

# Strategic Plan

2024 - 28

GAILEARAÍ  
NÁISIÚNTA<sup>na</sup>  
hÉIREANN



NATIONAL  
GALLERY<sub>of</sub>  
IRELAND



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# Foreword

**On behalf of the Board of Governors and Guardians of the National Gallery of Ireland, we are pleased to present the Gallery’s Strategic Plan from 2024 until 2028. This Plan is focused on how the Gallery will evolve to best serve its collections and audiences, in the late 2020s and beyond.**

The Plan has been developed following wide-ranging consultation within the National Gallery of Ireland and with our stakeholders. The process was led by the Gallery’s Director with support from the Executive Leadership Team and our external consultants, Genesis. It was approved by the Board of Governors and Guardians in 2024. The aims of this Plan accord with the most recent statements of strategy by our parent Department, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media.

We are grateful for the support we receive from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media. We are also indebted to the Office of Public Works, in whom our buildings and lands are vested.

The National Gallery of Ireland is one of Europe’s finest public art collections, with a high reputation for audience engagement. We have a stellar collection, a committed Board and staff, and a belief in our mission and what we do. This Plan outlines how we want to develop the National Gallery of Ireland as a public resource for Ireland and for the world, now and in the future.

**Mary Keane (2020–2024)**

**Adrian O’Carroll (2024–2028)**

**CHAIR, BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND GUARDIANS,  
NATIONAL GALLERY OF IRELAND**



## Introduction

The National Gallery of Ireland is among the earliest public art galleries in the Western world. We hold one of Europe’s finest public art collections in trust for the people of Ireland, and for visitors from across the world. We are the only public art gallery anywhere where you can see the best of Irish and international art together, from the Middle Ages to the twenty first century. We are a connector between Ireland and the world, and we bring the present and the past together.

In 1854, the Gallery was founded as an inestimable public resource for everyone in Ireland. Ten years later, in 1864, when we opened our doors, it was free to visit the collection, and our site was chosen specifically so that the Gallery would be accessible to a wide public.

Over the last 170 years the collection has grown considerably, from less than 100 works of art when we opened, to almost 17,000 in 2024, and we continue to make important additions to our art and archival holdings. We are home to Ireland’s leading research centre for the study of art and art history, and hold an extensive archive devoted to Irish artists. We have the largest Art Conservation studio in Ireland, and we are currently developing Ireland’s first Scientific Research Laboratory in an art museum.

Our audiences have also expanded significantly. Today the Gallery is one of the island’s most popular free visitor attractions. In 2023, we welcomed over a million visitors to our Dublin site, and a further million engaged with our digital platforms. We are working increasingly with schools and young people across the island, and we have the ambition and desire to do more. It’s important that people all over the island feel that this is their Gallery, and we want to share our expertise as well as our collections more widely. Our international role is also significant, and we wish to continue and grow relationships and partnerships with museums, collections and philanthropists outside Ireland.



The world has altered considerably since 1854, but the Gallery's activity remains guided by the principles that motivated our founders. We exist to care for this great public collection, and to connect people with their art. It is our responsibility to ensure that our collections are preserved for this and future generations, and that they reach and serve the needs of our changing and growing audiences, in a world that is both physical and digital. In order to do this, we must invest in our people and our infrastructure, including progressing the final stage of the Master Development Plan, and meet the challenges of climate change. The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media shares our commitment to our public mission, and to the special value that the Gallery holds for the people of Ireland. It is a priority to widen and further diversify our sources of income, including self-generated revenue and philanthropic support.

