

The Trinity College Dublin Art Collections

Artist: Brian Bourke
Title: *Don Quixote* (1973)
Medium: etching
Edition: 9 of 75
Notes: signed: Brian Bourke '73

b. 1936, Dublin

Brian Bourke is primarily associated with painting, drawing and etching, though he has also created a number of sculpted portraits. Bourke enjoys working in series, dealing mainly with landscapes and portraits. He studied at NCAD, Dublin, and the prestigious London art schools, St. Martin's and Goldsmith's College, though he states that it was in looking at the work of Early Flemish and Italian painting at the National Gallery of London where he found his true artistic education.

Following his time in London, Bourke spent a period in Germany where he became interested in Neue Sachlichkeit art ("New Objectivity"); this movement had grown out of German Expressionism, turning away from the emotional artistic response, this style was rather more sardonic and cynical, with artists such as Max Beckman and Otto Dix contributing to the Neue Sachlichkeit exhibitions.

On returning to Ireland in 1957, Bourke became involved with the Independent Artists Group. His first solo exhibition, held at the Dawson Gallery in 1964, shocked many Irish viewers as it was made up of a series of nude self-portraits, the like of which were not exhibited publically in Ireland at this time. This same year Bourke was awarded a prize at the Irish Exhibition of Living Art. In 1965, Bourke represented Ireland at the Paris Biennale and was also awarded the Arts Council prize for portraiture. The following year, he won the prestigious Carroll's Award at the 1967 Irish Exhibition of Living Art.

His work has also appeared at the significant contemporary Irish exhibition Rosc (in 1980 and 1988). In 1985 the Sunday Independent named him Artist of the Year, while in 1991 he was appointed Artist-in-Residence at the Beckett Festival in the Gate Theatre, Dublin. Bourke is a member of Aosdána.

The Self and Don Quixote Series (of which two are included in the Trinity College Modern Art Collection) is characteristic of Bourke's work both in its technical brilliance and in its self-parody. Through his work, we are made privy to the intensity and individuality of his vision and his ironic, often mocking humour. Bourke now lives in Co. Galway.

Information contained in this article is from The Modern Art Collection Trinity College Dublin (David Scott, 1989), www.visual-arts-cork.com, <http://aosdana.artscouncil.ie>, and 'Art and Architecture of Ireland, Volume V' (Ed. Andrew Carpenter, RIA, 2015).

This information has been compiled by Art Collections assistants, interns, and volunteers
For further information please consult www.tcd.ie/artcollections