

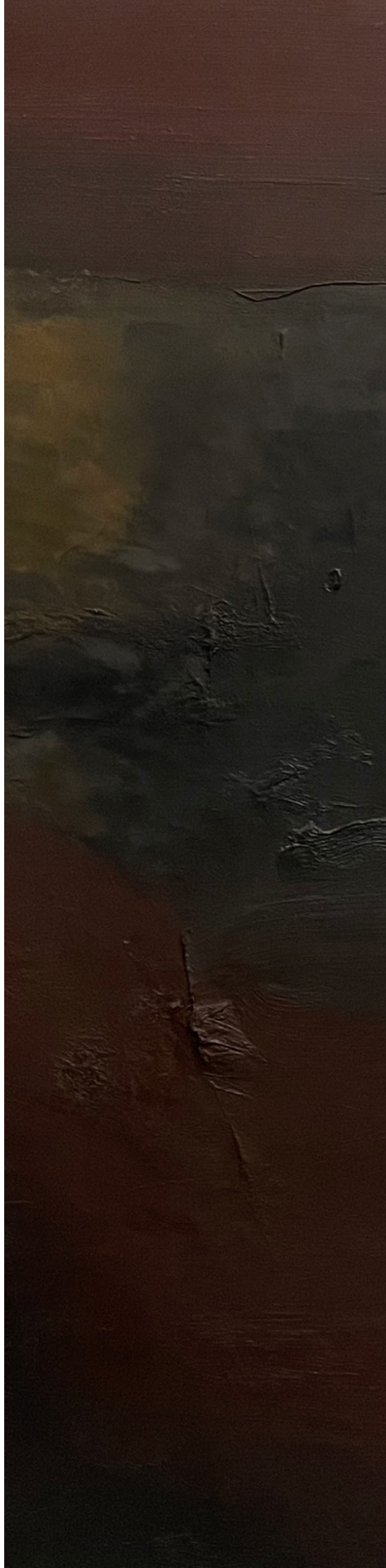


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Hughie O'Donoghue, North of the Seine, South of the Somme : A Crossroads in France, 1996

**ARTIST**

Hughie O'Donoghue (b.1953)

TITLE

North of the Seine, South of the Somme : A
Crossroads in France

MEDIUM

Oil on canvas

DATE

1996

SIZE

82 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 86 $\frac{3}{4}$ in : 210.0 x 220.0 cm

INSCRIPTIONS

Signed, titled and dated verso

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist
Purdy Hicks Gallery, London
Private Collection, South Africa

REFERENCE

AC23-33

In the mid-1990s, O'Donoghue's work became inextricably intertwined with his own familial past. When he learned that his father, Daniel, was dying, the artist began to spend extensive time with him, interviewing him about his family background and his father's service in World War II. After his father's death, O'Donoghue immersed himself in his wartime materials, letters and photographs. It became an obsessive preoccupation, the process of learning more about the man O'Donoghue admits he had a difficult relationship with. His study led him deep into the archives of the Imperial War Museum. The experience directly inspired the artist's next series, *The Fall of France*, a body of work that investigates the nature of war and its impact in the individual and collective memory. The paintings refer to his father's journey with the British Expeditionary Force through Europe and his retreat from France through the port of Cherbourg in 1940, after the evacuation of Dunkirk.

Hughie O'Donoghue, *The Visceral Body*, Hughie O'Donoghue, edited by Jo Baring, Lund Humphries, London, 2023

O'Donoghue made a series of colour carborundum prints in 1997 titled *A Line of Retreat* - this was a summary of key images that had formed in paintings inspired by events recounted in his father's war diaries. The artist works and re-works themes, and reappropriates imagery, in different media and at varying scales, to present a series of oblique, open-ended narratives. The present work depicts a dilemma of direction facing his father's unit retreating through France, unable to use lights and practically surrounded by enemy soldiers.

Hughie O'Donoghue

Born in Manchester, England, in 1953, Hughie O'Donoghue's Irish heritage and deep connection to his roots have had a profound influence on his artistic expression. His exploration of personal and collective memory is highly individual and he is considered amongst Ireland's most important artists.

O'Donoghue's work primarily revolves around the human figure, depicted on occasion in introspective, contemplative poses. His often vibrantly coloured paintings are richly layered, generally large in scale and are characterised by elaborately textured surfaces and a particular use of the medium. There is significant depth and emotional resonance in his works and his charcoal drawings display an uncommon technical dexterity.

One of the most significant aspects of O'Donoghue's oeuvre is his exploration of the themes of identity, memory, and history. The artist frequently draws on historical events, mythological narratives and personal experiences, presenting a complex and multifaceted compendium of works. O'Donoghue's ability to merge the personal and the universal on a grand scale allows viewers to engage with his art in a practically immersive fashion.

Several museums have given O'Donoghue solo exhibitions including Haus der Kunst, Munich; Imperial War Museum, London; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; The Gemeentemuseum, The Hague and The National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin. He was artist in residence at the National Gallery, London from 1984-85.

Throughout his career, O'Donoghue has created notable series of works. His early, monumental series *Sleeper* and *Red Earth* interpret the history of the ground itself, exploring what the soil may hold and why: examining the bodies placed in it or that may have fallen or otherwise come to be there.

The discovery of his father's war diaries led to the series *A Line of Retreat*. Interpreting moments from the soldier's experiences throughout the Second World War became a starting point for a prodigious consideration of that period through the medium of richly surfaced paint and heavy carborundum etchings. O'Donoghue's ability to merge history and personal experience frequently creates a compelling, resonant narrative.

ARCHEUS / POST-MODERN are principal dealers in Hughie O'Donoghue's early works and his graphic works.



The following institutions hold his work:

Arts Council of Great Britain

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

British Museum

Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford

Chester Beatty Library, Dublin

Cleveland County Museums, Middlesbrough

Crawford Art Gallery, Cork

Djanogly Art Gallery, University of Nottingham

Dublin City Gallery, Hugh Lane, Dublin

Eton College, Windsor, Berkshire

Ferens Art Gallery, Hull

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Gemeentemuseum, Den Haag, Netherlands

Huddersfield Art Gallery

Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin

Hunt Museum, Limerick

Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow

The Imperial War Museum, London

The Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin

Mayo General Hospital

Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor

National University of Ireland, Cork

National University of Ireland, Galway

National University of Ireland, Maynooth

The National Gallery, London

The Royal Collection, Windsor Castle

St John's College, University of Oxford

Trinity College Dublin

Trinity Hall, Cambridge

Ulster Museum, Belfast

Victoria Art Gallery, Bath

Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester

Yale Center for British Art, New Haven



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