

IRISH CUBISM

The Rediscovery of Form

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Cubism was a revolutionary style of painting which had developed in Europe. It was developing there for about 30 years before its first effects were felt in Ireland. The idea of taking a form and placing it in an abstract background can be traced to remote places such as for example Nepal where artists drew on cave walls. The early Christian period in Ireland is also an example of this Symbolism which was used to a great extent during this time. Symbols from both the old and new Testament were employed. An upright finger was a symbol of judgement, Christ was represented as the good shepherd, and also we find images of the good shepherd carrying the lamb-spirit among his heavenly flock of sheep.

Cubist influences were brought to Ireland by Mainie Jellett and Evie Hone also Mary Swanzy, all of whom I will be dealing with in this thesis. Hone and Jellett persuaded Albert Gleizes, an important figure of the art world in Paris, to take them on as his pupils in 1921 - he agreed. These Irish artists played a large role in the development of Cubist ideas. Their presence in Gleizes' studio encouraged him to check his every brush-stroke; and to analyse what he was trying to achieve in his painting during the years 1921-1931. Mary Swanzy also studied in Paris - though not really impressed with the French schools, Swanzy's Cubism was not as conceptual as Hones and Jelletts. She employed realistic objects, which she then fragmented and distorted. The latter was conceptual - as they experimented with abstract forms, the aim of these experiments being to achieve a geometric harmony among the forms. They enjoyed the idea of painting without subject-matter. It is important at this point to take a brief look at the background of the Cubist movement.

The main aim of Cubism was to reduce natural forms down to their geometric equivalent - squares, triangles etc. The Cubist movement was initially a reaction against Impressionism. During the Impressionist movement, artist's allowed themselves a great deal of freedom when painting subject-matter. The subject-matter was very important up to Cubist times as the artist felt obliged to use realistic images in his art. A revolution was desperately needed to remind the artist about the basic principals involved in painting - subject-matter had gained such importance.

Cezanne was a principal figure in this revolution, Cezanne's idea was to develop new and important principals on structure. Braque developed Cezanne's ideas much further and paved the way for Cubism. He was influenced by that master's l'estaques landscapes and decided to paint there in the Summer of 1908. Braque was not interested in realistically imitating the forms he saw in front of him. He set up forms of his own, using nature as the starting point. He imposed his own vision on the landscape.

Meanwhile Picasso was also developing his Cubism. He began working on figure paintings which were influenced to a great extent by negro sculptures. Braque and Picasso shared the same ideas. They also used similar shapes in their paintings - pipes, jugs and musical instruments. Neutral colour was used to make these shapes coherent. Gris, Leger and Gleizes were also developing their ideas.

Albert Gleizes - who I will be dealing with in Chapter 1, was influenced by the very early Cubist movement. His ideas were different to the other Cubists. He was interested in the idea of a totally abstract art, which would be based on form alone. He invented these forms in his studio.

He is quoted as saying about his work - the development of
"It is not dependent on the arbitrary or picturesque, nor
the constant effort to jake up the appearance of things" *

The Cubist period was a time of change. Many revolutionary ideas were developed. The idea of translating and rotating elements, which will be discussed during the course of this thesis. The new perspective, which allowed objects to be viewed from a number of vantage points at the same time. Objects were reduced to geometric shapes. The Irish Cubists introduced these ideas to this country. Painting was liberated from the importance of subject-matter. Movement was also introduced - this was achieved by imposing one form on another resulting in a lively movement; thus adding a whole new dimension to painting.

The aim of this thesis is to show the implications Cubism had on Irish art. I will be discussing the work of the above mentioned artists. Cubism was not received very well in Ireland. The Royal Hibernian Academy hindered the development of "modern" painting in Ireland. Hone's and Jellett's paintings were excluded from established shows especially the R.H.A. These artists did not imitate what they saw abroad, they interpreted it in their own unique way, though they were open to influences. Hone and Jellett employed religious imagery and Celtic decoration. The aim was to equate the principals of Irish Celtic Art with that of two dimensional 20th Century Abstract Art. They adapted the Cubist style of painting to suit their own needs.

*: Quoted from Mainie Jellett "An Artist's Vision".

Edited by Elaine MacCarville, Page 30.

Chapter 1 deals with Mainie Jellett and the development of her work. The influence of Albert Gleizes is also important. Chapter 2 deals with Jellett's life long friend Evie Hone and shows the Cubist influence in her work together with the extension of her work into the area of stained glass. Chapter 3 shows another Cubist painter, Mary Swanzy who travelled a great deal during her life.

I will be discussing the various stages of development in all these artist's work and showing the strong Cubist tendencies inherent in their paintings.

CHAPTER 1 : Mainie Jellett

CHAPTER 1

Mainie Jellett and Evie Hone went to study in Paris in 1920. Two great names in the arts at this time were - Andre l'Hote and Albert Gleizes. These two artists had different ideas about their art.

Andre l'hote was afraid to make the big break away from representational art. His work was semi-abstract. In his work, he never disguardd subject. He painted natural objects by breaking the subject into a series of Cube shapes on which other forms were developed. Albert Gleizes allowed a great deal of freedom to the laws of painting. He believed that subject-matter was unimportant - painting was no longer a copy of what was in front of the artist. A painting was a direct statement - the artist making a valid point. In the case of Gleizes he was working with form. Gleizes broke his objects into a series of forms; these forms were then collected and reassembled. He also worked on the idea of overlapping planes. Gleizes also played a large role in the development of the new style of perspective, which allowed the spectator to view an object from many different angles at the same time. Painting without subject-matter was of the utmost importance. Colour and rhythm were important factors in achieving this.

Gleizes believed in the importance of giving movement and rhythm among the shapes he placed on the canvas. The task the artist had in hand was - to turn the blank canvas into a space. Gleizes loved the idea of the many possibilities of movement all around the surface of the canvas. He believed that there was too much importance attached to the movement of the eye towards the vanishing points.

Translation and rotation was a new device introduced by Gleizes. In a letter to Evie Hone, written in 1922, he describes this new device as - " a swinging movement of a chosen plane surface and by the flat surface moving to the front and to the back, to the right and to the left. By synthesising these two exercises and taking more complex forms until you reach curves. This movement gave a new dimension to painting and created new interesting effects". Colour was a factor in this new development, artists painted in the colours of the rainbow.

Mainie Jellett and Evie Hone played a great role in the development of this idea.

In his tribute to Mainie Jellett, "Homage à Mainie Jellett", Gleizes writes - "Mainie Jellett, an Irish woman of innate quality, a woman who belonged to painting never contradicted herself. Through her passion for projecting her art, she with her friend Evie Hone whose name is inseparable from hers, was one of the first to understand all that was implied of authentic purity and true reality in the first attempts at the liberation of painting through elimination of classical subject".

Albert Gleizes, and the two Irish artists experimented in the creation of non-representational elements. These elements were a group of shapes which represented the figure. They were interested in bringing about a geometric harmony. This harmony was achieved by working on a rectangular plane which they translated and rotated. This was an important solution on the problem with space. Renaissance perspective was totally out of the question.

Before advancing any further with this thesis, let us not neglect the importance of another figure in Paris at this time - Andre l'Hote. l'Hote too helped in the development of Cubism though not to the extent of Gleizes; he had an influence on the art world in Paris for 25 years. Life painting was of utmost importance in l'Hote's Academy. He encouraged the students to simplify drawings of the model into a series of forms. A geometric pattern was evolved from the rhythms inherent in the model. Other forms could then be assembled on this pattern - for example a landscape. Straight lines were contrasted with curves, and hot colours with cold colours.

The Art of the Renaissance was a major influence on l'Hote, he encouraged his students to look at the paintings of the old masters for inspiration. l'Hote, unlike Gleizes, insisted that his student base their work on natural forms. These natural forms then acted as a stepping stone towards something completely different - they were not to be an end in themselves. l'Hote's art was trapped somewhere between Cubist ideals and Impressionism. He never wanted to take the giant step in discarding natural forms.

Mainie Jellett, whose name has already been mentioned several times was influenced by Paris and it's two great teachers. Jellett was born in Dublin in April 1897. She received her first lessons in painting from Elizabeth Yeats, who was the daughter of the painter Jack B. Years. She was taught by William Orphen at the School of Art where she won the prizes available at the time - The Taylor Art Scholarship and The Taylor Art Prize. After finishing Art School in Dublin, she then went to London where she studied under William Sickert at the Westminster School. It was in London that she met her life-long friend Evie Hone. They were drawn towards the Cubist movement and in 1920 they went to Paris.

Jellett was thankful for the early training given to her by l'Hote and is quoted as saying "Definition of My Art" -

"With l'Hote I learned to use natural forms as a starting point towards the creation of form for its own sake; to use colour with the knowledge of its great potential force, and to produce work based on a knowledge of rhythmical form and organic colour, groping towards the conception of a picture being a creative organic whole but still based on a realistic form". *

l'Hote showed Jellett that the traditions which were found in the paintings of the past, could be adapted and re-expressed in her paintings. Both Irish Artists worked with l'Hote for a year. Jellett and Hone were now anxious to advance their painting even further into Cubist abstraction.

