

## **SU407 INTRODUCTION TO ART IN IRELAND (3 Credits)**

**COURSE OBJECTIVE:** This course will trace the development of Irish art from Newgrange to the 2009 Venice Biennale. In the first part of the course students will learn to appraise and evaluate a broad spectrum of prehistoric art and the outstanding artistic achievements of the 'Golden Age' of Irish art; the Book of Kells, the Tara Brooch and Irish High Crosses. The second half of the course will focus on how the 'rediscovery' of this early artistic legacy informed later artists, culminating in the 'Celtic Revival' of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries before moving on to the development of modern art in Ireland, examining the work of Jack Yeats, Mainie Jellett, and many others. The course will conclude with an overview of trends in contemporary Irish art. A key question underlying the various strands of the course will be the development of a distinctly Irish cultural identity in the visual arts and the influence of international trends on Irish artists throughout the ages.

### **COURSE OUTLINE:**

#### Week 1

Introductory lecture  
Passage Grave Art  
Bronze Age Gold Work  
FIELD SEMINAR: NATIONAL MUSEUM & NATIONAL GALLERY

#### Week 2

La Tène Art: The Earliest Art of the Celts  
Irish Art AD 300-500: the Iron Age to Early Christian Transition  
The Golden Age of Irish Art  
The Work of Angels: Early Christian Manuscript Art

#### Week 3

Celtic High Crosses: Ornament, Symbolic Significance and Iconography  
Turning Points in Irish Art  
The Celtic Revival: Motifs and Symbols  
The Celtic Revival: People and Landscape

#### Week 4

The Irish Impressionists and the Belle Epoque  
Jack Yeats  
Realism, Nationalism and the West

#### Week 5

Mainie Jellett and the Modernists  
Post War Trends and Contemporary Art  
ASSESSMENT

### **COURSE TEXTS:**

#### **Passage Grave Art**

Jones, C. 2007. *Temples of Stone: Exploring the Megalithic Tombs of Ireland*. Dublin  
Stout, G. 2002. *Newgrange and the Bend of the Boyne*. Cork.  
Twohig, E. Shee. 1981. *The Megalithic Art of Western Europe*. Oxford.

#### **Bronze Age gold work**

Cahill, M. 1983. Irish Prehistoric Goldworking. In M. Ryan (ed.), *Treasures of Ireland. Irish Art 300BC – 1500 AD*, 18-23. Dublin.  
Eogan, G. 1994. *The Accomplished Art: Gold and Gold-working in Britain and Ireland during the Bronze Age (c. 2300-650 BC)*. London.

#### **La Tène Art: the earliest art of the Celts**

Jope, E.M. 2000. *Early Celtic Art in the British Isles*. Oxford.  
Megaw, R and Megaw, V. 1989. *Celtic Art. From its beginnings to the Book of Kells*. London.

### **Irish Art AD 300-500: the Iron Age to Early Christian transition**

Gavin, F. And Newman, C. 2007. Notes on Insular Silver in the Military Style. *Journal of Irish Archaeology XVI*, 1-10.

Newman, C. 1995. The Iron Age to Early Christian Transition: The Evidence from Dress fasteners. In C. Bourke (ed.) *From the Isles of the North: Early Medieval Art in Ireland and Britain*. 17-25.

### **The Golden Age of Irish art**

Harbison, P. 1999. *The Golden Age of Irish Art: The Medieval Achievement, 600-1200*. Dublin.

Youngs, S. (ed.) *The Work of Angels, Masterpieces of Celtic Metalwork, 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries AD*. London

### **The Work of Angels: Early Christian Manuscript Art**

Henderson, G. 1987. *From Durrow to Kells: The Insular Gospel Books 650 – 800*. London.

Meehan, B. 1994. *The Book of Kells*. London

Meehan, B. 1996. *The Book of Durrow: A Medieval Masterpiece at Trinity College, Dublin*. Dublin.

### **Celtic High Crosses: ornament, symbolic significance and iconography**

Harbison, P. 1992. *The High Crosses of Ireland, an Iconographical and Photographic Study*. 3 vols. Bonn.

Roe, H. 1965. The Irish High Cross: Morphology and Iconography. *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 95, 213-226.

### **General Texts**

Edwards, N. 1996. *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Ireland*. Dublin.

Waddell, J. 2000. *The Prehistoric Archaeology of Ireland*. Galway.

Wallace, P.F. and Ó Floinn, R. (eds.) 2002. *Treasures of the National Museum of Ireland*. Dublin.

