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### Patrick Graham - Biography

Patrick Graham was born in 1943 in Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. From 1960-64 he attended the National College of Art and Design. Since 1978 he has exhibited nationally and internationally receiving many awards and great acclaim. Currently he teaches painting in the Dublin Institute of Technology and works in the Firestation Art Studio in Buckingham Street, Dublin. He is represented worldwide by Rutberg Fine Arts inc.

#### Try to consider these questions about *Self Crucifixion*

1. Some reaction to this painting has been negative, some people see a monster, some people have seen other things. Can you spot the butterfly?
2. If you half close your eyes, try to find the best colour. Is it a green or red?
3. Without considering the title, I think the central thrust of a crucified form is unmissable. Where is this crucifixion taking place and is this relevant?
4. For some artists making a recognisable image is almost accidental, for them the process of working with colour is the first concern, which in your opinion is more important in this piece - the treatment of the paint or the finished image?
5. Graham's work grapples with the physical and the spiritual in a context that can appear medieval but is always modern. Within the bold aggressive tragedies that he exposes, a carnal impasse is struck. Beyond there is only the possibility of the spiritual. There is, however, nothing orthodox about Graham's spirituality, it is in effect the spirituality of the alone and the lonely. The visual lexicon of Christian Art has been raided and its central most sacred image reimagined.
6. It's almost impossible to view Grahams self-crucifixion without a sense of the history of art. The form and shape of the work extends backwards beyond romanticism into darker European art. The application of some paint strokes comes straight from Rembrandt or Carravagio, but it is still the twisted (balaclavaed) emaciated form that occupies us. This form is shaped like a Byzantine Christ and so brings us even further back in time. In this piece we find a thousand years of art history. Yet for me it seems more relevant and gripping then ever before in these brutal times of hangings and wars.

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.