



The Log Carriers

Date

c. 1904

Primary Maker

George William Russell (Æ)

Medium

Oil on canvas

Dimensions

49.5 x 66 cm

Description

George Russell outraged many nationalists by his defence of the Dublin workers' cause in 1913. Opposition from some Irish nationalist quarters stemmed from their objection to what they saw as interference from British trade unionism in Irish affairs. However, George Russell was deeply concerned about the poverty and bleak living conditions of the urban poor. He defended the right of workers to join unions in the hope of achieving fairer conditions and he criticised employers' opposition. In this he was joined by such diverse voices as Eamonn Ceannt, Patrick Pearse, Pádraic Colum, George Bernard Shaw, and William Butler Yeats. Through his involvement with the Co-operative movement, and as editor of the Irish Homestead, Russell had actively campaigned for bettering the lives of small farmers and agricultural labourers. The Log Carriers articulates Russell's idealised view of dignified and hardworking labourers working together to eke out a livelihood in a simple landscape setting. (JO'D) Two women in long dresses walk towards the viewer across a shelly beach, carrying a long log on their shoulders. The colour of the womens' dresses matches their faces, making them look like statues. In the background is a sky covered with white and grey blue clouds.