

New Galleries at Irish Museum of Modern Art to open in March 2000 (Now the Garden Galleries)

A series of new climate-controlled galleries, which will regularly house exhibitions from important collections worldwide, will open to the public at the Irish Museum of Modern Art on Thursday 30 March 2000. The galleries, which will add 320 square metres to the Museum's exhibition area, are located in the former Deputy Master's House, beside the Formal Garden in the north-east corner of the Royal Hospital site.

The exhibition programme for the New Galleries will focus on special collections, sometimes drawn from the Museum's own Collection but also from public and private collections throughout the world. The inaugural exhibitions are:

- Picasso: Working on Paper (30 March - 9 July 2000), drawn from the Musée Picasso in Paris, the Picasso family and selected museums and concentrating particularly on Picasso's use of newspaper as a material in collages, as a ground and as a source of subject matter throughout his life.
- The first showing of The Barry Joule Archive: Works on Paper attributed to Francis Bacon (30 March - 27 August 2000), highlighting the artist's awareness of and involvement with popular culture and mass media.

The exhibitions are presented in association with The Irish Times.

The exhibitions in the New Galleries are designed to represent points of origins in the works of major 20th-century artists and art movements in the context of the Museum's dynamic ongoing exhibitions of contemporary work and its innovative access programmes. There was, arguably, no more original artist in that century than Picasso (1881-1973), whose practice covered almost all important developments in art throughout the 20th century. This showing of 120 works on paper and archive material, some of which are being seen for the first time, will enable the public to get a sense of the mind of the artist at work, from the early 1900s up to the late 1960s. His use of newspaper as a ground, as subject matter and as a material in collages, will provide a unique opportunity to explore this important but little-known aspect of Picasso's work. The exhibition is curated by Anne Baldassari of the Musée Picasso.

There is a direct correspondence in subject matter to the parallel exhibition: a recently revealed series of works on paper and worked-over photographic material attributed to Francis Bacon from the Barry Joule Archive. In this case the view that Bacon (1909-92) did not draw or prepare before 'attacking' the canvas, which the artist also projected, is challenged by this imagery, indicating the need for a re-reading of critical discussion around Bacon's work in general.

The exhibition, comprising 100 works, will be the first showing anywhere of this material. The use of news and sports images, as well as art images and the annotation of books, demonstrates not only Bacon's knowledge of art of the period (late 1950s and early '60s) and of art history in general but also his awareness of and involvement with popular culture and the mass media. This exhibition precedes the Hugh Lane Gallery's major exhibition of Francis Bacon's paintings, opening in June

2000, which will feature key works spanning Bacon's entire career and will celebrate the Hugh Lane Gallery's acquisition of his studio and its contents. These two exhibitions will provide an unprecedented opportunity to assess a fuller representation of this important post-War artist.

Commenting on the exhibitions, the Museum's Director, Declan McGonagle said:

"Bacon was an artist in the world; so too was Picasso. Neither can be consigned to history, and any new reading of their work creates implications for contemporary artists. While the paths of both artists are quite distinct there is a linkage in their visualisations of ideas. Both exhibitions represent a transformation of the ordinary and the commonplace into the extraordinary, revealing something of each artist's thinking and decision-making process. Presenting this material in the Museum's New Galleries, as one century ends and another begins, will give people new insights into the minds of two crucially important artists who have explored the nature and meaning of human experience in the 20th century. The Museum is particularly grateful to the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, Ms Síle de Valera, TD, for the support which has allowed this new dimension in provision to be realised."

The Deputy Master's House, which contains the New Galleries, dates to 1763 and acted as lodgings for the Deputy Masters, or surgeons, to the Hospital and their families. The restoration of the Deputy Master's House and the creation of the New Galleries cost £2.2 million, made up of European Union Structural Funds and exchequer funding allocated by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands with resources for the Office of Public Works. Shay Cleary Architects carried out the conversion of the interior of the building to high-quality gallery spaces, including a new entrance court and an entirely new basement gallery. OPW Architectural Services was responsible for the conservation of the external fabric of the building. The project provides a new function for the existing building within the overall site, and juxtaposes new and historic elements in the spirit of the earlier adaptation of the main Museum building, which allows the past and the present to coexist.

Under the Percent for Art Scheme, the Office of Public Works has commissioned a permanent public artwork for the New Galleries building, *Flow*, by Irish-born artist Jim Buckley, involves the introduction into two trees, adjacent to the building, of a coherent system of light lines using side emitting fibre optics to punctuate the architecture and landscape. The impact of the light will change with the time of day and year, and with prevailing weather conditions, giving an elusive, intriguing quality to the work.

The Picasso exhibition is accompanied by a 190-page catalogue, with 200 colour images and a substantial essay by Anne Baldassari, published by Merrell Publishers, London (price £19.95). The Bally Joule Archive is accompanied by a 96-page publication, with 60 colour images, an essay by Dr David Alan Mellor and contributions by Barry Joule and the artist Richard Hamilton, published by IMMA (price £17.95).

Admission: £3.00, concessions £1.50, under-18s free. Admission free on Saturdays.

Opening hours: Tue - Sat 10.00am - 5.30pm

Sun & Bank Holidays 12 noon - 5.30pm

Closed Mondays, 21 April

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