Most of Jellett's paintings were developed from a central point - in which coloured shapes are held together by the rhythm of line. One of the reasons why Jellett's paintings have such depth and intensity is because she understands very clearly the basic principals of light and shade in the application of colour. Jellett regarded her most important work - her paintings, which were based on religious subjects but treated in a symbolic manner without any hint of realism.

She became interested in painting religious subjects around 1940. She reinterpreted Renaissance Nativities and Pietas. These were simple paintings based on combinations of flat shapes and colours.

* : Quoted from Mainie Jellett "An Artist's Vision".

In "Pieta", (Fig. 1), we have a classical subject treated in her own unique manner. The centre of the composition is dominated by the figure of the dead Christ lying in his Mother's arms. To the right of the picture we have several figures praying over the dead body. Jellett breaks down the forms inherent in each figures into a series of smaller forms. Movement is also achieved in the painting by imposing one form or another. She breaks down her subjects into a series of forms and planes which are then reassembled and sometimes overlapped. There is a gentle blending of colour within each form. In "Ninth Hour", (Fig. 2), (1939), Jellett continues with the same idea of the previous painting this time using a much more subdued palette. The colours used are greens and browns mixed with some brighter hues.

In "Nativity", (Fig. 3), 1941, Jellett uses a most intense palette. She finds the rhythms and movement inherent in the figures and develops these. The balancing of the rhythms in the picture is supported by the intensity of colour. Her investigations take on a symbolist feel. Jellett was opposed to the materialism of the late Renaissance and she saw Cubism as a revolt against this materialism.

Jellett was not interested in exploring the material objects as Braque and Picasso did, her work was much more conceptional, she was interested in giving her paintings a spiritual significance. The strong blues, and reds used in this painting, express the passion which is always associated with the birth of Christ.

"Homage to Fra Angelico", (Fig. 4), was her reworking of Angelico's painting in which we have the Coronation of the Virgin. In her version she takes the essential rhythms and

Fig. 1. : "PIETA" - Oil on Canvas.
Mainie Jellett.



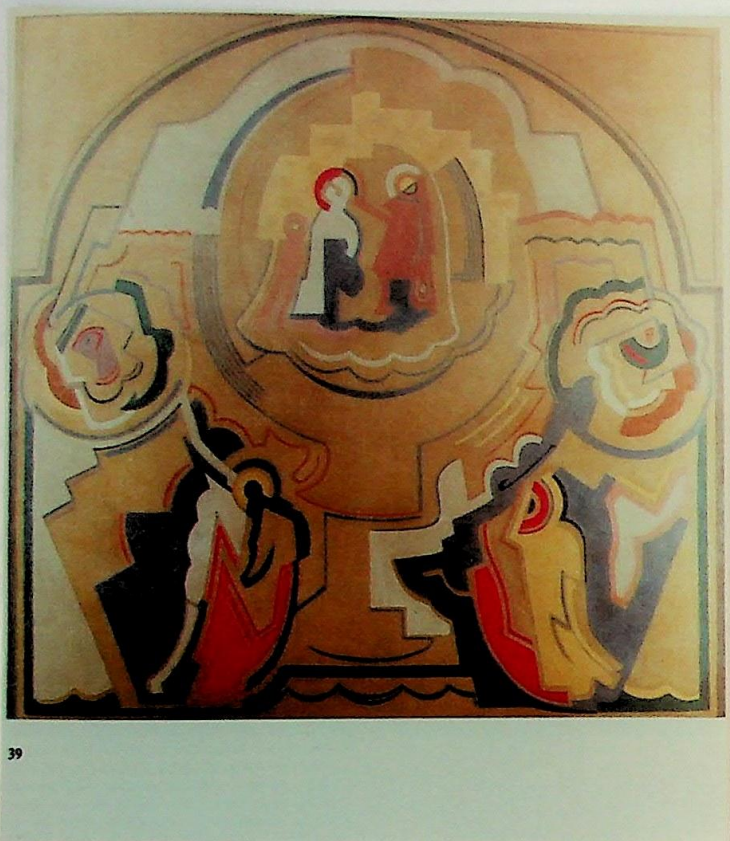
Fig. 2. : "NINTH HOUR" - Oil on Canvas.
Mainie Jellett.



Fig. 3. : "NATIVITY" - Oil on Canvas.
Mainie Jellett.



Fig. 4 : "HOMAGE TO FRA ANGELICO" - Oil on Canvas.
Mainie Jellett.



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If we look at Jellett's early work, we can see the natural progression towards her religious paintings, which she always regarded as being her most important works.

"Head of a Girl" (Fig. 5), 1922, a very early drawing by Jellett shows the artist beginning to apply Cubist theories, i.e. reducing figures down to their basic geometric equivalents.

"Rhythm of a Dove" (Fig. 6), is an important early drawing by Jellett which shows a link with early Christian Art. The sinuous spiral shapes, and irregular shapes are very similar to those employed in early Christian Art. These shapes resemble those on the decorated stone in front of the

* : Quoted from Mainie Jellett "An Artist's Vision".
Edited by Elaine MacCarrillo.

develops these. The painting is a realisation of her aim which was to "search into the inner rhythms and constructions of natural forms; to create on their pattern, to make a work of art a natural creation, complete in itself, based on the eternal laws of balanced harmony and ordered movement". *

In this painting, Jellett does not bother with any extraneous details, such as facial features or even hands, yet she conveys something of the devotional quality that gives Fra Angelico's painting its appeal.

She describes qualities implicit in picture-making, as being akin to the old Celtic tradition of the Christian era of Italy and France and the Eastern tradition of Egypt, India, China and Japan.

If we look at Jellett's early work, we can see the natural progression towards her religious paintings, which she always regarded as being her most important works.

"Head of a Girl" (Fig. 5), 1922, a very early drawing by Jellett shows the artist beginning to apply Cubist theories, i.e. reducing figures down to their basic geometric equivalents.

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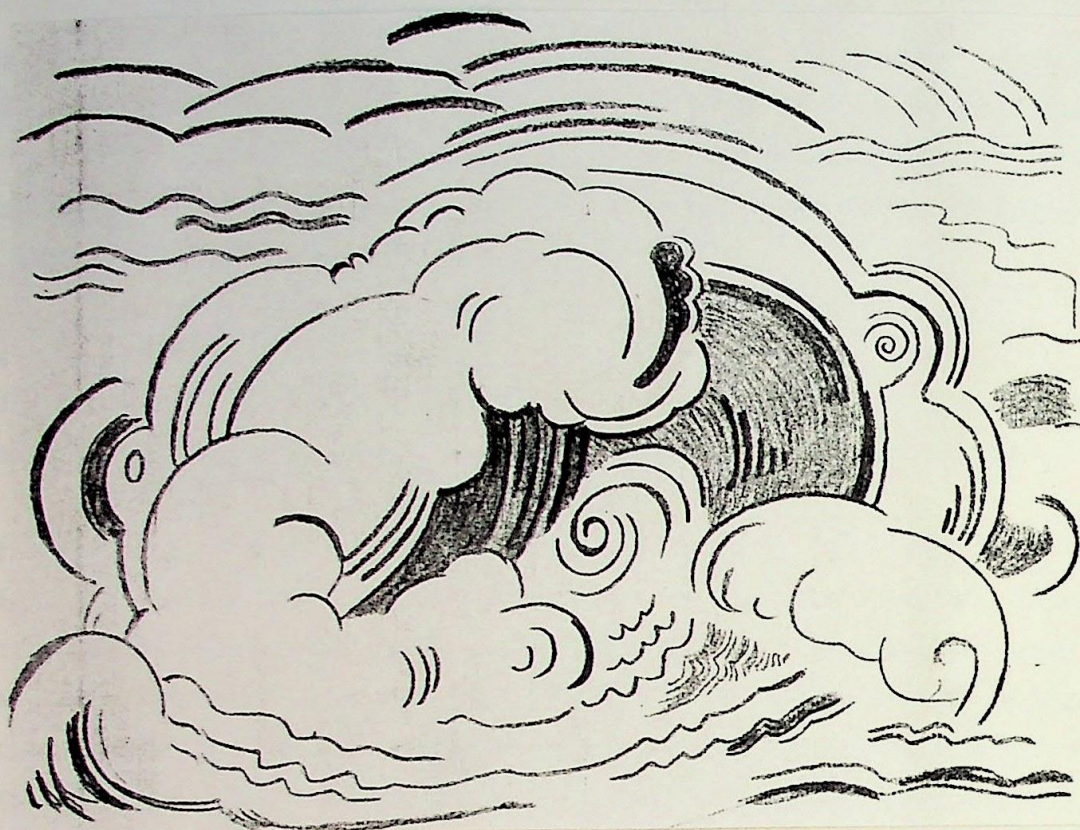
* : Quoted from Mainie Jellett "An Artist's Vision".

Edited by Elaine MacCarville.

Fig. 5 : "HEAD OF A GIRL"
Drawing by Mainie Jellett.



Fig. 6 : "RHYTHM OF A WAVE"
Drawing by Mainie Jellett.



entrance to the Tomb of the Newgrange Burial Chamber. Other geometrical shapes are also present in both - zig zags, and wavy lines. There is a contrast between decorated and undecorated areas, thus giving an interesting play between both areas. Rhythm are of utmost importance.

