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RODERIC O'CONOR 1860-1940

Two volumes
Volume One: Text

ROY JOHNSTON

A thesis submitted
in candidacy for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Faculty of Arts
Department of the History of Art

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RODERIC O'CONOR (1860-1940)

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SYNOPSIS OF THE STUDY

This study documents the life and work of the Irish artist Roderic O'Conor, placing his drawings, prints, and paintings in their appropriate historical context.

O'Conor was a member of an important and historic Irish family and was a direct descendant from the last Kings of Ireland. His family background and heritage is examined, and the main events in O'Conor's life are considered in the order in which they happened, beginning with his school days at Ampleforth College and then proceeding to a consideration of the importance to his later development as an artist, of his formal art training in Dublin and in Antwerp.

Roderic O'Conor left Ireland in 1886, and lived almost his entire life as an artist in France, in close proximity to many of the most important historical events in the development of painting at the end of the last century, and to those which took place at the beginning of this century. His study in Paris with the academic portrait painter Carolus-Duran and his adoption of an Impressionist style shortly thereafter are both analysed through reference to his paintings and to Duran's teaching methods. Particular attention is given to the most interesting period in O'Conor's career, that time when he was in Brittany at Pont-Aven where he met Paul Gauguin and worked alongside several of the artists who had been members of
Gauguin's circle. Because of his association with this group, their theories are examined in some detail, and his Brittany paintings are evaluated relative to the principles which guided these artists in their work. Some possible reasons for an apparent loss of direction in O'Conor's work are advanced in the text, and a theoretical chronology is proposed for the work which he did in the second half of his life when he was based in Paris.

The study also includes material about O'Conor's inheritance after his father's death, and describes some of the problems he experienced as an absentee landlord with property to maintain in Ireland and the welfare of tenants to attend to. O'Conor had a formidable personality, yet he was also kind and considerate especially to artists younger than himself. Information about O'Conor's friendship with Clive Bell provides an insight into his complex character, and the extent of his friendship with Roger Fry is also considered. Roderic O'Conor was also known to Somerset Maugham and Maugham's adoption of certain aspects of the O'Conor personality for characters in his novels is evaluated in the knowledge that both men had an intense dislike of one another.

In his later years, O'Conor found a new enthusiasm for painting and as his health began to fail, he increasingly relied on the comfort and companionship of his mistress, Renée Honta, whom he eventually married towards the end of his life. Some attention is also given to events after O'Conor's death, and to the gradual emergence of his paintings after the death of his widow.
Many people have helped me with my research in the preparation of this thesis, and while it is impossible to name each one of them individually, I owe them all a deep debt of gratitude and my sincere thanks.

In particular I especially wish to thank my supervisor, Professor Anne Crookshank of Trinity College, Dublin, for initially encouraging me to begin this study and also for her patience and constructive criticism throughout the duration of the project.

I must also acknowledge the support of the University of Ulster and its Research Committee for travel grants which permitted me to extend my search for the works of Roderic O'Conor beyond Ireland to France, England, Switzerland, and the United States of America. The staff of Belfast Central Library, National Library of Ireland, National Gallery of Ireland, Ulster Museum, Tate Gallery, Musée d'Orsay, and the Musée de Pont-Aven, were all extremely helpful.

Finally my thanks are also due to the many private collectors who gave me access to the drawings, prints, and paintings of Roderic O'Conor. Their generosity in making their collections available to me made much of the research possible and greatly enriched my experience of his work. Many individuals corresponded with me, and answered my many questions, and where it is appropriate their help is acknowledged in the footnotes and elsewhere in the text. I am especially grateful to the relatives and descendents of Roderic O'Conor for the assistance which they gave me.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

b.r.f. Bottom right front
Cat.No. Catalogue number
Coll. Collection
DRGS. Drawings
Exh. Exhibition
Il. Illustrated
NEAC New English Art Club
NGI National Gallery of Ireland
PRTS. Prints
PTGS. Paintings
RDS Royal Dublin Society
REF.NO. Reference number
RHA Royal Hibernian Academy
Sig. Signed
t.l.f. Top left front
Although the Irish painter Roderic O'Conor was active as an artist for more than fifty years between 1883 and 1940, the year of his death in France, he remained virtually unknown in the country of his birth until comparatively recently. The lack of knowledge about O'Conor's painting in Ireland during his lifetime, was directly related to an almost continuous period of voluntary exile, which began in 1886 when he left Dublin for Paris.

It was not until 1956, when the then Roland, Browse, and Delbanco Gallery in Cork Street, London, first exhibited his work alongside that of Matthew Smith, that the art going public in Great Britain and Ireland became aware of his remarkable talent. After that date the same gallery began the gradual process of releasing through public exhibition, a number of O'Conor works which they had acquired at the dispersal sale of the contents of his studio, held in Paris at Hotel Drouot in February 1956. Through these London exhibitions, Roderic O'Conor was revealed as an artist very much in touch with the most advanced painting of his time. He was perhaps also revealed as an artist whose best works were quite outstanding, but who at different points in his career was also producing paintings of much lesser quality, so that for many years his true merit as a painter has been subject to an element of doubt and uncertainty.
Some of the earliest publications in which O'Conor was mentioned were tantalisingly brief and short of factual matter and information about his work as an artist. When Clive Bell published his own memoirs in 1956, he devoted a chapter in his book to his early days in Paris, in which he included a valuable account of his friendship in Montparnasse with O'Conor, giving an account of the more important events in O'Conor's life as he was then able to identify them. One of the more intriguing revelations in Bell's description of O'Conor's career was the information that the Irish painter had developed a close friendship with Paul Gauguin in Brittany, prior to Gauguin's final departure for the South Seas. Bell also provided an important analysis of O'Conor's character and personality, and to an extent it was his account which began to identify O'Conor as a rather mysterious character who revealed as little as possible about himself, other than to his closest friends.

Bell's revelations about O'Conor were followed by the first published article devoted to the Irish painter, written by Denys Sutton for Studio in 1960, an article in which he described some of the main events in O'Conor's life and for the first time began the process of analysing the significance of his paintings, and of examining in more detail aspects of his career and his association with other artists. Sutton's article included much information that was new and it has always been considered to have been something of a pioneering article, as indeed it then was.

When Wladyslawa Jaworska in her book, 'Gauguin and the Pont-Aven School' which was published in 1971, devoted an entire chapter to Roderic O'Conor, she expanded more fully on aspects of his life and work describing him as 'an Irish expressionist'. Jaworska's research, which was much more
comprehensive than Sutton's, discussed in more depth O'Connor's association with Gauguin's circle in Pont-Aven, and she evaluated his work in the context of that important period in French art history, also writing on aspects of O'Connor's personality which she had gleaned from letters written to him by some of his artist friends.

Since the appearance of these early publications, and of others which have appeared subsequently and which are properly referred to in the text, and through further exhibitions of his work, including two retrospective exhibitions researched and selected by the writer, Roderic O'Connor's reputation as a painter has gradually increased.

At the same time, O'Connor has remained something of an enigma. Why, it is often asked, do the paintings which he made after his association with the artists who comprised Gauguin's circle in Brittany at Pont-Aven, not live up to the promise of the earlier works? Some possible reasons for this are advanced in this study but what has been much less appreciated by those quick to dismiss O'Connor's talent, has been the question of authorship of many of the paintings attributed to him. Because of the way in which his works came before the public after the dispersal sale, a sale which also included many works which were unfinished, and some of much lesser quality painted by his widow, some critics have been inclined to make their judgements on the basis of looking at paintings which are not by O'Connor at all.

One of the most difficult aspects of this research study has been that associated with the proper identification of O'Connor's paintings and their separation for purposes of analysis from those of his widow. When the
study began the writer was aware of rather less than thirty paintings by O'Connor, some of which were in public collections, and some of which were in private hands, principally in Ireland and England. As a result of the research, more than 400 works either by, or attributed to O'Connor have now been traced. Most of these works which include drawings, prints, and paintings, are listed in the appendix and included as colour transparencies to accompany the text, and the most significant works are analysed in their proper context. Works which are believed to have been painted by O'Connor's widow are not included, and their analysis will need a separate study.

The classification of O'Connor's works into groups by tendency, based on their visual and stylistic similarities, has also been an extremely difficult task. A significant number of the paintings are unfinished and their proper relationship to other lightly painted works known to have been exhibited by the artist during his lifetime, remains uncertain. To add to the problems associated with the proposing of a chronology for the works which have been traced, is the fact that many of them are neither signed nor dated, and some have been both signed and dated by hands other than O'Connor's. His widow is known to have amended some of her husband's paintings in this way in the years after his death, but some of these added inscriptions have probably also been placed there as the market demand for O'Connor's paintings has increased.

A further constraint to the study has been the absence of any significant body of writing or theoretical comment on his own paintings left by O'Connor himself. It is difficult in these circumstances to be certain about the qualities which O'Connor was striving for, and some paintings which give the appearance of having been painted and re-painted over a period of years
rather than of months, make the final judgement even more confusing at critical points in his career.

Finally there is the evidence that at times Roderic O'Conor was relatively inactive as a painter, and appears to have suffered from some loss of confidence in his own ability. In such instances it is difficult to be certain about the logical progression of style from one work to the next, and it is felt that some paintings are in the category of having been studio experiments, and were probably never intended for exhibition.

The method of unravelling this complex puzzle has been to trace and document the main events in O'Conor's life in the order in which they happened, from his early life in Ireland through his formative and mature years in France, to his eventual death there in 1940. The development of his painting style has been considered relative to these events, and particular emphasis has been given to his period of activity in Brittany between 1891 and 1904. Paintings have been placed in groups and related to securely dated works in order to trace the changes and developments in his painting style. O'Conor's prints constitute a discrete body of work which is fully analysed in the text, and drawings have been referred to as appropriate in the process of analysis of his paintings.

It is the opinion of the writer that in the years to come it is likely that yet more of Roderic O'Conor's work will emerge and become known to researchers, to art connoisseurs, and to the public. When that happens, some of the lacunae which are acknowledged in this study will be resolved, and perhaps only then will the complete story on this intriguing artist be concluded.
RODERIC O’CONOR

PART ONE

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

1860 - 1891
Roderic Anthony O'Conor was born in Ireland in the townland of Milltown (also known as Milton) in County Roscommon, on 17 October 1860, the second eldest child in an eventual family of six. His father, Roderic Joseph was a member of the legal profession, and his mother Eleanor Mary (née Browne) was the eldest daughter of a well known family from County Meath.

O'Conor's birthplace in Roscommon, in the western province of Connaught, is in a part of Ireland which has profound historical and indeed pre-historical links to some of the most important events which have helped to form Ireland's cultural heritage. Among the numerous sites of importance in this region is that of Moytura, the place of the two great battles between the Tuatha de Danaan and the Fomorians. At Kilmactranny can be found the remains of pillar stones, gallery graves, chamber tombs, dolmens and an ancient stone cross. St. Patrick has associations with this part of Ireland, having founded a church at Shancoe, and having also established a bishopric at Elphin in the fifth century.

Of all the ancient Irish families, few can claim to have made as great a contribution to the development of Ireland's social, political, and cultural past, as the O'Conors from Roscommon. (1) The family name features so prominently in the annals of Ireland, and they have left so many monuments of their former greatness, that no difficulty exists in establishing their
claim to a descent as ancient and unbroken as that of any family in Europe. At the time of the Anglo-Norman invasion in 1170 the O'Conor name had been well known in Irish history for at least eight hundred years, and for centuries the O'Conors had ruled as Kings of Connaught and as Monarchs of Ireland. Not far from Roderic O'Conor's birthplace, at Rathcroghan near Tulsk in the parish of Ogulla, was the inaugural site of the ancient O'Conor Kings, a place which had also been the residence of Queen Medb of the Tain. The principal O'Conor stronghold in Roscommon was Ballintober Castle, and Ballintubber Abbey was founded by Cathal Crobhdhearg, also an O'Conor, early in the thirteenth century. One of the most powerful families in mediaeval Connaught, together with the O'Haras, and the MacDermotts of Moylurg, the O'Conors were among the chief patrons of Boyle Abbey and in the ruins of Roscommon Abbey lies the effigy in stone of yet another O'Conor, King Felim.

The O'Conor Genealogy

The O'Conors of Connaught have a family genealogy which can be traced back to the one time King of Connaught, King Concovar, (sometimes known as Conor) who died in the year 971.(2) Concovar, the son of Teign of the Three Towers, was said to be 18th. in descent from Daagh Galach, the first Christian King of Connaught who died in 438 A.D., and it is from Concovar (or Conor) that the family name of O'Conor, meaning the sons, or descendents of Conor, is derived.(3)

Concovar's son, Cathal O'Conor, is thought to have reigned for thirty years before being forced to submit to Brian Boru, King of Munster, who then
asserted his power by assuming the chief sovereignty over all Ireland. Cathal's son Teign O'Conor of the White Steed became King of Connaught in 1015, and after his death in 1030 he was succeeded in turn by his son Hugh O'Conor of the Broken Spear, who, after coming to power in Connaught acknowledged the supremacy of the Monarch of Ireland. Hugh was killed in battle near Oranmore in County Galway in the year 1067, and he was then followed as King of Connaught by his son, Roderic, the earliest mentioned 'Roderic' appearing in the family records. The original Roderic O'Conor was known as 'Rory of the Yellow Hound' and after a reign which was described as being eventful, he finally had to abdicate after being blinded in 1092 by one of his subordinate chiefs called O'Flaherty. O'Flaherty's power was short lived for after he had ruled as King for only one month, he in turn was killed in revenge for his earlier act of treachery against King Roderic.

The power and influence of the O'Conors gathered momentum during the reign of Roderic's son, Turlough Mor O'Conor, and after his inauguration as King of Connaught at the ford of Termon in 1106, he subdued all the other Provincial Kings and then reigned supreme over all Ireland after the battle of Moin-Mor in 1151. After Turlough's death in 1156, he was succeeded by yet another Roderic who also became King of Connaught and Monarch of Ireland. It was during his reign that the English invasion of Ireland occurred in the year 1170, an event which led eventually to the 1175 Treaty of Windsor, through which the Kings of England became lords paramount of Ireland, and Roderic thereafter held the Kingdom of Connaught as vassal of the English Crown. Although the successful invasion of Ireland by Henry II virtually dispossessed the O'Conors of their power, they continued after that date to be recognised by the English Sovereigns as 'Kings' of Connaught.
King Roderic's reign and throughout the centuries which followed, the O'Conor influence and numbers gradually increased, and the various branches of the family became associated with numerous sites in the province of Connaught but principally through their vast estates, mansions and fortresses at Ballintober, Castlerea, Belanagare, Mount Druid and Clonalis.

The O'Conors of Milton, County Roscommon

The particular branch of the family from which Roderic Anthony O'Conor was descended can be traced back through several generations to his ancestor Sir Hugh O'Conor Don, of Balintubber Castle, who was born in the year 1541. In 1585 Hugh O'Conor Don formally relinquished his position as an independent Irish chieftain and surrendered his lands to the Queen, acting through her representative in Ireland, the Lord-Deputy Sir John Perrott. The O'Conor Don then accepted his lands back under a patent from the English crown, and was knighted by the Earl of Essex and returned to Parliament as the first Knight of the Shire for County Roscommon. Following his death in 1627 Sir Hugh's vast estates were transmitted to his four sons, and it is from his fourth son, Bryan Roe of Corrasduna, that Roderic Anthony O'Conor's descent may be traced.

Bryan Roe, or Brian the Red as he became known, was a military man who attained the rank of Captain, and his son Roger taking his father's example, also followed a military career eventually holding the rank of Colonel in the army of James II. Roger died in 1730 and his son Owen O'Conor, who died in 1766, left four sons and three daughters from his marriage to Catherine
McDermott of Emla, County Roscommon. The second of Owen's sons was Thomas, and he appears to have been the first of the O'Conors to have settled at Milton. Thomas, who was Roderic Anthony O'Conor's great great grandfather, became a Justice of the Peace and High Sheriff for the County of Roscommon in 1767, and like so many other members of this branch of the O'Conor family, he too had military experience, in his case as a major in the French service. Thomas married twice, his first wife in 1749 was Mary Dillon and their marriage produced two sons and three daughters. He later married a Miss O'Flynn said to be one of the ancient O'Flynn's of Ballinlough, but there were no further children and Thomas died in 1800. His eldest son and heir also had the name Roderic, and he continued to live at Milton, and, like his father, he also married on two occasions. His first wife was Anne Sparks described as an English lady, although there were no children of this marriage. His second wife, Bridget, was a widow who had previously been the wife of Colonel Thomas Wills of Willgrove in County Roscommon. The second marriage produced four sons, the eldest of whom was also christened Roderic.

This particular Roderic, born in 1794, was Roderic Anthony O'Conor's grandfather. He entered the legal profession and became a Barrister and like his grandfather before him he also became High Sheriff for County Roscommon, in his case in the year 1839. His wife Cecilia, whom he had married in 1824, was the daughter of John MacDonnell of Carnaton in County Mayo. Their first child, Roderic Joseph, was born in 1825 and there were two further sons, Alfred John and Eugene, and two daughters, Cecilia and Ellen.
The eldest son, Roderic Joseph O'Conor, married in 1854 Eleanor Mary Browne who was the eldest daughter of Joseph Browne, a Justice of the Peace who lived at Elm Grove in County Meath. The Browne's were a well known family in County Meath where they owned more than 1,000 acres of land. Three years after their marriage the O'Conor's first child, a girl, Ellen, was born in 1857. Roderic Anthony was their second child born three years later in 1860, and in subsequent years there were further children, Joseph, Cecilia, Mary and Elizabeth.

Milltown House, which was the family home in County Roscommon, was situated off the Tulsk to Castleplunkett road, and was approached by a tree lined avenue approximately half a mile long, past a gate lodge. The house itself was set among trees, and less than one hundred yards from the main residence there was a group of outbuildings and an enclosed yard. There were gardens, lawns, and shrubberies bordering on the house, and an iron fence to mark out the boundaries on the estate. At Milton there were 640 acres, some of the fields being named in keeping with their specific characteristics. There was for example a particularly large field known as the nine acre field, and another which was referred to as the pigeon park.

In addition to the Milton estate the O'Conors owned further land in the adjacent townlands of Upper and Lower Clydagh, Loughhill, and at Cloanshee, Gortmorris, and Michaelardagh. Although the area around Milton consisted of good arable and grazing land, it is unlikely that Roderic O'Conor's father had ever successfully farmed the estate. His chosen career in the legal profession would have used up all his available time, so that by the time his son Roderic was born in 1860, the greater part of the lands at Milton had already been let to tenant farmers. On the Milton demesne there
were no fewer than sixteen houses, some of which were probably traditional cottages, together with the various parcels of land associated with these dwellings. These smaller houses, the land which went with them, and the 346 acres comprising the land and acreage associated with Milltown House, had a total annual rateable valuation of £528 (8).

Although the lands at Milton had been let, the O'Conors continued to live in their Roscommon house until 1865, by which time the number of children in the family had increased to five. Their third child and second son, Joseph, was born in 1862 and a second girl Cecilia was born in 1863. When a third girl, Mary, was born early in 1865 the O'Conors had five children under the age of eight. At some stage in that year the family moved from Roscommon to live in Dublin, and the house in Roscommon was let to tenants. From that date the family effectively became Dublin residents, and Roderic's father continued to pursue his legal career in the city.
FOOTNOTES

1. See O'Donovan J., The O'Conors of Connaught - an historical memoir, Dublin (1891), passim. Contains a complete documentation of the main historical events associated with the family.

2. For a fully documented record of the genealogical descent from King Concowar, see Burke B. The Landed Gentry of Ireland, tenth edition ed. A.P. Burke (1904), pp 184-85, which, unless otherwise stated, is the source of the information on the O'Conor genealogy in this chapter.

3. The original Irish version of the family name is O'Conchobhair; at various times its anglicised version has appeared as O'Conquovar, O'Conogher, O'Knozgher, O'Konnor, O'Connor, O'Connor, and O'Connor.

4. The title of 'Don' was first used by Turlough Oge O'Conor in the fourteenth century and was used to distinguish him from his cousin, the grandson of King Felim, who was also called Turlough, and who became known as 'O'Conor Roe'. See Burke B. op.cit. 'The O'Conor Don.'

5. Milltown House is no longer standing, but the layout of the original house, its outbuildings and lands can be determined from the County Roscommon 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map. Sheet 27, Section 12, H.M.S.O. (1892)


Ampleforth College (1873-1878)

When the O'Conor family moved to Dublin from County Roscommon, their first place of residence was in the south of the City at 23 Waltham Terrace in Blackrock.(1) In Roscommon, almost three hundred acres of land, which represented approximately half of the estate, together with the sixteen dwellings situated thereon, had been let to tenant farmers from as early as 1860.(2) None of the property at Milton was disposed of when the family moved, and Roderic's father therefore continued to benefit from this additional source of income while residing in Dublin. There is no firm evidence to indicate precisely why the O'Conors transferred to Dublin when they did, but the move may have been made in the interests of furthering the father's career in the legal profession.

