



Portrait of Hugh Lane

Date

1907

Primary Maker

Antonio Mancini

Medium

Oil on canvas

Dimensions

226.1 × 116.8 cm

Description

Hugh Lane first met the artist Antonio Mancini in Rome in 1904 after which he became a huge admirer of his work. Lane commissioned Mancini to paint his portrait and this canvas, showing Lane surrounded by objects d'art, was regarded by Lane's friends to be his best likeness. When the Municipal Gallery of Modern Art opened in Clonmell House, Harcourt Street, Dublin on 20 January 1908, its impressive founding collection numbered a substantial three hundred works of art, about one third of which was donated by Hugh Lane himself. Lane was a successful art dealer rather than being a wealthy magnate. However, he was driven by the wish to enable people to freely enjoy and appreciate modern Irish and international art. In

attempting to fulfil his vision, Lane was adept at galvanising a distinguished and varied body of supporters. While Hugh Lane expressed relief that a building had temporarily been provided for the gallery of modern art, Clonmell House, a Georgian townhouse, did not have the scope to show all works to best advantage. The gift of what he considered to be his best thirty-nine Continental pictures was therefore conditional on a suitable building being provided to house them and the entire municipal gallery collection. (JO'D)