



Switzerland (Hazel and Alice), by Sir John Lavery, estimate €180,000-€220,000. The piece was the result of an unexpected winter sojourn by the artist in Wengen, Switzerland in 1913

# Tempting artwork by Leech, Lavery and Henry at Whyte's

The 134 lots on offer include fascinating historical and modernist works



**Philip Carton**  
Fine Arts

**F**ine Art auctioneer, Whyte's in Dublin 2, hosts its Important Irish Art sale on Monday, December 4.

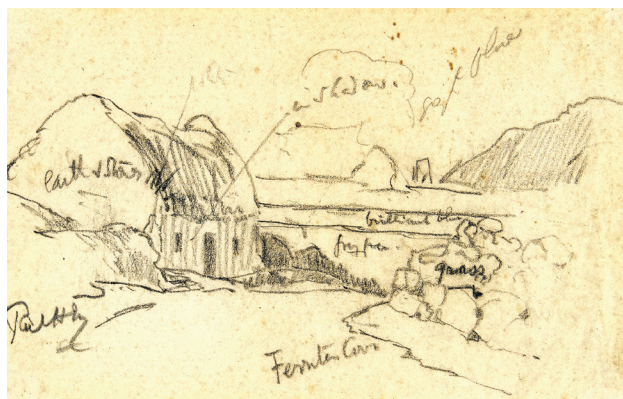
The 134-lot sale offers many tempting works, from an 1825 forest landscape by James Arthur O'Connor and a unique bronze by sculptor F E McWilliam to an impressive oil painting by contemporary artist Hughie O'Donoghue.

Among the fascinating lots that caught my attention, many with interesting back stories, was Lot 12, a most charming oil on board titled *Le Chateau, Nice* by Dublin-born artist William John Leech.

France provided a rich source of inspiration for his work after Leech left Dublin in 1903 for Paris. This painting radiates the warmth of the Côte d'Azur, and carries an estimate of €6,000-€8,000.

Staying in warmer climes is Lot 14: *The Desert Charge*, by Aloysius C O'Kelly, (€10,000-€15,000).

This dynamic history painting is the result of an expedition with his brother James to Sudan in 1883. James was travelling as a correspondent for the *Daily News* and Aloysius as an illustrator for the *Pictorial World*. The painting is part of a unique series capturing the battles between the forces of Muhammad Ahmad bin Abdallah and Anglo-Egyptian troops in the country.



Atlantic Drive, Achill, Co Mayo, by Paul Henry, estimate €3,000-€5,000. A small, intimate sketch by the artist



Threshing in Connemara by Gerard Dillon, estimate €1,000-€1,500. A gemlike watercolour sketch

Professor Niamh O'Sullivan writes in the catalogue: "Most war artists acted, in effect, as public relations personnel for Britain's colonial projects overseas. O'Kelly's decision to cover the colonial war from behind the battle lines of Britain's enemy was thus an act of remarkable audacity."

We change light and season with Lot 18, *Switzerland (Hazel and Alice)*, 1913, by Sir John Lavery, €180,000-€220,000.

The painting of Hazel on a hillside with Alice is accompanied by an enthralling catalogue note by Professor Kenneth McConkey, which provides an insight into the lifestyle of the Laverys and the historical context of the work.

"In the summer of 1912, Lavery was commissioned to paint the British royal family at Buckingham Palace and sittings were booked in the king's and queen's diaries for the following February.

"The arrangements meant that the painter's annual four-month sojourn at his house in Tangier had to be abandoned and a shorter winter holiday substituted at Wengen in Switzerland. The 'holiday'

proved to be one of the most concentrated painting episodes of Lavery's life." The result is this divine work.

The sale includes three works by Paul Henry. Lot 24 being an intimate sketch titled *Atlantic Drive, Achill, Co Mayo*, depicting a traditional thatched cottage in pencil, estimated at €3,000-€5,000.

Lot 37 is a breathtaking work by Mary Swanzy, *Sur le Bord de la Forêt* [On the Edge of the Forest], estimated at €25,000-€35,000. The technique of translucent layering of paint allows the subject's nude female figure to be both an entity in her own right and also inextricably linked to her surroundings.

Adelle Hughes notes that like most of Swanzy's oeuvre, "the painting is a fusion of multiple influences. She did not just adopt a new style of painting when she encountered it, she absorbed it, digested it, took from it what most pleased her and created something far more personal and unique." The painting was included in the artist's 2018 retrospective exhibition - *Voyages* - at the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA).