Roderic's fifth birthday fell in October of the year in which the transfer to Dublin took place, and it is thought that his education began privately at home.(3). If this was the case it would have kept to a minimum any disruption which he may have experienced in his childhood, for in the eight years prior to the commencement of his formal education at Ampleforth College in Yorkshire, the family moved house on three more occasions.(4) Although the Ampleforth records show that Roderic's father was in correspondence with the school as early as 1871, he did not enrol his son there as a pupil until 18 September 1873.(5)
Ampleforth College was then, and still is to this day, administered by monks of the Benedictine Order as an integral part of their settlement in Yorkshire. Ampleforth, or to give it its full title, the Abbey of St. Lawrence the Martyr at Ampleforth, has a long historical tradition which can be traced back to St. Lawrence’s Priory, which was originally established at Dieulouard in the French province of Lorraine in 1608.

The events leading up to the French Revolution and the eventual outbreak of war between France and England in 1793 led to the loss of the old Dieulouard site, and the monks who were in residence there had to leave hurriedly, eventually making their way to England. There were brief periods of residence at several different locations in the nine year period immediately after their arrival in England, and it was not until July of 1802 that a new and more permanent settlement was established at Ampleforth Lodge, which had been built by the Honourable Ann Fairfax of Gilling Castle for her chaplain, Father Anselm Bolton.

The site at Ampleforth was approximately half a mile to the east of the small village of the same name, and the buildings which comprised the settlement were set on the slopes of the Hambleton Hills overlooking the fertile Vale of Mowbray, about eighteen miles to the north of the city of York. Ampleforth began as a school in 1808, and grew slowly so that after ten years the enrolment numbered forty five boys. The school gradually expanded and developed, adding new buildings and improving its accommodation. The first permanent church was built in 1857, and a large study block was completed in 1861, at which time there were sixty boys in attendance at the school.
There is no evidence to establish a link between the Benedictine Order, their educational system, and the O'Conor family, prior to Roderic's enrolment at Ampleforth, although their teaching methods had been based on a mnemonic system communicated to the college by a Professor von Peinagle who had established similar courses in Luxembourg and at Aldborough House in Dublin. It may be that Roderic's introduction to the Ampleforth pattern of education came directly or indirectly from similar courses which were already in operation in Dublin. The College in Yorkshire also advertised its courses fully in the Annual Catholic Laity's Directory, so that O'Conor's parents could have had the opportunity to become familiar with the general policy of the school, and thus would have been able to assess its potential for their son. As a liturgical, educational and monastic centre, the College's history and traditions were of the highest order, making it an entirely appropriate choice of school for the eldest son of such a highly respected Irish family.

The school was organised into an Upper and Lower Division, the names of the classes in the Upper School - Rhetoric, Poetry, 3rd., 2nd., and 1st. Syntax - reflecting the type of classical and literary education which was offered. Latin and French were begun in the Preparatory or Lower School, and it was the practice to begin the study of Greek in the 1st. Syntax year so that in Roderic's first year of study he would have had an immediate introduction to the work of both Greek and Latin authors. The Poetry Year included not only the study of the Greek and Latin poets, but also English poetry, and in this class the pupils were also given some practice in the writing of poetry. In the Rhetoric year, which had a curriculum mainly directed for those who were going on for the Church, or for one of the professions, the programme included a study of the orations of Cicero and Demosthenes, and a
course based on Aristotle's Rhetoric and Blair's lectures on Sacred Eloquence. History and French were both taught, but were complimentary to classics and literature, and a subordinate place was given to science and mathematics.

Although Ampleforth's reputation as a centre of excellence was by then already well established, the school itself was housed in buildings which were far from being ideal, and Roderic's arrival there coincided with a programme of reconstruction and development which had been initiated by the Prior, Father Prest, who was intent on modernising some of the school's facilities. One such improvement was the introduction of a piped water system to replace the old wells which up to that point had been the sole source of water supply to the school. In 1873, two drinking fountains were installed in the passageway used by the boys to get to their dormitories. Extensive repair work was also undertaken in the autumn partly due to subsidence of the underlying foundations following an unusually wet spell of weather. This repair, which required major excavation and underpinning, was not completed until the following year. Under Father Prest's guidance the cricket ground was also re-laid, the bath-room was properly fitted out, gas lighting was introduced, and a steam laundry, kitchen, and cooking department created.

Roderic O'Connor was fortunate enough to have been a pupil at Ampleforth College during Father Stephen Kearney's period as Prior. He succeeded Father Prest in 1874, and he soon earned a considerable reputation as an inspired teacher in later years being given the credit for having 'infused a literary spirit into the college.' An unknown former pupil wrote of him that he 'guided his class to an appreciation of literature and poetry,'
taking them through a course from Chaucer downwards, and that he also helped to raise the standard of refinement in the school.' (12)

In 1875, Father Kearney introduced more breadth into the curriculum adding mathematics, Euclidean geometry, Algebra, Chemistry and Natural Science. Such policies were introduced in order to help prepare pupils for the public examinations, so that in May 1875 a beginning was made by entering for the Senior Oxford Locals, and in June 1876 for the London Matriculation examination. The published Course of Studies at Ampleforth includes this reference to the role of examinations in the work of the school:

'Examinations: It has been found that external examinations which are not overdone are of very great assistance in school work. They test the genuineness of the work done, and at the same time bring pressure to bear on the individual exertions of the boys'.

Even after re-organisation of the curriculum, the classics continued to play an important part in the school, the programme of studies including these references:

'Latin - The most careful attention is given to this language, from Elementary lessons to advanced grammar and Composition. In a full course a boy is enabled to read the principal Classic authors of Rome - Eutropius, Caesar, Nepos, Sallust, Livy, Cicero, Virgil, and Horace. Greek - is not begun as early as Latin but the course includes a critical acquaintance with the chief classic authors of Greece.'(13)

The practical work done in the classroom during the year was appropriately acknowledged at the annual distribution of prizes, when the entertainment provided for the visitors and parents included speeches and recitations by the pupils in Greek, French, Latin, and English.

From his earliest days in the school, Roderic O'Conor was registered as a subscriber to the library and he continued to use this resource regularly throughout his school career so that in September of 1876 he was described as being 'admitted to the room', a privilege reserved for senior pupils and regular library users.(14) In his later mature years as an artist, O'Conor
frequently drew admiration and respect from his friends because of his extensive knowledge of literature and of the classics. His collection of books which were disposed of after his death, together with his other effects in 1956, included many texts in Greek and Latin, which, from their inscriptions, are known to have been purchased throughout his lifetime. (15)

Cuno Amiet, the young Swiss artist who later worked with O'Conor in Pont-Aven between 1892-'93, commented in a letter to his father: 'He (O'Conor) is well educated, knows English and French literature profoundly and he reads a lot.' (16) Clive Bell who first met O'Conor in 1904 in Paris, wrote of him: 'He (O'Conor) was highly intelligent and well educated, had read widely in French and English and was conversant with the Latin masters.' (17) It was clearly his education at Ampleforth which was responsible for his knowledge of the classics, and it is a significant tribute to the pattern of his schooling that his passion for literature and books was something which never left him during his lifetime.

When O'Conor entered the school in 1873, his boarding fees for the year were £45 which was paid in advance in two instalments at a slightly higher rate than that paid by the other boys. (18) These fees remained constant throughout the period of his schooling, and the specially arranged rate was to include all school expenses and his pocket money. Although the College prospectus indicated that what was described as 'drawing from the Flat' was taught throughout the school, it was also the case that those pupils who wished to have more advanced teaching in art had to pay for this privilege as an extra. Drawing lessons and art materials were chargeable items, and the school records show that O'Conor began this extra study of art as early as March 1874, continuing with the subject right throughout his school
career. These additional art classes were taken by a lay teacher, William James Boddy, who travelled from York to Ampleforth to teach those who wanted 'more advanced lessons in Models, Landscapes, and Water Colours.'

W.J. Boddy was born on 1 April 1832 at Woolwich where he trained as an architect under his father's guidance. He moved to York on 9 May 1853 as an assistant to the architect George Jones, and then he began to work for the firm of J.B. and W. Atkinson. Boddy soon gave up the practice of architecture for a career as a teacher and artist, advertising as an 'Artist and Drawing Master' in the Yorkshire Gazette as early as January 1854. From 1860 onwards, he exhibited at the Royal Academy and with the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours. His own output was prolific, and he painted many views of York city as well as numerous architectural subjects and landscapes. According to Dom Cuthbert Almond, under Boddy's guidance drawing (art) received more successful attention at St. Lawrence's than in most colleges, being well enough taught for many who had passed through the school to have used their acquired skills for recreation in later life.... and for many others to have devoted themselves with success to architectural and other artistic professions. He even went so far as to suggest that such was the attention given to the subject 'that every Amplefordian is an artist.'

There is no specific information available about Boddy's teaching methods, although he was said to have 'sound judgment, mature methods and tactful instruction' and he managed to sustain a high level of interest in the subject for more than 50 years.

None of O'Conor's art work from his school days has survived, but the evidence from the illustrations in the College's literary magazine to which
the boys contributed, indicates that Boddy's architectural background was a major influence on the work which they did. There are drawings of architectural details from the school buildings, and some which were drawn at neighbouring houses having particular architectural interest, but many of these are unsigned and unfortunately Roderic O'Conor's name does not appear in connection with any specific illustrations.

The picturesque rural setting of Ampleforth College, on a site which supported both liturgical and secular activities, also provided a unique educational environment which was visually rich and interesting and which would have been appreciated by any pupil with an art interest. There were, for example, numerous stone carvings in the interior of the church and the stained glass window behind the high altar which depicted the passion of St. Lawrence, was particularly impressive. In the main corridor there were numerous oil paintings and architectural paintings of York Minster (24), and busts of Milton, Byron, and Cicero had been placed in the library. (25) Dom Cuthbert's descriptive account also informs us 'that there are pictures everywhere on the walls instead of wet footballs.' (26)

The school recognised the value of a basic training in drawing and art although Ampleforth's reputation had been founded on its record of academic excellence. Roderic's initial progress was undistinguished and the rather disruptive events associated with major developments and improvements to the school buildings, coupled with the change of environment and the separation from his family in Ireland, may have had an influence on his academic achievements in his first two years at school. In the Christmas examinations in 1874, for example, when he was a pupil in the Upper Syntax class, he was ranked only eleventh in a class of fourteen pupils. (27) The
subjects which he was studying were wide ranging - English, Latin, French, German, Mathematics, Arithmetic, Science, History, Geography, Elocution, Catecism, Writing, and Music. By the end of the Easter term his position had not improved significantly and he was then tenth in the rank order. At the end of the school year in 1875 he had moved to ninth in the ranking, although the number in the class had by then reduced to twelve.

Although Roderic's early academic results were not particularly high, his father must have been well satisfied with the quality of education which his eldest son was receiving at Ampleforth. He decided to enrol his second son Joseph, Roderic's junior by two years, in the school at the beginning of the 1875-'76 school year. Roderic was then just short of his fifteenth birthday and was in the Humanities class studying Latin, English, Maths, History, Arithmetic, Elocution, and Drawing. Joseph, who had entered the school on August 27th. 1875, unfortunately fell ill with diptheria at the end of September and was moved to the guest apartments on 2 October where his condition gradually deteriorated. The College Log Book for Sunday 10 October records a change for the worse in the boy's condition which made him look very pale and weak. He had also found it more difficult to take his food. By Monday the doctor described his condition as 'precarious' and fearing the worst it was arranged for him to go to Confession and to receive the Viaticum immediately. A further entry for Monday evening recorded that Joseph was still then in a very critical condition, and both doctors who had attended him felt that it was very doubtful that he would recover. The medical predictions proved to be accurate and Joseph died during the night. The poignancy of his death was recorded by the Prior in these words:

'Shortly after midnight Joseph O'Conor became very restless, and at 20 minutes to 1 o'clock he suddenly fell into his agony. The three priests were in the room, and had just finished saying five decades of the Rosary. Father Sub-Prior gave the last absolution, and read the
prayers for the departing soul. His agony lasted about 5 minutes and he died very quietly. May be rest in peace!" October 12 1875.

Unfortunately, Joseph's father who had been summoned by telegram from Dublin, did not arrive until the afternoon. The death had a profound effect on the whole school and his classmates voluntarily went to see the Prior and requested that they be allowed to carry his coffin at the funeral which then took place on Thursday 14 October. As soon as the burial was over, Roderic, who must have been deeply shocked by the tragic events, left for Dublin with his father, not returning to the school for a further three months.

On the 18th. of January, Roderic resumed his studies in the Humanities class and in the Easter examinations he achieved Distinctions in Algebra and Arithmetic, but surprisingly he failed in Latin.(29) He was awarded Class prizes at the end of the year for Mathematics and Greek, as well as the Science Prize for Geology. The class had become smaller so that by the Mid-summer Examinations he was ranked fourth in a group of nine. One year later, in the Poetry Class, he had emerged as the best pupil in a small class of five boys achieving Distinctions in English, Latin, Algebra, Chemistry, Physics, and Geometry, and his prizes were in English, Maths, Latin and Science. In his final year at Ampleforth, O'Conor travelled to Manchester where he sat and successfully passed the London University Matriculation Examination at Owen's College on June 22 1878.(30) In the school examinations he again emerged as the best pupil in the Matriculation Class, the most senior in the school, with Distinctions in English, Greek, Algebra, Arithmetic and Chemistry. At the annual distribution of prizes on July 10 he collected the Chemistry Prize which was awarded for the highest comparative merit in the first three classes of the school.
Roderic's rather undistinguished beginning at Ampleforth had been successfully transformed by his teachers, so that by the end of his school career his academic achievements were of the highest order. Significantly perhaps, in view of his chosen career, there does not appear to have been a marked talent for drawing for no distinctions were awarded for his work in this subject at any time during his school days at Ampleforth. The College Log records that by 11 July 1878, all boys, including Roderic Anthony O'Conor, had left the school at the end of the academic year.

The Metropolitan School of Art and The Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin. (1879-1883)

It is assumed that Roderic O'Conor would have travelled directly to his home in Ireland on completion of his studies at Ampleforth, to his parents house at 88 Pembroke Road in Dublin, an address to which the family had moved in the previous year from their former residence at 9 Morehampton Road. (31) In the normal course of events O'Conor would then have been expected to have continued with his post-College education in the autumn of the year in which he ended his study at Ampleforth, but the first recorded date of entry to the Metropolitan School of Art in Dublin does not appear in their register until January 1879. (32)

Sutton has suggested that O'Conor may have attended a London art school, 'before crossing over to Belgium in 1881', but this date is now known to be inaccurate and Sutton's speculation about possible study in London after O'Conor left Ampleforth College remains unconfirmed. (33) It may be that at some time before the end of the year 1878, O'Conor returned to the city
of York as a private pupil of James Boddy's, and if this were to be the case then it would be a logical explanation for his later enrolment at the Metropolitan School. (34) However the delay until January may also indicate some uncertainty on his part in arriving at a decision about his ultimate choice of career. With his fine academic record at school and his matriculation success behind him, entry into a University or to one of the professions would perhaps have been the more likely course for him to have followed. There was already a considerable tradition of military service in the family, and the successful careers of his father and grandfather in the legal profession, might well have indicated that a similar choice would have been appropriate in Roderic O'Conor's case. Given what we now know of O'Conor's later career as an artist, it is evident that the discipline of army life, or indeed that associated with legal practice, would have had little appeal for him, and neither would really have been compatible with his personality.

As far as can be determined from the family records there was no precedent among the O'Conors for any direct involvement with any artistic activity, although it might be said that the accumulated wealth and power of many of his ancestors had at various times cast them in the role of patrons of the arts. Some of Roderic's ancestors could also be described as being scholars, historians and literary men, some of them with publications to their credit, (35) but none appears to have been professionally active in any branch of the creative arts.

Within his own immediate family circle there was in all probability an air of refinement and cultured living, so that the arts in general would have been appropriately acknowledged and accepted as an essential part of life.
This would almost certainly have established a sympathetic atmosphere in which the further study of art might have been thought to have been culturally enriching, but it was also probably considered by his parents to have been a rather risky choice of career, and one which would be unlikely to provide a steady income. Roderic's choice would have appeared particularly extreme to them, for example, in comparison with the decision which his elder sister Ellen had taken to enter Holy Orders, and to become a nun. It has also been suggested that O'Conor's parents did not actually approve of his choice of art as a career, and that to ease their differences and by way of a settlement, that he was given his share of the family estate but no yearly income. (36) This speculation is not however consistent with the evidence from his father's will, under which Roderic became the main beneficiary and inheritor of lands and property at Milton in Roscommon. This would have been an unlikely occurrence had there been a family rift.

Shortly after O'Conor's enrolment at the Metropolitan School early in 1879, further tragedy struck the family. His younger sister Cecilia, then only fifteen, who had developed scarlet fever at her school in England at Oulton Park in Staffordshire, died at the family home in Dublin on 27 January. (37) This must have been quite a blow to morale within the family, as the circumstances of Cecilia's death were very similar to those surrounding the death of his younger brother Joseph at Ampleforth, just over three years earlier. The two deaths had a direct effect on the O'Conor parents decision not to send their subsequent children to school in England. (38)

Roderic O'Conor's initial enrolment as an art student in 1879 was in a class which met in the mornings only during the months of January, February, and March, for which he paid a fee of £2. 2. 6. In April he again enrolled in a
morning class which ran until July, paying a fee of £2. By the end of his first year as a student he had achieved a standard in his work which earned for him a pass at the Second Grade level in the three categories of Freehand, Geometry, and Model. (39)

Among the other students then enrolled at the Metropolitan were John Hughes, Charles S. Lamb and Joseph Malachy Kavanagh. Nathaniel Hill, who was also a registered student, appears to have been living with the O'Conor family at their 88 Pembroke Road address. (40) In these circumstances it is probable that something of a friendship grew up between O’Conor and Hill, and it can hardly be purely co-incidental that as young artists, both men were later to follow similar pathways which took them from Dublin to Antwerp for further study, and eventually to rural France as artists.

The Headmaster at the Metropolitan, Robert Edwin Lyne, had the responsibility to see that each year the work of the students was sent to London to be assessed nationally, where it was related to the various grades which formed part of the system for measuring attainment and progress. (41) The curriculum was very much in the academic tradition as it then was throughout all of the art schools in the British Isles, with classes in drawing and painting from life, and in drawing from antique statues being the principal areas of study. The work of the painting class also included still life work in the studios, as well as landscape painting. Some drawing was described as 'freehand' to distinguish it from drawing from ornament and architecture, which was described as 'geometry'. The overall emphasis in the teaching was directed towards the accurate and objective rendering of subject matter and there was an overriding concern with technique which
governed such details as brushwork and the appropriate use of light and shade in the development of form, very much in the style of the Old Masters.

In the 1879-'80 session, O'Conor enrolled at the Metropolitan in the month of October, paying a fee of £4. 2. 6. for a class which ran throughout the year, and which ended the following July. John Hughes was still a student, although not attending the same class as O'Conor, his attendances being in the evening. Also registered, although not until June, was Marie Emily Jellett. Charles Lamb, like O'Conor, registered in October, and George Russell became a student in an evening class which started in May. In total there were 399 students attending art classes. (42)

An important part of the programme of study at the Metropolitan included attendance at the National Gallery of Ireland, where many fine examples of old master painting could be studied. It was a common academic practice for the students to be required to make accurate copies of such paintings, working directly in the picture galleries. The first such recorded attendance made by Roderic O'Conor at the National Gallery was on Saturday 31 January, 1880, and the students' attendance book for that year also shows that he went there on several occasions outside the normal academic term during the summer months of August and September. (43)

In October of the following year, 1880-'81, O'Conor again enrolled for classes, this time paying a fee of 15 shillings. Both Hughes and Lamb continued as evening students, and O'Conor maintained his regular attendance at the National Gallery. (44) There was a considerable increase in the number of students attending the various classes in that year, with numbers reaching 466, but despite the increased competition, Roderic O'Conor won a
special prize to the value of £10, which was awarded by his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, Earl Cowper, K.G., for the merit of his study from the antique.(45) By the end of the year, O'Conor had achieved Third Grade Prizes in the national examinations in London.(46)

There is no record of any registration for the year 1881-'82, although O'Conor's name continued to appear regularly in the students' attendance book at the National Gallery.(47) During that year there was an extensive programme of building and reconstruction at the Metropolitan School, as a result of which a new wing was completed which provided eight 'well lighted and lofty classrooms' (48) The work had not been completed by the time Dr. Steele delivered his annual report in 1883, and he again made specific reference to the considerable inconvenience caused to the normal working of the school due to the repairs, alterations, and changes in progress in the previous year.(49)

It was perhaps because of this disruption that O'Conor chose to attend classes at the Royal Hibernian Academy during the 1881-'82 year where the main areas of study were similar to those at the Metropolitan, with much of the students' work being based on drawing and painting from the living model and on study from the antique.(50) Classes began late in October and ran for thirty weeks, before closing in mid-June. The average attendance throughout the year in what was described as 'the school of the living model' was thirty, while the average attendance in 'the antique school' was twenty five. Most of the prizes awarded by the Academy that year were shared among three students, Darius J.J.McEgan, Henry Tisdall, and Roderic O'Conor. O'Conor won the Bronze Medal for his drawing from the living model, and he gained a similar award for drawing from the antique. He also
won a small cash prize of £2 for the second best drawing from the antique, and a similar amount for the best study in the painting class. This class which opened on 20 March and closed on 16 June had an average attendance of sixteen students. O'Conor's achievements at the RHA, and those of McEgan and Tisdall, being students who had received the greater part of their training at the Metropolitan School of Art, were singled out for special mention in Dr. Steele's annual report.(51)

At some stage in 1882, the O'Connor family moved house to 25 Pembroke Road,(52) and in October of that year Roderic again enrolled as a student at the Metropolitan, attending classes there until the following January. Fees paid on this occasion were £1. 12. 6. Other students with whom he would probably have come in contact during that year included Richard T. Moynan, Henry Allan, and Joseph O'Reilly. It seems that even though O'Connor was registered at the Metropolitan for at least part of the year, he may also have been attending classes at the Royal Hibernian Academy between 1882 and '83.(53) The building work at the Metropolitan was not completed until the end of the 1883 year, and the disruption to normal art study continued until then. The prize list at the Royal Hibernian Academy includes O'Conor's name as the recipient of a cash prize of £5 for the best drawing from life, and a prize of £2 for the best drawing from the antique.

