Women Artists of Glasnevin Cemetery

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The concept of the Victorian garden cemetery is a relatively recent innovation, first cropping up in 19th century Paris. Père Lachaise Cemetery, first opening in 1804, revolutionised the way in which we memorialise the dead. The cemetery, unpopular at first with only thirteen interments in its first year, gained its status not due to its elegant boulevards and ample space, but as a result of its illustrious residents. After the transferral of celebrity remains of writers Molière and Jean de la Fontaine to Père Lachaise in 1817, admirers clamoured for the opportunity to rest alongside these revered literary figures for all eternity (Zappaterra, 2022, p. 101). By 1830, the cemetery housed over 33,000 graves, and today, spanning over 106 acres, the famous burial ground is home to an estimated 70,000 graves, accommodating around one million burials. For almost two centuries, the cemetery has been closely associated with the arts, with countless painters, sculptors, poets, composers and musicians interred at Père Lachaise. Amongst them are revered artistic figures such as Camille Pissarro, Georges Seurat, Théodore Géricault, Eugène Delacroix, Rosa Bonheur, Gustave Caillebotte, and Camille Corot. The illustrious burials at Père Lachaise draw a staggering 3 million visitors per year.

The influence of Père Lachaise can be seen across Europe, echoed by London's Highgate cemetery, Glasgow's Necropolis, and of course by Glasnevin Cemetery, Ireland's national cemetery. Founded in 1832 by Daniel O'Connell, Glasnevin is Dublin's largest cemetery, spanning 124 acres. Often referred to as the "dead centre of Dublin" due to its 1.5 million eternal residents, there are more people interred at Glasnevin Cemetery than there are alive living in county Dublin today (DCTrust, 2023, MacThomáis, 2010, p. 9, and Data Commons, 2023). Today, the cemetery has a strong nationalist association due to a number of significant burials pertaining to the fight for Irish independence in the early twentieth century.

Hailed in his time as "the liberator", Daniel O'Connell made strides for Catholic emancipation throughout the 19th century. Having seen and experienced religious discrimination for himself, O'Connell founded Goldenbridge Cemetery, Ireland's first non-denominational cemetery, in 1828, followed by Prospect Cemetery, now known as Glasnevin cemetery, just four years later (DCTrust, 2023). Unfortunately, Goldenbridge would be closed to the public in 1869 following a dispute with the British military authorities which operated at nearby Richmond Barracks (Independent, 2017), and would remain as such until its reopening nearly 150 years later in 2017. It is the founding of cemeteries such as these which would allow for dignified burial for Irish catholics, as all catholic burial grounds had passed into protestant hands during the time of the reformation. By the early 19th century, Catholics were not permitted to have cemeteries of their own, nor were they allowed to recite their own funeral prayers (Igoe, 2001, p. 17). The eventual passing of the Catholic

Emancipation Act in 1829 (Maclean, 1929) would set about significant change and allow for equal treatment of both catholics and protestants in both life and death.

Similarly to Père Lachaise, Glasnevin Cemetery is home to many significant figures, most notably the famous figures of Ireland's 1916 rising and subsequent War of Independence, such as Michael Collins, Constance Markievicz (nee Gore-Booth), Harry Boland, Erskine Childers, and Kevin Barry. The cemetery is often noted for its political significance, and is undoubtedly an important site due to its relevance to Irish history. The boundless stretches of greenery at the beloved garden cemetery echo the serene and idealistic Irish landscapes found in patriotic poems by William Butler Yeats and paintings by Sir John Lavery. Prior to its purchase for £600 in 1828 (DCTrust, 2023), the land which would become Prospect Cemetery was comprised primarily of woodlands, and many mature native trees still remain in some sections of the cemetery (Igoe, 2001, p. 104).