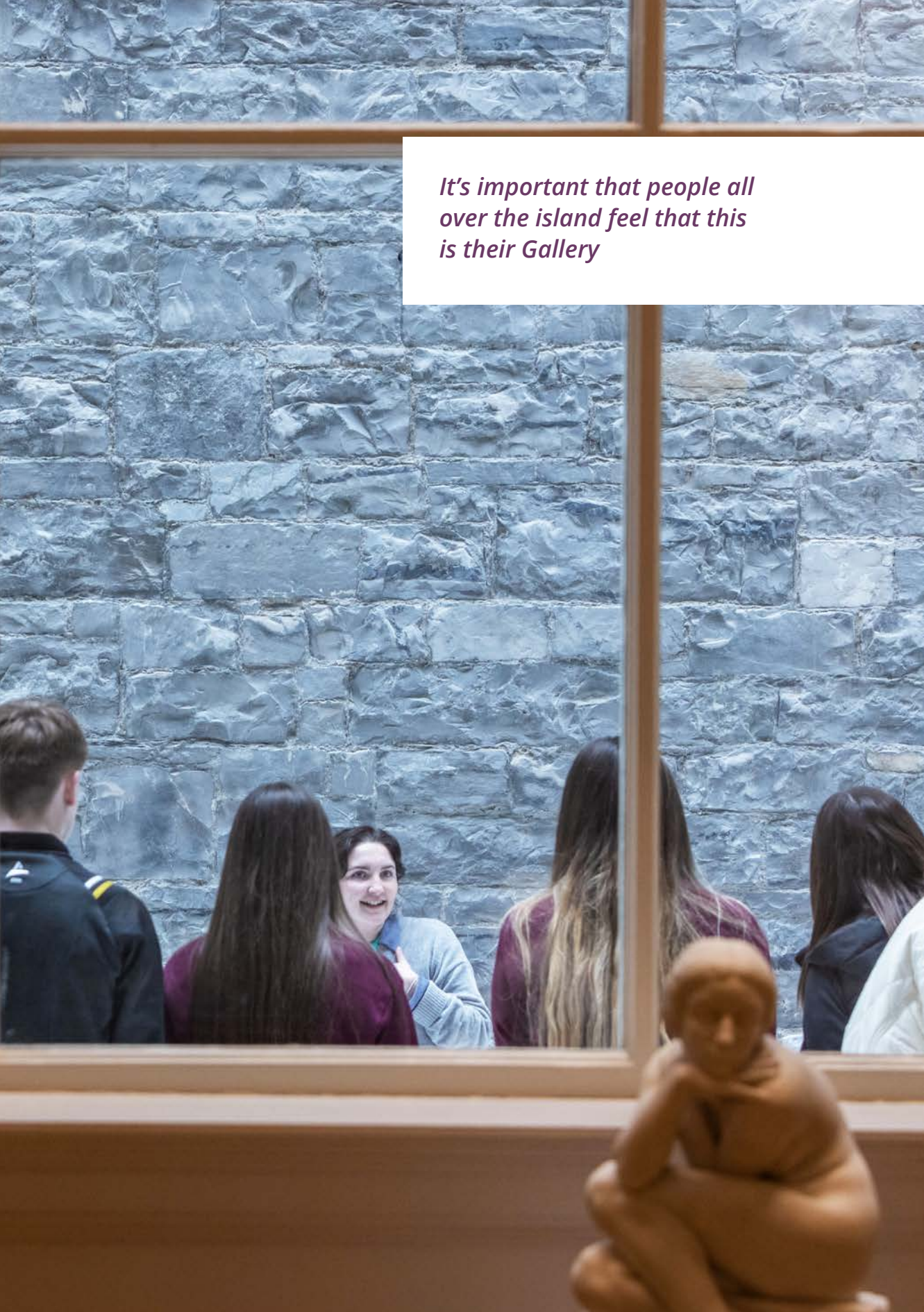
These are rapidly changing times, but our 170 years of experience, the support of the Irish government and our generous benefactors, old and new, our expert colleagues, and one of the world's most unique collections of art, enable us to look forward to the future with energy and enthusiasm.

**Dr Caroline Campbell**

**DIRECTOR, NATIONAL GALLERY OF IRELAND**



*It's important that people all over the island feel that this is their Gallery*





# About the National Gallery of Ireland

Founded in 1854, the National Gallery of Ireland is Ireland's major national cultural institution devoted to the collection and care of fine art. Our holdings include masterpieces by many of the most celebrated figures in the history of western European art. In addition, we are the home of the most representative collection of historic Irish art in the world. We are based in central Dublin, at the heart of the city's political and cultural quarter, but we are active across the island, and with international partners in Europe and America.

Our ambitious and diverse range of activity includes exhibitions and displays devoted to Irish and European art from the Middle Ages to the twenty first century, as well as conservation and archival projects, which we make available on site, digitally, and at other venues nationally and internationally.



We run an extensive and inclusive education programme which works with audiences across every age group, and with many different sectors of society.

