Both men would become the driving forces in Jamaican Politics. Norman Manley co-founded the Peoples National Party (PNP) and became the Premier of Jamaica negotiating Independence from Colonial Rule in 1962. Whilst Alexander Bustamante founded the Jamaican Labour Party (the JLP) and became the first Prime Minister of Jamaica after Independence. Manley's son Michael continued his father's legacy and became the leader of the PNP and Prime Minister of Jamaica from 1972 to 1980, and again from 1989 to 1992. This two-party political system is still in existence and the legacies of these political figures on contemporary Jamaica is still felt today.

In other work created specifically for this exhibition, Keating focuses her attention on the subaltern 'poor whites' community on the East Coast of Barbados, a minority locally well-known although historically under-represented. Believed to be descendants of indentured labourers or servants – both voluntary and involuntary from Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales - since their arrival in the seventeenth century, the creolisation process now makes it difficult to determine their exact origins. Little research has been done regarding the divisions amongst the whites in the Caribbean where the only unification of the white elite and the poor whites was that of race. In order to confirm the white elite's 'superiority on the island, the elite white planter needed to dis-associate with the other whites on the island as the colony struggled to reconcile the socio-economic positioning of the 'poor whites' and the assumption of white elite's superiority on the island.

Marianne Keating's ongoing research in the Caribbean has enabled her to access records only accessible in Barbadian and Jamaican National Archives alongside onsite investigation in the "vanishing villages" of Barbados and in the communities in Jamaica villages where these descendants still live.

Keating's work determines new critical narratives around the Irish diaspora in response to the dominant 'master narratives' of Western nationhood, thus rewriting the histories of the dominated 'other'.

The *Ocean Apart* by Marianne Keating is the first project of a new artist-directed programme which aims to support artists to pursue their current research interests that explore complex Irish histories and identities and connect with audiences through a collaboration with the Crawford Art Gallery's site, collection and location. This annual initiative aims to platform the development of an artist's career and its often intrinsic relationship with the institution.

MARIANNE KEATING The Ocean Between  
21 June–22 September 2019  
Preview: 5:30 pm, Thursday 20 June  
Artist Talk 1pm, Friday 21 June

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**More about Marianne Keating :**

Marianne Keating is an Irish artist currently based between Ireland and London. Marianne Keating is a PhD candidate in the Visual & Material Culture and the Contemporary Art Research Centre, at Kingston University, London UK.

Recent exhibitions include Another Land: Experimental Visualisations of Place, Stanley Picker Gallery/ Kingston Museum, London (2019); New Contemporaries, South London Gallery and as part of the Liverpool Biennial; Arrivants (2018): Art and Migration in the Anglophone Caribbean World, Barbados Museum and Historical Society, Bridgetown, Barbados; Between Us And, Embassy Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland (2018). Forthcoming exhibitions include a solo exhibition at Rampa Gallery, Porto, Portugal (2019).

**More about Crawford Art Gallery :**

Located in the heart of Cork city and free to enter, Crawford Art Gallery, is home to a collection of national importance and is a must see for locals and tourists alike. Welcoming a quarter of a million visitors a year the Gallery is open seven days a week, free to enter and delights in all visitors young and old.

Crawford Art Gallery, as one of the oldest collecting institutions in Ireland, is committed to presenting and caring for its national collection for this and future generations, and continue to conserve the works in the collection.

Originally built in 1724 as the city's customs house, when Cork was one of Europe's most important trading ports.

Crawford Art Gallery is home to an expansive collection featuring works from the 18th century to present which are of key national importance and tell a compelling story of place and history. It is also home to the famous 'Canova Casts', which were gifted to the city of Cork nearly two centuries ago. Well-known and loved works by 20th century Irish artists such as Seán Keating, Harry Clarke, John Lavery, Jack B. Yeats, Norah McGuinness, Mainie Jellet, Gerard Dillon and Muriel Brandt feature in the gallery's historic collection, while the modern collection features work by contemporary artists such as Eilis O'Connell, Gerard Byrne, Dorothy Cross, Maud Cotter and Hughie O'Donoghue. The Gallery hosts numerous temporary exhibitions by local, national and international artists showcasing visual art, film.

[www.crawfordartgallery.ie](http://www.crawfordartgallery.ie)

Monday–Saturday 10.00am–5.00pm  
Late opening Thursdays until 8.00pm  
(2nd floor closes at 16:45pm)

Sundays and Bank Holidays  
Gallery: 11am - 4pm  
Café: 11am - 4pm

### **Learn and Explore**

For details on the Learn & Explore programme guided tours, access and education, please visit our website: [www.crawfordartgallery.ie](http://www.crawfordartgallery.ie)



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