

The Trinity College Dublin Art Collections

Artist: Micheal Farrell
Title: *Red Beginning* (1964)
Medium: lithograph
Dimensions: 48cm x 48cm
Notes: signed on reverse: Micheal Farrell
exhibited: The College Gallery 21st Anniversary Retrospective, Douglas Hyde Gallery, TCD, 3 June – 5 July 1980, cat. no. 70

b. 1940, Kells, Co. Meath d. 2000, Cardet, France

From 1956-60, Micheal Farrell studied Drawing and Fine Art Painting at St. Martin's and Colchester Schools of Art in England. From 1971 until his death, he mainly lived in Paris, spending some time in Australia in the 1980s.

Farrell's range takes in both abstract and figurative works which involve issues of nationalism, colonialism, sexuality, modern mythology and politics. He made his name in the 1960s with a hard-edged abstract style, incorporating swirling 'Celtic' motifs (as in *Study '66* and *Conception of Black Reversed*, both works in the Trinity College Collection). In the 1970s, he made a series called *Pressés* (seven examples of which are in the College Collection). These started out as elegant, decorative motifs, but later became relief works, sometimes with floor-pieces or collage elements, with more or less specific references to the political problems of Northern Ireland. In the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, Farrell returned to a figurative style in which the themes of self-questioning and of the Irish abroad became prominent. His powerful 'Madonna Irlanda' series of 1976-77 portrayed Ireland in the role of a mistress based on Louisa O'Murphy, the 18th century mistress of Louis XVI.

Farrell exhibited extensively and won many prestigious awards throughout his career, including the Prix de Rome, Brittanique (1964), the Carroll Prize at the Irish Exhibition of Living Art (IELA) (1964, '67, '69, '74), the Macauley Fellowship (1966), the Laureat at the Biennale des Jeunes, Paris (1967), the Sculpture Prize at the IELA (1968), the gold medal at the Third Graphic Biennale, Florence (1972), Prix de la Ville de Liège, the Prix d'Europe, Ostend, and the Douglas Hyde Gold Medal (all 1976), the German Scholarship at the Villa Romana, Florence (1977), the Mosman Prize and the Camden Prize, Sydney (1985).

Information contained in this article is from The Modern Art Collection Trinity College Dublin (David Scott, 1989) and www.visual-arts-cork.com.

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