
Tony O'Malley - Biography

Tony O'Malley was born in Callan, Co. Kilkenny in 1913 and died there in 2003. Having started his professional life as a banker, he retired after contracting tuberculosis and at the age of 40 and became a full time painter. He was heavily influenced by the renowned artistic community in St. Ives, Cornwall, where he lived for thirty years. O'Malley travelled to the Scilly Isles and the Bahamas and these vivid influences are apparent in his work. He returned to Ireland in 1990 with his wife Jane Harris. He is a much missed trailblazer of Irish art.

Try to consider these questions about *Interior- Trevaylor*

1. Make a list of the colours and shapes that you find in this work by Tony O Malley.
2. If you could touch this piece of art do you think it would be soft or hard? What materials does it reminds you of?
3. Do you think the orientation of this work is significant? Would it make more or less sense in a portrait position?
4. This piece is made up of three major sections. What is the effect of each isolated section and what patterns are you reminded of when viewing it?
5. "For me landscape was always myself in a landscape" from this quote we can easily discover how embedded O'Malley is in his subject matter. Landscape for him appears to be not only observed but also physically enacted. Would it be fair to assume that every work by O'Malley then contains strong elements of self-portrait?
6. The great Romanian sculptor Constantine Brancusi dealt so purely with the essence of his subjects that any detail that was superfluous was discarded. O'Malley also uses the expression "essential" when describing his work. Does O'Malley's piece embody that same minimal reduction of elements that Brancusi's work adhered to? What therefore is the essential experience that O'Malley is getting at?

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.