That year also saw him favourably mentioned for the quality of his painting in a competition which had been initiated by the RHA in 1878, for a cash prize of £20 to be known as the Albert Prize. This award was given to the best picture, figure, or landscape, painted by an Irish artist under thirty years of age who was then, or had been a student in the schools of the Academy. The pictures in this special competition were included in the

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annual 1883 exhibition, and although O'Conor did not win the Albert Prize, as runner up he was given a special award of £10 for the exceptional merit of his study, 'In Rathfarnham Park', with the main prize going to Richard T. Moynan. In the same year, 1883, O'Conor was represented in the annual RHA exhibition by two works, one of which was probably a drawing. Neither work has been traced, and in the absence of any examples of his student work in either drawing or painting, it has not been possible to assess his ability at this stage in his career through direct analysis of any individual works.

Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts d'Anvers (1883-1884)

The success which Roderic O'Conor had achieved as a student in Dublin, both at the Metropolitan School of Art and the Royal Hibernian Academy, probably gave him the necessary encouragement to further his studies at one of the great European Academies. The year 1882-83 had been particularly noteworthy for him as he had been runner up in the competition for the Albert Prize, he had won two prizes at the Royal Hibernian Academy, and he also had two of his works accepted for the Academy's annual exhibition.

In looking towards Europe, Paris might have been thought to have been the obvious choice to make at that time, but Sheehy has suggested that for many parents the vices and distractions of Paris may have encouraged them to look elsewhere when considering a suitable centre for further art training on behalf of their off-spring. The Academy in Antwerp was already popular with students from England, and as there was also a considerable precedent
for talented Dublin students to go there, rather than to Paris, it had become
the preferred choice for many. O’Conor, probably acting on the advice
of his teachers at the Metropolitan School, elected to go to the Académie
Royale des Beaux-Arts d'Anvers.

The Antwerp Academy, founded in 1788, was the third oldest Academy in
Europe after Paris and Rome, and during the nineteenth century its
increasing popularity, particularly with foreign students, had given it an
international character. Its growing success as an Academy in the middle
years of the century coincided with a general revival of Flemish culture and
language which had been inspired by the social, political, and cultural
changes brought about by the French Revolution. The Belgian school of
history and genre painting, which was widely known and respected throughout
Europe, had strong links with the Academy through artists such as Gustave
Wappers who was its Director between 1839-45, and Micaise de Keyser,
Director between 1855 and 1879. Wappers had been influenced to a great
extent by the example of David and Delacroix, and he was a strong advocate
of similar principles and ideals to those which governed the work of the
French Academy.

Although the majority of students at the Academy were from Antwerp and
other numerous smaller towns in the surrounding rural areas, the number of
foreign students in attendance was quite high. In Roderic O’Conor’s year
for example there were 870 students from Antwerp, 280 from other communes
and 106 foreigners. Of these 106 foreigners, 37 were English, 16 were
French, 51 Dutch, and two were Americans. In drawing up their statistics
it was the practice of the Academy to group the Irish students with the
English, and among the registered English students was J. Milner Kite
with whom O'Conor developed a close friendship which was to last throughout his lifetime.

During the years prior to O'Conor's enrolment in the Academy in 1883, there had been a steady trickle of outstanding art students making the same journey from Ireland to Antwerp. The earliest registered Irish student at the Academy appears to have been the sculptor Michael Hayes who was born in Cork and who was in attendance there between 1867 and 1874. In the years between 1874 and 1877, Hayes was followed by several lesser known Irish students including Henry English and William Spread, before Vincent Gernon's enrolment in the Summer Course of 1877. Gernon was still a registered student in the 1879-'80 Winter Course, overlapping with the little known Peter Keelan before Norman Garstin's registration for the summer course in 1880.

Two years before O'Conor went to Antwerp, a small group of three well known Metropolitan students, Walter Osborne, Nathaniel Hill, and Joseph Malachy Kavanagh travelled together from Ireland to enrol at the Academy on 29 September 1881, and their period of study overlapped with that of John Green who had first enrolled as an Antwerp student in the autumn of 1880. Osborne, Hill, and Kavanagh all lived at the same address, presumably in lodgings, at 49 Kloosterstraat. In the year immediately preceeding Roderic O'Conor's 1883 enrolment, the name of Hendrik (Henry) Tisdall appeared in the Academy register along with that of T. Burrowes and in the summer of 1883 George W. Yeates was listed as a student.

From the dates of registration it is apparent that the chain of continuity, from one Irish student to the next, was almost unbroken over a period of
sixteen years between Michael Hayes' 1867 enrolment and that of O'Conor in 1883. Information about classes at the Academy was probably relayed back from Antwerp to Dublin by each successive student who went there. In such matters O'Conor was possibly better informed than most before making his decision to study in Antwerp, for his period as a student at the Metropolitan had overlapped with that of Kavanagh and Nathaniel Hill. Kavanagh and Tisdall had also been prizewinners in the same year as O'Conor, when all three were students in Dublin. (61) Hill had won a second prize in painting from nature as a result of his work in Antwerp during the Winter Course of 1882-'83, and Tisdall had collected a prize for taking fifth place in drawing from nature in the same session.(62) It is likely that their achievements were openly discussed in art circles in Dublin, particularly among the younger professional artists and art students, and in such circumstances O'Conor would have been expected to have heard of their success during his final year at the Metropolitan. O'Conor could have learned directly about the work at the Academy from any of these former Metropolitan students, and if this was the case it is probable that the strongest links would have been with Nathaniel Hill, particularly as he had lived for a period of time with the O'Conor family at 88 Pembroke Road when he had been a student in Dublin.

The formalities associated with O'Conor's entry to the Antwerp Academy must have been already well in hand by the end of the 1883 academic year, when he was still attending the Metropolitan, for the unexpected death of his mother in the month of August, did not deter him from leaving Dublin in the autumn.(63) This unfortunate loss must have been deeply felt by the surviving children and particularly by Roderic's father, who, after his son's departure for Europe was left with a much reduced family. The eldest girl
Ellen, then aged twenty six, had already become an Irish Sister of Charity nun five years earlier in 1878, and the father was therefore left with the sole responsibility for the two youngest girls, Mary, then aged eighteen, and Elizabeth who was only twelve.

Students going to the Academy could enrol in the autumn for what was known as the Winter Course, or in May or June, depending on the calendar for the year, for the Summer Course. Roderic O'Conor's recorded date of registration was on 3 October 1883, a day later than that of Richard T. Moynan who was four years his senior, and with whom he had probably travelled from Ireland. O'Conor and Moynan both took lodgings in the same house in the old part of the city, at 12 Keizerstraat, which was only a short distance from the Academy.

In his annual report for the year 1883-'84, the Director of the Academy indicated that there had been no significant changes to the curriculum, with the main work of the Academy being based on the study and practice of painting and sculpture. There were classes in landscape painting and painting from animals, drawing from the human figure and from ornament, and different types of print making including etching and wood engraving. In contrast with Dublin, there was a much wider range of activity at the Academy including classes in civil and naval architecture, as well as in industrial art where the emphasis was more firmly on design. There were also oral classes, as distinct from studio classes, which were concerned with the theoretical and historical aspects of art study. These included pictorial composition, the appreciation and history of art, the history of different schools and their tendencies, characteristics, and principles from antiquity up to that date. It was possible to take classes in general
literature, the history of costume and of antiquities, architectural history, building construction and knowledge of materials. The variety of subjects on offer gave the Academy a cosmopolitan atmosphere, which was enhanced by the widely different backgrounds and nationalities of its students. Teaching was conducted on a daily basis at two levels described as 'supérieur' and 'moyen', and organised in such a way that the students attended painting classes in the morning, with the afternoons usually spent sketching before a return to the studios in the evening. (67)

Professor Karel Verlat and the Académie

O'Conor was one of fifty seven students enrolled in a class called Natuur which was under the guidance of Professor Karel Verlat. There were students from England, Holland, Switzerland and Scotland in the same class although the majority were of Belgian nationality. O'Conor was then 22 years old and the age range in the class was quite considerable, running from 17 to 38, with the average age being 24. Moynan's enrolment was in the Antiek course where Edward Hill was also a student (not to be confused with Nathaniel Hill), although Moynan appears to have transferred shortly afterwards to the Natuur course. The course in Natuur began with work in drawing and painting from antique statues before the students progressed to painting from the human torso, and then finally from the entire figure.

Karel Verlat was the best known of the Antwerp Professors, an established artist who taught both drawing and painting, as well as a course in which he took great pride which was known as Composition and Expression. (68) He
had been a former student of the Academy in 1838, when he had studied simultaneously in the atelier of the artist Nicaise de Keyser, then well known as a painter of battle scenes and an admirer of French Classicism and Romanticism.

When O'Conor enrolled in his Natuur class, Verlat, then aged fifty nine, had been an Academy Professor since 1877 and he had become something of a celebrity in Antwerp, being as well known for his 'tempestuous and boisterous nature and partiality to boisterous living' (69) as he was for his paintings of animals and his talent as a teacher. Verlat had a rich and varied background having spent more than eighteen years working as an artist in Paris, where he had gone in 1850 as a young man of twenty six. He had been influenced by Courbet's realist painting, but he had mixed fortunes in Paris due to some adverse criticism which was levelled at his painting 'Le coup de collier', a very large canvas which he exhibited in the Paris Salon in 1857, in the same exhibition as Courbet's painting 'Les demoiselles des bords de la Seine'. The painting was considered not to be a success because of what was described as its audacious realism and scholastic pale colours,(70) and the art critic of le Figaro, Jean Rousseau, became one of its most severe opponents. Criticism was also directed at Verlat's use of a bold outline where the colour was brightest in the painting. Influenced by Rousseau's criticism, the client who had commissioned the painting refused to accept it, adding further agony to Verlat's acute sense of disappointment. His response to the attack on his picture by Rousseau was to paint a satirical work showing a monkey shaving himself and conspicuously wiping his razor on a copy of le Figaro, just where the name of the critic is very clearly visible.(71) Verlat then withdrew to Antwerp for twelve months to recover from his disappointment.
and there in familiar surroundings he soon re-adopted his original Flemish colouring and a more homogeneous pictorial technique.

It was on his return to Paris that Verlat produced those works for which he is best known - a series of large thickly painted pictures of animals which he composed in dramatic acts of aggression or defence. In the numerous drawings and studies which he made in preparation for these paintings, there is a marked influence from the work of Gericault and Delacroix. During the last 12 years of his stay in Paris, Verlat also painted religious compositions, his 'Madonna' achieving a marked success in the Paris Exhibition of 1867. This change of subject matter was in parallel with a general revival of interest in religious paintings in the Antwerp studios of De Keyser and of Wappers, and in the Paris studios of Scheffer and Flandrin.

In addition to his Paris experience, Verlat had taught for five years at the Academy of the Residence at Weimar. He had been invited by the Grand Duke of Weimar to teach the secrets of Flemish colouring to the students of the Kuntschule at Weimar, and there he ran an independent studio between 1869 and 1874. His interest in paintings with a religious theme took him to Palestine between 1875 and '77, to paint directly in the landscape where he worked 'under the discolouring rays of the blinding sharp light' so that the certain hardness of tone, which he had been inclined to use in his earlier paintings, became even more emphasised. It was on his return from Palestine in 1877 that he was appointed Professor at the Academy, and eight years later, in 1885, he became its Director.(72)

As an artist, Verlat was extremely prolific and versatile, accepting commissions for portraits and for large historical and allegorical scenes,
making numerous sketches at the Antwerp Zoo for his animal pictures. Verlat was also competent in the technique of etching, many of his prints being replicas or slightly modified versions of his paintings. There is no evidence in the Academy's register to indicate that O'Conor ever took any classes in etching but he must have been aware at that time of the work that Verlat was doing in this medium, and this knowledge of Verlat's experimental approach may have had some influence on the prints which O'Conor himself was to make ten years later in 1893. (73)

Verlat placed a great deal of emphasis on careful drawing arising from close and detailed observation, and was quoted as giving advice to his students to 'draw what you see, don't draw what isn't there.' (74) In teaching painting he encouraged his students to paint vigorously, so that one was drawing and painting at the same time. In reference to the directness of approach which he favoured he is reported as having said: 'it is a great gift for a painter to keep, in his finished work, the spontaneous sensation felt by the eye in front of nature.' (75) It was also said of his personality that Verlat possessed the gift to fire youth with enthusiasm, and that he thereby succeeded in forming brilliant pupils. Sheehy has pointed out that the references in many of the biographies of artists who studied in Antwerp are in most cases given as, 'Antwerp under Verlat', rather than just Antwerp alone, and in articles published at the end of the nineteenth century he was at times referred to as 'that fine teacher, the late M. Verlat of Antwerp.' (76)

However in spite of his wide experience as artist and teacher, and the reputation which surrounded him at Antwerp and which spread throughout Europe, Verlat was really a traditionalist at heart, being a resolute
opponent of what he called 'pictorial art of the future'. In one of his later satirical etchings from 1886 he depicted an 'artistic' monkey painting with a broom, while an enraptured critic, also a monkey, looked on in obvious admiration. (77)

Verlat's views and attitudes, which he must have formed as a teacher, were publicly presented in a speech which he delivered after he had become Director of the Academy in 1886. He emphasised to the young artists in his audience that to be worthy of esteem they should remain in touch with the masses and their needs in accordance with tradition; that respect for old masters did not exclude modern vision, but that it protected them from what he referred to as 'wild atelier revolutions and the unhealthy theories of esthetic windbags, who were the cause of many a downfall, and waylayed the spirit of our national art.' (78) Holding to such views, it is not surprising that in the year in which he became Director, he was critical of Van Gogh's work for being too 'impressionistic' (79)

Although he appreciated the work of the French realists, Verlat never really lost his enthusiasm for the work of the Flemish artists, Rubens, Jordaens, Snyders and Fijt. In the course of his teaching he is said to have frequently praised these great masters for their Flemish vitality and lively colouring, and the students attending his classes would have been directed to the first floor of the Academy building where the Antwerp Museum's collection was then housed, and where examples of their work could be immediately referred to and studied. (80)

In view of his success as a student in Dublin, and with the resources of the Academy at his disposal, it is something of a surprise to discover that
O'Connor's name does not appear in the list of prizewinners for any of his work there, in contrast with Moynan's success in receiving a prize for his painting of the human torso as part of his study in the Natuur course. Moynan's results were consistently better than O'Connor's for among the 35 students assessed by the examinations committee at its meeting on 15 March 1884 for their work in drawing from the figure, O'Connor was only ranked in twenty-sixth position in the group with a score of 12.8 points, well below Moynan who was given 14.2 points, with the highest mark awarded being a score of 20. When it came to painting from the figure, among the 39 entrants O'Connor was only thirty-fourth with a score of 12.1, again well below Moynan who came top of the group with a score of 20. The transfer which Moynan had made to the Natuur class from Antiek had obviously been to his advantage.

Why then had O'Connor's achievements in Antwerp not lived up to his earlier promise as a student at the Metropolitan School, and at the Royal Hibernian Academy in Dublin? Antwerp was truly international and with many highly talented and gifted students enrolled in its classes he may have found that the level of work and the competition among the students there was much higher than he had anticipated. Although there was a much wider choice at the Antwerp Academy in comparison with what had been available in Dublin, O'Connor's study there was confined to drawing and painting only, and the curriculum would not have been very different to that which he had previously experienced in Ireland. The differences which would have been most obvious would have been those surrounding Verlat's personality, and his own individual approach to teaching.
Sheehy has suggested that in spite of the reputation of the Antwerp Academy, the evidence from the work of its most famous student, Vincent Van Gogh who spent a few months there in 1886, 'is of an old-fashioned, authoritarian institution, hung up on the Belgian history painting of Leys and Wappers, with very little that was inspiring in its teaching.' (82) Valdron has commented that Irish artists who attended the Antwerp Academy revealed in their work the 'indelible stamp of their disciplined northern training where a student was taught to draw and paint in a realistic and precise manner.' (83)

It may have been that the Academy was not progressive enough in its attitude to meet with O'Conor's needs at that point in his career. It is also possible that he may have found it difficult to adapt to the pattern of the teaching there and Verlat's attitude may, at least as far as O'Conor was concerned, have been rather too restrictive and academic. Verlat's methods certainly did not suit every student for in Norman Garstin's case he is known to have become dissatisfied with Verlat as a teacher, and to have spent his last six months in Belgium painting in the countryside with Theodore Verstraete. (84) Whether or not O'Conor took similar action to Garstin's is not quite clear, although his registration at the Academy for the Summer course is revealing in that not only had he changed his Antwerp address to 1 Longuenue Straat, but that he was also registered as having his own studio. This rather suggests that there was some distancing from the Academy and its policy, perhaps for similar reasons to those which had led Garstin to make his move, and the taking of a studio outside the Academy while continuing to attend classes there may also be interpreted as an indication of O'Conor's wish to become more independent and to follow his own route as an artist as soon as was practical. Given what we now know
of his rapid development as an artist after Antwerp, it is possible that even as a student O'Conor was eager to delve into areas in his painting which he may have considered to be more challenging and exciting than the academic goals set by the Academy. When it came to the appreciation of the work of established artists, Campbell has suggested that Irish artists may not have been particularly interested in successful Flemish academicians such as Wappers, de Keyser, and Frederick de Braekeleer, or in Henry Leys' many figured medieval pagents.

They are more likely in his view to have known the work of Belgian landscapists such as Verstraeete or Boulaner, both influenced by the French Barbizon school, or of the etcher Rops.

Even though the emphasis was quite firmly based on academic study, the students in Antwerp would probably have had an awareness of the action which the Impressionists had taken in Paris through their rejection of the academic values of the Salon, and the setting up of their own independent exhibition. The events in Paris had also made an impact in certain artistic circles in Belgium, overlapping with O'Conor's time in Antwerp. After a particularly severe jury had rejected a large number of works from the entries for the 1883 Salon in Brussels, a new grouping known as 'Les XX' had formed, and they held their first exhibition at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels on 2 February 1884. This event attracted some interest among the public and news of the group's forming was announced through a new review L'Art Moderne.

Although it is possible that O'Conor could have seen the new group's inaugural exhibition, which included the work of Ensor, Van Rysselberghe, Heymans, Rodin, and Khnopff, it is more likely that Academy students would have been guided towards a well established exhibition such as that of the Société Libre des Beaux-Arts where the work of Corot and the Barbizon painters could be seen.
O'Conor's disappointing results may also have been related to the fact that Verlat's attention had become more and more divided between his teaching, private commissions, and his political involvement in the affairs of the Academy. During O'Conor's year Verlat was nominated for a major project which it was estimated would take ten years to complete, to undertake paintings for the entrance hall and staircase of the newly restored town hall. He had also been involved for three years in a bitter feud with the City Council Commission which had been set up to consider certain restructuring to the curriculum at the Academy, as a result of which the course on Composition and Expression was transferred to the Higher Institute. Verlat however disputed this, became involved in a bitter wrangle with the authorities, and continued to give his course at the Academy.

Unfortunately no examples of O'Conor's work from his Antwerp days have been traced although he did send a painting from Antwerp in 1884 to the competition administered by the Royal Dublin Society under the Taylor Bequest, winning a prize of £10. The title of this work, 'Preparing for the Carnival- seated girl', indicates that it was a composition with at least one figure, but apart from this there is no specific information available concerning his subject matter, or his approach to painting, while he was in Antwerp. Neither is there any indication in the few examples of his work from the years immediately following his period in Antwerp, apart from his landscapes, that at any time had he been interested in similar subjects to those painted by other Irish students. Their favourite subjects tended to be genre and street scenes, farmyards and domestic animals, and of course the Flemish landscape. According to Waldron, in the attention which they
gave to the detail of cobble stone, brickwork and tile, and the overall
darkness of tone, they were reflecting Verlat's influence.(90)

Such characteristics are not a recurring feature of O'Conor's post-Antwerp
pictures although his treatment of the foreground details in two early
seascapes, 'On the Shore, Aberystwyth,' (REF.PTGS.NO.003) and 'Between the
Cliffs, Aberystwyth,' (REF.PTGS.NO.002) do indicate some preoccupation with
the texture of rocks and stones in the manner suggested by Waldron.
Neither is there in O'Conor's later work any hint of an interest in the type
of grandiose historical subjects or paintings with a religious theme which
were such an important part of Verlat's oeuvre. There may however be some
oblique reference to Verlat's animal paintings of violent confrontations
between man and beast in a work such as O'Conor's 'Charging Bull by
Moonlight', (REF.PTGS.NO.034)

Verlat's influence is more obvious in an analysis of O'Conor's mature
painting technique which is characterised by its feeling of directness and
immediacy, almost, it would seem, in direct response to the advice which
Verlat had given to his students to paint vigorously so that drawing and
painting were fully integrated from the outset.(91) O'Conor's predilection
in his later works for paint which was thickly applied with brush and
palette knife, may also owe something to similar techniques which were used
by Verlat in his animal pictures.