Jellett is quoted as saying -

"A picture to me is the harmonious filling of a space with rhythmic forms, the subject being of secondary importance."*

In the painting "Sea Rhythm" (Fig. 7), 1939. Jellett again is concerned with rhythm. The artist contrasts the various rhythms inherent in the sea. She imposes her vision on what she sees in front of her, nature is used as a starting point to trigger off something completely different. She reduces the rhythms to simple shapes which radiate from the centre of the composition. The palette consists of blues and greens and there is an interplay between all the areas. Smaller dots of colour are contrasted with the sweeping shapes of the sea. Again a line can be drawn parallel to early Christian art and Jellett's work with the spirals and curve shapes. She does not copy early art, her paintings are modern expressions, however; they are constructed along the same lines as the early paintings. They are independent and have an life of their own. In her work now, Jellett is not really preoccupied with subject-matter - the most important factors to this artist are form and colour.

Her paintings are not an imitation of nature - they stand on their own. They are not a photographic imitation. The artist is now free to create form; this was indeed a revolution - form has finally been rediscovered.

* : Quoted from Mainie Jellett - "An Artist's Vision",
Page 60.

Fig. 7 : "SEA RHYTHM" - Oil on Canvas
Mainie Jellett.



In "Sea Horses" (Fig. 8), Jellett uses a beautiful rhythm of line as she captures the galloping movements of the horses. Jellett wanted her work to produce an emotional reaction on the spectator and wanted to make a direct statement.

The idea that the Artist was special and was separated from everybody annoyed Jellett. In 1938, she was asked by the Irish Government to paint murals for the Irish Pavillion at the Glasgow Industrial Exhibition in 1938 and New York in 1939. These murals were not representational among the subject titles were "Turf Cutting" and "Horses Grazing". The main theme running in all the murals was the building up of Ireland. An important point here is that the artist leaves behind the idea of painting without a subject for a brief while. But at the same time the murals are in no way representational - they are symbolic. An important aspect of these murals is that they show a new angle in Jellett's work, that is the introduction of a very delicate line possibly influenced by Chinese Art. We also see the use of the human figure.

In the murals, Jellett conveys the bleakness of the western landscape "Turf Cutting", (Fig. 9), shows a group of figures working in a bog. There is an interesting contrast between the rhythms of the figures and the road which winds in to the distance. Jellett conveys the feeling of a very productive activity in the western landscape. "Fishing from a Currach" (Fig. 10), shows two figures in a Currach. In this mural, Jellett contrasts many rhythms. The "S Shaped" rhythm in the centre of the composition is contrasted with an opposing rhythm created by one of the oars. Jellett breaks down the rhythms within the body of the Currach in the same way as those in the water. The murals were important because they showed how versatile an artist Jellett really was.

Fig. 8 : "SEA HORSES" - Oil on Canvas
Mainie Jellett.



Fig. 9 : "TURF CUTTING"

Drawing for Mural for Irish Pavillion in
Industrial Exhibition in Glasgow and New York.
Mainie Jellett.



Fig. 10 : "FISHING FROM A CURRACH"
Drawing for Mural for Irish Pavillion in
Industrial Exhibition in Glasgow and New York.
Mainie Jellett.



Jellett also extended her work to theatrical decor. She became involved with the ballet production of "Puck Fair". "Going to Puck Fair" (Fig. 11), captures the excitement of the Kerry Festival. Women, horses and caravans are contained in the composition. There is a great feeling of energy and excitement. A caravan leads the procession followed by figures on horseback. Jellett employs a variety of lines - which are in no way as delicate as those used in the Glasgow Murals. Forms are much stronger and bolder. Her use of colour is also very strong. There is a thrust towards the left-hand side of the picture.

Evie Hone - with whom I will be dealing with in detail in Chapter 2 wrote on the occasion of an exhibition by Mainie Jellett-

"The non-realistic painter, not satisfied with portraying the outward appearances of objects in their transition, fugitive aspect, conscious of the difference between the figure of an object (the immobile statue appearance of that object in space) and the form the living moving factor, presents a work which is a living organism with a form and life of its own independent of space and time in relation to those who respond to it, because painted with respect for the fundamental laws which are known to be the basis of creative and all human life"*

The forms in "Going to Puck Fair" are strong and daring and indeed have a life of their own. This same trend is evident in Jellett's work and paved the way for her religious paintings which she set about to paint after the Glasgow Murals. These paintings have already been discussed.

* : Quoted from Mainie Jellett, "An Artist's Vision",
Edited by Elaine MacCarville, Page 72.

Fig. 11 : "GOING TO PUCK FAIR"
Design for Ballet Production of "Puck Fair"
Mainie Jellett.



These paintings were the climax of all Jellett's theories and were executed in the last year before Jellett's death. Her works were a reaction to what came before them where artists hinted and suggested forms. The Impressionist movement was an example of this - where forms were half hidden and bathed in light; and artists were more interested in painting the light. However in Mainie Jellett, we have an artist who makes direct strong statements and no longer hints and suggests forms.

Mainie Jellett was one of Ireland's most important artists. She was the complete master of the late synthetic Cubism. Albert Gleizes had a great influence on her work. She found his theories on the spiritual value of shape and colour to be an inspiration in her work during her life. She played a large role in the rediscovery of form. She was one of a new group of artists who believed that too much importance was attached to subject-matter and not enough to the basic artistic considerations. Her paintings were direct strong statements in which she was interested in searching for inner rhythms; her work had form and life of its own, and was an independent statement.

In Chapter 2, I will be dealing with Evie Hone, the life-long friend of Mainie Jellett, who also helped to develop Irish Cubism.

CHAPTER 2 : Evie Hone

CHAPTER 2

Evie Hone's father was descended from the brother of Nathaniel Hone - the 18th Century painter. The Hone name has always been important in the history of Irish Art. Nathaniel Hone was one of the founder members of the Royal Academy in London. The second Nathaniel Hone was the important painter who spent 17 years painting in France and was friends with Corot and Manet.

Evie Hone was a brilliant religious painter who was also a stained glass artist. Her work changed considerably during her lifetime. She came under the influence of Cubism and was also influenced by Georges Roualt. Her religious work of the 1930's shows the influence - she employs an expressionistic line which owes a great deal to Roualt. When Roualt illustrated "The Life of Christ", Hone constantly looked towards it for inspiration. She enrolled in the Byan Shaw School of Art in London just before World War 1. In 1918 she studied briefly under William Sickert. It was during these years that she was encouraged to go to Paris. She, like Jellett, studied for a short while under l'Hote. She then moved to Albert Gleizes in Paris. In 1933, Hone began to work in stained glass. Sarah Purser, a great portrait painter in Dublin helped to introduce Hone to this new medium. Purser was involved with a group known as "An Túr Gloine" (The Glass Tower). While working with this group, Hone produced many fine works. The King's Hospital in Dublin and Tara Church contain examples of her work.

In the 1920's, Hone experimented with non-descript forms in her work. During this time she was influenced by Albert Gleizes. She, together with Jellett was interested in discovering form and the basic principals involved in

painting. She experimented with abstract forms, which she created in her studio. The aim of her experiments was to bring about a geometric harmony among these forms. By 1924, Hone and Jellett were exhibiting regularly in the Dublin Painters Gallery in Stephen's Green. And also in the Salon des Independents in Paris. This new style of painting came as a shock to the Dublin of the time, which had come to accept a more academic style of painting. These Irish Cubist paintings were described by the critics as being merely decorations. This I think was due to the fact that the Dublin of the time was so narrow-minded and unaware of what Hone and Jellett were trying to achieve in their paintings.

Hone's approach to her art was both modern and constructive. She, like Jellett was interested in producing a work of art in which all illustrative elements would be eliminated. She refused to give her Cubist paintings specific titles as she felt that in so doing, the spectator would have a preconceived idea about her work. She merely refers to her paintings as compositions. In these compositions, she plays about with a group of elements aiming to achieve a harmony within the group. All the forms in her paintings are given an equal amount of attention. She does not spend more time building up one form at the expense of another. No sections of her compositions are left undeveloped. This was indeed a revolution. Many painters previous to this tended to concentrate on certain aspects of their paintings. An example of this would be portrait painters such as Rembrandt who concentrated on painting the hands and the face; the remainder of the figure would be blocked out or in partial darkness. Indeed some artists went as far as employing other artists to paint what they regarded as being the secondary parts of their paintings. In these Cubist painters, we have artists whose primary concern is that each

each section of their painting should work successfully - the end result being a harmony of shape and form.

With Albert Gleizes, Hone, like Jellett searched for the essential forms, disciplining herself as much as possible. She wanted to produce a work of art which had an aesthetic interest. This, she felt was achieved by - filling a given space with forms, colours and line, all of which worked together as a unit. The colours used could be really varied. In this aspect she differed from Jellett. Hone found herself attracted to dark, rich colours. This was a moodier type of painting. She used a large number of greens and greys. Olive green was a particular favourite of Hones.

A key to achieving the harmony so sought after by Hone was by echoing colour and rhythms throughout the compositions. This, she had learnt from Gleizes. Her work is always marked by an interesting arrangement of elements. In the painting "Composition", (Fig. 12), we find Hone experimenting with various non descript elements.

