**IN THE SPRING OF TWO MODERN NATIONS:**

 **PORTRAITS OF IRISH AND LITHUANIAN HISTORY**

“This exhibition conveys a story of two countries that stood up to their oppressors. The history of these times is reflected on the faces of their heroes, poets, intellectuals and spiritual leaders.”

Tom Byrne

**The Great Hunger**

***2019***

The Great Famine or the Great Hunger was a period of mass starvation and disease in Ireland from 1845–1849. During the famine, about one million people died and a million more emigrated from Ireland, causing the island's population to fall by between 20 and 25 percent.

**The Battle of Mount Street Bridge**

***2016***

The Battle of Mount Street Bridge is a part of the 1916 Easter Rising that is rarely mentioned. Yet this battle is surely one that should have been at the forefront of the Irish history books and a mandatory part of every Irish history syllabus. It was, militarily, the most successful rebel engagement in Dublin. Though eventually defeated, the rebels held up two nearly full-strength British battalions for several hours on Wednesday 26 April, and the significant British casualties inflicted by a small band of Volunteers served as a powerful piece of propaganda, emphasising the bravery and sacrifice of the rebellion.

**Thomas Clarke (11.03.1858 – 03.05.1916)**

***2015***

Thomas Clarke was an Irish republican revolutionary leader from Dungannon, County Tyrone. He was said to be responsible for the inspiration of the 1916 Easter Rising. Following the surrender, Thomas Clarke was executed.

**Patrick Pearse (10.11.1879 – 03.05.1916)**

***015***

Patrick Pearse was an Irish teacher, barrister, poet, writer, nationalist, republican political activist, revolutionary, and one of the leaders of the Easter Rising in 1916. Following his execution along with fifteen others, Patrick Pearse became the personification of the rebellion.

**James Connolly (05.06.1868 – 12.05.1916)**

***2015***

James Connolly was a Scottish-born Irish republican and socialist leader. He was a member of the Irish Socialist Republican Party. James Connolly opposed British rule in Ireland, and was one of the leaders of the Easter Rising of 1916. He was executed by firing squad following the Rising.

**Joseph Plunkett (21.11.1887 – 04.05.1916)**

***2012***

Joseph Plunkett was a poet, editor, world traveller, a bit of a scientist, a good military strategist and one of the most mysterious of the 1916 Rising leaders. He became a romantic icon with his marriage to Grace Gifford just hours before he was executed. He was also the youngest signatory of the Proclamation.

**Sean Mac Diarmada (27.01.1883 – 12.05.1916)**

***2015***

Sean Mac Diarmada was an Irish republican political activist and revolutionary leader. He was one of the seven leaders of the Easter Rising of 1916, which he helped to organise as a member of the Military Committee of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and was a signatory of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic. He was executed for his part in the Rising.

**Thomas MacDonagh (01.02.1878 – 03.05.1916)**

***2015***

Thomas MacDonagh was an Irish political activist, poet, playwright, educationalist and revolutionary leader. He was one of the seven leaders of the Easter Rising of 1916, a signatory of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic. He was executed for his part in the Rising.

**Eamonn Ceannt (21.09.1881 – 08.05.1916)**

***2015***

Eamonn Ceannt was an Irish republican, mostly known for his role in the Easter Rising of 1916. He had an interest in Irish culture, especially in Irish language and history. "I shall die, like a man for Ireland's sake." These were the last words that he wrote to his wife just hours before he was executed.

**The execution of James Connolly**

***2016***

On 12 May 1916, one of the Easter Rising leaders, James Connolly, was executed for his role in the rebellion. James Connolly was executed for leading the rebellion, due to severe injuries sustained in the battle, he could not stand, thus the enemies offered him "grace" by offering him to sit on a chair. He looked boldly into the eyes of the executioners, firmly aware that he was sacrificing his life for the sake of his homeland. "It is more honourable to fight and die than to receive alms from the enemies," he repeatedly told his fellow men.

**President Eamon de Valera (14.10.1882 – 29.08.1975)**

***2015***

Eamon de Valera was a prominent legislator and political leader in 20th century Ireland. He managed the introduction of the Constitution of Ireland. Eamon de Valera was a Commandant at Boland's Mill during the 1916 Easter Rising. He was arrested, sentenced to death but released, as a public response to the British execution of the Rising leaders.

**St. Andrew’s church in Dublin**

 ***2017***

Fr. Egidijus Arnašius has been a member of the Lithuanian Catholic Mission in Ireland since its foundation in 2005. The church of St. Andrew’s has become a centre of attraction not only for active Catholics but also for many representatives of Lithuanian youth. Lithuanian public holidays, poetry evenings, concerts and other important dates are celebrated in the vicinity of the church. In addition, during the official visits the representatives from Lithuania frequent the church. The painting is displayed in Lithuanian embassy in Dublin.