In retrospect, it may be that O'Conor felt that the Academy had little more
to offer him at that point in his career, and sometime after April, probably
at the end of the Summer Course in 1884, he left Antwerp and returned to
Ireland having studied there for only one academic year.
FOOTNOTES

1. Thom's Dublin Street Directory (1865). Subsequent annual editions of this directory show that the O'Conor's lived at the following addresses: 23 Waltham Terrace, Blackrock, (1865-'67); 17 Sandymount Road, (1867-'69); 79 Wellington Road, (1869-'72); 88 Pembroke Road, (1877-'83); and 25 Pembroke Road, (1883-'93)

2. Griffith, R. (1860) op.cit. At p.25 is a list of the tenants and their respective holdings.

3. Information from O'Conor's great-niece, Sister Theophane.

4. Thom's, op.cit. See footnote (1)

5. There is a copy of a letter dated May 31 1871 in the school archives, in which the Prior outlined the scale of boarding and other charges which were then applicable. The letter also indicated his willingness to receive Roderic as a pupil. The date of enrolment is noted in a ledger known as the Pension List, which was a record of charges to be made in respect of boarding and tuition fees. Ampleforth College archives.

6. For a full account of the settlement at Ampleforth see Almond, Dom C. History of Ampleforth Abbey London (1903).


8. If Roderic did attend Aldborough House, his parents may have thought it desirable to continue his formal schooling within a similar approach, and it may be that it was from this source that the family learned of the similar methods which had been introduced at Ampleforth.

9. Course of Studies, Ampleforth College, from which source details of the curriculum included in this section have been taken.

10. Almond, (1903) op.cit. p.365

11. ibid. p.367


13. Programme of studies, Ampleforth College, 1875.


15. The writer has examined some of the surviving books in a private collection (D) in France. The titles include the Fables of Aesop, in the original Greek; Xenophon's 'The Cyropaedia and the Hellenics'; and Homer's Odyssey.

16. Cuno Amiet to his father, in a letter sent from Pont-Aven, 7 March '93. Private collection (A), Switzerland.


19. ibid. Entry for March 16, 1874. He was charged £2. 7. 0.

20. Programme of Studies, Ampleforth College.

21. Information about W.J. Boddy supplied by Mr. Richard Green, curator, City of York Art Gallery

22. Almond, (1903) op.cit., p.355

23. ibid. p.356.

24. For a full description of the new buildings at Ampleforth, see the account by a visiting journalist, 'Exhibition Day at Ampleforth College.' The York Herald July 9 (1874)

25. Library records, Ampleforth. Entry dated October 16, 1875

26. Almond, (1903) op.cit., p.359

27. Class records and examinations book. Ampleforth College

28. College Log Book for 1875-'76, Ampleforth College.

29. Class records op.cit.

30. Ampleforth College Log. See entries for 1873-78.

31. Thom's Dublin Street Directory, op.cit.,(1877)

32. Index Register, Metropolitan School of Art, Session 1878-'79, in the library of the National College of Art and Design, Dublin)

33. Sutton, D. 'Roderic O'Conor - little known member of the Pont-Aven circle.' Studio No.811, November 1960, pp.168-74 and 194-96.
The source on which Sutton based his information, that is the preface to the catalogue of the dispersal sale of the contents of O'Conor's studio in 1956, was itself inaccurate, as it had been drafted from information contained in a letter from a life time friend of O'Conor's, the English artist J. Milner Kite, which he had sent to Madame O'Conor in 1940. Kite had written, 'O'Conor à Londres était, je sais, à l'Université de Londres, mais s'il a commencé ses études de peintre à Londres je ne sais pas.' The letter and other O'Conor memorabilia is in a private collection (B) in France.

34. From information obtained in an interview with Sister Theophane, Roderic O'Conor's great niece.

35. The best known of these was the Very Reverend Charles O'Conor of Belanagare, also known as Dr. Charles O'Conor, who was born in 1764 and who died in 1828, and is described in Burke's Landed Gentry as being 'a learned antiquary.'

37. Information from Sister Theophane.

38. ibid.

39. Metropolitan School of Art General Register (1878)

40. Index Register, Metropolitan School of Art, op.cit.

41. The General Register of the Metropolitan School of Art indicates that Roderic O'Conor passed the Second Grade in 1879, and the Third Grade in 1881. The Headmaster's report for the year 1880-'81 shows that in that year no fewer than 1,553 student works in the various stages of art study were forwarded from Dublin to London for examination.

42. 29th. Report of the Science and Art Department of the Committee of Council on Education. See the report of the Director of the Science and Art Museum, Dublin, William Edward Steele M.D.

43. Students' Attendance Book, National Gallery of Ireland. Attendances recorded by Roderic O'Connor in the academic year 1879-'80 were made on January 31; February 7 and 14; 10 April; 8 May; 3 July. Also 28 August; 17 September; and 24 September. I am grateful to Dr. Raymond Keaveney of the National Gallery of Ireland, for bringing this record to my attention.

44. ibid. Attendances recorded on 5,12,13,20, 27 October; 15,22,29, January; 5,19,26, February; 5,12, March, and 25 June.

45. Known as the Cowper Prize and recorded in appendix E of Dr. Steele's annual report to the Science and Art department of the Committee of Council on Education, London (1882)

46. Metropolitan School of Art General Register (1881). Other well known names appearing in the school's prize list in that year were those of Richard Thomas Moynan, and for prizes at the Royal Hibernia Academy, former Metropolitan students Henry Tisdall and Joseph Malachy Kavanagh.

47. Students' Attendance Book, op.cit. Academic year 1881-'82 attendances recorded on 3 September; 12 November; 10,31 December; 21 January; 25 March; 1,15,22, April; 6 May; 8 July.


49. ibid., see p.260.


51. Roderic O'Conor is incorrectly referred to as 'Mr. Dominic O'Connor' in Dr. Steele's report.

52. This address was given by O'Connor at the time of his registration in October 1882, although it is incorrectly entered in the register as 5 Pembroke Road. Thom's Dublin Street directory for 1883 shows that the family were in fact living at 25 Pembroke Road.)
53. During the latter half of the year 1882, O'Conor registered his attendance at the National Gallery on 18 August, 20 October, 4 November, 9 and 23 December. In 1883 he attended the National Gallery on 13 January, 10 March, 15 June and 23 June.

54. Catalogue of the Royal Hibernian Academy of Arts Annual Exhibition, 1883. Catalogue Nos. 74 Sylvan Quiet, (£25) and 271 Wild Rabbit, (£5) It is thought that No.271, because of its price, was probably a drawing.

55. See previous chapter.


The tendency for Irish art students to further their studies in Antwerp was first commented on by Waldron in this article. For a complete account see also Campbell, J., Irish Artists in France and Belgium (1850-1940) Ph.D. Thesis, Dublin University, (1980) passim.

58. I am grateful to Dr. G. Persoons, librarian at the Antwerp Academy, for information about the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts.

59. Register of Inscriptions, Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts d'Anvers, (1883-1884)

60. Campbell, J. (1984) op.cit. For a comprehensive list of Irish students who attended the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts d'Anvers together with their dates of attendance, see also Appendix 3 in Dr. Campbell's publication.

61. See previous chapter.

62. L'Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts d'Anvers. Annual report and prize list. (1883)

63. Information from Sister Theophane, Roderic O'Conor's great-niece.

64. Register of Inscriptions (1883-'84) op.cit.

65. 12 Keiserstraat was a house with a significant history having at one time been the residence of Nicolaas Rockox (1560-1640), a former burgomaster of the city of Antwerp. Anthony van Dyck painted several portraits of Rockox who also had a particularly close friendship with Peter Paul Rubens. The house has now been completely restored and furnished with paintings which reflect the period and the taste of its original owner, and since 1977 it has been open to the public as a museum.

66. Rapports Annuels, Académie Royale Des Beaux-Arts d'Anvers, (1881 - 1890) The report for the year 1883 was delivered by the Director on 4 May 1884.

67. Information from Dr. Persoons


69. ibid. p.92
70. ibid. p.19
71. ibid. p.74.
72. ibid. et passim.

73. See Chapter VI in this text, 'The Prints of Roderic O'Conor.' Although Verlat was capable of producing refined linear prints, particularly in his portraits, he did not follow any recognised technique, improvising freely using chisels, files and scraping tools – indeed anything which was suitable for making scratches on a copper plate.

74. Campbell (1984) op.cit., p.83
75. Sheehy (1983) op.cit., p.43

77. Mertens, F. and van Loock-Verberckmoes, H., (1977) op.cit. The etching, catalogue number 75, is illustrated at p.74
80. Mertens, F. and van Loock-Verberckmoes, H., (1977) op.cit. p.92. O'Connor's earliest known portraits, painted in Brittany in later years, have a definite Northern European influence which recalls the work of both Rembrant and of Rubens. Refer to slides, 'Head of a Breton girl', (REF.PTGS.NO.005) and 'Old man', (REF.PTGS.NO.007) and discussion of these works in Chapter III

81. Concours de l'Année Académique 1883-'84. Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts d'Anvers. Examination Committee meetings of 15 March and 27 March 1884
82. Sheehy, J. (1983) op.cit., p.43
83. Waldron, E. (1968) op.cit., p.316
84. Sheehy, J. (1983) op.cit., p.14 Campbell, J. (1984) op.cit. has also pointed out that in subsequent years when William O'Brien was studying in Antwerp, he complained of unsatisfactory teaching and laziness among the students. See p.82 and footnote 10.
86. Stevens, M. and Joostens, J. in Post-Impressionism, exhibition catalogue, Royal Academy of Arts, London (1979). See their chapter entitled 'The Low Countries, Belgian Art: Les XX and the Libre Esthétique', pp.252-254 Significantly, O'Connor was invited to exhibit with Les XX some fourteen years later in 1898. He also exhibited with this group in 1905. See Chapters VII and VIII
87. Mertens, F. and van Loock-Verberckmoes, H. (1977) op.cit., p.20. The proposal was made in December 1883, and the commission awarded in July 1884.
88. ibid. pp.20-21

89. Royal Dublin Society Minutes (1884). The competition was held in April.

90. Waldron, E. (1968) op.cit.

91. See for example the integration of painting and drawing in works such as 'Landscape with Road and Farm Buildings,' (REF.PTGS.NO.009) or in 'Field of Corn, Pont-Aven', (REF.PTGS.NO.015) or in the much later, and stylistically different picture, 'Girl Mending', (REF.PTGS.NO.174)
CHAPTER III

EARLY ARTISTIC CAREER (1884-1891)

From Dublin to Paris

It is possible that O'Connor may have done some travelling in Europe on completion of his year of study in Antwerp although no firm evidence has emerged to confirm this. The sending in of a painting to the Royal Dublin Society from his Antwerp address in 1884, does rather suggest that at that time at least, he saw his exhibiting career as being centered on Dublin rather than in any one of the major European capitals. As the recipient of an award for this work (1) the likelihood is that O'Connor would have returned directly to Dublin on completion of what would have been for him, in terms of his personal achievement at the Antwerp Academy, a rather disappointing year. His family was by then living at 25 Pembroke Road on the south side of the city, (2) in a large terrace house which would have been spacious enough to provide him with a room to use as a studio. There may also have been some renewed affiliation with the Royal Hibernian Academy towards the end of that year, as he recorded attendances at the National Gallery on 1 September and 29 November. (3)

The next confirmed evidence of his continuing artistic activity is that provided by the Royal Hibernian Academy catalogue of 1885, where O'Connor was listed as an exhibitor with four works to his credit. (4) One of these four works, 'Sunny Day in June' (REF.PTGS.NO.001) has been traced and is thus the earliest work which has been identified and is known to have been publicly
This picture is a simple and straightforward naturalistic view of a group of trees in a sunny landscape, which, because of its lack of any other distinguishing landscape features may even be parkland. The painting is on a wooden panel and the coarse brushstrokes of the priming are clearly visible underneath the paint layer. Most of the paint has been applied with a short chisel edged brush, barely one centimeter wide, with frequent changes being made to the direction and weight of the brush strokes. Although it is a comparatively small work there is no indication of any approach to the painting process which could be described as being either tentative or hesitant. There is a certain vigour and directness which implies an overall confidence in the handling of paint, even on a scale as small as this. In terms of its style the naturalistic approach shows an obvious influence from the artists of the French Barbizon school, and it is typical of late nineteenth century landscape painting in Ireland as practised by artists such as Nathaniel Hone, whose style it closely resembles. Hone's work would almost certainly have been known to O'Conor as he had been an exhibitor at the Royal Hibernian Academy from as early as 1876.

There are certain physical similarities between this picture of O'Conor's and two other early works of his, which, through their inscriptions are known to have been painted in Aberystwyth. The paintings in question, 'On the shore, Aberystwyth' (REF:PTGS.NO.003) and 'Between the cliffs, Aberystwyth' (REF:PTGS.NO.002) have previously been tentatively dated as belonging to the year 1885. There is no evidence about the circumstances of his being in Wales, but it may be that he went there on a private visit, or on holiday, or quite simply to paint in a different environment. All three paintings, the two coastal views and the landscape with trees, have been made on similar
supports. They are of identical size, and the inscription on the back of 'On the shore Aberystwyth', (REF.PTGS.NO.003) which is clearly in O'Conor's hand, is almost identical in terms of its layout with that of 'Sunny day in June', (REF.PTGS.NO.001) It is probable therefore that these three paintings, if not all made in the same locality, were at least inscribed at the same time by O'Conor, and that they form part of a number of pictures which he painted around that time. We may further speculate that the untraced picture entitled 'Breakers' which he exhibited at the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1885 alongside 'Sunny day in June', (REF.PTGS.NO.001) because of its title identifying it too as a marine painting, may have been part of the same group of pictures painted at Aberystwyth.

In common with 'Sunny day in June' (REF.PTGS.NO.001) both of the Aberystwyth pictures assume a naturalistic view of their subject matter. 'On the shore, Aberystwyth' (REF.PTGS.NO.003) is the more subdued with reference to its colour range, which is rather sombre in keeping with the leaden sky and the dull and somewhat flat lighting of the foreshore. Although the use of stronger contrasts of colour and tone in 'Between the cliffs, Aberystwyth' (REF.PTGS.NO.002) would seem at first to owe something to Verlat's pictorial methods, in O'Conor's picture these characteristics are more likely to have been merely an aspect of nature directly observed at the time. All three paintings also share similarities in technique, being fairly briskly painted with a spirit of directness which suggests that there was only the minimum of preliminary drawing in each case. Through his brisk painting in front of nature, O'Conor also shows an awareness of the conventions of nineteenth century French Naturalism as evidenced in the work of Corot, of early Monet pictures, and of Boudin's marine paintings from the Normandy coastline. It is also interesting, and indeed somewhat prophetic, to note this early
interest of his in paintings of the sea, of rolling breakers and jagged rocks on the coastline. Such subjects were to emerge with great vigour and force, in richly coloured seascapes which he was to paint off the Brittany coastline within the next ten years.

In the autumn of 1885, Roderic O'Conor was permitted to attend the Royal Hibernian Academy for free study for the duration of the 1885-'86 academic year. Such an arrangement was common practice within the terms of a reciprocal agreement then in existence between the Royal Academy London, the Royal Hibernian Academy Dublin, and the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art, and would, presumably, have allowed students in this category to function rather like modern day graduate students. The book of registration at the National Gallery does not include any attendances recorded by him during that year, suggesting that his programme of study and work in the Academy studios was largely of his own devising. In these circumstances it is something of a surprise to discover that O'Conor did not publicly exhibit any work in Dublin during the year 1886. There may have been some personal dissatisfaction with the work which he had done during the previous winter, or he may have already been making plans to seek a more stimulating environment in which to sustain himself as an artist, and as a result may have been involved in some travelling, or in making preparations to move. The first positive confirmation we have of a change of locality however, is the evidence from the Paris Salon catalogue of 1888, where he was listed as an exhibitor with an address in Paris.

It has been suggested that Roderic O'Conor's decision to leave Ireland may have arisen as a result of a rift with his parents about his choice of career as an artist, and that in these circumstances he 'received his share
of the family estate along with his brothers and sisters, but no yearly income'. (9) This is thought to be unlikely, for after his father's death Roderic was named as the chief beneficiary under the terms of his will which was admitted to probate in Dublin on 7 December 1893. His sisters were also included in the same will, and there were of course then no 'brothers' in the family, his younger brother Joseph having died while still a schoolboy. It is also now known that Roderic, in his subsequent years in France, did in fact receive an allowance from his father.(10)

It is more than likely that O'Conor quite simply left Ireland because Paris had so much more to offer and it is probable that he was influenced to some extent by the number of Irish artists who had taken this step before him. By the 1870's a significant number of Irish artists, including Frank O'Meara, Norman Garstin, Vincent Gernon, Nathaniel Hone, Helen Mabel Trevor, Henry Jones Thaddeus, Aloysius O'Kelly and George Moore, had all spent some time in France.(11) Paris was then unchallenged as the centre of the art world and had become something of a mecca for the many talented and ambitious young artists who flocked there, from almost every country in the world.

The precise date of O'Conor's departure from Dublin for Paris is not known, but all the indications are that the transfer was made in the second half of the year 1886 on completion of his year of free study at the Royal Hibernian Academy. There is no record of any public exhibition of his work until his appearance as an exhibitor in the 1888 Paris Salon which opened in May, but there is the evidence of a signed and dated painting, the 1886 'Groupe de Peupliers - effet de soleil' (12) (REF.PTGS.NO.004) which reveals a dramatic change in his painting style in comparison with the pictures of a year earlier which have been discussed above. So dramatic is the change, that
it is inconceivable that this work could have been painted without direct knowledge of the most advanced painting methods of the French Impressionists. 1886 was the last year when the Impressionists showed together as a group, (13) but to have seen this exhibition O'Conor would have had to have arrived in Paris by May or June, which, with his attendance at the Royal Hibernian Academy as a free student would have been rather unlikely.

Judging from the appearance of the trees in 'Groupe des peupliers - effet de soleil', (REF.PTGS.NO.004) and because of its dominant colour characteristics, O'Conor's painting was in all probability made somewhat later in the year, probably in the autumn soon after arrival in France, and after his exposure to the Impressionist style which he could easily have absorbed through a visit to Durand-Ruel's gallery, or from seeing the Salon des Indépendants Exhibition in August and September. There was also Père Tanguy's well known shop in the rue Clauzel in the Montmartre district, near O'Conor's confirmed address in rue Darcet, where the most advanced painting of the day could be studied and where it was possible to make contact with the artists whose paintings might be seen there, for they were frequent visitors to Tanguy's shop. Further descriptive information may have come his way through Félix Fénéon's informative pamphlet 'Les Impressionnistes en 1886', which contained a series of exhibition reviews, and which also classified and differentiated between the various exhibitors associated with the Impressionist grouping. (14)

No other paintings have emerged which carry a specific dating to the year 1886, and indeed only one picture dated to the year 1887 has been identified. This is 'River Landscape' 1887,(15) in which rather more definition has been
given to the landscape forms in comparison with those in 'Groupe des Peupliers - effet de soleil' (REF.PTGS.NO.004), but it too is handled equally loosely in the Impressionist manner. Both pictures also show that O'Conor's range of techniques had expanded to include a more liberal use of the palette knife to apply the paint thickly and directly to the canvas.

The information about O'Conor's movements in the years 1886 and 1887 is unfortunately rather imprecise. Apart from the confirmation of his residency in Paris in rue Darcet, first published in the Salon catalogue of 1888, we have no means of knowing the precise location where these two Impressionist influenced pictures were painted. Grez-sur-Loing some distance to the South of Paris is a possibility, for it is known that he spent some time there in subsequent years although his period of association with Grez has always been thought to have begun in 1889. He may well have visited Grez earlier than this as it was then well established as an artist's colony, and indeed it had been frequented by John Lavery and the Irish painter Frank O'Meara since 1875.

There is the reported but unsubstantiated evidence of an early visit to Pont-Aven in 1887, which is mentioned by the painter J. Milner Kite in a letter written to Madame O'Conor, after Roderic O'Conor's death. Kite's report should be treated with some caution however, as he acknowledged in the same letter that the facts were recalled as best he could remember them and were written about events which had taken place more than fifty years earlier, without reference to any notes.

