

Leaving Cert Art History | Artist Summary

Sample Answer

Louis Le Brocquy (1916-2012)

Background: Louis Le Brocquy was born in Dublin in 1916. He studied chemistry at Trinity College Dublin and during this period he gained an amateur interest in art, prompted in particular by music. Encouraged by his mother and with no formal training, Le Brocquy left Ireland to study European art collections (1938). Le Brocquy travelled widely, absorbing the old masters in London, Paris, Venice and Geneva, then housing the Prado Collection during the Spanish Civil War. He spent several weeks among the Spanish masters here, and rather than receiving formal training, he preferred to learn by direct contact with the great artists of the past. In 1946, Brocquy moved to London and became prominent in the contemporary art scene. He began to exhibit internationally and in 1956 he represented Ireland at the Venice Biennale, where his painting 'A Family' won a major award. In 1958, he married artist Anne Madden and settled in Carros in the South of France.

Style and Subject Matter: Le Brocquy exposed himself to a wide range of sources and his work can be divided into an academic period, a white impressionist period, and a modernist linear period. The compositions establish Le Brocquy's interest in the loneliness of the human individual. Among his collaborations with Irish writers, Le Brocquy is perhaps best known for his lithographic brush drawings and for Thomas Kinsella's renowned translation of the Tain (the gathering of people for a cattle trade, forming the centrepiece of the cycle of Ulster heroic stories) in 1969. Le Brocquy's images underline the important role of the illustrations. His ink brush drawings are sympathetic with a literary text, allowing the reader to perceive both text and image without being distracted by the graphic qualities of the drawings.