**Marcelė Kubiliūtė (28.07.1898 – 13.06.1963)**

 ***2019***

Marcelė Kubiliūtė was a Lithuanian public figure, active in press, education and military areas. She is the only Lithuanian woman awarded all major Lithuanian orders: Grand Cross of Commander of the Order of the Cross of Vytis of second degree, Officer's Cross of the Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas, Knight's Cross of the Order of Vytautas the Great, and Commander's Cross of the Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas. During the Nazi occupation, she rescued Jews. After the imprisonment and deportation period during the second Soviet occupation, she lived and worked in Tauragė from 1950 until 1956. When she later returned to Vilnius, she supported exiles and political prisoners. Kubiliūtė was buried in the Rasos Cemetery, in Vilnius. The painting is displayed in the Birutė Baltrušaitytė Public Library of Tauragė District Municipality.

**Bishop Vincentas Borisevičius (23.11.1887 – 18.11.1946)**

***2018***

Vincentas Borisevičius was a Lithuanian Roman Catholic bishop of the Telšiai Diocese. He was a philanthropist, patron of the poor and needy. He was always ready to help those in need, regardless of their faith, nationality, or ideology. Faith in God was paramount to him, thus Vincentas Borisevičius helped both the Nazi prisoners of the Soviet Army, and the wounded soldiers serving in the German Nazi army. He helped to rescue Jews and contributed a lot to Telšiai ghetto. During the Post-war period, he helped Lithuanian partisans. He was executed by soviets in Vilnius. Borisevičius was posthumously awarded the Grand Cross of Commander of the Order of the Cross of Vytis of second degree. The painting is displayed in the Šunskai Parish church in Marijampolė district.

**Bishop Pranciškus Ramanauskas (21.11.1893 – 15.10.1959)**

***2018***

Pranciškus Ramanauskas was a bishop of Telšiai, had a PhD in Theology, was a professor, a martyr of Siberia, and a press officer. In 2000, Bishop Ramanauskas was added to a record of Martyrologium of the Church of the New Martyrs of Lithuania. In 2006, he was posthumously awarded the Grand Cross of Commander of the Order of the Cross of Vytis of second degree. The painting is displayed in the Telšiai Catechetic center.

**Fr. Pranas Gustaitis (1910 –18.11.1946)**

***2019***

In 2000, Fr. Pranas Gustaitis was added to a record of Martyrologium of the Church of the New Martyrs of Lithuania. Gustaitis was posthumously awarded the Grand Cross of Commander of the Order of the Cross of Vytis of second degree. In addition, during the second Soviet occupation he was the closest advisor to the bishop, Vincentas Borisevičius. The painting is displayed in the church of Vainutas in Šilutė district.

**Sergijus Staniškis (10.02.1900 – 03.02.1953)**

***2020***

Sergijus Staniškis was an officer of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, Lithuanian Resident and a partisan. He was a commander of Dainava District, chief of Operational division of South Lithuanian partisan Headquarters, as well as a chief of Staff and a region commander. Staniškis was recognized as a military volunteer, and posthumously awarded the Grand Cross of Commander of the Order of the Cross of Vytis of third degree. The painting is a private property of Valdas Molevičius.

**Feliksas Vaitkus (20.06.1907 – 25.07.1956)**

***2020***

Feliksas Vaitkus was an American-born Lithuanian pilot. He was the only pilot to fly across the North Atlantic in 1935, and even though he landed in Ireland and not in Kaunas, he was entered in aviation’s history books for being the sixth pilot to fly solo across the Atlantic. He enlisted in the army in 1928, and after graduating from advanced pilot’s training school, was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Air Corps. On 21-22 of September 1935, with a plane Lockheed L-5B Vega, renamed Lituanica II, repeated the Darius and Girėnas flight across the Atlantic. After the flight he visited Lithuania and was awarded Knight's Cross of the Order of Vytautas the Great of third degree. After his death, Feliksas Vaitkus Memorial Museum was opened in Kohler, as well as a memorial to commemorate his flight across the Atlantic was built in Ballinrobe in Ireland. The painting is a property of the Embassy of Lithuania in Dublin.

**Embassy of Lithuania in Ireland**

***2019***

Relations among Lithuania and Ireland have been fragmented over the course of history. During the interwar years, diplomatic relations between Lithuania and Ireland were not established. Nevertheless, a trade agreement was signed. Together with other EU countries, Ireland recognized Lithuania's independence on 29 August 1991. Diplomatic relations among two states were established on 2 September 1991. In 2005, Ireland founded its embassy in Vilnius, and the appointed ambassador was Dónal Denham. The current ambassador of Ireland to Republic of Lithuania is Peter McIvor. The Embassy of Lithuaniain Dublin was opened in November 2003, and on 1 June 2005, Izolda Bričkovskienė was appointed as ambassador. The current ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to Ireland is Egidijus Meilūnas. The painting is a property of the Embassy of Lithuania in Dublin.