

The Trinity College Dublin Art Collections

Artist: Rodrigo Moynihan
Title: *Untitled*
Medium: silkscreen
Notes: signed: Rodrigo Moynihan
purchased: Hanover Gallery, London
donated by Professor George Dawson

b. 1910, Tenerife d. 1990, London

Rodrigo Moynihan was born on the small Canary island of Tenerife, his father was Irish and his mother was Spanish. At the age of eight, Moynihan moved with his family to England. As a young man, Moynihan travelled widely, living in Rome and the USA before returning to London to study at the Slade School of Fine Art (1928-31). He quickly made a name for himself as one of the founding members of the Objective Abstractionist group in the early 1930s. This group included London artists such as Ceri Richards, William Coldstream and Edgar Hubert though Moynihan, Geoffrey Tibble and Graham Bell were considered the leaders of the school. The general idea behind Objective Abstraction was to reject geometric abstraction, which had become popular in Europe at this time, and instead to find inspiration in the mysterious logic of Nature and create abstract forms founded upon organic motifs.

In the late 30s, Moynihan took to painting in a sober, Realist manner, and became associated with the Euston Road School, of which his associate William Coldstream was the founder. Moynihan joined the army in 1940 and was made Official War Artist in 1943, following an injury which had taken him out of service. He was given the title of Associate member of the Royal Academy of Art in 1944 and was made a full member of the academy in 1954. Moynihan was Professor of Painting at the Royal College of Art from 1948-57, during which time he executed the acclaimed monumental Realist group portrait, *The Teaching Staff of the Painting School at the Royal College of Art (1949/50)*. Moynihan's own self-portrait can be seen in the far-left of the composition.

Following his term as Professor at the Royal College, Moynihan moved to France and returned to a more abstract way of painting. The artist experimented with different painting techniques, from thick impasto to a more refined smooth application of paint. His palette and style would vary throughout the years, oscillating between abstract, still-life and figurative painting. Notable portraits by Moynihan include that of fellow artists Sir Lawrence Gowing, Francis Bacon and William Coldstream as well a portrait of politician Margaret Thatcher- this work was commissioned in 1984 and is now in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery. The artist was given a retrospective at the Royal Academy in 1978.

The information in this article has been taken from Grove Dictionary of Art online and David Scott, *The Modern Art Collection Trinity College Dublin*, (Trinity College Dublin Press, 1989).

This information has been compiled by Art Collections assistants, interns, and volunteers
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