The National Gallery of Ireland's parent Department is the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media. We also work closely with the Office of Public Works, in whom our buildings and lands are vested. Government grant-in-aid is supplemented by income raised through corporate and philanthropic support and through the National Gallery of Ireland's commercial activities.

We provide free access to the public 361 days a year.

In 2023, we welcomed 1,017,636 visitors and employed over 180 staff.

In 2024, the Gallery celebrates two major anniversaries:

- 160th Anniversary of the opening of the Gallery in 1864
- 170th Anniversary of National Gallery of Ireland Act in 1854.

During our history, we have extended our buildings on three occasions by opening the:

- *Milltown Wing* in 1903
- *Beit Wing* in 1968
- *Millennium Wing* in 2002.

In 2017, the Gallery's Historic Wings were extensively conserved and modernised. We are currently working with our government partners on the final phase of the Gallery's Master Development Plan. This will equip the Gallery with education, collection care, exhibition and display facilities that match the quality of our world-class collection.

In recent years, we have received numerous awards and accreditations. These include:

- *Museums Standards Programme*
- *Triple Lock Standard*
- *SWiFT 3000 Accreditation*
- *RIAI Silver Medal for Conservation & Restoration*
- *Business to Arts Awards*.



We are a registered charity (Registered Charities Number/RCN 20003029, Charitable Tax Exemption Number/CHY 2345).

Our charitable objectives, as set out in Section 60 of the National Cultural Institutions Act (1997), are:

- To increase and diffuse in or outside the State knowledge of the visual arts by whatever means they consider appropriate.
- To engage in such activities for the purpose of raising funds for the purposes of the National Gallery as they think appropriate.



# Mission, Purpose & Ambition

All that we do is underpinned by the excellence and uniqueness of the collections we hold in trust for everyone. These drive our mission, purpose and ambition.

## Mission

Our mission is to care for, interpret, develop and showcase art in a way that makes the National Gallery of Ireland an exciting place to encounter art.

We aim to provide an outstanding experience that inspires an interest in and an appreciation of art for all.

We are dedicated to bringing people and their art together.

## Purpose

The National Gallery of Ireland is for everyone.

We believe in the transformative power of art to inspire and connect people, enrich lives and contribute to Ireland's cultural reputation at home and abroad.

## **Ambition**

A beacon of inclusivity, sustainability and diversity, our ambition is to be a model for national galleries, making the National Gallery of Ireland a vibrant, joyful and immersive experience, enjoyed by all.

We will achieve this by showcasing our unique collections, celebrating artists, developing creativity and providing spaces within and beyond the Gallery, for meaningful engagement with art.

We want everyone to enjoy creative encounters with the National Gallery of Ireland that spark curiosity, create meaning and foster a lifelong love of art.

# The Context: Challenges & Opportunities

Ireland, and the world, are rapidly evolving. We are living in a period of greater change than at any moment since the late twentieth century. Issues relating to housing, transport, the cost of living, and population growth loom large within Ireland. There are greater differences than ever between generations, exacerbated by social media. Globalisation, climate change, unrest within regional power blocs, and large-scale movements of people are combining to make a less stable world order. The Gallery needs to be mindful of this larger picture as we develop our activities and evolve to serve our changing audiences in the late 2020s and beyond.



The Gallery has a strong national and international reputation for its excellent collections, its exhibitions, displays and education programme. Building on this, we will explore new ways to grow our collections, and bring them to life for audiences. We have a strong commitment to live the principle that the Gallery is for everyone, and to engage with the widest variety of people.



It is important that the Gallery is welcoming, accessible and encouraging for all, and our ambitions for greater funding and growth are aligned to our mission and purpose, and for the common good. In order to further diversify our income, we will need to change processes, practices and mindsets. As one of Ireland’s national cultural institutions, we also have a key role to play in sustainability in the cultural sector in Ireland, and how we deal with climate change.



# Strategic Priorities

**The National Gallery of Ireland’s Strategic Plan 2024–28 identifies key priorities which will shape our activity and programming until 2028. These ambitious plans will enhance our collections and research, further develop how we work with our audiences in Ireland and internationally, enable us to be more environmentally and financially sustainable, and lay the foundations for our continued future as a successful public art gallery in the 2030s and beyond.**

The Plan is organised into four overarching strategic priorities. Some build on existing work, some are in the planning period, while others look towards the future. By focusing our activity on these priorities, we will deliver on our mission and purpose, and be able to achieve our ambition.