If we accept the dates of the two landscapes 'Groupe des Peupliers - effet de soleil' (REF.PTGS.NO.004) and 'River Landscape' as being authentic, then it
would appear that at least part of O'Conor's initial eighteen month period in France involved some travelling to rural areas, during which time he assumed a quite advanced style of painting, under an Impressionist influence. The fact that there are no recorded exhibitions to his credit in the year 1887, for example, does rather suggest that there may have been some travelling in that year in particular, with no firmly established or preferred location. However, the reference in the 1888 Salon Catalogue linking O'Conor to the studio of the Parisian academic portraitist Carolus-Duran, whose teaching methods will be discussed later, is a confusing element in our attempt to establish the chronology of his work after his arrival in France. If Kite's memory of specific dates was uncertain, we can perhaps be rather more confident about his recollection of O'Conor's subject matter at that time, which he recalled as consisting of portraits of elderly French peasants, "très fort mais encore sous l'influence de Carolus-Duran". (17)

That O'Conor spent some time studying with Carolus-Duran is not in doubt. What is puzzling, in view of the 1888 Salon reference, is to be precise about when this contact took place, for Duran was essentially an academic painter, albeit with a more progressive approach to his teaching and his work than many of his artist/teacher colleagues. It would be more logical to expect that the sequence of events would have begun with Duran soon after O'Conor's arrival in France, and that after this initial experience O'Conor's work would then have moved into more experimental areas as exemplified by the two landscapes. One possible explanation is that the two landscape paintings in question were not signed and dated by O'Conor, but by someone else after his death, although the provenance of the picture known as 'Groupe des Peupliers - effet de soleil', rather precludes this as a possibility.(18) Another plausible explanation is that these paintings were O'Conor
experiments with a 'new' and progressive style which he was not at that time ready to exhibit with complete confidence in the more progressive Salon des Indépendants, which was open to him as an alternative. The choice of the official Salon as a preferred exhibition venue also rather confirms that his work at that time was still in the academic tradition, as does the linking of his name to that of M. Carolus-Duran in the catalogue entry as his 'élève'. The landscapes may indeed have overlapped with that period of time when he was studying with Carolus-Duran in Paris.

The atelier of M. Carolus Duran

Almost all of the young foreign artists who arrived in Paris in the second half of the nineteenth century had already completed a formal and academic training in their respective countries of origin, in circumstances not very different to those of Roderic O’Conor. On their arrival in Paris their practice was either to enrol in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts or in one of the private ateliers conducted by artist teachers who also taught there. By enrolling in a private atelier the young and aspiring artist could make those sorts of personal contacts which would help him further his own career and the most important contacts were those with the influential group of private atelier teachers, most of whom were in a position of power and influence at the Salon. When it was necessary to do so, for example, they could ensure that the work of their own students was accepted for the Salon exhibition and by such means they could sustain and re-inforce their own positions as leading teachers. The ateliers also provided a natural meeting place for the young artists of many different nationalities, and a place
where they could learn from one another, making comparisons between their own work and that of their peers.

O'Connor's choice was the studio of Carolus-Duran, an artist who had been a friend of Manet's and who at that time was well known in the city as a fashionable portrait painter. It is possible that Duran had been recommended to O'Connor by one of his Dublin teachers, as his studio in Paris had previously been the choice of Frank O'Meara in 1872, and of Vincent Gernon, Norman Garstin and Helen Trevor in the 1880's. Carolus Duran was a man who had enjoyed mixed fortunes and considerable poverty early in his artistic career, before coming to the attention of the critics in 1866 through his painting 'L'Assassinée', a painting in which he showed a marked Courbet influence. The sale of the picture for 5,000 francs enabled Duran to make a visit to Spain where he was greatly impressed by the works of Velasquez. In 1869, his portrait of Madame Duran, in which he adopted some of Velasquez's techniques, helped to consolidate his reputation and he subsequently became increasingly successful and well known in Paris as a portraitist. His portraits were felt to be incisive, capable of detaching the sitter from all that was superfluous and of bringing him into a close personal relationship with the viewer.

Duran himself was known to be quite a flamboyant character. In the activity of painting he was reported to have made strange gestures with his brush while working, as if engaged in a duelling bout, gestures which were often accompanied by appeals to the shade of Velasquez. Duran was also an excellent horseman, a noted fencer, and an accomplished musician. Once he became established he was considered to be the most fashionable painter of Europe and his home in the Passage Stanislaws became a gathering
place for the social elite, his wealthy clientele ensuring that his receptions were always lavish and formal affairs. (24)

The majority of students in Duran's atelier, which was situated on the Boulevard Montparnasse, were either English or American although the official language used in every day communication was French. John Singer Sargent had been one of the better known students, and W.H.Low and Francis Chadwick, with whom O'Conor became a life-time friend through his contact at Grez-sur-Loing, had also studied there. (25) The students themselves were responsible for the running of the atelier which assumed a quasi-official status due to the fact that Carolus-Duran was also a recognised teacher of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. (26) In spite of his elevated position, Duran gave his services free, his reputation as an artist and teacher being enhanced through the prestige of his studio. This reputation was added to by the enthusiasm of his students and by their respect for Duran's teaching methods, which, as his representatives, they freely communicated as his ambassadors outside the studio.

The practice in the studio was to draw from the model on Monday and to begin painting on Tuesday. Duran made formal visits to the studio twice a week, usually on Tuesday and Friday, to review the students' work. In keeping with his revered position, the students would stand up when he entered the studio and present themselves before their easels to have their work reviewed. Duran would then make adjustments with brush or pencil as appropriate, keeping his observations brief and only rarely giving commendations. It was also usual for the students to observe Carolus-Duran at work in his own studio, on one of the remaining days in the week. (27) A typical Duran portrait used a severely limited value scale in which the eyes
were allowed to predominate as the strongest accent. Paint was laid on thinly in a restrained manner which allowed the merest tonal variation to suggest some degree of modelling, and which also permitted the few highlights to achieve their maximum effect.

What characterised Duran's teaching methods was his insistence on 'direct painting', that is painting without any preliminary drawing on the canvas. This approach was quite different from that found in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and generally in the Art Académies, where the methods were based on principles which had been established by David and Ingres. The popular belief in academic circles was that if drawing was separated from painting, then the students would avoid the pitfall of being confused with form and colour at the same time. The almost universal practice was to make a drawing by some medium and then to proceed to colour it.

Duran derived an altogether different approach based on his study of Velasquez, through which he advised his own pupils to refer to the same source, not in order to make laborious copies from examples of Velasquez work which could be studied in the Louvre, but instead to make copies 'au premier coup'. (28) Duran insisted on the omission in art of all that was not essential to the realisation of the central purpose of a painting and was quoted as having said: 'en art tout ce qui n'est pas indispensable est nuisible.' (29) He also advised his pupils to adopt a quite specific approach to the business of painting: 'Cherchez la demi-teinte, mettez quelques accents, et puis les lumières'. (30) That is, to start in the middle of the scale with a dominant value and to work broadly up and down from there.
Although Duran had a popular following, his work did not always gain the approval of the more progressive artists. When, for example, Camille Pissarro wrote to his son Lucien in 1884, he referred to former students of the Académie Suisse whom he recalled were remarkably skilful and could draw with surprising sureness. This skill acquisition in Pissarro's eyes did not amount to much, and he wrote to his son: 'Just think of Bastian-Lepage! and Carolus-Duran!!! No, no, no, that is not art'. (31)

Duran's restrained methods may not have appealed directly to O’Conor's temperament at that time, for, on the evidence of those few early French pictures of his already referred to, the Irish painter was already showing a predilection for a paint layer which was more dense, opaque, and altogether more heavily applied. It is more likely that Duran's insistence on the integration of form and colour in one and the same process without intermediate or subsequent stages, would have had much more relevance for O’Conor. This Velasquez inspired approach would almost certainly have reinforced the methods which O’Conor had gleaned from Karel Verlat in Antwerp, for he too had stressed the immediacy of a vigorous involvement with the paint so that one was painting and drawing at the same time.(32)

This approach to painting may have had a more widespread adoption than has been realised, and was even to be found in some of the teaching academies outside Europe. Charles Fromuth, the American painter, for example, referred to the methods of his teacher Thomas Eakins at the Philadelphia Academy, as being directly plastic and not linear. Eakins had shown Fromuth a procedure where in painting from the figure, he was encouraged

"to attack the model at once in colour with the brush in the construction..... to proceed and build up a figure with the paint and brushes the way a sculptor with his clay (sic) adding and removing or displacing pigments like clay. (33)"

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Duran was also known to be sensitive to the individual needs of his students, leading Low to write of him: 'I have known him to recommend diametrically opposite courses to different men, as he judged might be useful to one or the other'. (34) This attitude was also confirmed by Anna-Seaton Schmidt who gave to Duran the perhaps somewhat subjective accolade of being one of the few inspired teachers of modern painting, praising him for his ability to allow individual talent to flourish. (35)

Perhaps the most revealing information about Carolus-Duran's teaching philosophy, which in retrospect must have been a major influence on O'Conor, is available to us from the notes of one of his pupils. Duran often supplemented his studio visits with informal talks on the nature of art, and is credited with the following statements:

'Is painting simply an initiative (sic) art? No, it is above all an art of expression. The great masters have interpreted nature, not given a literal translation. Their interpretation is what constitutes their personality. Without this individual point of view there can be no really original work......... Art lives only by individual expression. Works of art can only be produced through the transcriptions of our own aspirations and experiences. (36)

There are several early O'Conor portraits which in all probability originated as a direct result of his work under Duran's guidance. To begin with there is the portrait of the Danish painter and illustrator, Paul Vogelius, which we know to have been exhibited by O'Conor in the 1888 Salon exhibition,(37) but which unfortunately has not been traced. Vogelius was two years younger than O'Conor, and the two men may have met in Duran's atelier or at Grez-sur-Loing, where Vogelius painted landscapes which he exhibited in the 1890 Salon des Indépendants.(38) In 1890 O'Conor exhibited another portrait among a group of ten consisting largely of landscape pictures, in the Salon des Indépendants,(39) and in the 1891 exhibition of the New
English Art Club he showed a picture, which, from its title, we may also assume to have been yet another portrait. (40)

There are two portraits extant which are considered to be early works, one of which is thought to date to Roderic O'Conor's first visit to Pont-Aven. This is the portrait of a Breton girl who because of the type of traditional coiffe or head-dress which she is wearing, can be quite specifically located to the Pont-Aven area. (41) (REF.PTGS.NO.005) This portrait head is soundly constructed with a very assured sense of drawing, and it is a particularly convincing work with respect to the way in which O'Conor has managed to convey the sense of volume in the form of the head, and in the collar of the dress worn by the sitter. Some of the paint, particularly that in the area of the collar, has been applied with a directness and a vigour through which one can sense the unified activity of drawing and painting. The more heavily textured build up of paint in this area is in contrast with a different method of paint application to the features of the head, where a thinner paint layer and more mixing and blending of the flesh tones on the canvas has given much more translucency to the painted surface. This contrast between the texture of the collar and the comparatively smooth painting of the features helps to emphasise the girl's youthful beauty, in a restrained painting of great charm and sensitivity. Although Carolus-Duran's influence is evident, this particular work also embodies an approach to painting which can best be described as Northern European, which may have carried over from his Antwerp days and his study of painting in the Museum collection at the Academy. In the way in which the lighting has been controlled, and the head composed within the picture with the eyes downcast, there are echoes of the work of Rubens, Rembrandt and Van Dyck.
There are similar compositional devices in the portrait just discussed, particularly with reference to the manner in which the light has been introduced as a dominant visual element, and those of a painting of an old man which has the ascribed title, 'Portrait de Marin' (REF.PTGS.NO.007). In contrast with the delicacy of treatment in the portrait of the Breton girl, the head of the old man has been given a much more rugged appearance. There is a more liberal use of the palette knife to build up a heavier paint layer, with some areas of texture, particularly in the sitter's beard, being achieved through the technique of scumbling. Although there are similarities in technique in specific areas within the two portraits, particularly in a comparison of O'Conor's means of painting the old man's beard and the young girl's dress collar, the slightly more aggressive and more fluent approach to the painting of the old man suggests that it is a somewhat later work. There are similarities, for example, between some of the palette knife work in this portrait and that of a landscape thought to have been painted at Grez, possibly in 1889, 'Landscape with road and farm buildings;' (REF.PTGS.NO.009). There are also enough similarities between this old man's clothes and the general appearance of a figure in another early O'Conor portrait, which is known to have been hanging for some time in the Grand Salon of the Hotel Julia in Pont-Aven,(42) to suggest that both of these works were part of the series of early O'Conor portraits referred to by Milner-Kite in his communication with Madame O'Conor.
Vincent van Gogh's studio

One further detail concerning O'Conor's early days in Paris is worthy of investigation. He has been reported as having made a visit to Van Gogh's studio in the company of the American painter Edward Brooks, who was a Grez resident for many years and where he and O'Conor probably met for the first time. The source of this information can be traced to a letter from Brooks' son Alden, sent to the English critic Denys Sutton prior to publication of the first article devoted to O'Conor's work. (43) According to Alden Brooks, the visit to Vincent's studio was made possible because his father knew van Gogh's brother Theo, who, at the time of van Gogh's arrival in Paris was employed as the director of a branch of the gallery owned by Boussod, Valadon and Co., the successors to Goupil, at 19 boulevard Montmartre. (44) Assuming that the information from Alden Brooks is correct, to have taken place at all, the visit would have had to have been made at some point after van Gogh's arrival in Paris in March of 1886, and before his departure for Arles in February of 1888.

There is no information about O'Conor's movements or his place of residence during this period, although it is presumed that he had been living at his 1888 Paris Salon address of 4 rue Darcet for some time before the Salon opened in May. His friendship with Edward Brooks would also suggest that at least part of his time may have been spent at Grez-sur-Loing. (45) We do know, however, that Brooks and his family were not in permanent residence in Grez as early as 1886, as their names do not appear in the census taken in the commune of Grez that year. However the 1891 census does confirm that by that date at least, Edward Brooks, his wife Annie, and their three young children were living in a rented house in the rue d'Eglise. (46) They could
of course have arrived in Grez as early as 1887, or even late in 1886 after the date of the census.

The reported visit to van Gogh's studio is of particular significance in view of what is now known about O'Conor's painting style between 1892 and 1895, when he was working in Brittany at Pont-Aven. During that period his landscape pictures in particular were to become characterised by elongated brush strokes and striping, showing an obvious debt to van Gogh's work. (47) In his private correspondence in later years, O'Conor freely acknowledged his admiration for Vincent's work whose pictures he described as being 'wonderful examples of expression of character pushed to the point of hallucination.' (48)

O'Conor's early appreciation of van Gogh's painting is all the more remarkable as Van Gogh had arrived in Paris as an obscure and little known artist, and would not have had any Parisian audience for his work until at least the autumn of 1886, when it is thought that O'Conor may have arrived in France for the first time. By then van Gogh's work could be seen at Père Tanguy's in the rue Clauzel, and also with three different Parisian dealers, A. Portier, P.F. Martin and G. Thomas. Van Gogh at that time was also painting in the atelier of Fernand Cormon. However, the viewing of a more public presentation of van Gogh's pictures, such as that provided for him by Agostina Segatori the owner of the Café Le Tambourin at 62 Boulevard Clichy (49) in the winter of 1886-'87, would have been a more likely point of reference for O'Conor's early interest in his work. (50) Van Gogh also attracted some attention through his organisation of an exhibition of Japanese prints in March-April of 1887, which was shown at le Tambourin. (51) He also exhibited one or two paintings in the rehearsal hall of André
Anton's Théâtre Libre during the winter of 1887-'88, at least one of which, 'Le Parc Voyer d'Argenson à Asnières, les amoreux,' shows a definite neo-impressionist influence. (52)

Then, in the month of November 1887, van Gogh's paintings were included along with the work of Bernard, Anquetin, Lautrec, A.H. Koningin, and possibly Guillaumin, in the group exhibition of artists of 'Le Petit Boulevard' which was held in the Grand Bouillon - Restaurant du Chalet, at 43 Avenue de Clichy. (53) This was an exhibition which van Gogh had helped to initiate and as it attracted rather more critical discussion and debate among the artists, it is thought more likely to have been the type of event which would have motivated O'Connor and Brooks together to have made the arrangements for the studio visit. It is therefore likely in these circumstances that the visit may have taken place somewhere between November of 1887 and February of 1888. By 20 February 1888 van Gogh had moved to Arles, and although he did make a brief return to Paris on his way to Auvers from St. Rémy in May of 1890, he was only in the city for a matter of three days, making a visit at that time rather problematic.

If the visit to Vincent's studio did take place as suggested, and if we assume that O'Connor was therefore familiar with some of the early works which van Gogh had painted after his arrival in Paris, it may be useful to speculate on those characteristics then present in van Gogh's work which may have appealed to the Irishman. Welsh-Ovcharov suggests that an analysis of van Gogh's style in Paris between 1886 and 1888 reveals four tendencies: realism, impressionism, pointillisme, and Japonisme, but she is careful to point out that these were not clearly defined stages or progressions in the
development of his work, and that he frequently combined techniques from each of these tendencies within the one painting. (54)

Among the earliest Paris paintings are a number of self-portraits and studies of flowers, described by Welsh-Ovcharov as 'pre-impressionist' and identified as having been painted in the summer of 1886. (55) Some of these flower studies are painted against dark backgrounds, and the closely related and rather sombre tones which characterise these paintings recall van Gogh's earlier work from Nuenen and Antwerp. Other paintings of flowers from 1886 may be said to be 'transitional' in the sense that they develop the sombre palette range, and also reflect van Gogh's awareness of the French realist tradition. Although Welsh-Ovcharov has acknowledged the problems associated with the establishing of a chronology for the pictures painted in Paris after 1886, the gradual introduction of additional marks and colour contrasts indicate a development in van Gogh's work, which also embraced the use of a much lighter colour range. We also know from a letter written by Vincent to the English painter Horace Mann Livens, that he was becoming increasingly interested in the use of strong colour contrasts such as those provided by the complementary colours of red and green, and blue and orange, and he wrote to Livens that he had become pre-occupied with their development in his paintings of flowers. (56)

Van Gogh's work from 1887 shows further stylistic development with backgrounds becoming more decorative and colours more pure, although the overall concept of the work remained within the realist tradition. However it is in the semi-rural Montmartre landscapes of 1887, and in the views over the city from the hill of Montmartre, that we first note a greater introduction of 'pointilliste' brush marks and atmospheric effects. These
developments are known to have been paralleled by Theo's growing interest, at roughly the same time, in the work of the Impressionists.

The concern in the paintings from the autumn and winter of 1887-'88 then shifted from landscapes and the outdoors to the studio interior, and to still life subjects, to self-portraits and to portraits of friends and acquaintances, among them Agostina Segatori and Père Tanguy. (57) It is in their portraits, and in Vincent's own self-portrait 'Portrait de l'artiste par lui-même, à l'estampe japonaise', (58) that the familiar marks and brush strokes which we associate with van Gogh's later works are seen to evolve and develop within a much lighter colour range, making use of richer colour contrasts. The still life painting 'Nature morte; choux rouges et oignons,' (59) for example, is also vividly painted with complementary colours applied using parallel brush strokes which follow the form of the cabbages and onions in the composition. The paintings achieved in the autumn and winter of 1887-'88, are therefore early indicators of the same spirit and technical approach which was to mature in the next phase of van Gogh's work after he moved south to Arles. If O'Connor did visit van Gogh's studio, it is likely that it would have been these later Paris paintings which would have held the most significance for him.

O'Connor, however, does not appear to have been immediately influenced in his own work by any of the changes he may have seen in the later Parisian pictures painted by van Gogh. The evidence is that O'Connor's work was then still within the academic tradition, as is confirmed through his exhibition of a portrait in the official Salon exhibition which opened in May of 1888, even though the more experimental Salon des Indépendants was open to him as an alternative. (60) While there is the conflicting evidence from the 1886
painting 'Groupe des peupliers, effet de soleil, (REF.PTGS.WO.004) of an early impressionist influence, an analysis of O'Conor's painting style strongly suggests that the introduction of the hatched brush marks and the longer brush strokes associated with his rhythmic interpretation of forms in nature, together with the setting down of contrasting colours in parallel stripes, did not emerge in his work until he went to Pont-Aven in Brittany, probably in 1891. This argument is further supported by the evidence from the paintings which O'Conor is thought to have painted at Grez-sur-Loing in 1889 and 1890, which are discussed in the section 'From Paris to Grez' which immediately follows. In these paintings the influence is initially that of Impressionism, with a tendency towards heightened colour contrasts and indications of a growing interest in the vibrant colour effects achieved by the Neo-Impressionists. The adoption of an approach similar to that of van Gogh's mature style will therefore be discussed in more detail in Chapter V, in the section entitled 'Early Brittany Landscapes'.

