
Michael Farrell - Biography

Michael Farrell was born in 1940 and worked as a theatre set designer as well as being a painter. His work is represented in every important collection in Ireland. He died in 2000 and is remembered vividly by those who knew him.

Try to consider these questions about *Saturday 15.8.98 Omagh*

1. Why do you think this painting is so tall?
2. Why do you think there are so few colours in it? Does this make the red stand out even more?
3. The title of this painting is a date and in the next exportation that date will be made clear so before going any further, what can you tell about this piece? What is its theme?
4. This painting recalls the 15th August 1998, the date of the Omagh bomb. The single worst atrocity of the troubles in Northern Ireland. Twenty nine people of different races and religions are murdered on a busy shopping day, one of whom is a woman pregnant with twins. Over 220 people are injured. This piece remembers those events.
5. This is painting at its most polemic, it is simple and uncomplicated. What are the qualities of display this and what are its effects?
6. We are engaged here in a most intimate moment, one person, us and the horror. Is a gallery an appropriate place for such moment?

On the reverse of this sheet is a short one-page exercise to assist you while looking at the painting. It comprises of five questions. Feel free to fill it out and take it home with you or you can simply use the questions in your mind as prompts to look at the painting more thoroughly. (If you do fill it out, please tell a member of staff so we can replace it for the next visitor)

1. Answer the first question, "Like/Dislike", with just one of these two words.
2. The next one is "Description", here describe all the physical details you can about the painting such as the name of the artist; the title; medium; dimensions as well as how the paint is applied and so on.
3. For the next one "Imagery", note down what the painting is of. For example Barrie Cooke's *Two Lough Key Islands* might include, "an island in mist, sort of abstracted, out in the lake but sort of floating in the painting" or Blaise Drummond's *Wreck of Hope* might include "a passenger aeroplane flying through a circular gap in stormy clouds in the centre of the painting. The plane is very small for the size of the painting" Describe as much as you can, everything you notice such as the choice of colours, the position of things in the painting and so on.
4. In the next one "Interpretation". Try to figure out what the artist was trying to communicate, what they meant by putting these things on the canvas, why are they there, what does the choice of colours signify, how does one bit relate to another, what was the artist feeling? Think about this for a couple of minutes before you come to your conclusions.
5. Finally you come to "Like/Dislike" again, but this time rather than just one word, give a sentence or two about your answer.