The elements radiate from the centre of the composition. She employs large areas of flat colour. She was very much concerned with the effects of colour and line. She uses a rich palette. This concern with abstract line and colour would prove to be a perfect foundation for her work in stained glass. The clear sharp shapes in this composition produce a design which is coherent. She was not interested in painting naturalistic elements at this time in her career. Unimportant elements were also disregarded. The top priority was structure. The other composition (Fig. 13), (Gouache on paper) shows Hone using a brighter palette - greens and yellows. In this work also, she has achieved that perfect harmony so sought after. Hone expressed the

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Fig. 12 : "COMPOSITION" - Gouache on Paper
Evie Hone.

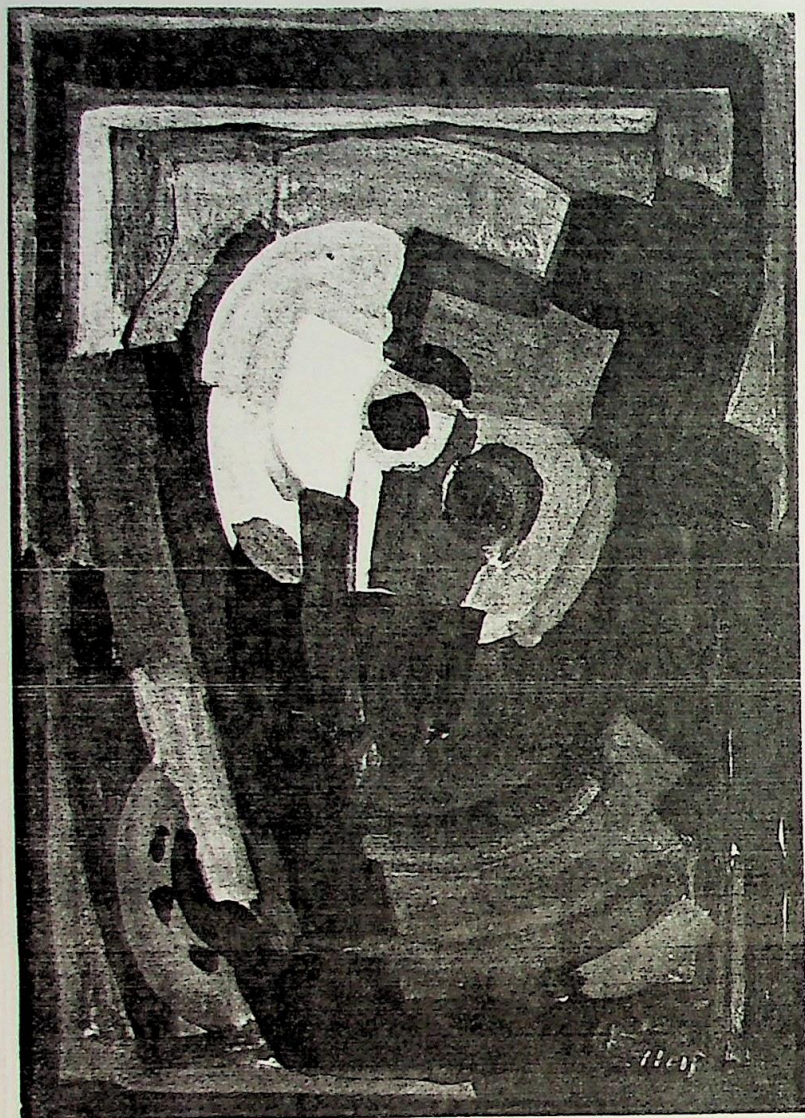


Fig. 13 : "COMPOSITION" - Pencil and Gouache on Paper
Evie Hone.



concept of creating something in her work. She invented these forms in her studio - they were not dependent on nature or on the picturesque. She then reduced these forms down to the essential.

In her work, Hone deals with the problem of space, very successfully. There is an interesting movement from the centre of the composition, in both works, In this aspect, she was greatly influenced by Gleizes. Gleizes loved the idea of movement around the various areas of the canvas. There were far more possibilities of movement, rather than just the movement of the eye towards the vanishing points. Hone, also employs the device of translation and rotation just as Jellett did, thus creating lively movements within the space of the canvas.

Painting had now freed itself from the great importance that was attached to subject-matter. There were many other important considerations such as - form, structure, line, composition and movement. These considerations were rediscovered during the 1920's and early 30's. Hone and Jellett played a large role in the rediscovery. They called to mind the fact that the artist need not paint unimportant details. They invented abstract forms in their studios and used those forms for their experiments. They created a geometric harmony among the forms. Movement was created by imposing one form on another. Subject-matter was no longer the most important aspect of a painting, there were other considerations. Cubist painting was only dependent on its own laws which were clearly outlined. It was a period of self-discipline, an important time and these Irish artists were at the very core of it all.

In the 1940's a change was occurring in Hone's painting. She believed that she had experimented enough with non-descript forms. Her forms now became more representational, however, she still makes a strong statement about shape and colour. All the forms in her paintings have a direct function and are in no way extraneous. Her great understanding of colour and rhythm, and her early training under Gleizes remained a constant influence in her work.

She continued painting still-lives, landscapes, and religious subjects all her life. "Still Life with Various Objects Before a Window" (Fig. 14.A), is a very successful composition. In this work she uses many realistic elements - lamps, jugs and books, which are all placed before a window. This painting demonstrates Hone's great ability in the building up of forms. This great knowledge was gained during her strong Cubist period, during which time she carried out many experiments. Structure and form are very strong statements. There is a freshness of expression. She does not hint at the existence of these forms - they are painted very strongly. She demonstrates her great knowledge of composition, of which she learnt a great deal about, in the early years in Paris. She employs very strong brushwork in the painting of the elements contrasting broad sweeping areas, with smaller strokes. Her great understanding of light and shade comes across very strongly.

"Landscape, Lough Mask", (Fig. 14.B), and "Ruin and Graveyard by the Sea", were also painted around this time. In these landscapes, she treats the elements in a similar way to the previous still-life. In "Ruin and Graveyard by the Sea", (Fig. 15). Hone is concerned with structure and shape, elements of her Cubist paintings come through, structure is conveyed using bold brushstrokes, line is also very important. In this work, she reduces the forms to flat

Fig. 14. A. "STILL LIFE WITH VARIOUS OBJECTS BEFORE A WINDOW"
Evie Hone.



Fig. 14. B. "LANDSCAPE, LOUGH MASK"
Evie Hone.



Fig. 15 "RUIN AND GRAVEYARD BY THE SEA" - Oil on Canvas.
Evie Hone.



area of colour; the daring brushstrokes conveying structure. The composition is also worth noting, as the elements radiate around a larger shape. Echoes of her Cubist years. Extraneous details are again eliminated, she has not allowed herself to become involved with the painting of the surfaces, or decoration. She strongly defines each form, yet not allowing subject-matter to dominate. It is a very well worked out composition showing Hone's remarkable knowledge of form.

"Landscape, Lough Mask", is also very successful. Hone uses a daring composition; the work shows an artist very much at home with her technique of painting. She employs a large number of marks, conveying the essence of her subject-matter. Strong, bold forms dominate the composition; all of which work successfully together. The forms are not as rigid as those in the previous painting, but the underlying structure is important. Again, we see Hone's great knowledge of light and shade. Neither of these two works could be described as being picturesque - they are well thought out compositions in which the artist makes a strong statement.

Hone was a very religious person and we find a large number of religious themes running through her work "Christ Meets His Blessed Mother", (Fig. 16), and "The Crucifixion", (Fig. 17), are two examples. "The Crucifixion" is based on a stone carving in Kells Churchyard. It is a pen and ink drawing in which Hone reduces her subjects to simple flat shapes. She exploits line, employing a heavy black line. We no longer have non-descript elements in her work. However, the elements she employs are well disciplined with the minimum amount of detail. In "Christ Meets His Blessed Mother", Hone exploits flat areas of colour in a painterly manner. The houses in the background are reduced to square

Fig. 16 "CHRIST MEETS HIS BLESSED MOTHER" - Oil on Canvas.
Evie Hone.



Fig. 17 "THE CRUCIFIXION" - Pen and Ink Drawing
Evie Hone.



shapes. The artist has not involved herself in painting the details of the windows and doors - they are simplified to flat shapes. The figures of Christ and His Mother are dominated by strong lines enclosing areas of flat colour applied in a painterly manner. Facial features, also hands and feet are simplified. Hone exploits the shapes inherent in the halos. The large shape of the cross tends to dominate the whole composition. There is an influence of early Irish stone carvings, with the use of simple shapes. There is almost a "primitive" feel to the whole painting. Atmosphere and movement are not important to Hone in these works. She is much more interested in the analysis of forms. The rhythm of line is also a concern for Hone. These works, among others, together with her early training under Gleizes acted as a foundation for her work in stained glass. Her work in this new medium was an extension of her ideas in painting.

In this new medium, she developed rhythm in a new way - using arrangements of coloured glass. The lead lines necessary in holding the pieces of glass together provided the artist with simple lines which enclosed coloured glass. She retains the brilliance of the glass producing beautiful tones. Even in the early days under Gleizes, Hone always found herself interested in rich colour. Jellett was more interested in brilliant hues often using the colours of the rainbow. In the area of stained glass as with her painting, Hone does not involve herself with extraneous detail. She avoided marginal borders and floral motifs, often associated with stained glass. She detested compositions which were cluttered with non essential elements and strived for a harmony among elements she used. In her stained glass there is a harmony inherent within the interlocking coloured pieces of glass, "My Four Green Fields", is one of her most effective pieces of work, while being quite simple. Her

forms are reduced to simple areas of coloured glass enclosed by the lead lines, which she exploits to the full.