However, Glasnevin Cemetery is also home to the resting places of innumerable famous painters, sculptors, and artists such as Leo Whelan, Albert Power, Michael Angelo Hayes, and Joseph Haverty, as well as stained glass artist, enamellist and painter Kathleen Fox, and flower painter Moyra Barry. Even those remembered primarily for their roles in Irish politics – such as Grace Gifford and Countess Markievicz – have rich histories in the arts which are both relevant and important to the wider history of Glasnevin Cemetery, though often overlooked in favour of their other accomplishments. The aim of this research project is to insert three Irish women into the historical narrative at Glasnevin cemetery, not only as artists but as women, and to argue their vital role in understanding life in Ireland during the early twentieth century. As curator and historian Rebecca Birrell writes:

> "women's experiences, their defining passions as well as their more humdrum certainties, had been censored for centuries, and not just on canvas. Unless you were a woman undressed, you were invisible, and if you were a woman undressed, nobody asked: Where did this woman wake up? Where did she leave her cup with dregs of tea from the previous night? What did she hurriedly make for breakfast, conscious of the time?" (2021, p. 10).

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Kathleen Fox was born in September of 1880 to parents Henry C Fox and Mamie Colclough. Her father, a captain in the King's Dragoon Guards, hailed from Glen-a-Gearagh Hall in County Dublin. She was one of six children in an Irish Catholic upper middle class family; her older brother Major

Charles Vincent Fox was a member of the Scots Guards and an accomplished athlete, and acted as a mentor for Kathleen in her younger years (Gray, 2009, p. 105 and Dictionary of Irish Biography, 2023).

Fox studied at St. Mary's, Ascot and Loreto Abbey Convent, Dalkey, before enrolling at the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art from 1903, studying under William Orpen, a revered portrait painter and war artist who considered Kathleen one of his most gifted students, taking her on as his assistant in 1910 (Flamarike, 2020, p.121). Fox ran in prominent circles, making the acquaintance of Constance Gore-Booth (later Markievicz) and Willie Pearse, brother of Pádraig Pearse, during her time at the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art (Dalton, 2014, p.28 and Flamarike, 2020, p. 121). She painted notable portraits of her close friend Grace Gifford, whom she met during this time (Dictionary of Irish Biography, 2023). Additionally, Fox studied under a plethora of prominent artists such as Arthur Child and Oswald Reeves.

Kathleen showed great promise and versatility early on in her artistic career, exhibiting works in oil, watercolour, enamel, and stained glass at a Past and Present exhibition at the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art in 1910. The same year, she would exhibit with the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland, and just one year later with the Royal Hibernian Academy for the first time (Dalton, 2014, p. 28 and Finucane and Connolly, 2010, p.45).

Initially interested in the arts and crafts movement, working with stained glass and enamelling, Fox's earlier works – such as the copper plaque entitled *Music* which was awarded a prize in 1909, and her enamelled cup entitled *Going to the Feast* which won a gold medal in 1908 and was subsequently exhibited in the Victoria and Albert Museum and at the Aonach Tailteann exhibition in Dublin in 1924 (Dictionary of Irish Biography, 2023) – can be contextualised by the Celtic revival and Arts and Crafts movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Fox notably experimented with textile work in her earlier days, further aligning her work with the Arts and Crafts movement of the time.

There is an undeniable connection between the Irish revolution and the resurgence of interest in Irish language, folklore, art and literature. With the Arts and Crafts movement spawning from a desire to preserve traditional crafts processes in an age dominated by machinery at the time of the industrial revolution, the Celtic revival was a natural progression. Aidan Geraghty notes that it was the combination of anti-colonial sentiment amongst the Irish population during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries combined with the surge in archaeological discoveries in Ireland which led to an

Irish renaissance of sorts (2020), with the Celtic revival being central to this. Historian Liz Gillis writes: “much emphasis has been placed on how literature, poetry and the theatre awakened a political awareness in young men and women at the time. Art was no less a powerful medium, a platform where ideas of nationhood were expressed through painting, illustration, etchings and drawings” (Flamarike, 2020, p. V – VI). This connection is easily visible at Glasnevin cemetery from the abundance of Celtic monuments and depictions of figures from Irish mythology used throughout the cemetery around the turn of the century, in comparison to the more Victorian gothic architecture of the older sections of the cemetery.

Further to her education at the Dublin Metropolitan, Kathleen Fox spent four years in Europe, first spending time in a studio in London, where she would continue to study under Orpen. Fox pursued further study in Paris and Bruges, as well as throughout Germany. Like many of her contemporaries such as Mainie Jellett and Mary Swanzy, she studied the Académie de la Grande Chaumiere during her time in Paris. During her time in London at the time of the first world war, Kathleen met Lieutenant Cyril Pym, a member of the British Army, whom she married in 1917. Pym was killed in action just one year later, with their daughter being born in 1918 after his death (Dictionary of Irish Biography, 2023 and Finucane and Connolly, 2010, p.45). Fox never remarried, and lived independently for the rest of her days.

