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## **NYU Kimmel Windows Present “Portraits of Ireland’s Easter Rising Leaders,” March 5-June 17, 2022**

*“Portraits of Ireland’s Easter Rising Leaders” explores the Easter rising as a turning point in Ireland’s pathway to independence through painted portraits of revolutionaries*

New York University Kimmel Windows Gallery presents *Portraits of Ireland’s Easter Rising Leaders* from March 5, 2022 through June 17th, 2022, in Schwartz Plaza on the corner of Washington Square East and West 4th Street, visible 24/7.

*Portraits of Ireland’s Easter Rising Leaders* is an exhibition in collaboration with Glucksman Ireland House, NYU’s center for the study of Ireland and its diaspora. The Easter Rising, which began on April 24, 1916, marked a turning point in Ireland’s pathway towards independence and it is all the more fitting to reflect on 1916 as Ireland marks the centenary of the British handover of power in 1922.

Over the course of Easter Week in 1916, an armed insurrection took place in Dublin. It was the most significant uprising in Ireland since the rebellion of 1798. Sixteen of the Rising’s leaders were executed, and the political developments to follow contributed to a significant increase in popular support for Irish independence.

Research and publications spearheaded by NYU’s Glucksman Ireland House have revealed how central New York City was for Irish revolutionary activity circa 1916. As one historian has remarked, “No America, No New York, No Easter Rising. Simple as that.”

According to scholar Miriam Nyhan Grey, “Irish cultural and political nationalists, especially in New York, had worked assiduously for years to mobilize American opinion against the British presence in Ireland. Indeed, the United States of America provided an important post-colonial republican model and the Irish were cognisant of that revolutionary legacy.”

It is also clear that the Irish were just one of a number of groups—which included Indian, Jewish, and African American people—who saw this period as an “age of struggle for liberty” and they too agitated from the anti-imperial refuge of New York City. A new collection of essays from NYU Press, *The Irish Revolution: A Global History*, shows just how much activists were learning from and engaging with other revolutionaries in anti-imperial metropolises like New York.

Artist Maureen O’Leary paints at the intersection of figuration and abstraction. By experimenting with garish colors and rapid brush stroke, she creates portraits that emanate

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emotion and presence. A first-generation Irish American and New Yorker, she began to contemplate how history is passed on generationally and in the Irish-American diaspora. In an exercise of interrogation of her own ethnic and family history she created *American Portraits of Ireland's Easter Rising Leaders*.

Taking historic photographs as her source material, she created portraits of revolutionaries who played a role in the Easter Rising. The rebels of 1916, many of whom had spent time in or had personal connections to New York City, decisively shaped Ireland's trajectory to becoming an independent state. In the Kimmel Windows, O'Leary's paintings are contextualized in an installation, created in collaboration with designer David Arsenault, that invokes the rubble and destruction of Dublin following the Easter Rising.

Maureen O'Leary's work is presented courtesy of Cristin Tierney, New York, New York.