"The Beatitudes", (Fig. 18), and "Our Lady on the Hill", (Fig. 19), are well executed works. In the latter, Hone breaks down the figure of our lady in to well defined areas. She exploits the folds of the drapery the figure wears, in each of these areas. In the larger glass shapes, she finds forms which interest her and develops these such as plants and also the grass. The lead lines still dominate. Again, as is typical of Hone's work, facial features, also hands and feet are treated very simply. "The Beatitudes" is a highly structured arrangement of coloured glass. It portrays the figure of Christ surrounded by several other figures. She exploits the shape inherent in each of these figures, and fragments them in a similar way to the painting. She also breaks down the background in a similar way and both the figures and background blend together. There is an interesting interplay between all the pieces of coloured glass. She repeats various colours, creating a balance. This exercise she had already developed in her painting under Gleizes.

Her stained glass work, was really just an extension of what she was trying to achieve in her paintings. She simplified her forms, developing an interest in line. She combined abstract design with formal statements of religious art. Her studies and probings into abstract art gave Hone a grasp of the fundamentals in stained glass. Her understanding of rhythm and colour is due to her early training in France. It was refreshing to see a new approach to religious art. Hone does not treat the subject in the conventional academic manner - she applies her own unique way of seeing to it. The end result being strong statements. Evie Hone's stained glass career reached a climax with her great work on the

Fig. 18 "THE BEATITUDES" - Stained Glass
Evie Hone.



Fig. 19 "OUR LADY ON THE HILL" - Stained Glass.
Evie Hone.



east window of Eton College Chapel. This is regarded as being her masterpiece, but there are many examples of her work in Irish Churches.

Evie Hone, like Mainie Jellett was a great innovator, she played a large part in the introduction of modernist painting to Ireland. Her years in Paris under Albert Gleizes were extremely important. Gleizes had introduced her to many revolutionary concepts. She, like Gleizes had been interested in form for its own sake. Hone experiments with abstract elements, striving to achieve a balance between all these elements. She disciplined herself painting what she regarded as being the essentials. Extraneous details were eliminated. She found herself attracted to rich colour - olive green being a favourite of hers. There is a real communication of feeling in her work. This first period paved the way for her work in stained glass. She brought a new freshness to the art of stained glass - combining religious subjects with abstract design. The lead lines emphasising shape and form. She was one of the most dedicated artists producing work right up to her death. Evie Hone is an important artist who played a great role in the rediscovery of form. She introduced exciting possibilities to Irish art.

CHAPTER 3 : Mary Swanzy

CHAPTER 3

Mary Swanzy (1882 - 1978), is another Irish artist who was influenced by Cubism. She applied her Cubist vision to a whole range of diverse subject-matter. This Cubist influence remained extremely strong in all her paintings, she travelled a great deal during her life, she lived for almost a century.

Swanzy went to France in 1905, which was around the same time Picasso was beginning to cause a stir among the art world. She exhibited in the Salon des Independents in Paris with Signac and Delauncy. Her early influences while in Ireland included Jack B. Years - she admired his work. She also liked the work of William Leech, but felt it lacked a certain spark. Swanzy, unlike Evie Hone and Mainie Jellett was not really impressed with the methods of teaching in the French schools. She believed that the pupils interfered too much with each others paintings.

Her work has some of its roots in that of William Orphens - she was influenced by his great skill in drawing and draughtsmanship. Yet, she was much more influenced by modernist paintings, especially those she saw in France. She loved the work of the new up and coming French artists - Picasso and Chagall. It is important to state that Swanzy never imitated others. She was very influenced by what was going on at the time. She regarded the Cubist style of painting as being like a breath of fresh air after the strong influence on Academic Art. Swanzy had a very strong personality which, I think came through very clearly in all her paintings.

Before advancing into Swanzy's work, let us pause to look at the background of this great Irish Cubist painter. Swanzy was born in Dublin in 1882. She was very friendly with the painters of the time - Sarah Purser, John B. Years and Naithaniel Hone. She attended the art classes of May Manning, who encouraged her to attend sculpture classes. Her teacher thought that these classes would improve her pupils knowledge of form and thus improve Swanzy's drawing abilities.

Swanzy is quoted as saying -

"You learn that people not only have a face but they also have a back to their heads".

Swanzy's first painting "Portrait of a Girl with Hat", (Fig. 20), was accepted by the R.H.A.. Hone and Osborne encouraged Swanzy to study in France. She left for Paris in 1905. While in Paris she studied under Delaclone for a period of time. Under his guidance, Swanzy drew for great lengths of time. She also worked in the studio of the great French painter Antonio de la Grandara. She enjoyed looking around the Louvre when she found Renoir's paintings to be fascinating.

Swanzy really became aware of modern French painting on a visit to the house of the famous French collector Gertrude Stein. In Stein's house she saw paintings by Cezanne, Braque and Matisse among others. Around this period Swanzy began to find her style of painting being influenced by Cezanne. She returned to Ireland for a brief stay and nearly became a portrait painter. In 1913 she had a one woman show held in Merrion Row. There was a conflict in her work between traditional portraiture - which was expected of her, and the much more experimental work which she found herself attracted towards. She painted portraits up until

Fig. 20 "PORTRAIT OF A CHILD" - Oil on Canvas
Mary Swanzy.



1930, all of which were well received. George Moore, an important figure at the time wrote - "The portrait of her father is conceived in one single harmony".

Swanzy was one of the most dedicated artists and was constantly working and experimenting.

In 1914, Swanzy exhibited in the Salon des Independents with Delauney. She was in Dublin during the 1916 Rising. After the war in 1918, she exhibited views of boats and harbours which were painted in bright airy colours. She exploited the straight lines of the masts and the planes of the sails. These paintings expressed her originality. She also painted landscapes in which she employed very swift brushwork.

In 1921 Swanzy travelled to Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, she became very involved in her work and this was a productive time.

She observed the way of life around her - making crayon sketches of the peasants and market places. A new boldness appears in her work. During her travels her painting changed as did each country she visited. In 1933, she went to Samoa and Hawaii where she became interested in spontaneous painting. Her work then became an explosion of colour and activity.

In 1932 she settled in London where she became interested in Orphism. She executed studies of boats and masts - which were broken up by straight lines and arcs.

Surrealism also proved an influence. In 1943, she returned to Dublin, where she had a one woman show in the Painters

Gallery. She also exhibited three paintings in a major show in London. These were well received and were described as being sincere. Her work was not seen by the public again for as long as 20 years. In 1968, a Retrospective of her work was held. She also exhibited in the Dawson Gallery in 1974.

"I deeply love Ireland, and thought very seriously about going to live and die in it, but I could not stand the narrowness of my life there."

All Swanzy paintings express the joy of life except during the war years when her work reflects the depression of the time.

As already mentioned the Cubist element is very strong in all her paintings. All the forms and structures in her work are derived from a Cubist skeleton/structure under the paint. Her work reflects direct statements though not in a literal way. She applies her original vision to her chosen subject-matter. Her later painting contained a sharp social comment.

Swanzy was a leading figure in the emergence of Cubism in Ireland. She was open to a wide range of influences. Her work reflects the careful draughtsmanship of William Orpen together with the influence of Picasso. Paintings such as "Cubist Landscape with Red Pagoda and Bridge", demonstrate the influence of William Orpen - in this work, she has delicately drawn the back view of the female figures. There is great sensitivity in the line she employs. In "Young Woman with White Bonnet", and also "Young Woman with Flowers", she fragments her subjects in a manner similar to Picasso's. These paintings are discussed in great detail further in the Chapter. Delaunay also proved an influence,

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she employs the lively tones similar to his in many of her paintings to be discussed later in the Chapter. Her Cubism developed as she underwent the influence of different techniques.

"Young Woman with White Hat" (Fig. 21) and "Young Woman with Flowers" (Fig. 22), shows her early knowledge of the Cubist style of painting.

In "Young Woman with Flowers" we have a head and shoulders view of a young girl. The painting shows the strong influence Picasso had on Swanzy. The canvas is fragmented in to a series of shapes in the typical Cubist manner. Swanzy makes the composition more interesting by contrasting the shapes inherent in the canvas with diagonal rays of light. One of these rays illuminates the girls forehead - adding a new dimension. There are floral motifs in the foreground. The colour use is very bright and lively.

In "Young Woman with White Hat", we find another composition similar to the previous one. This was also painted in Paris. Here, again she is influenced by early Cubist paintings which she studied very carefully. She fragments objects in a similar manner to Picasso and Braque. The arc shapes in the hat obtained from fragmentation are also echoed in the neck. In spite of all the activity resulting from the variety of lines, the mood of the whole painting is quite gentle. Swanzy uses rich smooth skin tones. She employs a very delicate line.

Apart from concerning herself with portraits, Swanzy was also involved with abstract Cubist studies. In these works we have paintings of city scenes containing sky-scrapers and amazing buildings. Swanzy employs these dramatic lines she finds in the buildings to a great extent. She also makes great use of other shapes she finds such as circles.