From Paris to Grez-sur-Loing

In Paris the atelier system acted as a natural grapevine for the spreading of news and information about the new artists and the best exhibitions, and on other more practical matters such as as where to find cheap living accommodation, on recommendations to inexpensive restaurants, and where to go outside the city for easy access to landscape themes. In all probability it would have been from the artists with whom he came in contact in Paris, that Roderic O'Conor would have learned about the group of landscape painters who were working at the small village of Grez-sur-Loing, some 80
kilometres to the south of the city. Grez had become popular with the younger artists who preferred its environment as an alternative to that of Barbizon, and because of its proximity to Paris which made day trips possible. It was a picturesque village thanks to its situation on the Loing river, and the red roofs of the simple village houses and the narrow streets, the old church, the ruined castle, the old stone bridge with its arches, and the lightly wooded river banks provided numerous motifs for the artists who painted there. At some stage prior to the May opening of the 1889 Salon exhibition, O'Connor moved from Paris to live at Grez which was to be his base for the next two years. (61)

The rural area to the south of Paris, in and around the fringes of the great Forest of Fontainebleau, where Grez was situated, had by then been firmly established as a popular location for at least two generations of landscape painters. The original group who had begun to paint there as early as the 1840's, had chosen as their base the small village of Barbizon on the edge of the forest, some 65 kilometres to the south of the city, where the natural beauty of trees, rocks and dappled sunlight made the small wooden huts and the lanes of the forest frequent and appealing subject matter for their paintings. Theodore Rousseau was one of the first to settle there and he was soon followed by other landscape painters who were united in their attitude of opposition to classical conventions, and by their interest in landscape for its own sake. Included in their number were Charles Daubigny, Narcisse Diaz de la Pena, Jules Dupré, Millet, Charles Emile Jacque and Constant Troyon. (62) These Barbizon artists, particularly in their period of greatest activity between 1850 and 1870, shared a desire to be faithful to their observations and at the same time to invest their work with more subjective qualities so that the painting would not simply be a
view of a particular scene, but the expression of a state of mind in response to that scene. Their work was marked by quite specific individual characteristics and although there was no manifesto as such, the original Barbizon artists shared a passion for nature which all but alienated them from the public and their contemporaries. (63)

It has been suggested in the previous chapter that O'Conor's earliest landscapes, those known to have been painted in Wales and in Dublin circa 1885, indicate that he was already well aware of the conventions of French naturalistic and romantic landscape painting before he arrived in Paris. The work of the Barbizon painters had been circulating in Europe since at least 1859, and he would in all probability have been familiar with the paintings of his fellow Irishman Nathaniel Hone, who had worked at Barbizon between 1857 and 1865 before moving to Burron-Marlotte where he lived until 1870. (64) Hone had known and made friends with Millet, Jacque, Corot and Harpignies during the thirteen years which he had spent in the Barbizon district, and after his return to Ireland in 1872 he began to exhibit his pictures at the Royal Hibernian Academy four years later, exhibiting there for the first time in 1876.

By the autumn of 1886, the probable date of O'Conor's transfer to Paris, Barbizon's peak period of activity had long since passed, but because of its earlier significance in the development of landscape painting it was then still the best known artists' colony within easy reach of the city. However, due to Barbizon's increased popularity, a second generation of landscape artists seeking a quieter environment in which to work had already begun the move to some of the other small villages in the same area. The two adjacent villages of Burron and Marlotte had attracted both Corot and
Harpignes, and Hone had moved there in 1865, but these early Barbizon artists were soon followed by a new generation of more progressive painters, and in subsequent years, Sisley, Renoir and Cézanne all painted at Burron-Marlotte.

Close to Burron-Marlotte, at a distance of little more than five kilometres, the small village of Grez-sur-Loing had also grown in popularity, becoming well known through the work of the numerous artists who went there in search of rural motifs and to paint the old stone bridge on the river. According to Fernande Sadler's account, Grez had gradually been adopted by artists after the year 1853 when the French writer Henri Murger lived there, although he tended to prefer Marlotte where he eventually settled. Corot had painted the old bridge at Grez in 1863, thereby adding considerably to its reputation and although the first artists to work there had almost all been French, the years 1873-'74 saw the beginning of its adoption by numerous visiting foreign artists. The English painter Harry Enfield, who was best known as a marine painter, worked there at that time, as did the American landscape painter Henry Bloomer who exhibited a view of the old bridge at Grez in 1878 at the World's Fair Exhibition in Paris. Literary figures also found some peace and tranquility there in the early years of its popularity - Robert Louis Stevenson was in Grez in the 1870's for example as was his cousin, Robert Allen Mowbray Stevenson. Other artists with a strong Grez connection included Arthur Heseltine, who was there as early as 1874-'75 before settling at Marlotte where he died in 1930, and Ernest Parton, Theodore Robinson, and John Lavery who made several paintings of the river banks and the bridge, setting his easel up in the garden of the hotel Chevillon, which was the most popular place to stay.
Other artists associated with Grez include the Irish artist Frank O’Meara, who is known to have painted at Grez in 1882, and between 1881 and 1884 the American painter Alexander Harrison, who later became well known for his marine pictures, together with his brother Birge, also a painter, are known to have been working at Grez. Lavery acknowledged that while his inspiration came from Jules Bastien-Lepage and Cazin, in Grez the painters who influenced him most were Harrison, Stott, and especially O’Meara. (67)

In addition to the English speaking artists, a significant number of Scandinavians had also established an association with Grez during the period prior to O’Conor’s arrival. They too had been initially attracted in the 1880’s to Paris, and to Barbizon, by the lyrical naturalism associated with the Fontainebleau artists, before coming under the influence of Bastien-Lepage’s plein-air realism. Albert Edelfelt, a Finn of Swedish attraction who had been in Paris since 1874, was an important influence on the younger generation of Scandinavian artists who arrived in Paris, although there is no record of his having worked as Grez. He was a strong supporter for Realism in Finnish art, and quite ambivalent about Impressionism which he viewed as a passing trend. Interestingly enough, his small 1886 study for the painting "Luxembourg Garden" (completed in 1887) is loosely and broadly established with a paint application which is similar to that of Manet’s, although the much larger final version of the painting reveals his true intent through his achieving of a carefully composed and refined realist painting which confirms his superior draughtsmanship and considerable skill as a painter. (68)

One of the earliest Scandinavian artists to make the short journey from Paris to Grez-sur-Loing was the Norwegian Christian Skredsvig, who, after an
initial visit, returned to Grez in 1882 accompanied by his fellow countryman Christian Krohg, and the Swedish painters Karl Nordstrom and Carl Larsson. Krohg, who was a Norwegian artist, had been initially impressed by the work of Manet, Bastien-Lepage and Caillebotte while in Paris in 1881, and he and Nordstrom with whom he had a close friendship, then became interested in the work of the Impressionists just before they went to Grez. Indeed, they may well have moved to Grez as a direct result of their growing interest in Impressionism, and their wish to work directly from landscape sources. Krohg's picture, painted in Grez, of Nordstrom looking out from an upper floor window over the garden of the Hotel Laurent, has stylistic associations with Manet's work and is almost certainly based on a similar composition by Caillebotte. However, the treatment of the garden foliage, while showing an Impressionist influence, is rather subdued in comparison with the more lively and energetic brushwork of Pissarro, Monet, Morisot, or Sisley, all of whom were exhibitors in the seventh Impressionist exhibition in 1882. Nordstrom was viewed as being more radically impressionist than most of the other Scandinavians, yet his 1884 painting 'Garden in Grez' is really a modified version of Impressionism in which broken brush marks suggestive of shimmering light are used within a carefully composed painting, with due recognition given to correct tonal values.

Carl Larsson, who was perhaps the best known of the Scandinavians, became the acknowledged leader of a circle which included Nordstrom, Bergh, Krenger, Krohg, Skredsvig, and Vallgre who was a Finnish sculptor. Larsson had painted at Barbizon in the late 1870's and on moving to Grez he began to work with water colour in preference to oil paint. The darker tones of his Barbizon paintings were gradually replaced by a much lighter tonal range,
which, in the more delicate water colour medium, he found to be more suitable
to depict the effects of light and atmosphere which had begun to interest
him. Larsson's paintings from his early days at Grez, were, like
Nordstrom's, largely composed of horizontal elements which receded into
space as they moved upwards on the canvas, very much in the manner of
Bastien-Lepage, (71) and his facility with water-colour is very evident in a
painting from 1887 entitled "By the River Loing at Grez". This painting,
which is essentially a Naturalist depiction of a plein-air motif, shows Anna
Liljefors, the wife of his Swedish friend Bruno Liljefors, looking out on the
river from a small wooden boathouse. (72) Liljefors, who was an animal
painter, was much less interested in the landscape around Grez than the
other Scandinavian artists, but while he was there his painting gradually
evolved into a clear and refined style, with an influence from Japanese
wood-cuts which shows in the decorative patterning and the flattening of
space in his compositions. (73)

Although most of the Grez based artists were influenced by Cazin and
Bastien-Lepage, in contrast with the original Barbizon colony they were much
too diffuse and diverse a group to have ever developed a particular
aesthetic philosophy or theoretical approach which might have unified their
work. Brawley Hill has however identified certain visual similarities in
the paintings of the first generation of artists to work at Grez, which
reflect not only the influence of Bastien-Lepage's plein-air methods, but
which also reveal a preference for relatively flat and uniformly lit subjects
of low tonal contrast. (74) It was probably such tendencies which led the
American artist, Bruce Crane, to write to his father in 1882 about the
characteristics of "the Grez School" identifying Cazin as their leader. In
reference to his paintings Crane asserted:

'Tone is the thing sought for, objects are never modelled,
everything is treated as a flat mass.' (75)

Some of the artists asserted that the quality of light at Grez was conducive to their plein-air approach as it remained relatively constant throughout the day, thus permitting them to work for lengthy periods in natural lighting conditions which altered very little while they were working 'sur le motif.'

The rather grey light associated with Grez-sur-Loing seems to have inspired many paintings which were diffusely lit, and in which a misty veil permeated the middleground and background forms, leaving them imprecisely stated in soft and gentle veils of colour. As a result the Scandinavian artists who were active in Grez actually became identified by their countrymen as members of 'the grey school of Grez' (76)

The intimate rural environment in and around Grez also meant that there was a degree of similarity in preferred subject matter, with the old bridge viewed from the garden of the Chevillon Hotel being one of the most popular choices. Will Low actually considered this to be something of a liability and wrote: 'compositions ready made are found on every hand and impart a superficial look to work done there.' (77) The similarity of theme was rather cynically commented on by the English painter William Rothenstein in his letter to Sadler, and referred to by her in her article on the Grez painters. (78)

The Grez painters came and went freely, being seduced by the opportunity to escape temporarily from Paris, particularly in the summer months, and to experience for themselves the much more simple and slow pace of rural life in the village. In Grez they found a definite sense of community which was centered on the popular Hotel Chevillon, a property which had been acquired as early as 1860 by Monsieur Jules and Madame Marguerite-Virginie Chevillon.
The Chevillons were known to have had a generally warm and sympathetic attitude towards the artists, many of whom had very little money and had difficulty in paying their bills, and their benevolent and tolerant attitude had been a significant factor in helping to consolidate Grez as an artistic community. When Jules Chevillon died in 1881 his widow continued to run the hotel, until with her advancing years she eventually transferred her business interests to her son Paul. (79)

In 1889, the village of Grez was still essentially a rural community inhabited by peasants who lived a simple life off the surrounding countryside. The village then consisted of approximately two hundred houses and there were roughly six hundred inhabitants. (80) Sadler describes how in the narrow streets it was not in the least unusual to see numerous hens and ducks foraging for food, and nothing out of the ordinary to suddenly come across a herd of cows on their way to the grazing fields. The local women carried on conversations with their neighbours and passers by from the doorways of their modest houses, and the implication in Sadler's account is that Grez was then a sleepy and slow moving village, inhabited by a poor and largely agricultural community. (81) There was a train service from Paris to the station at Montigny, a neighbouring village which was also frequented by artists, and from there the distance to Grez was approximately 5 kilometres on foot, along a meandering country road which afforded occasional glimpses of the river from the higher ground. The artists who were living in Grez found that it was possible to take an early morning train from Montigny to Paris to buy art supplies or to visit an exhibition, and then to make the return journey the same day. (82)
From the accounts available to us from some of the artists who worked there, part of the attraction of Grez lay in its social ambience and indeed some of the reported interaction between artists of different nationalities often bordered on the outlandish. The garden of the Hotel Chevillon was the scene of much frivolity and good natured horseplay. Bathing was extremely popular, and it was not unusual, according to Low, to see several painters energetically participating in canoe races on the river, or more unlikely still, taking part in races in tubs which inevitably ended up with the participants in the water facing no alternative other than having to swim to the river bank and comparative safety.\(^{(83)}\) It was perhaps due to antics such as these that the more serious minded French artists tended to avoid the village, leaving it instead to the visiting foreigners. The village people had to adjust to the unusual sight of one or more of these temporary residents wearing little more than bathing trunks, bathing sandals, and straw hats, making frequent journeys between the hotel and the village 'tabac'. It was also a common sight at mid-day to see as many as twenty artists fresh from a river bathe, seated at a communal table in the hotel garden eating lunch and carrying on an animated and noisy conversation in the English language. According to Low, some of the Grez artists had 'a devotion to exercise which worked havoc to the arts.'\(^{(84)}\) Birge Harrison described Grez as 'a gay, picturesque, and genuinely Bohemian community' in which the majority were either English or Americans, but with a sufficient sprinkling of French and of Scandinavians to give an international feeling to the place, which was heightened by the arrival of the occasional Spanish or Italian visitor. There was always a number of artist's models and female acquaintances in the company of the largely male artistic population there, and Harrison observed that in his time there was what he referred to as 'a certain return to primitive standards in the relation between the sexes.'\(^{(85)}\)
By the time O’Conor went to Grez the Chevillon Hotel had lost much of its former popularity, for Madame Chevillon’s son Paul who had inherited the establishment, had not proved to be as capable a businessman as either of his parents. The hotel Laurent provided a more comfortable alternative for the Irish painter, and it was there that he chose to stay initially. O’Conor may have well have gone to Grez on the recommendation of his Danish artist friend, Paul Vogelius, whose portrait he had painted and exhibited at the 1888 Salon. Indeed it is not impossible that the two young artists travelled there together, although Vogelius’ stay may have been comparatively brief as he chose to retain his Parisian address. Even if they did not travel there together, they must have worked at Grez at the same time, for in the 1890 Salon des Indépendants both O’Conor and Vogelius showed paintings with Grez titles.

The Grez based artists with whom O’Conor became most friendly were the Americans, Francis Chadwick, who had married the Swedish painter Emma Lowstadt in 1882, and Edward Brooks who was in Grez in 1889–’90, with his wife and three young children. Chadwick, who was ten years older than O’Conor, was a great admirer of the Irishman’s paintings, and the evidence from those few canvasses of his which are known, is that he too shared a preference for an active brush, as well as for a rich colour range and a generous application of paint. An untitled painting by Chadwick of rushing water viewed from above, and therefore more likely to have been painted close to the weir at Montigny-sur-Loing, has been worked with a great deal of energy and movement in the brush strokes, using thick impasto paint in a high colour key. The work embodies a similar spirit to that of O’Conor’s ‘Raging Torrent’ (REF.PTGS.NO.014) and although there is a relationship between them in the comparison of their respective techniques,
the absence of inscriptions or precise dates on either of these works makes it impossible to be more specific about who was influencing whom. Chadwick's wife, Emma, was herself an accomplished artist, and her work shows similar preferences to that of her husband's in its adoption of a bold approach through which an always active brush may be said to have been engaged in both painting and drawing at the same time. Her preferred subject matter included landscapes, portraits, and paintings of individual figures in garden settings.

O'Connor and Brooks were also close, and some useful information about their friendship, which helps to throw some light on O'Connor's personality, has been recorded by Edward Brooks's son Alden. Alden Brooks's reminiscences were based on accounts given to him by his father and on his own later mature years of contact in Paris with O'Connor, for at the time when his father and the Irish painter first met in 1890, Alden was only eight years of age. This letter from Brooks to Denys Sutton is also the source of the information about the visit which O'Connor and Edward Brooks are said to have made to van Gogh's studio, (see previous section in this chapter). Brooks also includes in his letter the somewhat anecdotal reference to the fact that his father had led him to believe that O'Connor and he had thought of buying some of van Gogh's canvasses to paint over because they were so cheap, a story adamantly refuted by O'Connor in later years when the mature Alden Brooks looked him up in Paris. Another story which also came to Alden from his father concerned the ease with which he and O'Connor could polish off a bottle of whisky between them in the course of an evening. According to Alden Brooks, this story, as might be anticipated, was more readily accepted by O'Connor in later years.
Brooks observed that O'Conor was then something of a ladies man, and was thought of as 'the handsome gifted young Irish painter, favourite of the ladies, of whom great things were expected'. Brooks also reported that while at Grez, O'Conor became engaged to a young and unnamed Swedish painter whom he quickly turned down after he discovered that his fiancée had received a visit from a Swedish male friend who was repaying a loan. It seems that the former fiancée then suffered a nervous breakdown, from which she eventually recovered to marry one of her own compatriots with whom she lived quite happily in the years which followed. The identity of O'Conor's fiancée has never been established.

O'Conor also enjoyed a close friendship with another regular visitor to Grez, the American painter Guy Maynard. Maynard, who was four years older than O'Conor, was born in Chicago and had studied at the Chicago Art Institute, before going to France and making his way to Grez where he was in residence by 1886. If O'Conor had made an early visit to Grez shortly after arriving in Paris, he and Maynard could have met as early as that year. The friendship between them was particularly close, and it lasted right throughout Maynard's lifetime, until his death in 1936. Unfortunately very few paintings by Maynard are known, but from those few examples available to us, the quality of immediacy and directness in the brush work of two small portraits of peasants, which may very well be of Grez residents, seems to owe something to O'Conor's style. In contrast with these two paintings, which are little more than studies and have never been exhibited, Maynard's 'Breton Interior,' thought to have been painted around 1895 is quite deliberately composed and the comparatively large flat areas which together define the composition have been painted quite deliberately, with a rather heavier build up in surface quality.
Judging from the number of paintings which O'Conor exhibited in the 1890 Salon des Indépendants - he showed ten works - his stay at Grez can be said to have been reasonably productive. Unfortunately, at the time of writing, neither of the paintings which he exhibited in the two Salon exhibitions of 1888 and 1889 has been positively identified, nor indeed have any of the three pictures which he showed at the Salon des Indépendants exhibition of 1889, nor any of the ten exhibited in 1890. It is possible that some of these paintings were sold from the exhibitions in which they appeared and have become widely dispersed or have since been lost, and equally possible that any which were not sold and which were retained by him, were painted over in later years. It is also probable that the increased interest in O'Conor's work, which has been evident in the auction sale-rooms and among the dealers in recent years, will bring at least some of these paintings to public attention in the near future. It is however tempting to draw parallels between identified O'Conor paintings and the titles of those which are listed in these exhibition catalogues. For example, the painting known as 'Paysage de neige' (REF.PIGS.NO.008) - a title ascribed to it by its owner - might just possibly be the picture exhibited in the Salon des Indépendants of 1890 as No. 560, 'La mare gelée.' Catalogue No. 565 from the same exhibition, 'La lisière du bois,' would in many respects be a more appropriate and alternative title for the work with the ascribed title 'Groupe de peupliers - effet de soleil,' (REF.PIGS.NO.004) To add further to the uncertainty, a painting having the latter title was actually exhibited in the 1889 Salon des Indépendants, but it has not been proven that this is in fact the work in question.(93) 'Chemin menant à Grez', exhibited in the 1890 Salon des Indépendants is a title which would be quite appropriate for another picture with an ascribed title, and which is known as 'Landscape with road and farm buildings.' (REF.PIGS.NO.009) As has been argued in the
previous chapter, in spite of many similarities between the subject matter of these identified O'Conor paintings and the catalogue titles, there is no supporting evidence by way of inscriptions by the artist on any of these paintings, to enable us to draw these sorts of conclusions with certainty.

The painting known as 'Paysage de neige' is thought to be an early Grez picture which has been tentatively dated to the year 1889. It may be related to another winter landscape which O'Conor exhibited in Paris in the spring of 1890 (94) although it could conceivably be an earlier work. The restricted colour range has of course been conditioned to a large extent by the subject matter, but the more finished appearance of this work, in comparison with 'Groupe de peupliers - effet de soleil' (REF.PTGS.NO.004) for example, suggests that the painting was probably begun outdoors and completed in the studio, which in view of the winter season depicted would be the most likely procedure for O'Conor to have followed. The rather flat lighting, and the tendency to group the landscape forms of trees and shrubbery in the middle ground on a horizontal division of the canvas, may be taken to be representative of the 'Grez style' previously referred to, although it should also be noted that the absence of figures or detailed landscape forms in the rather expansive and empty foreground also distinguishes this work from that of many of the Grez artists already discussed, who were influenced by Bastien-Lepage. Some passages in the painting also show evidence of typical Impressionist influenced brush marks, particularly in the way in which the trees are described with short brush strokes of closely related tones, relieved with occasional flecks of brighter colour. In many respects these jabbed brush marks are reminiscent of Monet's treatment of shrubbery in his 1879 Vétheuil pictures, especially in some of the details of the landscapes under snow which he painted there.
The use of the palette knife in the foreground also shows an awareness of Courbet's methods, but overall this is a quiet and much more restrained painting than almost all of O'Connor's other early landscapes.

