

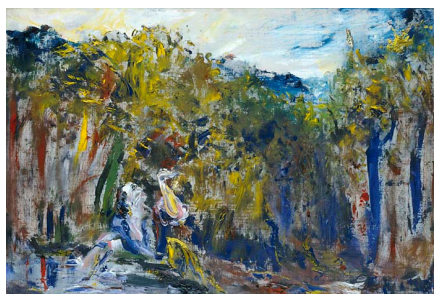
# Waddington Galleries

## PRESS RELEASE

### Jack B. Yeats

#### Paintings, Watercolours and Drawings

16 November – 17 December 2005



Glory to the Brave Singer 1950

*"The painter's vision has not to be translated into words; if he has seen his vision clearly and if his hand is sure, he can give us his vision as it came to him, and painting can reach as high as men can reach."*

Jack B. Yeats

The exhibition focuses on a selection of eighteen oil paintings, nine watercolours and three drawings, by Jack B. Yeats, offering an overview of his artistic practice and development within each media.

Yeats painted his first landscape in oil in 1907, illustrating his country's nature as in "A Windblown Tree, Roundstone" (1916). In his later oil paintings for example "Glory to the Brave Singer" (1950) Yeats employs an expressionistic almost abstract style but he retains the humanity and poetry of his subject. The painting is dominated by the figure of a man lying in a forest clearing, raised on his right elbow, he gestures towards a singing bird perched in a tree in the top right of the painting. It seems as if Yeats partly abandons the brush, squeezing the paint directly onto the canvas, using a palette knife or end of the brush to create energetic strokes, which alone distinguish the figure from the surrounding landscape; Yeats instinctive use of colour seems to merge parts of the portrayed figure until near dissolution with its immediate environment, man and nature becoming one.

Prior to working in oil Yeats established himself as an illustrator for journals and other publications. His watercolours capture "the living ginger in life" (Yeats) by vividly depicting scenes from everyday life in his native country, Ireland; for instance men at the horse races and in the boxing halls. In his early watercolours visual narratives are created through delicately sketched figures and loosely flowing, lucid paint. In the large composition "The First Time Round" (1903) Yeats illustrates the bustling activity of a strand race. Captured in dynamic outlines with solid colours, horses speed past the coloured flags, while a large crowd watches and enjoys the side entertainment near the whiskey tents. Until his death in 1957, Yeats created human images of optimism and compassion, real experience and imagination knit together in uplifting, colourful energy.

Born in London in 1871, Yeats spent his later childhood in Sligo. After attending art schools in London, he returned to Ireland in 1910, moving to Dublin in 1917 where he lived for the rest of his life. Yeats exhibited regularly nationally and internationally from 1885 onwards, with his first solo show of watercolours at the Clifford Gallery, London in 1897. Exhibitions followed at the Royal Hibernian Academy, in Dublin; The Salon des Independents, Paris, The Armory Show, New York, the National Gallery, London. A retrospective was held at the National College of Art, Dublin (1945), Temple Newsam House, Leeds, the Tate Gallery, London (1948), and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (1951). From the 1940s onwards Victor Waddington became Yeats' dealer and close friend. Yeats was appointed a governor of the National Gallery of Ireland in 1939 and in 1940 elected a member of the London Group. Following the artist's death in 1955, major exhibitions have been held worldwide, including a centenary exhibition at the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin (1971), and most recently at Manchester City Art Galleries (1996). This current exhibition has been organised jointly with Theo Waddington of the Irish Art Project.

A fully illustrated catalogue with a text by Paul Durcan will accompany this exhibition.

For further information and images, please contact Louise Kybert.

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