Fig. 21 "YOUNG WOMAN WITH WHITE HAT" - Oil on Canvas
Mary Swanzy.



Fig. 22 "YOUNG WOMAN WITH FLOWERS" - Oil on Canvas
Mary Swanzy.



"Cubist Landscape with Red Pagoda and Bridge", (Fig. 23), is an example of such a painting. This is a usual composition, in which Swanzy attempts to combine very diverse elements. These elements include figurative studies, combined with Cubist elements - it resembles a collage. The composition is dominated by the back view of a female nude. This is a sensitive study influenced possibly by William Orpens draughtsmanship. The outlines of the female nude overlap with classical architecture. Swanzy uses a very soft palette.

All the time, as with Evie Hone and Mainie Jellett, Swanzy is concerned with the importance of form. Analysing it and reducing it to its geometric equivalent.

Swanzy also worked on Cubist landscapes, these date from around 1914. In these paintings, we see an artist with a great knowledge of the Cubist techniques of painting. Swanzy uses nature as a starting point. She is not interested in making an exact copy of what she sees in front of her - she applies her own Cubist vision to her subject. She simplifies and distorts objects in the process. She sometimes places recognisable elements in her compositions. The paintings are brilliantly coloured, never losing their freshness. Swanzy, like Hone, was interested in obtaining a harmony between all the elements she uses. Her Cubist landscapes are carefully executed, and often very mathematical. She treats the subject-matter with great confidence.

There is an interesting special element in all her paintings. The space is fragmented with various types of lines - straight and curved. These lines often overlap - producing arcs and triangles. The solid areas and the special area overlap also. "Cubist Study of Skyscrapers" (Fig. 24), is an example of this. In this work, straight

Fig. 23 "CUBIST LANDSCAPE WITH RED PAGODA + BRIDGE"-
Oil on Canvas
Mary Swanzey.

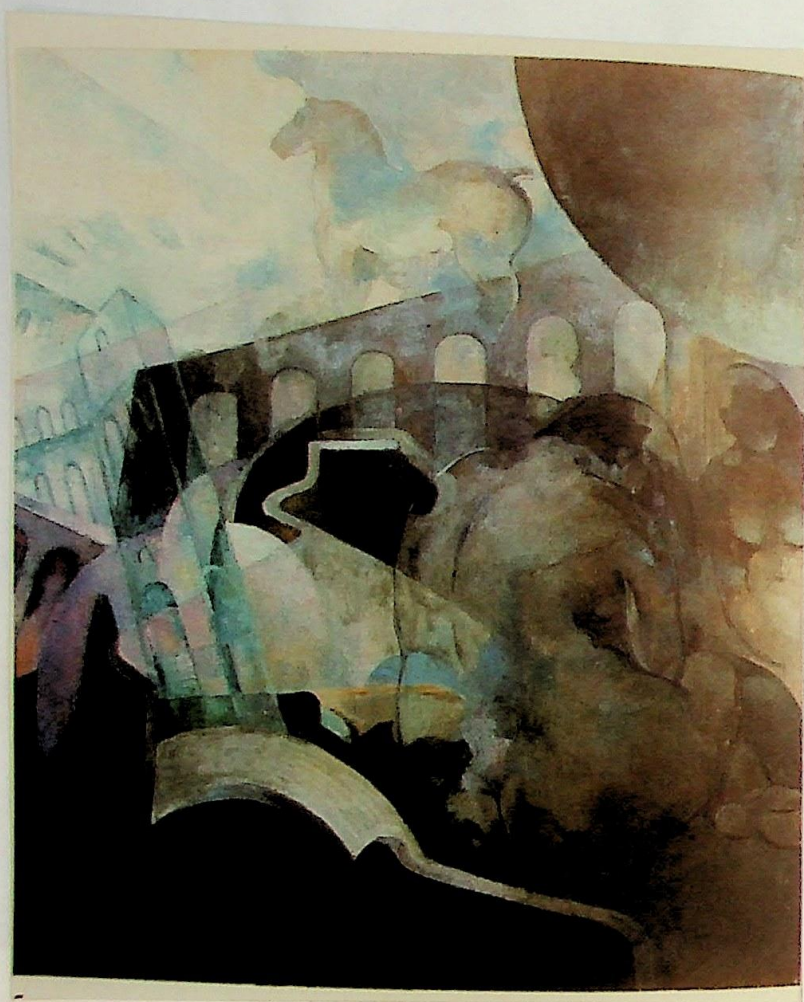


Fig. 24 "CUBIST STUDY OF SKYSCRAPPERS" - Oil on Canvas
Mary Swanzy.



and curved lines run parallel to each other, producing a multitude of shapes - diamonds and triangles. It is unusual for Swanzky to find herself influenced by Picasso's earthy palette, yet in this painting we see this influence, as she uses browns, greys and greens. Here, in this work, Swanzky demonstrates a great discipline in her treatment of the landscape. The forms are carefully thought out. They are crisp and well defined, thus producing a highly ordered composition. These paintings are direct statements on form, though not in a literal way.

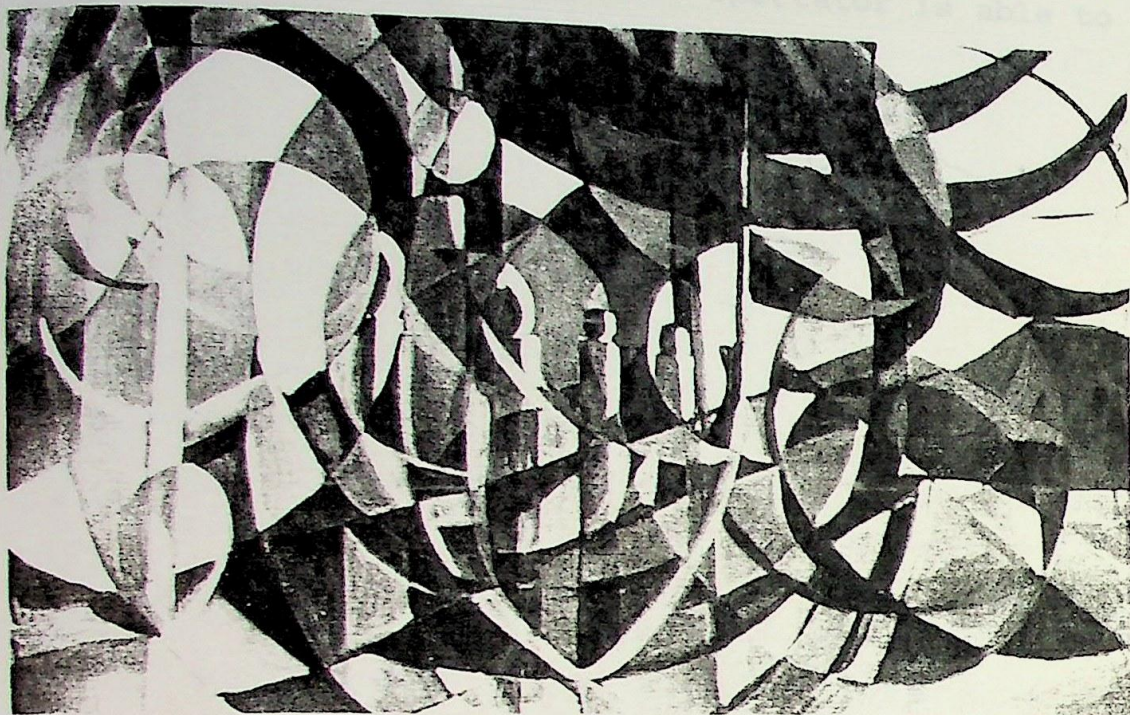
The colour in "Rocky Landscape with Trees" (Fig. 25), is very lively in comparison to the previous painting. The whole mood is very lively. There are floral and leaf motifs together with architectural forms. Light and shade is carefully thought out. A strong shaft of light enters the composition from the top left-hand corner illuminating some of the leaf like forms. This makes these forms much stronger. This same device was employed in some of the earlier portraits. Through the arches, which echo the shape of the leaves, we find traces of architecture. The vertical lines which originate from this architecture provide an interesting contrast with the archs. This is a carefully executed statement on form.

"Cubist Landscape with White Pillars", (Fig. 26), is a further development of the previous painting, showing the artist growing in confidence. The work is highly structured and very mathematical. We have an abundance of sharp well defined forms. These forms are a result of the overlap of arcs and circles. In the midst of these circular movements, we find upright shapes suggesting pillars. These pillars recede in to distance. The presence of these vertical forms prevent the composition from becoming too predictable. The colours employed here, consist of yellows, greens and blues.

Fig. 25 "ROCKY LANDSCAPE WITH TREES" - Oil on Canvas
Mary Swanzy.



Fig. 26 "CUBIST LANDSCAPE WITH WHITE PILLARS" - Oil on Canvas
Mary Swanzy.



The darker areas suggest distance. The spectator is able to see traces of a mountaineous landscape, also the sky. The yellow shapes give the feeling of sunlight.