Fox would return to Dublin in 1916, bearing witness to one of the most significant events in Irish history – the Easter Rising (Finucane and Connolly, 2010, p.45). On Sunday the 30th of April 1916, Fox would sketch the surrender of Countess Markievicz and 118 other members of the Irish Citizen Army to British Troops at the Royal College of Surgeons in real time. She would finish the canvas in her studio months later, immortalising the scene in paint. Aware of the tense political climate in Ireland at the time, Fox sent the painting to a friend in New York in 1917 for safekeeping, however, the work went missing and would only be returned to the artist in Dublin some three decades later (Byrne, 2016, and Coulter, 2023 and Flamarike, 2020, p. 122). She would proudly, defiantly tell Nora Niland, founder of the Sligo Municipal Art Collection in 1963 that she never portrayed the Irish as defeated or broken in the work, stating: “if you notice... they did not surrender. They asked for a truce and if you notice in my picture, you see the little white flag up beside the tricolour, but when that little flag went up the British Army came along and the citizens marched out of the college” (Flamarike 2020 p. 122).

Despite her early associations with Markievicz, Pearse, and several other significant names, Fox remained for the most part uninterested in politics prior to 1916, stating in an unbroadcast interview

to mark the sale of *The Arrest of Countess Markievicz* in 1963: “I did not have a great interest in politics at the time. My one idea was to paint and draw, and suddenly I was told there was a rising. That didn’t mean anything to me, but then I went out out of curiosity to see what exactly was happening, and walking down I came up to the green (...) approaching nearer I realised they were the Irish men of the citizen army who had been arrested and were standing outside the college surrounded by soldiers waiting to be marked off” (ABC Radio, 2016, and Flamarike, 2020, p. 122). To borrow from William Butler Yeats’ significant poem titled Easter 1916, it could be said that Fox herself was “changed utterly” by the events of the rising.

The use of perspective in the painting makes the British army in the image feel oppressive and overwhelming. The British forces, painted in mustard-brown tones, who turned out in large numbers stand out next to the Irish volunteers in their muddied green uniforms. The eye is immediately drawn to the image of Constance Markievicz in the centre of the painting – according to Adela Flamarike, it evokes an iconic moment in Irish nationalist mythology: when Markievicz reputedly kissed her gun before handing it to a British official Major Wheeler on her arrest, a move which was ridiculed by the media at the time for being “unfeminine” (2020, p. 122). It is noted by journalist Lara Byrne the poignancy of the scene, noting that Markievicz was the first cousin of the Major’s wife, and it is said that Wheeler held onto this gun for the rest of his life, his descendants eventually donating the pistol to the National Museum of Ireland in the 1960s (2016).

[Fig. 1] Arrest of Countess Markievicz, Kathleen Fox, 1916, available at abc.net.au

Fox also allegedly includes a self portrait in the work – painting herself into the crowd of onlookers towards the right hand side of the work. The woman thought to be Fox herself stands under a tree, looking out from the painting to make eye contact with the viewer, as though to as for participation, or for empathy for those arrested and subsequently executed during the 1916 rising (Flamarike, 2020, p. 123). Flamarike further notes that through her presence in the image, Fox becomes no longer impartial to the events of the rising, as she herself acts not only as a witness, but as an integral part of the event (2020, p. 123).

The event sparked a newfound sense of nationalism in Kathleen, with Fox continuing to paint throughout the Irish Civil War. Fox was noted as independent-minded, so noticeably so that she became known as "the artist of the rising", and earned the nickname "the little rebel" much to the dismay of her parents (Flamarike, 2020, p.124, Dalton, 2014, P.28, Finucane and Connolly, 2010, p.45 and National Museum of Ireland, 2023). Fox's family ties to the British army alongside her republican sympathies are said have caused her some level of moral confusion. With her husband, father and beloved brother Charles all heavily involved with the British forces, the bloodshed of the 1916 rebellion is said to have left Kathleen feeling conflicted. In fact, the British officer who arrested Markievicz at the Royal College of Surgeons was a distant relation of Kathleen's (Finucane and Connolly, 2010, p.45).