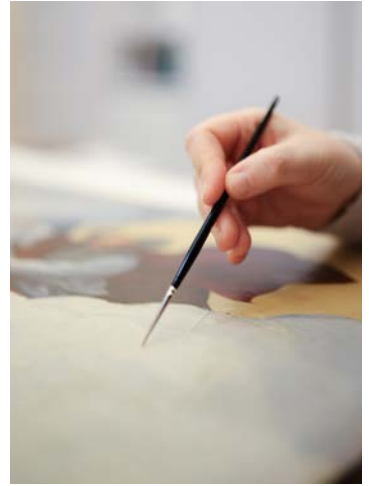
Executive Leadership Team (L-R) Kim Smit, Gillian De Marco, Dr Caroline Campbell and Andrew Hetherington

# Developing and caring for our living collections for public benefit

Our collection uniquely combines the greatest Irish and international art across seven centuries of human achievement. We interpret, research and expand this invaluable resource, honing the highest standards of scholarship and conservation.

## **Key Initiatives:**

- Develop, research, manage and care for the collections.
- Establish the first Scientific Research Laboratory and develop research in this area.
- Secure our position as the custodians of Ireland's foremost Library and Archives collections for art and visual culture.





# A National Gallery for all

We are leaders in sharing our collections, exhibitions and expertise with our growing and changing audiences, on site, online, across the island, and internationally.

## **Key Initiatives:**

- Foster a culture of inclusivity, diversity and equality for our audiences and for our people.
- Ensure our visitors enjoy a world-class experience with the National Gallery of Ireland’s collections, on site, off site, online and through publications.
- Define, build and launch a National Programme to embrace a wide range of people and communities across the island.
- Develop and implement the National Gallery of Ireland’s first Audience Strategy 2025–28.





# Excellence in Corporate Services

The National Gallery of Ireland is held in regard as a world-class museum committed to improving its facilities and infrastructure, progressing the Master Development Plan and developing sustainable resources to fulfil our potential in a rapidly changing world.

## **Key Initiatives:**

- Develop a People Strategy where our people are provided the opportunity to fulfil their potential, working together to realise individual and shared goals.
- Strengthen and support a culture of good governance at every level of the organisation in line with our duties as a cultural institution held in the highest regard.
- Foster a culture of environmental responsibility, working closely with the OPW, to ensure that the Gallery's Climate Action Plan integrates strategic practices and government targets with a commitment to a greener, more sustainable future.
- Secure the Gallery's physical and digital infrastructure, and advance the Master Development Plan.
- Support and promote the implementation of the Official Languages Act in line with government strategy.



# Strategic Partnerships

We exist for public purpose. We grow national and international partnerships and income streams across the public and private sectors to advance our mission.

