



## Homage to Sir Hugh Lane

### Date

1920

### Primary Maker

Seán Keating

### Medium

Oil on canvas

### Dimensions

183 x 208.3 cm

## Description

Sir Hugh Lane offered to donate his collection of thirty-nine Continental pictures to Dublin, a collection which included work by leading French artists such as Edouard Manet, Edgar Degas, Auguste Renoir and Berthe Morisot, on condition that a suitable building be found to house them. Hugh Lane asked the British architect Edwin Lutyens to make designs for the proposed new gallery. These designs showing the proposed gallery in St. Stephen's Green and on the site of the Ha'penny Bridge are on view here in Gallery 18. The picture on the wall to the right of the figures in Keating's painting is a view of Lutyens' classically inspired building seen from O'Connell Bridge against a rich red sunset. The gallery controversy instigated fierce debate about the role and the value of the arts in Irish society. Many of the Home Rule proponents and business establishment in Dublin city opposed the proposal to build a gallery on the Liffey because of the cost factor and the consequential implications for themselves as ratepayers. However, five years after the premature death of Hugh Lane, Lane's vision, generosity and endeavours were celebrated in Keating's painting. Shown gathered around John Singer Sargent's 1906 portrait of Hugh Lane are several of Lane's most ardent supporters. These are Thomas Bodkin, Dermot O'Brien and Thomas Kelly (standing left to right) and W B Yeats, George Russell (Æ), Col Hutchinson Poe and Richard Caulfield Orpen (sitting left to right). The idea of a group portrait is reminiscent of William Orpen's 1909 painting Homage to Manet which was a celebration of Hugh Lane's forward-thinking acquisition of Manet's painting Portrait of Eva Gonzales. The controversy over Lane's collection of thirty-nine paintings raged for many years and Lane's intentions were considered at British and Irish governmental level.