

For Immediate Release
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Contact: Jill Potterton 020.7752.3121 (jpotterton@christies.com)

IRISH ART AT CHRISTIE'S

The Irish Sale
Thursday 15 May 2003
King Street at 11am & South Kensington at 2.30pm



Sir William Orpen, R.H.A., R.A. (1878-1931)
Gardenia St George on a donkey, oil on canvas, 38x36in.
Estimate: £800,000-£1,200,000/€1,200,000-€1,800,000

London – Christie's eight annual sale of Irish Art on 15 May comprises over 200 lots of oils, works on paper, sculpture and tapestry spanning over three centuries of Irish painting. This year's auction boasts a particularly strong selection of early works featuring no less than four important pictures by the acclaimed 18th century artist George Barret. The Christie's sale will once again be held in two parts, the first at King Street at 11am, followed by an afternoon session at South Kensington at 2.30pm.

Christie's
8 King Street, St. James's, London SW1Y 6QT
phone 44.207.389.2664 fax 44.207.839.7026
www.christies.com

All the major names in Irish Art will be represented including James Arthur O'Connor, George Barret, Roderic O'Connor, Sir William Orpen, Jack Butler Yeats, Walter Osborne, Sir John Lavery, Paul Henry, Louis le Brocq, Colin Middleton, Andrew Nicholl, Sean Keating, Derek Hill and Tony O'Malley. Estimates will range from £250 to £1.2million (€360 to €1.8million).

The Christie's sale is highlighted by a radiant masterpiece by Sir William Orpen, R.H.A., R.A. (1878-1931) entitled Gardenia on a Donkey. Dating from 1910, this exquisite oil depicts Gardenia, the daughter of Mrs St George with whom Orpen was having a secret love affair at the time. Like many of Orpen's greatest works, the painting's glowing impact lies in part in the originality, even the eccentricity of the pose – a gangly, pensive adolescent balanced precariously on the rump of a donkey swathed with flowers. With an impeccable provenance, the sitter and thence by descent, this superb work is expected to realize £800,000-1,200,000/€1.2-1.8million.

The popular and much sought after artist Jack Butler Yeats, R.H.A. (1871-1957), features in the sale - A Little Shade, 1952 (estimate: £80,000-120,000/€120,000-180,000) and The Nimrod of the Railway Train, 1948 (estimate: £70,000-100,000/€110,000-150,000) are just two of the highlights. There are six lots to choose from by Paul Henry, R.H.A. (1876-1958), currently the subject of a major exhibition at the National Gallery of Ireland. In May 2002, Christie's established a new auction record for a work by Henry when they sold The Lobster Fisher for an incredible £298,150.

This year's Irish Sale will feature three stunning nudes by Roderic O'Connor (1860-1940). The first, La jeune fille, is a beautifully realized work believed to depict the artist's model, mistress and future wife, Renée Honta, circa 1926 (estimate: £50,000-80,000/€74,000-120,000). Another entitled Nude on a bed, carries an estimate of £60,000-80,000/€80,000-120,000. Sir John Lavery, R.H.A., R.A., R.S.A. (1856-1941) appears in the sale with three lots highlighted by The Spanish Coast from Tangier, painted in 1920 (estimate: £150,000-250,000/€230,000-370,000). No Irish Sale would be complete without the work of Walter Frederick Osborne, R.H.A. (1859-1903). The leading lot this year is The return of the flock, an oil on board painted in 1885 (estimate: £120,000-180,000/€180,000-270,000).

Highlights from the earlier part of the Irish Sale include two magnificent early landscapes by George Barret, R.A. (c.1728-1784), painted before the artist left Dublin for London in 1763, each with an estimate of £100,000-150,000/€150,000-230,000. In addition, two smaller scale landscapes by George Barret, R.A. in collaboration with Sawrey Gilpin, R.A. (1733-1807), A view of Dolbadarn Castle, Llanberis, North Wales and Mares, Foals and Sheep in a wooded landscape are estimated at £30,000-50,000/€40,000-74,000 and £20,000-30,000/€30,000-40,000 respectively. The sale also includes two landscapes by James Arthur O'Connor (1792-1841), A Wooded River Landscape,

signed and dated 1826, estimated at £15,000–25,000/€24,000–39,000, and a very interesting View of Bullock Castle and Bawn, Dalkey, Co. Dublin, signed and dated 1830, estimated at £10,000–15,000/€16,000–24,000. Another highlight of the sale is a rare watercolour of an Irish view by Paul Sandby, R.A., View of Ross Castle, Killarney, with villagers in a ferry boat in the foreground, which has an estimate of £20,000–30,000/€30,000–40,000.

The sale concludes on a contemporary note with five works by the sought after Kilkenny-born artist Tony O'Malley, H.R.H.A. (1913–2003), who died earlier this year. Labelled a New Expressionist, O'Malley's work often demonstrated an individual sense of perspective and a heightened concentration on the spatial relationships of colours on a flat plane. Featuring varying views from Clare Island to the Bahamas, individual estimates range from £6,000–20,000/€8,900–€30,000.

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Note to Editors:

SALE:

The Irish Sale, Part I at 11am – 8 King Street, London SW1

The Irish Sale, Part II at 2.30pm – 85 Old Brompton Road, London SW7

VIEWING:

Belfast

Ulster Bank Group Head Office, 11–16 Donegall Square East, Belfast BT1 5UB

Monday 28 April: 10am – 12noon & 2pm – 4pm (by appointment only)

Dublin

The Shelbourne Hotel, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2

Wednesday 30 April: 2pm – 5pm & Thursday 1 May: 9am – 5pm

New York

Christie's, 20 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, New York 10020

Friday 18 & 21–23 April

London

King Street & South Kensington: Sunday 11 – Wednesday 14 May

Lecture – Tuesday 13 May at 6.30pm: Peter Murray, Curator of The Crawford Municipal Art Gallery, Cork will give a lecture titled Landscape Painting in Ireland 1750–1930

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*Images available on request
Visit Christie's at www.christies.com*



