

Basic Detail Report



Exiles

Date

1943

Primary Maker

Patrick Hennessy

Medium

Oil on canvas

Dimensions

101.7 x 61 cm

Description

Exiles is a superb example of Hennessy's distinctive form of realist painting with its Surrealist undertones and air of mystery and intrigue. An elongated male figure presents his back to the viewer as he looks out over an apocalyptic landscape devoid of any vegetation. A cloaked female figure can be observed in the distance. The columns of rock mirror the forms of the figures and the brooding cloud masses that engulf the man's head add to the unsettling atmosphere of this painting. Hennessy's technical accomplishment is evident in this painting with

its low-key palette and barely discernible brushstrokes. The title is enigmatic and it left to the viewer to decide whether the subject of this painting is emigration in famine-stricken nineteenth-century Ireland century or the effects of world war two. One of Ireland's finest realist painters, Patrick Hennessy was born in Cork but as a child moved to Scotland and studied art in Dundee before travelling to France and Italy. In 1939 he returned to Ireland and joined the Dublin Painters Society in 1940. He divided his time between Dublin and Cork. Over the next thirty years he showed almost one hundred works at the RHA, ranging between interiors and still-lives, portraits, and landscapes. In his later years he travelled frequently in Europe and North Africa, often spending his winters in Morocco. PATRICK HENNESSY b. 1915 - d. 1981 Exiles (1943) Oil on canvas, 99 x 59.5 cm Prov. presented by the Thomas Haverty Trust, 1945 Born in Cork and reared in Scotland, Hennessy returned to Ireland at the outbreak of the Second World War where his highly individual style of painting attracted much attention. His work was remarkable for its technical accomplishment, its mysterious surrealist quality and very personal iconography. However, Hennessey's work was more overtly political than that of the European surrealists, de Chirico and Magritte. In the 1960's his work became influenced by photo-realism. An anti-war statement, Exiles was painted c.1943 and depicts a tall, young man looking hopelessly towards a wasteland with apocalyptic-like rock

formations. Hennessy was probably inspired by photographs of the bombed city of Berlin sent to the artist by Henry Robertson Craig.