A further painting, also tentatively dated to 1889 and thought to have been painted at Grez, having the ascribed title, 'Landscape with road and farm buildings', (REF.PTGS.NO.009) is a particularly vigorously painted work with very little by way of preliminary drawing in evidence. There has been a quite direct application of paint to the canvas, using both brush and palette knife techniques in a manner which is wholly impressionistic in character. The features of the landscape in this painting do rather suggest the environs of Grez-sur-Loing and the technique seems to owe something to the painting methods of Sisley in the way in which O'Connor has painted the roadside trees or shrubs. Sisley also frequently painted in a high tonal key with sudden outbursts of colour, a method which is very much in evidence in this picture of O'Connor's. Some influence from Monet's heavier impasto techniques may also be discerned in O'Connor's treatment of the textured road and of the buildings. Taken collectively, these qualities in O'Connor's work reveal a much more radical approach to painting than that associated with the 'grey school of Grez', so that O'Connor is likely to have been perceived by the other Grez artists as being quite advanced and progressive in his own painting methods. Although there is little firm evidence on which to make definitive judgements about O'Connor's sphere of influence, it may be significant that the Swedish painter Anshelem Schlutzberg, who had arrived in Grez in the autumn of 1889 in the company of Carl Tragardh, began almost immediately to experiment with Impressionist impasto techniques. It may be of course be pure co-incidence, but it is in many ways remarkable that Schlutzberg's landscape of trees on a hillside 1889,(95) has similar
characteristics to O'Conor's earlier 1886 painting known by its ascribed title, 'Groupe de peupliers, effet de soleil'. (REF.PTGS.NO.004)

In the fifth Independants exhibition of 1889, which included work by Anquetin, Filiger, Luce, Lucien Pissarro, Rousseau, Seurat, Signac, Toulouse Lautrec, and van Gogh, O'Conor was represented by three paintings sent in from his Hotel Laurent base in Grez. An important but brief clue to the appearance of these pictures was given by the critic, Martel Toussaint, in his writing about the Salon exhibition in l'Organe du 18e arrondissement - Montmartre la Chapelle. (96) Toussaint, after consideration of the work exhibited by Cross, Signac, Luce and Pissarro, referred to 'les flamboyants paysages de M. O'Conor'. His use of a descriptive adjective which may be translated as meaning 'blazing' or 'fiery' gives us a very positive indication that O'Conor was then already committed to the use of a rich and colourful palette. Such a description would not be inappropriate to the painting known by the ascribed title 'Groupe de peupliers - effet de soleil', nor indeed to the painting with the ascribed title 'Landscape with road and farm buildings', either one of which could have been Salon exhibits.

By 1890 O'Conor had moved to the Hotel Beausejour, and in the 1890 Salon des Indépendants he was represented by no fewer than ten pictures, the same number co-incidentally as van Gogh. As might be anticipated from his rural location, the majority of the pictures which O'Conor exhibited in 1890 were landscapes, and of the seven works in this category, four had specific Grez place name references in their titles. He also showed two portraits and for the first time in a public exhibition, a single still life. (97) Given what we now known of O'Conor's admiration of van Gogh (98) and of the influence which his work had on the Irish painter's style, it is particularly
unfortunate that none of these pictures has as yet been positively identified among the traced works from this period. If such information were available to us we could be more specific about the beginnings of the van Gogh influence, which, as we have noted, is most apparent in O'Conor's landscapes painted in Brittany, shortly after his transfer there from Grez.(99)

Apart from the friendship with the Americans, Brooks, Chadwick, and Maynard, there is little documented evidence of contact between O'Conor and any of the other artists who were then active at Grez. O'Conor is however said to have been in John Lavery's company during one of the latter's visits to Grez, the evidence coming from a photograph which is referred to by J.L. Caw in his biography on Sir James Guthrie.(100) According to Caw the photograph included Guthrie, who was in Grez to visit Lavery, Alex Reid the Glasgow dealer, Arthur Heseltine and his wife, and O'Conor, whom Caw inaccurately described as 'an Irish American artist of Lavery's acquaintance.'(101) Unfortunately this photograph was not dated, and given Caw's reference it is a little unusual that no mention is made of O'Conor by Lavery in his memoirs, which suggests that their contact may really have been of a rather superficial nature. Lavery's approach to painting would scarcely have been of much interest to O'Conor in any case, as his inspiration, like the majority of the other Grez artists, also came from Bastien-Lepage and Cazin.(102) We may assume, however, that as Alex Reid was in the group, there would have been some discussion between him and O'Conor on the subject of van Gogh and his paintings. Reid knew both Theo and Vincent van Gogh and he had been a visitor to van Gogh's studio where he had sat for at least two portraits in the spring of 1887.(103)
In 1890 the Bradford born painter William Rothenstein was in Grez, although no mention is made by him either in his published memoirs, of any contact which he might have had with O'Connor. In the same year another English artist, William Warrener from Lincoln, was also in Grez which is probably where he and O'Connor met for the first time. Rothenstein's lack of reference to O'Connor is all the more puzzling because Warrener is specifically mentioned by Rothenstein who wrote of him: 'Warrener flung himself into the most advanced movements then prevalent in Paris.'(104)

Rothenstein, whose memoirs unfortunately include few specific date references, recalled that Warrener's paintings were at that time of nudes in landscape settings, painted in 'the shrillest chrome yellow and viridian green the colour merchant provided.' Because of Rothenstein's lack of specific date references, it is not clear from his account whether or not this tendency in Warrener's work might be attributed to an influence picked up from O'Connor. What is fairly certain is that O'Connor obviously felt some degree of empathy with Warrener, probably because of preferences shared by both men for full strength and brilliant colour effects in their paintings, so that in later years he dedicated one of his prints 'to my friend Warrener', suggesting that their friendship must have spanned a number of years.(105)

In trying to determine to what extent O'Connor's approach to painting may have influenced some of the other Grez artists with whom he came in contact, there is the interesting revelation by another American painter, Edward Potthast, who was also at Grez in 1889 and 1890, that he was introduced to Impressionism by the Connecticut born painter Robert Vonnoh, and by O'Connor.(106) The linking of Vonnoh's name to O'Connor is all the more interesting as Vonnoh's association with Grez began in the autumn of 1887 and the evidence of his paintings from that date onwards is that he, like
O'Conor, also made a transition from an academic style to a more spontaneous and direct method of painting. (107)

His portrait 'Camarade d'Atelier' 1888, for example, thought to have been painted early in that year, is firmly within the academic tradition associated with the Paris ateliers, while his several studies of poppies in a field, also from the same year, are much more expressive and spontaneous works in which complimentary contrasts, particularly of red and green, and other unmixed colours have been applied with brush and palette knife. Vonnoh is quoted as saying of his own work:

"I gradually came to realise the value of first impression and the necessity of correct value, pure color, and higher key resulting in my soon becoming a devoted disciple of the new movement in painting." (108)

There is little by way of excessive contrasts of colour in Vonnoh's "Birch Trees, 1889" but the technique of painting is equally direct, and although the tendency is towards a more restrained colour effect, Vonnoh still managed to find a context for a range of pure colours which he applied with jabbing brush strokes leaving the underpainting to show through. Although there is no firm evidence of any working contact with O'Conor, the similar concerns which they shared while both were active at Grez, strongly suggests at least some interaction between them during that period. Further paintings by Vonnoh from the year 1890 (109) confirm his continuing pre-occupation with the use of intense colours leading one critic to comment:

'Vonnoh's pictures show a great diversity of subjects, and the perpetual searching after variety of coloring. Not the subject, not the more or less artistic arrangement of the picture, but the variety of tones, the brilliance of coloring, is the essential thing in his pictures.'(110)

Yet another American artist, Edward Hamilton, was also associated with Grez in 1889 and 1890, and in some of his paintings we note the introduction of
similar motifs to those preferred by Vonnoh, with the use of an even higher colour key in his case. (111)

There does seem to be some evidence therefore, to suggest as Brawley Hill does, that the adoption of a higher colour key by several of the Grez artists between 1887 and 1890, came about as a direct result of their having come into contact with O'Conor. The evidence from the limited number of O'Conor paintings which have thus far been traced and which may be confidently linked to his early days at Grez, and the published reference by Michael Toussaint to his 'flamboyants paysages' are testimony to O'Conor's early involvement with the use of enriched and heightened colour contrasts, a characteristic which had begun to appear in French painting by the time of the last Impressionist group exhibition in 1886, and which was to come to maturity in the colour vibrancy of the Neo-Impressionists. In any consideration of the measure of O'Conor's influence on other artists active in Grez we should also take note of the strength of his personality, and of his breadth of knowledge in the literary arts as well as in painting, which, placed alongside his experimental approach, would have placed him in a position of respect especially among the younger artists who may have come in contact with him.

From Grez-sur-Loing to Pont-Aven

For landscape painters in France, the popularity of the Fontainebleau forest and the villages of Barbizon, Burron-Marlotte, Montigny, and Grez-sur-Loing had as much to do with the proximity of those villages to Paris, as it had
to do with the intrinsic beauty of the rural landscape in which they were situated. There were also other sites in the French countryside, and on the Normandy coastline, which had proved to be no less popular. Giverny, Pontoise, Vétheuil, Auvers, Rouen, Trouville, Honfleur, and Etretat have since become familiar place names to us - as familiar as have the names of the artists who worked at those sites - among them Monet, Pissarro, Boudin, Courbet, and van Gogh. There was also an important artistic settlement in the far west of France in the remote province of Brittany, where the Breton people maintained many of their Celtic folk traditions in their everyday lives, and it was to this locality that O'Conor moved to begin an association with Brittany and the village of Pont-Aven which was to last for approximately thirteen years.

The precise date of O'Conor's move to Brittany from Grez is not known, but to have exhibited paintings with Brittany titles in the 1892 Salon des Indépendants during March and April, he would have had to have been painting there at some stage in the previous year, probably in the summer months. We have already speculated in this Chapter that O'Conor may well have made an earlier visit to Pont-Aven, and concluded that even before he left Dublin for France, he would almost certainly have been aware of its popularity with other painters through the work of previous generations of Irish artists who had been there. When O'Conor was a student in Dublin at the Metropolitan School of Art, for example, Breton subjects were frequently to be seen in the annual RHA exhibitions, and he was probably therefore aware that Irish painters including Nathaniel Hone, Aloysius O'Kelly, Augustus Burke, Henry Jones Thaddeus, Walter Osborne, J. Malachy Kavanagh, and Nathaniel Hill had all painted in Brittany. Nathaniel Hill had stayed with the O'Conor family for at least part of his studentship in
Dublin, (see Chapter II) and it is not impossible that he had maintained contact with O'Conor after moving to France. Having painted in Brittany with Osborne and Kavanagh as early as 1883, Hill could have informed O'Conor directly about the Pont-Aven locality, and of the colony of artists who were active in the region.

Although individual artists had painted at Pont-Aven as early as 1838, much of the credit for the establishing of Pont-Aven as an artist's colony may be given to the American painter Robert Wylie, who arrived in Pont-Aven in 1865. Wylie's presence attracted a number of other American artists including Earl Shinn and Howard Roberts who had been students in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, where Wylie had served for a time as curator. From Boston to Pont-Aven, by way of Rome and Paris, was the route taken by Benjamin Champney who had linked up in Paris with a former acquaintance of his, Charles Way the son of a Boston millionaire. Encouraged by the enthusiasm of Champney and Wylie, Way was easily persuaded to go to Pont-Aven with the two artists, and later in that year, Frederick A. Bridgman, a young New York engraver with ambitions to be a painter, had also made his way to Pont-Aven and by August of 1866 he was in residence in one of the pensions popular with the artists. Through the generosity of a local notary the artists were given access to the outbuildings of a large and semi-derelict property known as the Lezaven farm, which was situated on the high ground above the river valley, a short walk from the village. One of the barns at Lezaven became a communal studio and continued for many years to serve this purpose for subsequent groups of artists and for many individual painters. When Shinn and Roberts first went to Pont-Aven in 1866 there were perhaps a dozen artists at work in the district. By 1878 the number had grown to around fifty, and by 1884
there was an international community of artists numbering close to one hundred. (116)

Because of Pont-Aven's standing among the American ex-patriate artists in Paris and at Grez, it is almost certain that references to Brittany would have been frequent in conversations between O'Conor, Chadwick and Brooks. O'Conor's other life-time friend, Ferris Guy Maynard, who was in Grez as early as 1886 - is also known to have been at le Pouldu in Brittany with another American painter, John White Alexander and his wife, in 1891. (117) The friendship between Maynard and O'Conor was still active in 1937, (118) three years before O'Conor's death, and Maynard who made frequent trips between Brittany, Paris, and Grez, probably played a major role along with Chadwick and Brooks, in forming O'Conor's decision to go to Pont-Aven.

There were other related events in the art world which had begun to focus some attention on Brittany and the even smaller and more scattered village of le Pouldu, which was situated on the coast a short distance to the south of Pont-Aven. These events were centered on the activities of Paul Gauguin who had first gone to Brittany for approximately four months in the summer of 1886, at which time he had formed a friendship with Charles Laval, and met for the first time the young Emile Bernard. (119) Gauguin and Laval travelled together to Martinique in April 1887 where they painted for almost six months, before ill health brought Gauguin back to Paris. By December of 1887, and again in January of 1888, Gauguin's most recent work could be seen on consignment at Boussod, Valadon and Company, (120) the gallery managed by Theo van Gogh which was situated at 19 Boulevard Montmartre, a short distance from O'Conor's 1888 address at 4 rue Darcet.
If O'Conor was then paying regular visits to the galleries, as he almost
certainly was, it is highly likely that he would have seen Gauguin's new
work. However, it was not until Gauguin's second visit to Pont-Aven which
began in February of 1888, that his style of painting changed significantly,
largely as a result of his renewed contact with Bernard towards the end of
the summer. Gauguin had for some time been seeking an alternative way of
painting to that of the Impressionists, away from the imitation of nature
towards a style of painting which would give more scope to the artist's
imagination. He wanted to replace what he considered to be the more
objective visual analysis of the Impressionists with a new synthesis of
ideas, images, and feelings, in a form of painting which would be more
revealing of the artist's subjective responses.(121)

Although the origin of these changes may be traced to Gauguin's first visit
to Brittany, and his initial meeting with Bernard, the emergence of a
positive grouping of artists sympathetic to Gauguin's theories did not
happen until 1888, after his renewed acquaintance with Bernard. This group,
which became known as the School of Pont-Aven, changed its membership
frequently as the artists came and went. It then included Laval, Emile
Jourdan, Sérusier, Filiger, de Chamaillard, Moret, de Haan, and Bernard.(122)

There is little evidence in O'Conor's Grez paintings, and in any case too few
traced pictures from this period in his career on which firm conclusions
might be made, of any stylistic shift towards a form of painting which would
place him close to Gauguin's early version of synthetism. In O'Conor's case,
his growing use of an enriched colour palette and his preference for strong
colour contrasts, may be taken as an indication of his own subjective
responses to observed subject matter. The chromatic contrasts in O'Conor's
work and the tendency towards the use of separated brush strokes, as in 'Landscape with Road and Farm Buildings' (REF.PIGS.NO.009), would appear to indicate a closer affinity at this point in his career with Neo-Impressionist principles and techniques, (as has been suggested in the previous section in this chapter) than with any of the new theories which had emerged in Pont-Aven.

Paul Gauguin and the Volpini exhibition of 1889

In November of 1888, O'Conor may have taken advantage of the opportunity to see some of Gauguin's new paintings at the first one man exhibition of his work which was held at the Boussod and Valadon gallery. Evidence of some of Gauguin's activity at Pont-Aven may therefore have already filtered through to O'Conor prior to the first public group exhibition of the new work by Gauguin and his Pont-Aven followers, which took place in Paris at the Cafe Volpini between June and October in 1889.(123) O'Conor was then resident in Grez and could quite easily have travelled to Paris to see this exhibition which was strategically placed adjacent to the official art section of the much published 1889 Exposition Universelle, planned to coincide with the completion of the building of the Eiffel Tower. The Volpini exhibition had been arranged by Gauguin's close friend, Emile Schuffenecker, who had persuaded the benevolent café owner to allow his walls to be used for an exhibition of paintings, the owner having been disappointed by the non-delivery of a number of ornate mirrors which had been ordered to decorate the café's interior. There were on exhibit approximately one hundred pictures, the work of Gauguin, Bernard, Laval, Anquetin, Roy, Léon...
Fauché, Daniel de Monfried, and Schuffenecker. Guillaumin and van Gogh were expected to exhibit but in the end neither of them showed any work. An album of lithographs made by Gauguin and Bernard was also available for inspection on request, although the prints were not openly exhibited with the paintings.

The Volpini exhibition was shown under the title, 'Groupe Impressionniste et Synthétiste', and all the details were printed in bold black type on a poster which was widely distributed by the artists themselves. Although the show was not reviewed in any of the newspapers, Bernard did manage to persuade his friend Albert Aurier to mention it as part of his general review of the Exposition Universelle in his newly founded review, 'Le Moderniste'. Several of the symbolist critics and reviewers - notably Gustave Kahn in 'La Vogue', Félix Fénéon in 'La Cravache', and Jules Antoine in 'Art et Critique' - also published reviews of the exhibition, and it is therefore unlikely, with all the attendant publicity, that O'Conor would have been unaware of the significance of the event.

While the Volpini exhibition was still running, Gauguin published in Albert Aurier's review, 'Le Moderniste', two separate articles on the art shown at the Exposition Universelle. These were followed in September, in the same publication, by an introspective and rather subjective article also written by Gauguin entitled 'Qui trompe-t-on ici?'(124) These articles were critical of official art and took a rather negative stance with very little reference to his own new and emergent theories, but like the exhibition at Volpini, such matters could scarcely have escaped O'Conor's attention for he was known to have been a fastidious reader as well as a regular visitor to the galleries and the exhibitions.
Then in 1891 there was renewed public interest in Gauguin's activities, largely because of his declared intention to go to the South Seas and his proposal to hold a sale of his pictures at Hotel Drouot in Paris. Gauguin's objective was to secure as much advance publicity as possible for this sale of some thirty works of his from Martinique and Brittany, in order to raise sufficient funds to cover the costs of his proposed journey to Tahiti. He had been able to secure from Octave Mirbeau the promise of an article which was published just one week before the event, in the 'Echo de Paris'. Mirbeau also published a shorter article in the more widely read 'le Figaro', and Roger Marx wrote in support of Gauguin in 'le Voltaire'. Gauguin had done his preparatory work so well that just two days before the auction, Gustave Geffroy was persuaded to announce that the French government had purchased one of his paintings, a story which was a pure invention and which was designed to focus as much attention as possible on the sale. Following the Drouot auction, in the March issue of the magazine 'Mercure de France,' Albert Aurier published an authoritative article on Gauguin identifying him as the founder of the new symbolist approach to painting.

Taking all of these events into consideration - some knowledge of Gauguin's paintings from 1888, a possible visit to the 1889 Volpini exhibition and an awareness of Gauguin's publications in the same year, the likelihood that he would have seen his pictures at Hotel Drouot in 1891 and the reading of the related publicity and Aurier's published article - it is plausible that O'Connor's curiosity was aroused sufficiently to persuade him to travel to Pont-Aven to see for himself what was happening there. In arriving at this decision it is likely that he also had the support and encouragement of his
own artistic circle, for Gauguin's paintings would surely have been a topic for regular discussion and debate between O'Conor and his friends.

In considering what other factors may have influenced O'Conor in making his decision to go to Pont-Aven, there is also the evidence that he was active in artistic circles in Paris during the course of 1891, and it is not without significance that two of the artists with whom he made contact that year were also to develop an affiliation with Pont-Aven, almost simultaneously with that of his own. One of these artists was the young Swiss painter, Cuno Amiet, who mentioned his friendship with O'Conor in a letter to his sister, and specified the source of that friendship as having originated in Paris in 1891.\(^{(127)}\)

Unfortunately Amiet did not give any details about where that meeting took place, or precisely when it took place, nor of what circumstances had brought them together. A second artist with whom O'Conor had contact that same year was Armand Seguin, and in his case his association with O'Conor took on a much deeper significance, particularly when the two men were working together in Brittany.\(^{(128)}\) When Seguin later fell on hard times it was O'Conor who materially assisted him with gifts of money and moral support, right up until Seguin's eventual death in 1903.\(^{(129)}\)

\[\text{The New English Art Club (1891)}\]

The speculation on 1891 as being the first year of O'Conor's taking up more or less permanent residence in Brittany, is rather supported by the fact

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that he did not exhibit in France that year, suggesting some displacement and the likelihood of some travelling. Indeed it has been established that he was an exhibitor with the New English Art Club in London during the months of May and June, and the fact that he gave his address as c/o Ernest Parton, 35 Acacia Road, London,(130) indicates that O'Connor probably went to London to personally deliver his painting for this exhibition.