"Cubist Landscape with Arched Doorway" (Fig. 27), shows Swanzy carefully examining the landscape, and then fragmenting it into geometric forms. These forms are well defined. Again in this work we have diagonal lines and circular shapes intersecting forms. Some of these forms are transparent. A characteristic of these landscapes is the contrast of architectural elements and leaf-like forms. Swanzy often flattens forms, but not at the expense of depth - which is achieved by the careful use of colour.

During this period, Swanzy employed an extreme form of Cubism. All the elements in her painting were flattened and reduced to their geometric equivalent. The paintings were disciplined and nothing was left to chance. Compositions were often tight, but always perfectly balanced. She carried on working in this manner, executing many fine landscapes, some containnig little settlements on hill tops; together with fields and red roofed houses. Forms are of the utmost importance, and he is always aware of structure and composition. Her next series of paintings are less mathematical. The colours in this next group of paintings are very lively, as she contrasts roof tops and the landscape, she captures light and sunshine in these works. Cezanne was proving an influence at the time. We see Swanzy fragmenting forms in a similar way. The brush-stokes also resemble Cezanne's. In some of these works we find Swanzy at her most painterly.

"Landscape with Red Roofed House" is a painting which captures a sunny day. In the background, she breaks down forms in a similar manner to Cezanne. It has a similar quality to Cezanne's Mount Sainte Victorie landscapes.

Fig. 27 "CUBIST LANDSCAPE WITH ARCHED DOORWAY" - Oil on Canvas
Mary Swanzy.



In "Landscape with Black Trees" (Fig. 28), Swanzy introduces new elements. The black forms of the trees in the foreground contrast with the smaller forms below. Forms are again reduced to their geometric equivalent in the typical Cubist manner. This painting is not as mathematical as her previous paintings. "Twisted Tree against Red Houses", shows a further development of Swanzy's work. New spiral forms derived from the trees are introduced. She also begins to distort these forms even more by tilting them. This shows Swanzy really enjoying her painting technique and playing around with it. She develops this distortion even further in some other paintings. Throughout all her paintings, we have Swanzy's constant involvement with form - she distorts it, simplifies and often flattens it.

Another departure of Swanzy was the introduction of the figure to her work. She fragments these figures in a similar manner to the landscape. "Peasant Woman on a Pathway" (Fig. 29), is an example of this. This is also a painting which shows the play of light on various forms. She also distorts the forms in various directions. In the foreground Swanzy simplifies the ground into large areas of flat colour. The strong forms of the trees in the background contrast with a mass of smaller exciting forms in front. "Peasants at Work in a Landscape" (Fig. 30) is a painting on a similar theme. The focal point is undoubtedly a red roofed house illuminated by a strong shaft of light entering the composition from the right hand corner. Earthy colours - browns and greens are contrasted with very strong colour. There is a great feeling of activity and movement. The forms in red roofed villages and hilly landscapes are much more realistic - but the composition is still highly structured though not in a mathematical way. The vertical brushmarks in the background contrast with broad sweeping strokes of flat colour in the foreground. She uses "fresh" colour as she paints the hillside villages.

Fig. 28 "LANDSCAPE WITH BLACK TREES" - Oil on Canvas
Mary Swanzy.

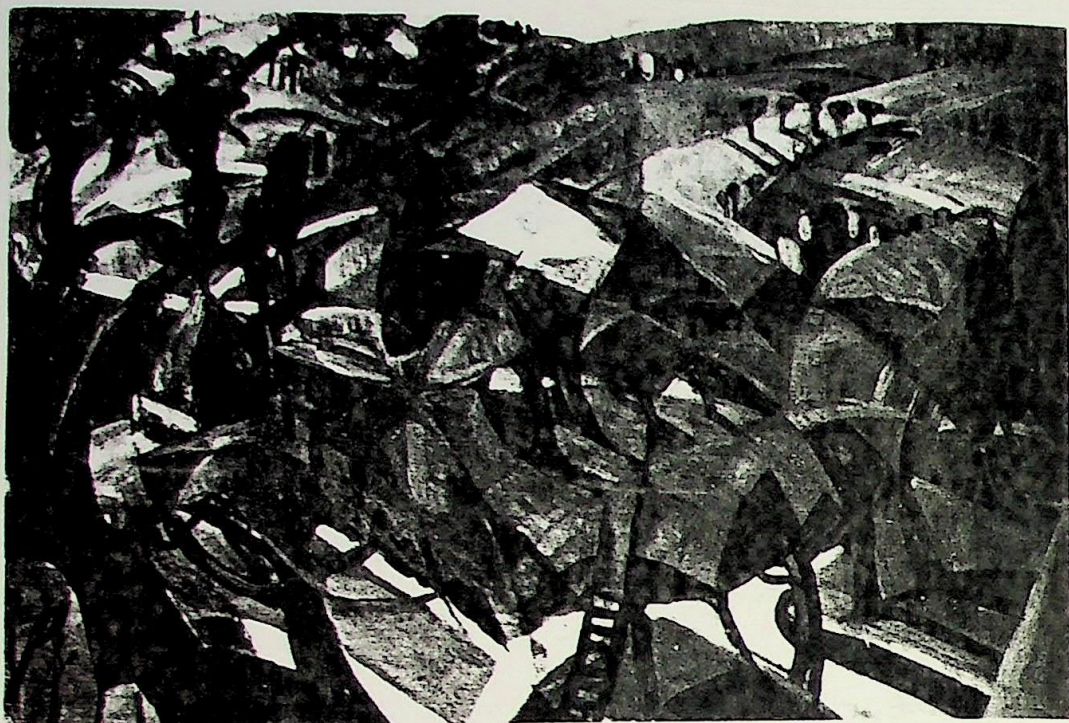


Fig. 29 "PEASANT WOMAN ON PATHWAY" - Oil on Canvas
Mary Swanzy.



Fig. 30 "PEASANTS AT WORK IN A LANDSCAPE" - Oil on Canvas
Mary Swanzy.



Swanzy later travelled to Czechoslovakia, while in this country, she was captivated by the whole way of life here. She was enchanted by the colourful costumes the people wore. She began painting market scenes. She always carried a sketchbook, in which she made many quick studies. These were then developed in the studio, and worked in to oil paintings. In her drawings she reduced her subjects into simple geometric shapes, capturing the essence of her subject. Her Czechoslovakia paintings are marked by several characteristics. They are bold paintings in which Swanzy is not afraid to apply colour. She distorts and tilts the forms, in the same way as she did in her landscapes. The houses she paints are simplified, the end result being a brick like shape. She often takes an aerial view of her subject.

"Village with Roof of Church and Green Hill" (Fig. 31), demonstrates all these characteristics. She no longer uses diagonal and vertical lines in creating sharp forms as she had previously done. Her forms are not as sharp now, as she twists them creating interesting rhythms. Many of her paintings were done on location. "Tilting Houses and Tower" and "Pattern of Roof Tops" are very similar in quality to the above painting in which Swanzy creates a pattern with the roof tops.

Swanzy also travelled to Hawaii and Samoa, she loved travelling and was always open to whatever influences came her way. The strong Cubist style was a factor which remained in all her paintings she produced during her long life. She was constantly aware of forms which was one of the most important considerations in her work. She, like Hone and Jellett played a very important role in the rediscovery of form. Her subject-matter was often diverse but the treatment of this subject-matter was similar to all her paintings. Structure and composition together with light and shade were also factors in her work.

Fig. 31 "VILLAGE WITH ROOF OF CHURCH AND GREEN HILL"
Oil on Canvas - Mary Swanzky.



CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Evie Hone, Mainie Jellett and Mary Swanzy were Irish artists who exhibited strong Cubist influences in their work. All these Artists were not satisfied with the Academic style of painting which was very popular in Ireland. They studied in France, where they became aware of modernist painting. The Irish public did not respond very well to modernist paintings, although paintings by Cezanne and Gauguin had been seen in Dublin. Many Irish artists owe a great deal to Hone, Jellett and Swanzy - they paved the way for modernist painting. Norah McGuinness, Nono Reid, Patrick Pye and Michael Farrell have been influenced by Hone, Jellett and Swanzy as I will show in the concluding paragraph.

When Evie Hone and Mainie Jellett first exhibited their work in June 1923, they were greeted with great criticism. George Moore known as A.E., an art critic at the time is quoted as saying -

"What Mainie Jellett says in one of her paintings she says in them all - which is nothing".

He described her work as being merely decoration. However this was a beginning for the development of modern painting. Mainie Jellett was involved with the setting up of the new Institution of Living Art in 1941, this gave a platform for the exhibition of modern paintings. The Royal Hibernian Academy had rejected many works which they regarded as being too modern. Hone and Jellett's work was rejected.

Hone, Jellett and Swanzy brought to our shores the Cubist style of painting, in which the old traditions of painting were examined and questioned. These artists felt that subject-matter dominated paintings far too much, at the

expense of other important considerations such as - structure, form and colour. They also felt that too much importance was attached to the use of natural images. These Irish artists were part of a revolution which had been started by Cezanne - the great figure of Modern Art who experimented with form and colour.