## Key Initiatives:

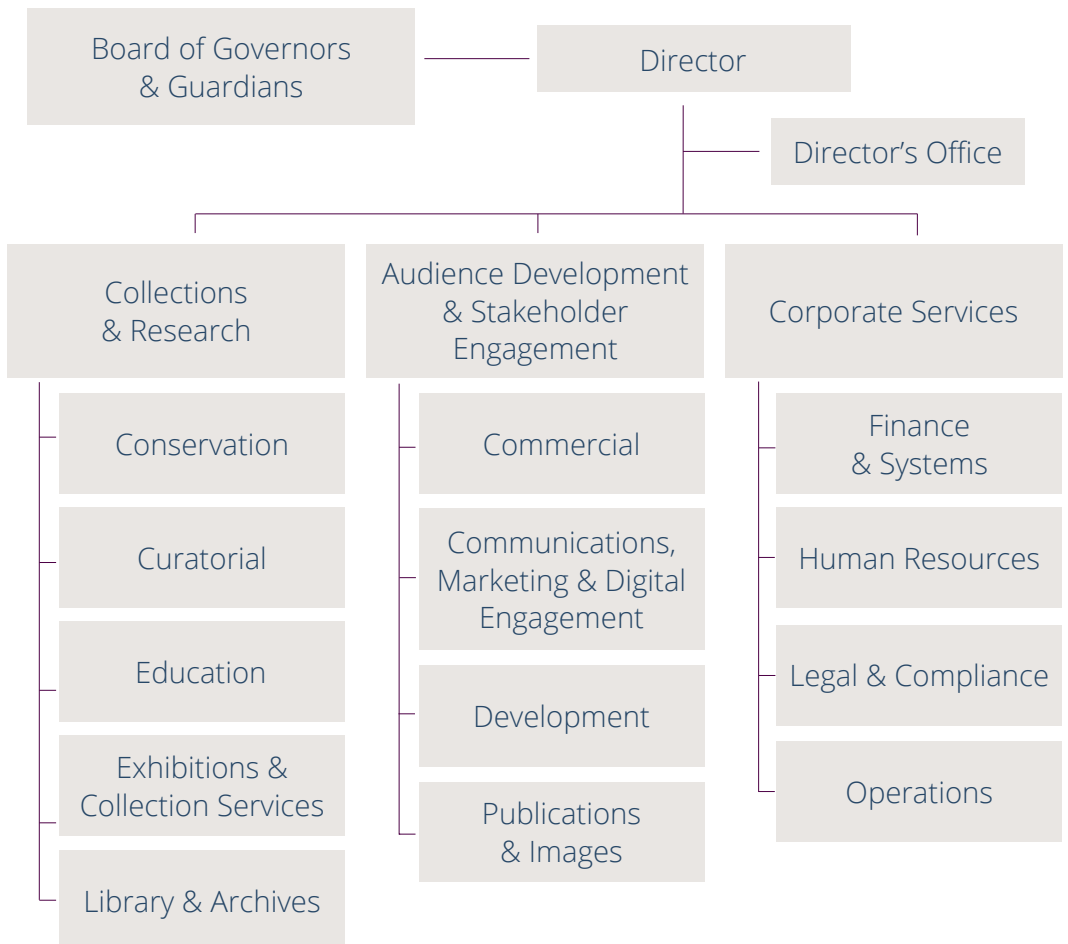
- Work with our parent Department (the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media), the Office of Public Works, the wider public sector, and with our other Strategic Partners to appropriately resource and develop the Gallery and its activities, on site, off site and online. This includes initiatives that focus on the Night Time Economy and Commemorative Events.
- Develop and implement Annual Stakeholder Engagement Plans to inform key stakeholders about our impact, strategic priorities and our progress.
- Create and foster international partnerships to optimise the Gallery's collections, programmes and exhibitions.
- Develop and implement a Revenue Growth Plan encompassing sustainable Commercial and Development Plans 2025–28.





# Organisational Structure

Our people are critical for achieving our strategic objectives. As we embark on this Plan, the Gallery’s organisational structure is summarised below.



# Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the many people, within and beyond the National Gallery of Ireland, that we have consulted during the creation of this Plan.

We have been advised throughout the process by Gary Joyce and Rory O'Rourke of Genesis. Together we have conducted interviews, held many workshops and hosted a world-café consultation event with a representative mix of our staff and our stakeholders.

We commenced our consultations in September 2023. The Strategic Plan was completed and approved by the Director and the Board of Governors and Guardians of the National Gallery of Ireland in 2024.



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P 12 (right): Lavinia Fontana, 1552–1614, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, c.1595–1600. Musei Civici d'Arte Antica, Museo Davia Bargellini, Bologna.

P 12 (left), 13: Lavinia Fontana, 1552–1614, *The Visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon*, 1599, NGI.76.

P 16: Silver Olympic medal awarded to Jack Butler Yeats for *The Liffey Swim* (NGI.941) in the painting competition, Paris games, 1924, IE NGI/YAY1/JY/10/2/2.

P 17: Jack B. Yeats, 1871–1957, *The Liffey Swim*, 1923, NGI.941.

P 21: Ludovico Mazzolino, c.1480–c.1530, *The Crossing of the Red Sea*, 1521, NGI.666.

P 22 (bottom right): Vera Klute, b. 1981, *Garry Hynes (b.1953), Theatre Director, Co-founder of Druid Theatre* (detail), 2017, NGI.2017.1.

P 26–27: Paul Cézanne, 1839–1906, *La Vie des Champs*, c.1876–77, NGI.2023.1.

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