

**Artist** Gavin O'Curry  
**Title** *Sugarloaf XIII PM* (2016)  
**Medium** oil on linen  
**Notes** Signed on the reverse  
Selected from 'The Past is a Foreign Country', solo exhibition at the Oonagh Young Gallery, 9 September – 15 October 2016  
Purchased 2016 from The Provost's Fund for Contemporary Art



b. London, 1969

Gavin O'Curry lives and works in Dublin, having graduated from Winchester School of Art in England in 1992 with a degree in Sculpture. From here he worked for a number of years in the atelier of world renowned sculptor Sir Anthony Caro, who, as a young sculptor worked in Henry Moore's workshop. Since 2001 however, O'Curry's practice has focused on painting, and, on occasion, he has incorporated both art forms in exhibitions such as 'The Lost American/ Crying in the Chapel', held at the Goethe Institute in 2009. Two years later, he was commissioned to create a sculpture for Dublin's first city-wide international contemporary art exhibition – 'Dublin Contemporary'.

He attributes his transition from sculpture to oils and linen to his personal experience of 'The Pursuit of Painting' exhibition in 1997 at The Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA), the year O'Curry moved from London to Dublin. The exhibition was curated by painter Stephen McKenna who brought together works by Irish artists alongside international figures such as Gwen John, Kazimir Malevich, and Giorgio Morandi, whose words included in the remarkable catalogue still resonate with O'Curry:

*There is nothing or very little new in the world: the important thing is the different and new position in which the artist places himself to consider and see the things of so-called nature and the works which preceded and interested him.* Giorgio Morandi (1962)

O'Curry's work is often inspired by modern literature and music, yet, at times, his work engages in profoundly layered conversations with visual culture spanning the past two centuries. A continued point of departure for the artist lies in Early Photography and its use as a source of inspiration for painting practices in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. An inherent emphasis on a monochromatic palette, and the balanced panoramic viewpoints within the 'Sugarloaf' landscape series of 2014 to 2016 shows this influence, while it is O'Curry's repeated self-immersion in this terrain and his intuitive practice of translating absorption and observation

---

This information was researched & written by Catherine Giltrap, Curator of the University Art Collections  
For further information please consult [www.tcd.ie/artcollections](http://www.tcd.ie/artcollections)

from eye to lens and, subsequently, to linen through oils which roots these paintings very much in the contemporary. The culmination of this body of works took the shape of his most recent exhibition, from which the work at Trinity College was selected. Entitled 'The Past is a Foreign Country' and held at the Oonagh Young Gallery, the main focus of the exhibition brought together for the first time the observed and assimilated painted landscapes of the peak called the 'Sugarloaf', photographed over many trips to an area of personal significance for the artist within the Wicklow mountains in Ireland.

Recent solo exhibitions by the artist include 'The Past is Foreign Country' (2016) held at the Oonagh Young Gallery, Dublin; 'New Paintings' (2012) at the Peppercanister Gallery; 'The Lost American/Crying in the Chapel' (2009) at the Goethe Institut, Dublin; 'A Brief History of Time' (2005) at the Old Museum Arts Centre, Belfast; 'Eight Years' (2005) at the RHA, Dublin; 'Paintings' (2002) at the Kevin Kavanagh Gallery, Dublin and 'Domestic Affairs' (1995) at the Gasworks Gallery in London. O'Curry has also featured in a number of group exhibitions such as 'Interlude, Aspects of Irish Landscape Painting' (2011) at the Douglas Hyde Gallery; Dublin Contemporary (2011); '10,000 to 50' (2008) at IMMA; 'Thinking of Ideas' (2004) at the Golden Thread Gallery in Belfast and 'The Holiday Show' (2002) at the RHA, Dublin.

The artist's work is to be found on display in *Áras an Uachtaráin*, the President of Ireland's residence, as part of a number of works held in the Irish State Collection managed by the OPW, and is also represented within the Temple Bar Cultural Trust and various private collections.

In 2016, in recognition of the body of work expressed within his exhibition 'The Past is a Foreign Country' of the same year, O'Curry was shortlisted for the Savills Art Prize at the VUE Contemporary Art Fair, along with Jaki Irvine, Michael O'Dea, and Patrick Graham who won the overall prize.

---

The information contained in this article is compiled using information from [www.gavinocurry.com](http://www.gavinocurry.com), [www.thepeppercanister.com/gavin-ocurry-biography](http://www.thepeppercanister.com/gavin-ocurry-biography), The Visual Artists Ireland Newsletter online (23 September 2016), and conversations with the artist

This information was researched & written by Catherine Giltrap, Curator of the University Art Collections For further information please consult [www.tcd.ie/artcollections](http://www.tcd.ie/artcollections)