

# CHRISTIE'S

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## CHRISTIE'S IN ASSOCIATION WITH WHYTE'S OF DUBLIN *THE ERNIE O'MALLEY COLLECTION*

**AUCTION TO TAKE PLACE IN DUBLIN ON 25 NOVEMBER 2019**



Jack Butler Yeats, *The Enfolding Night* (1947, estimate: €500,000-700,000 / £440,000-615,000)

**London** – Christie's, in association with Whyte's Auction House in Dublin, will offer works from *The Ernie O'Malley Collection*, highlighted by five paintings by Jack Butler Yeats. Comprised of 100 lots, including early sketches by Yeats and work by the artists Mainie Jellett, Evie Hone, Louis le Brocqy, Colin Middleton and Norah McGuinness, the auction will form an anthology of Irish art from the early 1900s to the 1950s. Ernie O'Malley was an experienced officer in Ireland from 1916-22 who went on to publish two books detailing his experiences. The sale and international exhibitions provide an opportunity to discover his private passion for art and the relationships he developed with artists he encountered in America and Ireland. Highlights will be on view in New York from 23 to 27 October 2019, and London from 16 to 18 November. The full pre-sale exhibition can be viewed at the Royal Dublin Society from 23 to 25 November 2019, with the auction held in the same location at 6pm on 25 November 2019.

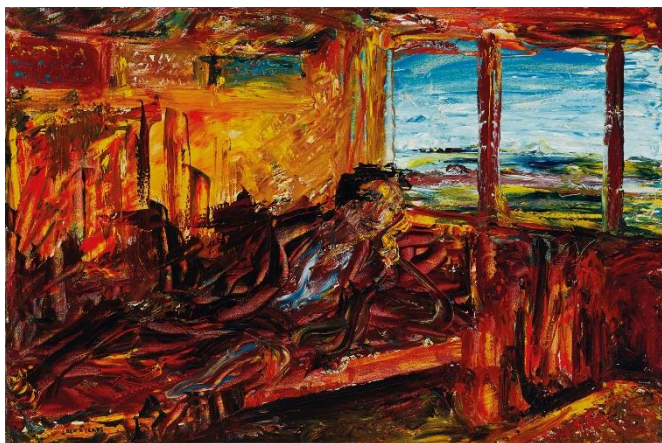


Ernie O'Malley met Jack B. Yeats in Dublin at the home of the art enthusiast and historian Constantine Curran in 1937 where the two became friends, meeting and corresponding regularly. *The Enfolding Night* (1947, estimate: €500,000-700,000 / £440,000-615,000 approximately, *illustrated page one*) depicts three figures walking through a barren landscape towards an intense light while a fourth figure is seated in the foreground. The painting is one of several existential subjects that Yeats painted in the late 1940s, as he approached his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. The composition is theatrical, heightened by dramatic contrasts of light and shade.



O'Malley first saw *Death for Only One* (1937, estimate €400,000-600,000 / £350,000-530,000 approximately, *illustrated left*) on a visit to Jack Yeats's studio in 1939 and it became the first work he acquired directly from the artist. In the painting, a figure stands gazing down on a corpse, his face obscured while his hands are folded in a gesture of reverence or mourning. The scene takes place on an open cliff-top, with the darkened sea and dramatic cloud-strewn sky dominating the background.

*Evening in Sligo* (1937, estimate: €500,000-700,000 / £440,000-615,000 approximately, *illustrated below right*) depicts a group of figures sat around a dining table that is said to recall a Yeats family dinner in Sligo. The centre of the table is decorated by a large bowl of bright yellow daffodils which evoke the notion of spring and bring touches of vivid colour into the foreground of the composition. This painting was purchased from the artist by Ernie O'Malley in 1945.



Yeats travelled by rail across Ireland extensively throughout his career. It is a major subject in both his paintings and writings. In *Reverie* (1931, estimate: €500,000-700,000 / £440,000-615,000 approximately, *illustrated above left*), the journey provided the perfect trope for juxtaposing an uncultivated world with that of modern transport. As in *Evening in Sligo*, another work that belonged to O'Malley, the view through the window can be read as symbolic of the figure's thoughts and imagination.



*The Fighting Dawn* (1945, estimate: €250,000-350,000 / £220,000-310,000 approximately, *illustrated left*) is dominated by vibrant colours. The faces of the figures are sculpted from thick blue and pink paint while their hiding place is made of dark green vegetation with highlights of red and yellow, painted in a series of long strokes.

Ernie O'Malley also collected and supported Colin Middleton and Louis le Brocqy, introducing the latter to the West of Ireland and the Traveller community in Mayo, both of which inspired many of the artist's works in the 1940s. Further highlights include Anne Yeats, Evie Hone, Mainie Jellet, Nano Reid, May Guinness, and Elizabeth Rivers.

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*\*Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

*\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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Hires images of all the works in the sale may be obtained from Matthew Slack at Whyte's, [ms@whytes.ie](mailto:ms@whytes.ie) +353 1 676 2888

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