Fox went on to paint *Ruins of the Four Courts* in 1922, a painting which captures the aftermath of a fire which ravaged the building in June that year during the Irish Civil War. Leading up to this fire which would ultimately destroy innumerable priceless historical records dating back seven centuries which were held in the building, the Four Courts had been occupied by anti-treaty IRA forces led by Rory O'Connor. On the 27th of June, under the instruction of Minister for Defence Richard Mulcahy and authorised by Arthur Griffith, the pro-treaty National Army attacked the building, sparking a battle which would rage on several days (Military Archives, 2023 and Courts.ie, 2023).

By the 30th of June, the shelling of the building had resulted in the fire which would cause substantial damages to the dome that had been completed by architect James Gandon some 120 years previously (Military Archives, 2023 and Courts.ie, 2023). Fox's work accurately reflects this damage; the recognisable large dome entirely missing and only the outermost shells of nearby buildings left intact. It is painted in a loose, impressionistic style which captures the atmosphere of the city after a rainy spell. The painting went up for auction in 2012 at Adam's Irish Art & Fine Art Auctioneers, estimated at €15,000 - €25,000, but went unsold until 2014 when it eventually sold for a mere €8,000 (Adam's, 1st October 2014, and Kennedy, Adams.ie, 2023).

Another presumably earlier work by Fox depicting the Four Courts is held by UCD Newman House, site of the Museum of Literature Ireland. The painting is noticeably aged, with little known by staff at MOLI about the provenance of the painting. *View of the Four Courts* is an undated work, however, the painting was created before the destruction of the building, as its recognisable dome is intact in the painting, unlike in *Ruins of the Four Courts* (1922). This work, depicting the famous landmark after heavy rain, is carried out in a more traditional academic style, less spontaneous and impressionistic than the later painting. The influence of Orpen's teaching is evident in this work. According to Christina Kennedy at Adam's Irish Art & Fine Art Auctioneers & Valuers, it is Orpen's style of tonal realism that he acquired at the Slade School of Art which he passed on to Fox during her time at the Metropolitan School of Art that can be seen in this work (Kennedy, Adams.ie, 2023).

Kathleen spent time between Dublin and London for a period between 1916 and the mid-1920s, caring for her beloved brother Charles, who passed away in 1928 and is interred in the Fox family plot in Glasnevin cemetery. Upon the death of her mother, Mary Rebecca Fox (nee Colclough), Kathleen inherited a large house on Richmond Avenue, Milltown, where she would live out the rest of her days (Finucane and Connolly, 2010, p.46 and Flamarike, 2020, p. 121). Fox is remembered today mainly for the flower studies she produced towards the end of her career in the 1940s and 1950s. Some note that she reached the height of her success in 1921, when she exhibited with the National Portrait Society alongside Sir John Lavery and her former mentor, William Orpen (Adam's, 2023 and Finucane and Connolly, 2010, p.46).

Kathleen Fox died at her home in Brookfield, Richmond Avenue South, Milltown, Co. Dublin on the 17th of August 1963. Her work not only provides a precious view of a history that she witnessed first-hand, but also an insight into that history from the nuanced perspective of a woman. Throughout her career, she centred women such as Constance Markievicz in her paintings, helping to solidify their legacies as women of the revolution. Patriotic and persistent, Fox waged a war of her own against an upbringing which dictated what was and wasn't a suitable career path for a woman, deciding her beliefs for herself and choosing to pursue politics and art despite the disapproval of her family. Buried in the South section of Glasnevin Cemetery and memorialised with a modest Celtic cross, Kathleen Fox is one of many artists residing at Ireland's national cemetery, unvisited by the masses and underappreciated for her work during what is arguably the most important period in Irish history.

In contrast, one of the most frequently visited graves amongst the several hundred thousand at Glasnevin Cemetery is that of Constance Markievicz; politician, nationalist, suffragist, socialist, and artist, as well as the subject of Fox's notable painting. Markievicz is well remembered, not for her artistic career but for her dedication to the fight for independence. However, Markievicz's artwork served as a vital part of her activism; a tool through which she communicated her beliefs and garnered attention for her radical republican beliefs. Much like the work of Kathleen Fox, Constance's images were often emotive and patriotic, eliciting passionate responses and fuelling the political change.

