

The Trinity College Dublin Art Collections

Artist: Larry Rivers
Title: *Boston Massacre Series* (1970)
Medium: screenprint
Edition: 21 of 150
Dimensions: 49cm x 71cm

b. 1923, New York d. 2002, New York

Born Yitzroch Loiza Grossberg in the Bronx, New York, Larry Rivers started his career as a jazz musician, earning a living playing the saxophone in numerous clubs around New York. He turned to painting in the mid-1940s upon discovering the work of the Cubists, and, in particular, the paintings of Georges Braque. After serving briefly in the US Army Air Corps during World War II, he went on to study painting in Provincetown, Massachusetts and then at New York University. At this time Rivers met Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock and other Abstract Expressionists whose active style of painting and free brushwork would prove to be River's first major influence.

By the late fifties Rivers had moved on from the Abstract Expressionist style and began incorporating figurative elements in his work. He started using new materials – incorporating into his art Plexiglas, neon tubes, etc., as well as found objects and images derived from mass media and photography. In this way, his art can be seen as something of a precursor to the Pop-Art movement; Andy Warhol cited Rivers' work as an inspiration. Rivers' irreverent and often humorous handling of politics, history, and sexual matters in his later works created much controversy and affirmed his position as innovator and artistic pioneer.

He participated in many solo and group exhibitions over the course of his sixty-year career. His work was first seen in Dublin at the exhibition *Pop Art: American and British* which was held in The Trinity College Exhibition Hall, within the new Berkeley Library, in 1971. Examples of his work can be found in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. and at the Tate Gallery in London. The primary influence for this series of works on display was an event which took place on the 5th of March 1770. On this day, groups of civilians and British soldiers were involved in a confrontation on King Street, Boston, leading to the British soldiers firing into the crowd, killing 5 civilians and injuring 6 others. The event came to be known as the 'Boston Massacre', and was seen as a prelude to the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War which began a few years later.

Information contained in this article is from: www.larryriversfoundation.org, <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/larry-rivers-1852>, <http://www.marlboroughgallery.com/galleries/graphics/artists/larry-rivers/graphics>, and <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/related/massacre.htm>

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