Albert Gleizes and Andre l'Hote were important figures in France while Hone and Jellett studied there. Andre l'Hote attached great importance to the human figures - reducing it to a series of geometric forms, on which other forms were developed. He never discarded subject-matter. Hone and Jellett were much more attracted to Gleizes theories. His ideas on art without subject-matter appealed to them. Gleizes experiments with non-descript elements were revolutionary. He believed that once painting was freed from the great burden of subject-matter, there were other important considerations to be dealt with. The presence of these Irish artists in Gleizes' studio encouraged him to question his every brushstroke. He praised Hone and Jellett and together with them, exciting concepts were worked on. He is quoted as saying -

"In 1922 I wrote *Peinture et ce lois ce gril devait sortir du Cubisme*, an imperfect study in many ways. I owe it to Mainie Jellett and Evie Hone, even today my feelings of gratitude show no signs of leaving me." *

Mary Swanzy was also an important figure in the rediscovery of form. Swanzy regarded the Cubist style of painting to be refreshing and a strong reaction against the Academic style of painting. She studied in France in 1905. She applied her Cubist vision to her art. Swanzy's Cubism was not as

* : Quoted from Mainie Jellett - "An Artists Vision"

Edited by Elaine MacCarville, Page 90.

conceptual as Hone and Jellett's. However she, like the latter was very interested in creating a perfect balance among the forms in her paintings. She reduced her forms to geometric shapes. Structure was also an important consideration. She found herself influenced by Picasso and Delauney. In some of her work, she fragments space by the use of dynamic lines and arcs. Forms are extremely strong and often distorted and twisted. Many of her paintings are very mathematic, as she carefully balances the fragmented shapes. Her work shows influences as diverse as the careful draughtsmanship of William Orpen, and the dynamic lines of Delauney Cubism with the towering skyscrapers. Her early Cubist portraits show a strong Picasso influence as she fragments her subjects in the same way as Picasso did. She also used a similar palette to Picasso's in many of her works. It is important to note that she never imitated others. She travelled a great deal to places as remote as Hawaii. Swanzy exhibited in Dublin to a mixed reaction.

The 1920's and 30's were important years in the history of Irish art, as this paved the way for other artists. Norah McGuinness was impressed with Jellett's work. Jellett advised her to go to Paris to Andre l'Hote. She spent nearly two years there working under l'Hote during which time her style of painting changed considerably. Colour and form became much more important in her work. She began to think more in blocks of tone values rather than in outline. During the 1940's Norah McGuinness became much more interested in describing only the essential features and details of any scenes she painted. They developed in to a simplification of forms, and breakdown of the landscape in to a series of areas of colour which created a pattern all over the surface of the canvas. Nano Reid (1905-1982) was also impressed with Jellett's work and wished that she had been trained under one of the masters of the Ecole de Paris,

as Jellett had been. Reid, in her work defines her forms very strongly, using an expressive brushstroke. She seems to have been influenced to an extent by Evie Hone's still lifes, "Friday Fare" shows this influence. Her forms are defined using a vivid outline just as Hone had done in her paintings. These two artists inherited the valuable ideas of Hone and Jellett. Patrick Pye (B 129) works in oil and stained glass. Colour is very important in his work, in obtaining balance among the elements he uses. Many of his paintings are religious in theme. The inspiration for his early work comes from his understanding of colour which he obtained by studying Mainie Jellett's paintings very carefully. Michael Farrell who came to prominence during the 60's is also influenced by the Irish Cubists. In his paintings he employs Celtic motifs, as Jellett did, he simplifies his shapes a great deal and is concerned with achieving a balance and harmony among the shapes.

The 1920's and 30's were exciting years for Irish art. Evie Hone, Mary Swanzy and Mainie Jellett introduced the Cubist style of painting to Ireland. They played important roles in the rediscovery of form. Structure, form and colour had now become important considerations for the artist. They achieved a perfect harmony among the elements in their paintings. Evie Hone extended her ideas to the area of stained glass, producing many fine works. Form had now gained importance together with other basic considerations.

Fig. 34 "FEEDING GROUND" - Oil on Canvas
Norah McGuinness



Fig. 35 "FRIDAY FARE" - Oil on Canvas
Nano Reid



Fig. 36 STUDY 1 - Oil on Canvas
Michael Farnell.

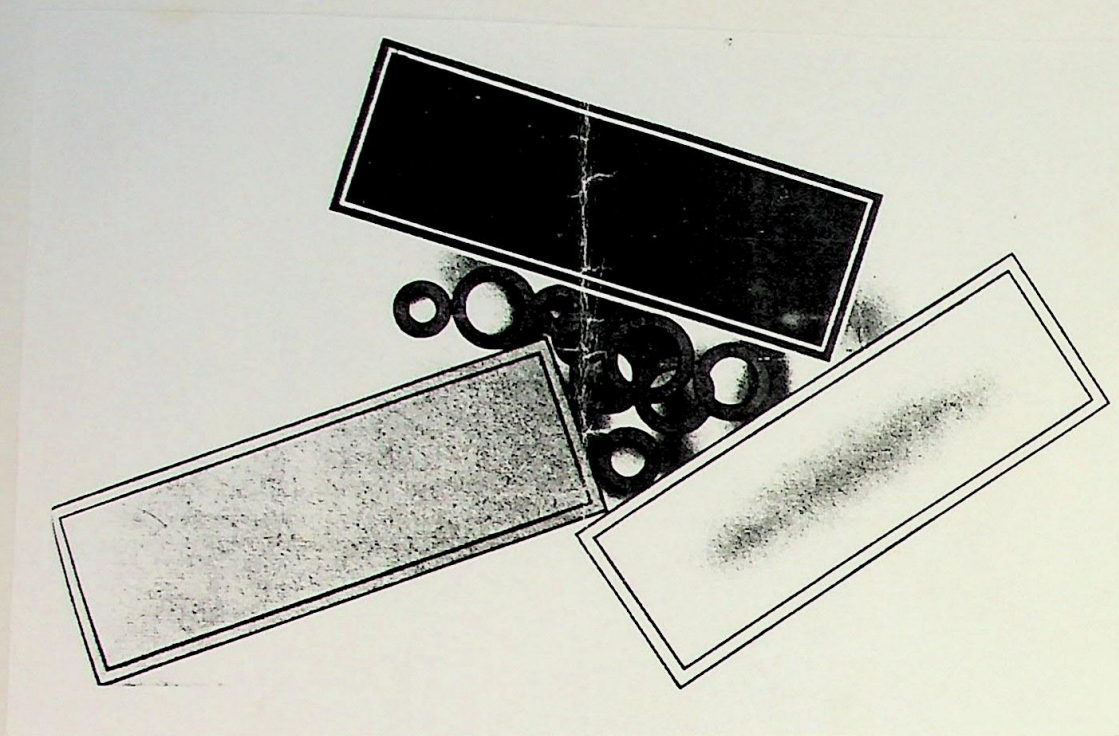
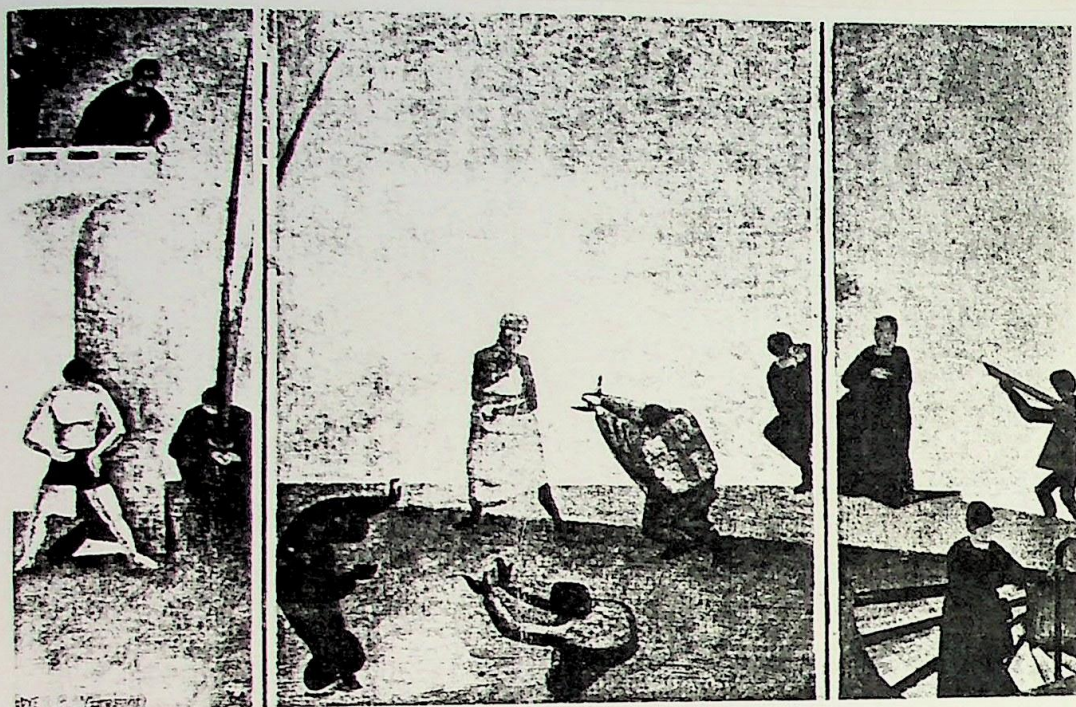


Fig. 37 "THE MOCKING OF CHRIST" - Oil on Canvas.
Patrick Pye.



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