Born in 1868 into a life of privilege, and brought up in keeping with her family's social status, Constance Gore-Booth was educated at home, taking trips to Europe at a young age. Constance had regular exposure to the arts as a young girl, meeting established painter Sarah Purser at 12 years old when Purser was commissioned to paint her sister Eva Gore-Booth. Constance had early ambitions to study art, however, faced opposition from her parents, who initially denied her the education she desired (Dictionary of Irish Biography, 2023). They would eventually come around after Constance demonstrated her dedication to art while painting with Anna Nordgren in London, funding her study at the Slade School of Art in London where she enrolled in 1893. At this time, Constance wore a ring and regularly stated to others that she was "married to art" (Finucane and Connolly, 2010, p. 57).

However, after her time as a student in London, Constance attended Académie Julian from 1898 to 1900, where she met fellow art student Count Casimir Dunin-Markievicz in 1899 (Sligo County Libraries, Creative Ireland Programme, 2022). They married one year later in 1900, and would rent studios together to continue their artistic pursuits, spending time in Normandy and Kiev before eventually moving back to Dublin in 1903 where Constance would take night classes at the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art (Finucane and Connolly, 2010, p. 57). It is here she would first cross paths with Kathleen Fox who would become a dear friend.

The Markieviczes were heavily involved with the Abbey Theatre, and also helped establish the United Arts Club in 1905 (Flamarike, 2020, p. 115). Constance exhibited work frequently upon her return to Dublin, notably contributing 27 works to an exhibition organised by George Russell in 1903 at Leinster Lecture Hall on Molesworth Street (Sligo County Libraries Creative Ireland Programme, 2022 and Finucane and Connolly, 2010, p. 57). The same year, Russell would remark: "the Gore-Booth girl who married the Polish Count with the unspellable name is going to settle near Dublin... we might get the materials for revolt" (Lissadell House, 2023).

It is true that Constance exhibited her sharp sense of social justice in her artwork from early in her career. Her 1903 critique of the Russian-Japanese war *The Conscript* depicts a young peasant boy at a kitchen table, eating his last meal before his conscription into the Russian army. Based on a true story of a family Constance had encountered while in Ukraine with her husband, the work demonstrates her thorough awareness of contemporary issues. The boy in the image would sadly die in the Russian-Japanese war of 1905 (Flamarike, 2020, p. 114 – 115), though immortalised in Markievicz' work.

One humble pen and ink sketch by Markievicz, measuring a mere 24cm in diameter, speaks volumes on her significance, not only as a political activist of her time, but also as an artist whose depictions of life in early twentieth century Ireland are vital in our attempts to understand history. *Visit to a Dublin Family During The Tuberculosis Epidemic* (1924) is a small, casual reflection on an intimate moment between two parents and their children. Held by the National Library of Ireland, and printed in Finucane and Connolly's *Journeys Through Line and Colour* (2010), the work is unassuming. Depicting a poor Irish family in a small, dark room, this work captures the dismay of two parents at the sickness of their children. The father sits with his head in his hands towards the left of the image. A child clings to his mother as she looks down at the pale faces of her sick children who sit on hay bales in the foreground. In their anonymity they present us the opportunity to empathise; to reckon with the sheer number of families struck by this disease at the time. According to the Irish Red Cross Journal, following the failed attempts to establish a specialist clinic for TB victims between 1878 and 1887, over 12,000 young adults died of tuberculosis in Ireland in 1904, with mortality rates continuing to soar throughout the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s (Buckley, 2010). A long-standing threat, tuberculosis can be easily linked to Glasnevin cemetery, with the cemetery's first interment being Michael Carey, a young boy from Francis Street in Dublin who died in 1832 from Tuberculosis, with his death record stating that he died of consumption (DCTrust, 2023).

