

# Basic Detail Report

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## Chinese Landscape 7/'86

### Date

1986

### Primary Maker

Patrick Scott

### Medium

Gold leaf and tempera on linen

### Dimensions

122 x 218.5 cm

### Description

'Chinese Landscape', one of a series of works Scott created using gold leaf, shows his formal preoccupations, the sun a sharply defined semi-circle and the forms of the mountains highly simplified. A mood of stillness pervades the image. The artist uses ancient materials to create modernist works, tempera and gold-leaf are more usually associated with icon painting. Tempera was the predecessor of oil paint and was traditionally made by combining pigment with egg-yolk. In the early 1960s, working in Galway, Scott was fascinated by the landscape. He wanted to capture the elusive light of the bogs and discovered he could do so by using tempera on unprimed canvas, allowing the paint to seep into the fabric. These early works used a variety of colour while 'Chinese Landscape' concentrates on white, but the effect is similar, the outlines of the mountains appear to fade away as if shrouded in mist. The use of gold leaf on canvas reveals Scott's interest in technical innovation. Gold leaf usually cracks when applied to canvas so traditionally it has only been employed with hard surfaces such as wood panel. However, Scott liked the combination of textures of raw linen with gold and, in consultation with the British Museum, he experimented with acrylic adhesive which proved to be flexible enough to hold gold. The semi-circular sun in 'Chinese Landscape' is composed of 8cm squares of gold leaf. The mountains are outlined by rows of parallel curved lines, similar to the patterns raked into the gravel of formal Oriental garden. This exploration of non-European cultures for inspiration is a feature of international modernism. (Extract from 'Images and Insights', Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin, 1993, p. 136)