### **Turning points in Irish art**

Arnold, B. *A Concise History of Irish Art* London: Thames and Hudson, 1969; Chapters 2, 3, 4

Duffy, P.J. "The changing rural landscape 1750-1850: Pictorial evidence" in Gillespie, R. and Kennedy, B.P. (eds.) *Ireland: Art into History* Dublin: Town House, 1994.

### **The Celtic Revival: Motifs and Symbols.**

Sheehy, J. *The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past: The Celtic Revival, 1830-1930* London: Thames and Hudson, 1980. Chapters 1, 5, 9

### **The Celtic Revival: People and Landscape.**

Sheehy, J. *The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past: The Celtic Revival, 1830-1930* London: Thames and Hudson, 1980. Chapters 2, 3, 4, 6

Bourke, M. "Rural Life in Pre-Famine Connacht: A visual document" in Gillespie, R. and Kennedy, B.P. (eds.) *Ireland: Art into History* Dublin: Town House, 1994.

### **The Irish Impressionists and the Belle Epoque**

Campbell, J. *The Irish Impressionists: Irish Artists in France and Belgium, 1850-1914* Dublin: National Gallery of Ireland, 1984.

### **Jack Yeats**

Arnold, B. *Jack Yeats* London: Yale University Press, 1998.

### **Realism, Nationalism and the West**

Bhreathnach-Lynch, S. "Framing Ireland's History: Art, Politics and Representation 1914-1929" in Christen Steward, J. (ed.) *When Time Began to Rant and Rage: Figurative Painting from Twentieth-century Ireland* London: Merrell Holberton Publishers, 1998.

Kennedy B.P. "The Irish Free State 1922-49: A Visual Perspective" in Gillespie, R. and Kennedy, B.P. (eds.) *Ireland: Art into History* Dublin: Town House, 1994.

Sheehy, J. *The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past: The Celtic Revival, 1830-1930* London: Thames and Hudson, 1980. Chapter 10

### **Maine Jellett and the Modernists**

Hartigan, M. "Irish Women painters and the introduction of modernism" in Christen Steward, J. (ed.) *When Time Began to Rant and Rage: Figurative Painting from Twentieth-century Ireland* London: Merrell Holberton Publishers, 1998.  
Walker, D. *Modern Art in Ireland* Dublin: Lilliput, 1997.

### **Post War Trends and Contemporary Irish Art**

Dunne, A. "Politics" in Christen Steward, J. (ed.) *When Time Began to Rant and Rage: Figurative Painting from Twentieth-century Ireland* London: Merrell Holberton Publishers, 1998.

McGonagle, D. *Irish Art Now: From the Poetic to the Political* London: Merrell Holberton, 1999

Murray, P. "Irish painting, tradition, and post-war internationalism" in Christen Steward, J. (ed.) *When Time Began to Rant and Rage: Figurative Painting from Twentieth-century Ireland* London: Merrell Holberton Publishers, 1998.

### **General Texts**

Arnold, B. *A Concise History of Irish Art* London: Thames and Hudson, 1969

Bourke, M. and Bhreathnach-Lynch, S. *Discover Irish art at the National Gallery of Ireland: A reference book on Irish art* Dublin: National Gallery of Ireland, 1999.

Crookshank, A. and the Knight of Glin, *The Painters of Ireland, c. 1660-1920* London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1978.

Snoddy, T. *Dictionary of Irish artists: 20th century* Dublin: Merlin Publishing, 2002.

**All books are available in the University's library. A compilation of relevant articles will also be made available at course commencement.**

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR CREDITS:**

1. Attendance and participation at all the scheduled lectures **and** seminars.
2. One essay of 1,500 words minimum on subject assigned by the course tutors.
3. Written examination of the material covered in the scheduled lectures **and** seminars.

### **COURSE PROFESSORS:**

#### **Fiona Gavin**

Fiona Gavin was educated at the National University of Ireland, Galway. Her field of post-graduate research and publication focuses specifically on insular ornamental metalwork AD 300-500. Her research topics include iconography and symbolism in early Insular art, the creation and socio-cultural performance of prehistoric art and the early use of silver in native metalwork.

#### **Jenny Mc Carthy M.A.**

Jenny Mc Carthy is a graduate of UCD, where she studied art history and philosophy. She holds an M.A in Irish Studies and is currently completing her doctoral thesis *Jack B Yeats and John Sloan: Ireland and America* at the Centre for Irish Studies, NUI Galway Her research interests include nineteenth- and twentieth-century Irish art, the illustrations of Jack Yeats, images of the Irish in travel literature and crosscurrents in early twentieth-century Irish and American art.