This drawing is important as not only does it hold a mirror up to a corner of society which we may not otherwise pay much attention to in the grand scheme of Irish history, but it also gives us an insight into Constance's character. Markievicz was often spotted bringing food and fuel to families in tenement houses in the poorest areas of Dublin, with Maud Gonne and Hanna Sheehy Skeffington – who are also interred at Glasnevin cemetery – often by her side (Lissadell House, 2023). She also set up soup kitchens at Liberty Hall during the 1913 lockout, feeding thousands of people in need (Lawler, 2013 and McCarthy, 2013). Her willingness to go out amongst the masses

not only to fight for independence, but also to help the ordinary citizens of Dublin speaks volumes on Constance's rebellious spirit and her desire to help others. *Visit to a Dublin Family* is significant as it not only reflects a reality which many artists may not have deigned to paint, but also because it showcases Constance's compassion for those less fortunate than herself, and her awareness of her own privilege. Additionally, at the time of its creation, Tuberculosis was a highly stigmatised illness seen as a "poor man's disease" (Buckley, 2010), so it can be hypothesised that it would not have been the status quo for a member of the high-standing Gore-Booth family to create such an image so unashamedly.

We hear the Markievicz name most frequently in discussions of Constance's lasting impact on politics. Though the first indication of any political interest can be traced back to March of 1891, when the Gore-Booth sisters attended a meeting at Sligo Town Hall which was addressed by Charles Stewart Parnell (Sligo County Libraries, Creative Ireland Programme, 2022), Constance's political activity ramped up around 1908, when she publicly spoke in favour of the nationalist cause (Lissadell House, 2023). Markievicz had a broad influence, with Isabella Gifford citing her as a bad influence on her daughters Grace and Nell – the latter of whom fought with the Citizen Army at St Stephen's Green in 1916 and subsequently spent time in Kilmainham Gaol (Dictionary of Irish Biography, 2023).

Noted at the time as a talented portraitist, Constance painted numerous notable portraits of nationalist figures during the early twentieth century, including a portrait of Mary Kelly, a member of the Irish Citizen Army and part of the garrison during the Easter Rising, as well as a watercolour entitled *Mrs Gonne MacBride*, an image which portrays Maud Gonne seated wearing mourning attire following the execution of her husband John MacBride in 1916. Constance also carried out one particularly significant watercolour piece depicting the execution of James Connolly in 1916 (Flamarike, 2020, p. 115). Markievicz had a particular dedication to James Connolly, who is cited as a significant influence on her developing political ideology. Constance wrote for The Nation in March of 1927: "when he began to organise the Irish Citizen Army he brought me along, teaching me, as he got to know me, as a comrade, giving me any work that I could do, and quite ignoring the conventional attitude towards the work of women" (Lissadell, 2023 and Flamarike, 2020, p. 117).

Constance became an officer in the Irish Citizen Army in 1916, and was second in command next to Michael Mallin when she was arrested at the Royal College of Surgeons. Though all leaders of the 1916 rising were sentenced to death following the rebellion, Markievicz was spared execution due to her sex (Lissadell House, 2023) and instead spent time in a cell at Kilmainham. During

Markievicz' time at Kilmainham, her sister Eva smuggled art supplies into her cell, allowing Constance to produce numerous paintings during her time in prison, depicting her daily life and political ideals, creating works in watercolour of patriotic allegories, Celtic motifs, Irish mythological goddesses and images from folklore, as well as various propaganda cartoons which were displayed by the National Gallery in 2019 (Flamarike, p.118).

Markievicz died at Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital in 1927 of complications after surgery for appendicitis. It is estimated that around 300,000 people attended her funeral at Glasnevin Cemetery, where she was interred in the republican plot (Barry, 2017). Her resting place is marked by a singular gold plaque bearing her name, a modest memorial for a monumental figure in Irish history. According to Flamarike: "just like her artwork, the portraits of Markievicz as a feminist republican dressed in the uniform of the Irish Citizen Army became a shout to the women of Ireland to take up arms and join her in the fight" (2020, p. 121). Liz Gillis further notes that women's contributions to the Irish art scene at the time of the 1916 rebellion have been overshadowed by those of their male counterparts in the years following independence (Flamarike, 2020, p. V – VI). Though Constance Markievicz's role in the fight for the Irish republic is both well documented and well celebrated, her artistic passions are often overlooked or deemed as ephemeral frivolities in comparison to her acts of political activism. However undervalued for her contributions to art, Markievicz is undoubtedly one of the most revered women in Irish history. Her name appears in history books; a privilege not afforded to most female figures, let alone female artists.

