



## The Foundation Stones (Mental Home)

**Date**

1990

**Primary Maker**

Brian Maguire

**Medium**

Acrylic on canvas

**Dimensions**

203 x 173 cm

**Description**

State-sanctioned political and social injustice and institutional coercion of the human spirit are grist to Brian Maguire's mill. Renowned for highly expressive gestural

painting, in recent years the artist has added billboard posters, photography and video to his arsenal. Maguire's sources are various, from extended art residencies with Loyalist and Republican prisoners and women prisoners of a New York correctional centre, to his renowned body of work Casa di Cultura which arose from his interaction with Sao Paulo's favelas and prisons and with which he represented Ireland in the XXIV Sao Paulo Biennial in 1998. The Foundation Stones (Mental Home) questions society's attitudes towards the mentally ill and their marginalisation. The image of a receding institutional corridor is based on the cellars of St. Patrick's asylum, Dublin, founded by Jonathan Swift. It appears inscribed by a down turned face, as of one whose life it has eclipsed. The inhumanity of the situation and visceral content of the image are given all the more potency by Maguire's elegiac use of colour, the areas of yellow and green perhaps suggesting the patient's inner struggle to reconcile actuality and memory. Maguire has been Professor of Fine Art and Head of the Faculty of Fine Art at the National College of Art and Design since 2000.