

QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY

For immediate release



Ireland's Great Hunger Museum at Quinnipiac University acquires Jack B. Yeats' 'Derrynane'

Hamden, Conn. – Jan. 17, 2014 – [Ireland's Great Hunger Museum at Quinnipiac University](#) recently acquired the landscape painting "Derrynane" by Jack Butler Yeats, one of the best known Irish painters of the 20th century, and it is currently on view at the museum.

"We are thrilled to have Jack Yeats' remarkable landscape "Derrynane" join the Museum's growing collection of Irish paintings," said Grace Brady, executive director of the museum. "It is fitting that a work of such historical significance and quiet beauty find its permanent home at Ireland's Great Hunger Museum. We look forward to sharing it with our visitors today and for generations to come."

Yeats' biographer Hilary Pyle described "Derrynane" as "the most important landscape painting of Yeats' middle period, depicting Derrynane, Co. Kerry, from memory."

Derrynane, a village in County Kerry, Ireland, located on the Iveragh peninsula, has been described as "a melancholy spectacle" located near Derrynane Abbey, the home of famous Irish Liberator Daniel O'Connell.

"Jack B. Yeats stands head and shoulders above other Irish artists of his time," said Niamh O'Sullivan, curator. "When Yeats stood in front of his easel in 1927 to paint "Derrynane," he knew this was no ordinary place, but a charged landscape whose associations with O'Connell were rife with contradictions."

A constitutional politician who eschewed violence in achieving his political ends, O'Connell's legacy lent itself to the parliamentary politics of the new Irish state, attempting to distance itself from the republican violence of the War of Independence. Yeats, however, remained a republican, ill at ease with the new post-treaty Ireland.

Though the new Irish state sought reconciliation, it also carried its own repressions. O'Connell's great political achievement was Catholic Emancipation, yet unlike his united Irishmen predecessors, he made no effort to unite Catholics, Protestants and dissenters.

O'Sullivan said, "It is difficult not to see resonances of this exclusion in the paintings of Yeats, a Protestant republican whose brother, William Butler Yeats, eloquently and angrily felt obliged to remind the Irish Senate in 1925 that Protestants were 'no petty people.' Jack Yeats would have admired the heroic stature of O'Connell, however, not least his popularity among the common people as 'King of the Beggars.' And it was not for nothing that the Yeats family cat was called Daniel O'Connell."

Yeats painted more than 1,100 works in oil alone. He illustrated books, newspapers and periodicals, and designed for the theater. He also wrote for both children and adults: novels, poetry and plays. O'Sullivan said Yeats easily segued from one art form to the other; "the poetic is evident in his paintings, and the visual in his writings."

Ireland's Great Hunger Museum is home to the world's largest collection of visual art, artifacts and printed materials relating to the Irish Famine. The museum preserves, builds and presents its art collection in order to stimulate reflection, inspire imagination and advance awareness of Ireland's Great Hunger and its long aftermath on both sides of the Atlantic.

The collection focuses on the famine years from 1845-52, when blight destroyed virtually all of Ireland's potato crops for consecutive years. The crop destruction, coupled with British governmental indifference to the plight of the Irish, who at the time were part of the United Kingdom, resulted in the deaths of more than 1 million Irish men, women and children and the emigration of more than 2 million to nations around the world. This tragedy occurred even though there was more than adequate food in the country to feed its starving populace. Exports of food and livestock from Ireland actually increased during the years of the Great Hunger.

Works by noted contemporary Irish artists are featured at the museum including internationally known sculptors John Behan, Rowan Gillespie and Eamonn O'Doherty; as well as contemporary visual artists, Robert Ballagh, Alanna O'Kelly Brian Maguire and Hughie O'Donoghue. Featured paintings include several important 19th and 20th-century works by artists such as James Brenan, Daniel MacDonald, James Arthur O'Connor and other pieces by Yeats.

The museum, located at 3011 Whitney Ave., is open Wednesdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursdays 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sundays 1-5 p.m. Please visit www.ighm.org or call 203-582-6500.

Quinnipiac is a private, coeducational, nonsectarian institution located 90 minutes north of New York City and two hours from Boston. The university enrolls 6,400 full-time undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students in 58 undergraduate and more than 20 graduate programs of study in its [School of Business and Engineering](#), [School of Communications](#), [School of Education](#), [School of Health Sciences](#), [School of Law](#), [Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine](#), [School of Nursing](#) and [College of Arts and Sciences](#). Quinnipiac consistently ranks among the top regional universities in the North in U.S. News & World Report's America's Best Colleges issue. The 2014 issue of U.S. News & World Report's America's Best Colleges named Quinnipiac as the top up-and-coming school with master's programs in the Northern Region. Quinnipiac also is recognized in Princeton Review's "The Best 377 Colleges." The Chronicle of Higher Education has named Quinnipiac among the "Great Colleges to Work For." For more information, please visit www.quinnipiac.edu. Connect with Quinnipiac on Facebook at www.facebook.com/quinnipiacuniversity and follow Quinnipiac on Twitter @QuinnipiacU.

###

Media Contact:

John W. Morgan, associate vice president for public relations, Quinnipiac University
(203) 582-5359 (office)
(203) 206-4449 (cell)