One of the most undervalued painters in Irish art history, not only in life but also in death, resides in an unmarked plot at Glasnevin Cemetery. This artist is none other than flower painter Moyra Aloysius Barry, born in Dublin in 1886 into a family of eleven children, only seven of whom would live to see adulthood (O'Connor, 2010, p. 119). Moyra's father, Bernard Barry, was a poor Catholic labourer born at the beginning of the potato famine, who earned a modest living as a door-to-door salesman (Finucane and Connolly, 2010, p. 1). Though Bernard managed to make a decent living before his death in 1906, opening two warehouses and purchasing a handsome suburban house in Rathmines, Moyra Barry did not come from a notably affluent or privileged family, unlike Fox and Markievicz. By the time her mother had passed, the small fortune left by Bernard had been squandered, leaving Moyra to support herself as an artist.

Moyra was fortunate enough to afford an education, first at the Dublin Metropolitan in 1903, switching to the RHA schools in the latter half of the decade, before progressing to the Slade School of Fine Art between 1911 and 1914. She had natural talent, winning prizes for drawing with both

the RHA and Slade schools. She was also recipient of the coveted Taylor Prize during her time at the Royal Hibernian Academy (O'Connor, 2010, p. 121 – 122 and Finucane and Connolly, 2010, p. 1). She exhibited her first work with the RHA in 1908 aged just 22, and would continue exhibiting with them until 1952.

Upon finishing her studies, Barry worked as a private tutor in Ecuador, teaching painting and English, and upon her return to Dublin in 1932 held her first one woman exhibition at the Angus Gallery on Stephen's Green. Throughout her life, Barry showed her work in London and Amsterdam, though most frequently held solo shows at the Victor Waddington galleries between 1936 and 1952. One Irish Times review of her work at the Waddington Gallery stated in 1937: "her limning is, in all, free, direct and true, and colour is stated with generosity in its fullness and an exquisite delicacy in the varying tones". Moyra was a member of the Dublin Sketching Club, an exhibitor with the Watercolour Society of Ireland and the Society of Dublin Painters, and in 1936 the Thomas Haverty Trust presented her painting *Rhododendrons* to the Belfast Municipal Museum and Art Gallery (Finucane and Connolly, 2010, p. 1-2).

Moyra was primarily known for her flower studies and still life works, averaging thirty paintings per show at her exhibitions. Barry was also a skilled portrait painter, though unfortunately an unsuccessful one at that, attempting to establish herself as a portraitist in 1916 but ultimately facing too much competition in the area (Finucane and Connolly, 2010, p. 1 and Dictionary of Irish Biography, 2023). Moyra's self-portrait *In The Studio* was displayed at the RHA, likely with the intent of attracting commissions. It was eventually purchased by the National Gallery of Ireland at a small studio sale at Gorry Gallery in 1982 (p. 2). *In The Studio* was also featured on the cover of a novel by Maura Laverty, who is also buried at Glasnevin cemetery (O'Connor, 2010, p. 117).

Though the Slade School of Fine Art was noted for producing some of the most influential and groundbreaking artists in British modernism, such as Dora Carrington, Thomas Nash, and David Bomberg, Barry's works were carried out using more academic techniques (O'Connor, 2010, p. 123). Finucane and Connolly further note that: "while some women artists played a key role in introducing modern art styles to Ireland during the twentieth century, Moyra worked throughout her life in a more conservative style. Her subject matter might be considered more 'straightforward' and tended to appeal to middle-class women, who made up the bulk of her patrons" (2010, p. 1 – 2). This was effective – if not necessary – in ensuring Barry's financial success as an artist.

Forbidden from studying anatomy and the human figure for fear of compromising their virtue, women artists were frequently confined to painting flower studies for large portions of history (Eckett, O'Connor, 2010, p. 120 and Stott, 1992, p.61). Thought to be a suitable choice of subject matter for women, one author for the Gazette des Beaux-Arts wrote: "let women occupy themselves with those kinds of art they have always preferred... the painting of flowers" (Eckett, O'Connor, 2010, p. 120). This association with women artists led to still life and flower painting being regarded as unimportant, with the viewer often perceiving the artwork as amateurish (p. 121). It is worth noting that many female artists – despite their interest or work in other areas – are often mainly noted for their accomplishments in flower painting. This is the case with Fox, as pointed out by one auction catalogue (Adam's, 2014). However, Claire Dalton writes for Adam's Auctioneers in 2014: "Kathleen Fox's Ruins of the Four Courts (...) shows that women were not confined to producing sentimental images of children playing, chocolatebox landscapes or flower studies" (p. 6).

