

## Trinity College Dublin Art Collections

<b>Artist:</b>	Anne Madden
<b>Title:</b>	Big Red Mountain Series (1967)
<b>Medium:</b>	Oil on canvas
<b>Location:</b>	Arts Building, TCD

b. 1932, London

Anne Madden is a particularly well-known artist in Ireland. Her early childhood was spent in Chile, but her parents returned to Europe to live in Ireland and London. In the latter she studied drawing and painting at the Chelsea School of Arts and Crafts; despite the traditional teaching methods of the school, it was while studying here that Abstract Expressionism impacted on her work, as she attended an exhibition of American painting, being especially impressed by the work of Sam Francis and Jean-Paul Riopelle. In Paris, she met these artists, among others, and exchanged works and ideas freely.

At the age of 18 she began to exhibit in group shows in London and Dublin; however, her production of work was interrupted for three years around this time as a result of a series of operations to her spine. It was then that she met the artist, Louis le Brocquy, who was working in London. Six years later they married and moved to Carros village in the South of France, where they set up a studio and had two children. From the mid-sixties onwards, the Fondation Maeght played an important role in their activities, as it created a network of artists, writers, musicians and poets.

Madden's work has gone through a series of directional changes. She generally works within the boundaries of a conceptual series, pushing a theme to its limits. *Big Red Mountain Sequence* is part of her body of early work. It was during the 1960s that she began to paint abstract landscapes related to her time near the Burren in Co. Clare as a child. During this phase, the works evoke a sense of history and permanency, despite their abstract nature. She often added sand and grit into the paint, and they had a highly monochromatic tonality of greys and light pinks, with only occasional dashes of purple and red. However, *Big Red Mountain Sequence* demonstrates colour becoming a more important feature of her work; it seems almost like an inversion of her previous monochromatic concerns, red forming the background with black, white and grey offering contrast. In the 1970s, Madden became concerned with more architectural forms – Megaliths and doorways – painted mainly in a monochromatic fashion with intense reds or blues.

In the following decade, the artist focused on drawing and gave up painting for a time. Since then she has created a large body of work, within the *Pompeii and Garden* series (1980-90), the *Odyssey and Icarus* series (1990-2000), and her most recent *Northern Lights*

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series. Enriqu  Juncosa has written about Madden's art in the catalogue from the Irish Museum of Modern Art's *Retrospective* in 2007.

Madden resolves [her] paintings as problems of composition, pictorial process, texture, colour and light, but remains constantly aware of what can be achieved through this beyond mere abstraction. Her approach to painting could be described as material, as opposed to formal, but Madden is fully committed to (and wholly engaged with) the transformative powers of her medium. Anne Madden: A Retrospective, Irish Museum of Modern Art, 2007

Madden's first one woman show was held in 1959 in Leicester Galleries in London and she has exhibited extensively by herself and with groups during that time, including exhibitions in Mexico, Scandinavia, Japan, Europe and America. In 1965, Madden represented Ireland in the Paris Biennale. She was commissioned by Carros to paint the ceiling of its medieval castle, the Chateau du Carros, which is now a centre for contemporary art.

Her work is represented in many collections around the world, like the Centre National d'Art Contemporain Georges Pompidou and Mus  du Louvre in Paris, the Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C., and in the Arts Council of Great Britain. In Ireland, she is represented in the Irish Museum of Modern Art, the National Portrait Gallery, Dublin City Gallery, the Hugh Lane, the Ulster Museum in Belfast and the collection of University College Dublin. She is a member of Aosd na and in 2008 was awarded the *Officier des Arts et des Lettres* from the French Government in recognition of her services to the arts. She now lives and works in Dublin.