

The Trinity College Dublin Art Collections

Artist: Norah McGuinness

Title: *Thames*

Medium: gouache

b. 1903, Co. Derry d.1980, Dublin

Norah McGuinness' artistic career began when she was still a school girl while taking life drawing classes at Derry Technical School. In the early 1920s she studied Drawing and Fine Art Printing at the Metropolitan School of Art, Dublin, before studying at the Chelsea Polytechnic, London (1923-24) and at the studio of André l'Hôte in Paris. In addition to working as an artist, McGuinness also earned a living as a graphic designer, illustrator, theatre set designer, costume designer and window dresser (for Altman's, New York and Brown Thomas, Dublin).

McGuinness executed vivid, highly coloured, works in a spontaneous style influenced in part by the colourist Fauvist movement and by the Cubism she learned under l'Hôte. She favoured landscape and still life painting, and to both of these McGuinness brought a sense of design and colour along with the feeling of energy and life that, since the thirties, have been recognised as the hallmarks of her style.

McGuinness began showing her work at the Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA) in 1924, and had her first solo show in London in 1933. In 1943 she helped found the Irish Exhibition of Living Art, and succeeded Mainie Jellett as President of the organisation in 1944, where she remained in term until 1970.

In 1950, McGuinness represented Ireland at the Venice Biennale with Nano Reid-this was the first time Ireland had participated in the Biennale. Seven years later, she became an honorary member of the RHA. In 1968, the Douglas Hyde Gallery hosted a retrospective of the artist's work in Dublin with over 100 works on show; the same exhibition toured to Cork. She resigned from the RHA, however, the following year in 1969. McGuinness' work may be found in the collections of IMMA, the Hugh Lane, the Arts Council, the Crawford Gallery, TCD and many more.

Norah McGuinness was a particularly influential figure in Irish art, respected for her painting but also for her work supporting Irish artists and promoting art in Ireland.

The information contained in this article is from The Modern Art Collection Trinity College Dublin (David Scott, 1989), *Art and Architecture of Ireland, Volume V* (Ed. Catherine Marshall & Peter Murray, 2015) 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