Though women began to have equal access to art education in the latter half of the nineteenth century, flower studies continued to be the preferred genre for many women artists due to their accessibility; still life works could be carried out from home, simply tidied up into a cupboard when the woman's household duties beckoned. Rebecca Birrell writes in defence of the still life: "women made art for years and had become fixated on still life (...) with a belief in its capacity to produce and accommodate intimacy, an affective power other genres simply could not provide" (2021, p. 2). She further describes still lifes as "histories of women's lives compiled by way of the objects that bore witness" (p.3).

Moyra Barry's reputation as one of Dublin's finest flower painters was disrupted when her greatest supporter Victor Waddington of the Waddington galleries left Dublin for London at the end of 1957 (p. 116), after which Barry's work fell out of favour. Barry's flower studies and still lifes – genres which have long been "construed in terms of both dilettantism and of gender" (p. 120) – would not earn Barry a significant reputation in the broader Irish art-historical canon a mere 50 years after her death. In fact, towards the end of her life her occupation was recorded as "none". Having never married nor had children, Barry lived out her final days relatively secluded.

None of the newspapers at the time of Moyra's death carried an obituary, and the sole death notice printed bore the standard message "no flowers by request" – a tragic irony. At this time, the Royal Hibernian Academy had a tradition of hanging a work in memoriam at their Annual Exhibition upon the passing of one of their members – a tradition they neglected upon the death of Moyra Barry just

two months before the exhibition took place (Eckett, O'Connor, 2010, p. 116-7). Barry died in obscurity, leaving behind no archive of letters or diaries from which to gain insight into her personal life. Extremely introverted in nature, she did not mix in artistic circles like Fox or Markievicz, nor did she join social groups such as the Dublin United Arts Club (p. 117 – 118). A notoriously private person, there are few existing mentions of her from her contemporaries, aside from one brief mention in an Irish Times diary piece printed in 1949 where one writer notes her as "a white-haired Dublin lady with less arty jargon in her vocabulary than anybody I have ever met" (Finucane and Connolly, 2010, p. 1 – 2).

Moyra Barry's fate is not an uncommon one for women artists. In the original burial archive books kept by Glasnevin cemetery throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women's occupations were frequently neglected on death records, making it significantly more difficult to discern the true number of forgotten women artists buried at Glasnevin. Barry's "occupation" recorded in 1960 reads "spinster". Similarly, Kathleen Fox's records note her as merely the widow of an army lieutenant (DCTrust, 2023).

Women and their art has been consistently undervalued in western society, leading to a rather one sided and unvaried canon of art history. This is evident from the National Gallery of Ireland's collections, where in 2010 only 5% of artists whose works were displayed were women (National Women's Council, 2010). When speaking about twentieth century Irish history, the artworks that immediately spring to mind are those done of men, by men: Sir John Lavery's 1922 portrait of Michael Collins (*Love of Ireland*) is synonymous with secondary school history class curriculums. It is works of monumental significance such as Fox's *Arrest of Countess Markievicz* and *Ruins of the Four Courts* which slip between the cracks of history. We've seen the innumerable images of Constance Markievicz such as *The Artist's Wife* created by her husband in 1899, but far less frequently the images created by Constance herself. Her uniquely female viewpoint affords us the rare opportunity to view a male-dominated history through the eyes of a woman – providing us glimpses into not only her experiences as a rebel and as an artist, but also the experiences of the marginalised groups she felt such a compassion for.

For hundreds of years, images of floral arrangements and fruit baskets have adorned walls in ordinary houses, painted by underappreciated artists such as Moyra Barry, whose legacies were shoehorned by obstacles such as class and gender confinements of their time. These impediments undoubtedly impaired women's ability to solidify their legacies as artists, further erasing them from the art historical narrative.

Though women in art have always faced their adversaries, one may find some comfort in the fact that there is now increased scholarship on female artists. Fox, Markievicz, and Barry are three completely distinct figures in art history, with a variety of different economic and religious backgrounds. Their works differ in subject matter, style, and technique. However, they are easily linked to each other and to Irish history by their final resting place at Glasnevin cemetery.

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