The Desert Charge by Aloysius C O'Kelly, estimate €10,000-€15,000. Showed another side of the Sudanese conflict



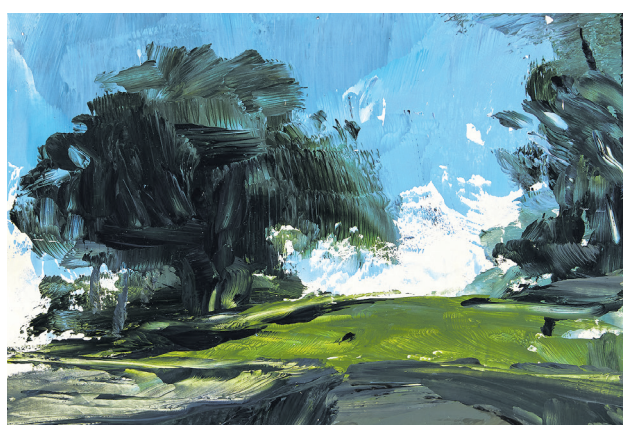
On the Beach, by Gerard Dillon, estimate €20,000-€30,000. A painting of the artist and friend on a summer's day

Staying in the realm of Surrealism is lot 42, *Figure in a Forest* (€2,500-€3,500). This work is by English artist Basil Ivan Rakoczi, who was a member of the White Stag Group, an Irish art group that encouraged the exploration of modernist ideas and aesthetic experimentation. The intriguing and textured figure is a recurring motif in his work.

There are five works by Gerard Dillon in the sale. Notable among them is Lot 46, *On the Beach*, a tender painting of the artist and friend taking a rest on a summer's day. Dated to 1950, it is estimated at €20,000-€30,000.

Lot 47, from 1944, is a gemlike watercolour sketch of figures threshing, which gives the work its title *Threshing in Connemara*, (€1,000-€1,500). My final pick is Donald Teskey's *Near Durrus, West Cork* (2019). This richly painted oil on board is nearly as delicious as Durrus cheese, and is estimated at €3,500-€4,500.

Important Irish Art sale takes place on Monday December 4. See: whytes.ie



Durrus, west Cork, by Donald Teskey, estimate €3,500-€4,500. A richly painted oil on board



Figure in a Forest, by Basil Ivan Rakoczi, estimate €2,500-€3,500. The figure is a recurring motif in his work



Self-Portrait 1990-2020, by Michael Boran

## Meet the artist: Michael Boran

**D**ublin-born Michael Boran is a graduate of NCAD. A lens-based artist, he works primarily with still photographic images while also making short film and slide shows. His work tracks the fleeting traces of interactions between time, place and activity. Often using aerial viewpoints, his photographs offer the viewer unfamiliar visions of the familiar. Notions of scale and transference between micro and macro cosmos are explored in a manner of map-making.

Boran's exhibition, *Near and Far Away*, opens on November 30 at the Kevin Kavanagh Gallery, Dublin. See: kevinKavanagh.ie

### How my artistic journey began

When I went to secondary school, two teachers, Tom Farrell and Tom Bleach, had just started a photography club. I joined straight away and really took to it. There was a darkroom, group work and even some exhibitions. Some of my first subjects were the Airfix models I had been making, and I really enjoyed playing around with illusions and close-ups from the get-go. I eventually did fine art painting in NCAD. In my own practice, I was so busy with observing and representing that I dropped the painting and concentrated solely on photography as a way to create intentional images with a texture of reality.

### The title for my current show came from...

Four things that chimed for me around *Near and Far Away*:

1. I've always been fascinated with how photography alters scale and how the apparatus can move from micro to telescopic with ease.
2. Working from home and through lockdown brought my attention back to the domestic and local and the remoteness of the beyond.
3. It encapsulates the sense of photographs as records of time, which in my own case stretch back into a receding past and different technologies of the medium.
4. The photograph starts with a found observation in a particular place and time but becomes a detached image that can be endlessly shuffled as a permanent symbolic object, so its journey starts in the near but moves off to its own far away.

### Artists who have influenced me

Robert Cumming. I'm really looking forward to seeing the first book about this neglected American photo artist's work. Pre-internet it was very hard to see contemporary art, and particularly when photography hadn't found its place in the fine art world. He, among others - notably Duane Michals - opened me up to expanded possibilities for photography. More than what one might see, to include thoughts, feelings and a sense of playfulness.

### My favourite piece of music when I need inspiration

Any and all. Bowie has been a constant. On my current playlist there's a captivating version of sound and vision from the recent movie *[Moonage Daydream; 2022]* with a longer intro where the bass player is improvising before finding that groove - it's like listening to it come to life.

### I have a collection of...

Stones, feathers with stripes, memory discs, wires, boxes of negatives (and positives), books, thoughts, lists, evidence, connections.

### An artist whose work I would collect if I could

I am fortunate to have a small and treasured collection of artworks. They release much more treasure over the time spent in their company and I would love some more... Luigi Ghirri.

### A place that means a lot to me other than my studio

Alhambra Palace, Grenada. I've been a number of times over the years. Exuberant celebration of nature and geometry with a dizzying array of variations and abstractions. The name means 'the Shade' and it's a place to contemplate the world.

### A place I'd like to visit

No particular destination springs to mind, but I am drawn to wanderings and detours.

### In another life I would have been...

A scientist of things, real-world physics.

### Best advice received

Art doesn't just exist because people need it; art exists because people need to make it.

## IMPORTANT IRISH ART WHYTE'S

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Paul Henry DOEGA, ACHILL ISLAND €150,000 - €200,000

### Saleroom and online auction

**AUCTION:** Monday 4 December at 6pm  
**VIEWING:** 27 November to 4 December  
**VENUE:** 38 Molesworth Street, D02 KF80  
**CATALOGUE:** online at whytes.ie or €10 by post

38 Molesworth Street, Dublin 2, D02 KF80  
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