



## Christ and the Soldier

### Date

1930

### Primary Maker

Georges Rouault

### Medium

Gouache, crayon, pastel and ink on paper

### Dimensions

63.5 × 48.2 cm

### Description

One of the great religious artists of the twentieth century, Georges Rouault, revived biblical subjects and reinterpreted them in a modern context. The son of a cabinet-maker, Rouault served a five-year apprenticeship as a stained glass artist before deciding to become a

painter and entering the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris to study under Gustave Moreau. The dark contrast and vibrant areas of colour in Christ and the Soldier are instantly reminiscent of stained glass windows. Around 1929 the Passion of Christ became a dominant theme for Rouault and in this work he depicts the moment after the crowning of thorns. Christ wears a red mantle and behind him a Roman soldier stands with a reed, ready to strike. A number of figures peer out of an open window. When this work was offered to this Gallery in 1942 it was rejected on the grounds that its modernity was blasphemous. The artist Sean Keating was one of its most vociferous opponents. Ironically, two months later, the painting went on loan to an ultra-conservative religious institution, St. Patrick's Seminary in Maynooth, before eventually being accepted by the Gallery in 1956.