We must assume that Seguin and O'Connor were known to each other before this visit to London took place, for in a letter which Seguin wrote in December from his rue Lepic address in Paris to the English painter, Eric Forbes-Robertson who was then in Pont-Aven, he referred directly to O'Connor's visit to England, and speculated on whether or not he might still be there.(131) In a further letter to Forbes-Robertson, written two months later on 20 February of 1892, Seguin asked that his 'good thoughts and compliments' be sent to O'Connor, confirming that by that date Seguin knew that the Irish painter was already installed in Pont-Aven.(132)

The New English Art Club had been formed in London in 1886, largely through the efforts of a number of English artists who had painted in France, and who had realised that the Royal Academy was unlikely to be able to provide them with the type of platform they needed for the successful promotion and appreciation of their work. This group, which included Clausen, Steer, and Stanhope-Forbes, had been influenced by the then new 'plein-air' approach to landscape painting in France, and by the work of Bastien Lepage in particular. At the time of its formation, the particular interest of the NEAC was in the reviving of naturalistic painting, so that one writer in 1889 described their aim as 'following in England, the methods long practiced in France - vivid and simple study of nature.' (133) These
policies were soon modified under Sickert's influence, after he was elected to the committee in 1888. The work of the Impressionists had then begun to influence Sickert and his fellow committee members, and Degas' picture, 'The Green Dancer', exhibited in 1888, was the first of several Impressionist paintings to be shown in the years which followed. This gave a fresh impetus to the Club's activities, as a result of which the more conservative Bastien-Lepage influenced artists had to give way to a more liberalising attitude, and to what they considered to be much more experimental work.

Given that he had been resident in France since 1886, how did O'Conor come to be an exhibitor in the 1891 NEAC exhibition in London? The answer is probably to be found somewhere among the network of contacts that he would have made at Grez, allied to the fact that his host in London, Ernest Parton, also had a link to Grez where he too had painted, and where it is probable that his and O'Conor's paths would have crossed. There may not have been a great deal in common between O'Conor's painting style and Parton's, who was described by William Rothenstein as being a mild and gentle person who had become well known for his paintings of silver birch trees through some success which had come his way as a result of a painting exhibited at the Royal Academy. Parton, however, in spite of having a different attitude to painting from that of O'Conor, must have been appreciative of his talents and suggested to him that he might wish to consider exhibiting with the NEAC. According to Sadler's account, Rothenstein was also in Grez in 1890, and either he, or O'Conor's friend the English painter T. W. Warrener who was also there at that time, could have been instrumental in encouraging the Irish artist to exhibit in London with the group. The fact that O'Conor did not exhibit in the Salon des Indépendants, which was held as usual in Paris during the months of March and April, rather suggests that he had
already taken an early decision to travel to London and he may therefore have gone there early in the spring of 1891.

In contrast with his subject matter of the previous two years, O'Conor's picture for the NEAC was not a landscape. It may be that those pictures which the critic Martel Toussaint had earlier described as his 'flamboyant' landscapes were felt by O'Conor to be too risky for the London exhibition, being too advanced stylistically, and although we have no record of what his exhibit - a portrait entitled 'An old French peasant', actually looked like, it probably was more traditional in its approach to its subject matter, with some carry over from his earlier study with Carolus-Duran.

Apart from the evidence of his having exhibited in London, there is no supporting evidence of any painting activity during his visit to England, although it is likely that he would have gone to the museums, and the National Gallery in particular, to look at their collections. Neither is there any indication of the length of his stay there, or of the date of his return to France. He may have visited Grez again before moving on to Brittany, or he may indeed have gone directly to Pont-Aven from Paris on his return from England.
FOOTNOTES

1. The painting 'Preparing for the carnival - seated girl' under the Taylor Bequest, was awarded a prize of £15. Minutes of R.D.S. (1884)


3. Book of student attendances, National Gallery of Ireland

4. Royal Hibernian Academy, Annual Exhibition, Dublin (1885). Catalogue Numbers 205. 'Sunny Day in June' £10; 331. 'Wet Weather' £25; 349. 'Breakers' £10; 522. 'A Quiet Spot' £10

5. O'Conor is known to have painted in Rathfarnham Park while he was resident in Dublin; a painting made in that setting, 'Study in Rathfarnham Park' had been awarded a special prize of £10 for its exceptional merit at the RHA Annual Exhibition of 1883.


7. Science and Art Department, Metropolitan School of Art, Dublin. Report for the academic year October 1885 - July 1886. Dublin (1887). p.19


10. Cuno Amiet, a young Swiss artist became friendly with O'Conor when both men were painting at Pont-Aven in Brittany in 1892-93. In a letter to his father, which Amiet sent on 7 March 1893 from Pont-Aven, he revealed that O'Conor received an allowance from his father in Ireland of 250 francs a month. Amiet's letter is in a private collection (A) in Switzerland.


12. The title of this painting has been ascribed to it by its present owner, and it is not necessarily the painting of the same name which O'Conor exhibited in the 1889 Salon des Indépendants Exhibition. See Salon des Indépendants Exhibition Catalogue for 1889, entry number 188. 'Groupe des Peupliers - effet de soleil.'

13. Rewald, John. The History of Impressionism, (New York) p.526. According to Rewald only Gauguin, Guillaumin and Morisot represented the Impressionist element in an exhibition which also included Marie Bracquemond, Degas, Forain, the Pissarros, Redon, Rouart, Schuffenecker, Seurat, Signac, Tillot, Vignon, and Zandomenghi. The exhibition was dominated by Seurat's painting 'La Grand Jatte'.


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15. Reproduced in Sutton, Denys. (1960) op.cit., Fig.3.

16. The letter was written by Kite in response to a request which he received from Madame O'Conor to supply her with information about O'Conor's early career. Private collection (B) France.

17. ibid.

18. The picture was given directly by O'Conor to Francis Chadwick at Grez-sur-Loing, and then by descent to his granddaughter from whom it was purchased by the present owner in 1983.

19. When a change of style takes place in an artist's work some degree of overlap is usual, until the point is reached where the artist feels confident enough to publicly exhibit the new paintings and to set aside his former style.

20. Kite to Madame O'Conor, op.cit. The entry in the 1888 Paris Salon catalogue also links O'Conor to Duran's atelier.


22. ibid. p.28


24. ibid., p.353


27. Charteris (1927) op.cit., pp.25-26

28. ibid., p.28

29. ibid., p.27

30. ibid., p.27


32. cited in Campbell (1984) op.cit., p.83


34. Low (1908) op.cit., p.16

35. Seaton-Schmidt (1917) op.cit., p.352

36. ibid., p.354


39. O'Conor, Roderic, born at Roscommon, (Ireland). Hotel Beauséjour at Grez, par Nemours (Seine et Marne). See catalogue entry number 566. 'Tête de jeune paysan'. This work has not been traced.

40. O'Conor, Roderic. New English Art Club (1891) Catalogue entry number 38. 'An old French peasant'.

41. In the nineteenth century each district in the Brittany area had its own distinctive traditional costume which was worn regularly, particularly by the womenfolk. The variation in the coiffes worn by the women is an aid to identifying the specific locality where they lived.


43. The letter is dated 12 July 1956, and a copy is filed in the Archives of the Tate Gallery, London. See also Sutton, Denys (1960), op.cit., p.172

44. Theo had arrived in Paris in 1878 to work for Goupil's and because of his position there, and through his visits to exhibitions, he was known to a wide circle of artists, collectors, art connoisseurs, and dealers. See Rewald, John. Studies in Post-Impressionism (1986) and the chapter titled 'Theo van Gogh as art dealer' pp.7-115, which was originally published as 'Theo van Gogh, Goupil and the Impressionists' in the Gazette des Beaux-Arts, January and February (1973)

45. See the opening section in this chapter entitled 'From Dublin to Paris' and the speculation on O'Conor's arrival in France which is thought to have been in the autumn of 1886. The earliest confirmation of a Parisian address is that of the 1888 Salon catalogue, where he is listed as living at 4 rue Darcet.

46. Dénombrement de 1886 and 1891. Liste nominative des habitants de la commune de Grez, Archives Départementales, Melun.

47. The van Gogh influence in O'Conor's work is discussed in more detail in Chapter V, 'Pont-Aven - the early years (1891- 1894)', in the section entitled 'The early Brittany landscapes'.

48. Roderic O'Conor conveyed this information to Clive Bell in a letter sent from Paris on 18 February 1908. Archives of the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin. Reference OC/GB 6. Although O'Conor did not specifically identify the location of the exhibition, it was almost certainly the one held at Bernhlem Jeune's in January 1908, where approximately one hundred works by van Gogh were exhibited. There was also a smaller exhibition of van Gogh's work, also in January 1908, of some thirty five items at Druet's.

49. Van Gogh had arranged to take his meals there in exchange for his canvasses. See Bernard, Emile. 'Julien Tanguy,' Mercure de France LXXXIV, December 1908, pp.600-16.

51. ibid. p.31.

52. ibid. p.104, catalogue number 33 by Welsh-Ovcharov as 'Le Parc Voyer d'Argenson à Asnières, les amoureux.' In de la Faille, J.B., *The works of Vincent van Gogh: His Paintings and Drawings* New York (1970), listed as (F314) 'Parc à Asnières.'


54. ibid. p.20.

55. ibid. p.16.


57. de la Faille (1970) op.cit., see F381 'L'Italienne (La Segatori), and F363 'Portrait de Père Tanguy'.

58. ibid. F363 'Portrait de l'artiste par lui-même, à l'estampe japonaise'.

59. ibid. F374 'Nature Morte; choux rouges et oignons'

60. The 1888 Salon des Indépendants was held from March until May.

61. His address is given in the Salon Catalogue of 1889 as Hôtel Laurent, Grez. See catalogue entry No. 2029. 'Le rouet' (Untraced).


63. ibid. p.12.

64. Campbell, J. (1984) op.cit. See chapter 4 on Nathaniel Hone, and chapter 5 on Barbizon and the artists' colonies of the Forest of Fontainebleau.


67. idem.

69. *idem.* pp.166-67. Krohg's biographical details and the illustration of
his painting, 'Portrait of Karl Nordstrom' 1882 at p.167, collection of the
Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo, is the source of information included in this
paragraph.

70. Hill, May Brawley, 'Grez-sur-Loing as an artist's colony', 1875-1890,
unpublished paper presented at the Graduate Center, The City University of
New York. (May 1983) 'Garden in Grez' is in the collection of the Gotesborgs
Konstmuseum.

71. Alphons, Sven; Lindwall, Bo; and Josephson, Ragnar, *Svensk Konstkronika
under 100 år*, Stockholm; Natur och Kultur, (1944) No pagination, see
illustrated works for the year 1882. A typical Larsson painting from this
period, such as his 'October' of 1882 depicts a peasant woman in a walled
garden beyond which is a group of village houses. Nordstrom's 'Old Bridge
at Grez, also painted in 1882, is based on compositional principles which
also stress horizontal divisions.

(1982) See catalogue No.7, 'By the River Loing at Grez,' illustrated at p.10

73. Varnadoe, Kirk, (1982) *op.cit.* For a typical example of Liljefors'painting see catalogue no. 60, 'Dovehawk and Black Grouse,' 1884 illustrated
at p.181, and the catalogue notes which accompany this painting at p.180


75. Quoted by Clark, Charles Teaze in *Bruce Crane (1857-1937). American

76. Waern, Cecilia, 'The Modern Group of Scandinavian Painters,' *Scribner's
Magazine* 25, (June 1899) p.652

77. Low, Will H., *op.cit.* (1908) p.173

78. Rothenstein, in reference to the Hôtel Chevillon, recalled that so many
painters set up their easels there (presumably in the garden overlooking the
river) that they were teased by other artists who were passing by, with
comments such as "Ah! I see motif number four." Quoted in Sadler (1938)
*op.cit.* (<no pagination>)

79. *idem.*

80. In 1886 the actual numbers were 618 residents, 187 houses and 197
families. In 1891, 603 residents, 192 houses, and 206 families.
*Dénombrement de 1886 et 1891. Liste nominative des habitants de la commune
de Grez*. Archives Départementales, Melun.

81. Sadler, (1938) *op.cit.*

82. Reported by John Lavery in a letter to Fernande Sadler. 'Je prenais
un train le matin de bonne heure de sorte que cela m'était possible de
revenir le jour même.' Quoted by her in her article on the Grez artists,
*op.cit.*

83. Low, W.H. (1908) *op.cit.* See in particular Chapter XIV, 'Montigny and
Grez', pp.172-83.

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84. ibid., p.17.


86. The 1889 Salon des Indépendants catalogue gives Vogelius's address as chez Mme. Chaircuite, rue de Douai,18. The works which he exhibited, No. 277, 'Le chemin de la ferme'; No.278, 'La porteuse d'eau'; and No.279, 'Le vieux saule', do not have explicit Grez references in their titles, but were probably painted there, while two of the four works which he exhibited in the following year's Salon des Indépendants do refer specifically to Grez.

87. Among the ten paintings which O'Conor exhibited were four which may be quite specifically related to Grez through their titles - No.562, 'Le matin au bord du Loing'; No.563 'Chemin menant à Grez'; No.567, 'Le pont de Grez' and No.568, 'Le moulin de Roy'. In the case of Vogelius, two of his four exhibits fall into the same category - No.843, 'Bords du Loing près de Grez'; and No.844, 'Environs de Grez-sur-Loing'. Salon des Indépendants catalogue, 1890.

88. Witness account, France.

89. The painting is one of several by Francis Chadwick, including a self-portrait, which are in a private collection in France.

90. Letter dated 12 July 1956, from Alden Brooks to Denys Sutton, Tate gallery Archives. The letter was written in response to Sutton's request to Brooks for information on O'Conor, for the article which was then in the course of preparation for Studio magazine.

91. Sellin, David (1982) op.cit., p.174

92. The two portraits are in a private collection in France. See also Maynard's painting 'Breton Interior' in Sellin (1982), op.cit. Catalogue number 59, illustrated at p.174.

93. This point has been more fully argued in the previous chapter.

94. Salon des Indépendants, 1890. Catalogue no. 560, 'La mare gelée'. The exhibition opened on 20 March and ran until 27 April.

95. Hill, May Brawley (1983) op.cit. p.18. See also Alfons and Lindwall, (1944) op.cit. Illustrations for the year 1889.

96. The original article has been re-published in Un Siècle d'Art Moderne. L'Histoire du Salon des Indépendants, editions Denrel. (1984) See the Chapter by Parinaud, André, 'Les Indépendants: la critique et la presse, l'affirmation de la Modernité 1884-1914.' p.94.


98. See Chapter V and footnote no.26
99. See Chapter V where the early Brittany landscapes are discussed

100. Caw, J.L. Sir James Guthrie, London (1932) p.68

101. There has been some speculation as to whether or not O'Conor first met Lavery in Paris, the original source of this information being the catalogue preface to the auction sale of O'Conor's paintings which took place in Paris some fifteen years after his death. The reference by the writer of the catalogue, Jean Cailac, was not substantiated, but in all probability his information came from papers left by Madame O'Conor.

102. Lavery confirmed this in a letter to Fernande Sadler, from which extracts are quoted in her article on the artists associated with Grez-sur-Loing (1938) op.cit.

103. de la Faille, op.cit. See F270 'Portrait d'Alexander Reid', and F343 similarly entitled 'Portrait d'Alexander Reid'. Reid was a Scottish dealer who arrived in Paris towards the end of 1886 to work for Boussod and Valadon.

104. Rothenstein, W. Men and Memories New York (1931) pp.76-77

105. Sutton, Denys, (1960) op.cit. This reference is at p.175


109. idem. See for example his 'Trees at Grez' 1890; 'Spring in France' 1890; Beside the river' 1890, all illustrated in the catalogue.


111. Hill, May Brawley, (1987) op.cit., p.27. See Hill's commentary and the illustration of 'Madame Julien's Garden in Grez' by Edward Hamilton which he painted in 1889. This painting is very similar to Vonnoh's 'Jardin de Paysanne' 1890.

112. The Brittany weather could be quite severe in the winter with storms coming straight off the Atlantic Ocean and therefore the usual practice for most of the artists was to go to Pont-Aven in the summer months, and to return to Paris in the autumn prior to the on-set of winter.


114. DeLouche, Denise, 'Pont-Aven avant Gauguin' in Bulletin des Amis du Musée de Rennes, No. 2, Été (1978) DeLouche has identified among the earliest Pont-Aven artists, Francia, who exhibited a painting 'Vue de Pont-Aven en Basse-Bretagne' in the 1838 Salon. See also her references to Wylie's role in attracting other American artists to Pont-Aven in the years immediately after 1865

116. ibid. p.41

117. idem. p.174

118. Letter from Maynard to Roderic and Madame O'Conor, dated September 1937. Private collection (L) France. Maynard was then in Paris, and the O'Conors were living quietly in Neuil-sur-Layon in the Maine-et-Loire region.

119. Bernard, Emile, Souvenirs inédits sur l'artiste peintre Paul Gauguin et ses compagnons lors de leur séjour à Pont-Aven et au Pouldu. Preface by René Maurice, Lorient (1939) p.8

120. Rewald, John, Post-Impressionism, New York (1978) p.68

121. The formation of the group and and its theories are more fully discussed in Chapter IV


123. Rewald, op.cit. For a full description of the significance of the Café Volpini exhibition see pp.256-65

124. Gauguin, Paul, 'Notes sur l'art à l'Exposition Universelle', Le Moderniste, June 4 and 13, pp.84-86 and pp.90-91; and September 21, (1889) pp.170-71

125. Rewald (1978) op.cit., p.439

126. Aurier G. Albert, 'Le Symbolisme en Peinture,' Mercure de France, 2, no. 15, March (1891), pp.155-65

127. Letter from Amiet to his sister, sent from Pont-Aven on 21 December 1892. Private collection (A) Switzerland.

128. O'Conor, in an undated letter to Maurice Denis probably written in January 1904, after Seguin's death in December, revealed that he had known him since 1891. Denis Archives, Musée de Prieuré, St.Germain-en-Laye, France.

129. This relationship is explored more fully in Chapter VI


134. Sadler, Fernande, (1938) op.cit.
135. Some National Gallery publications have been found by the writer among the books and publications which formerly belonged to O'Connor, but these may of course have been acquired by him at any stage during his lifetime. Private collection (D) France.
RODERIC O’CONOR

PART TWO

BRITTANY

1891 - 1904
CHAPTER IV

BRITTANY - HERITAGE, CONTEXT

The Province of Brittany

Many of the artists who were normally based in Paris were attracted to Brittany because of its sense of remoteness and detachment from the busy cosmopolitan way of life associated with the city. In the summer months in particular, a steady trickle of painters and their friends would travel outwards from Paris in search of a more relaxed life-style closer to nature, in a rural environment which could provide them with many different types of subject matter. The American artist, Arthur Hoeber, writing about Brittany in 1895 described the annual exodus from the city in these words:

"Paris was hot and impossible in its whiteness; the brilliancy of the light stone work of its buildings, combined with the glare from the asphalt, dazzled one's eyes and drew all the heat in the simmering July sky. Good resolutions of remaining at the Beaux-Arts till the last day of the session faded gradually away. The cafés on the Boulevard began to pall; the little room au sixième certainly was stuffy, and familiar faces in the street became more and more rare. It was time to go to the country."(1)

In contrast with their Parisian environment, the artists who worked at Pont-Aven could enjoy the quiet sandy bays and inlets of the Brittany coastline and observe the activities of fishermen at their nets and in their boats. From the narrow roads and lanes which traversed the landscape they could paint the day to day work of the peasant farmers in their cultivated fields.

The landscape was full of contrasts stretching from the rocky coastline with its surging Atlantic rollers, inland to the old stone cottages and red-roofed farm buildings, many of which were partially concealed behind clumps of
trees. There were numerous carvings on the facades of church buildings, and groups of stone figures having an association with their devout Catholicism and deep religious beliefs were to be found in the central squares of most of the villages which dotted the landscape. From the point of view of the artist, the great advantage was that these resources and contrasts in subject matter were all there within a comparatively small area which extended from the busy fishing port of Concarneau which was 16 kilometres to the north and west of Pont-Aven, to the sparsely populated and wind-swept district of le Pouldu a further 20 kilometres south.

Although Brittany was certainly a picturesque and rural province capable of providing numerous motifs for the artists who went there, Orton and Pollock have commented on the importance of evaluating the work of the Pont-Aven group within its proper social, environmental, and economic contexts, and they have found fault with much of the literature written about this period in French painting which in their view is not accurate in its description of some of the conditions encountered by the artists working in Brittany. They cite as an example of this the following passage from the exhibition catalogue which accompanied the Post-Impressionist exhibition at the Royal Academy in London in 1979:

'Springing from its geographical remoteness from Paris, its harsh climate and poor soil, and its social and economic backwardness, Brittany was also a region marked by extreme poverty, intense piety, residual paganism and a fatalism brought on by the bitter struggle for survival.'

This impression of a region of 'social and economic backwardness' and of 'extreme poverty' is not supported by the statistical evidence which shows that while Brittany may have been economically depressed in the middle of the century, when Garonne was one of the richest regions of France and Brittany one of the poorest, by the end of the century Brittany had become
one of the most profitable and productive regions in the country. This growth has been attributed to the economic revolution which transformed both rural and urban society in France in the second half of the nineteenth century. Orton and Pollock have expanded on specific aspects of the Brittany economy as it then stood, including in their analysis reference to the fertility of reclaimed waste lands... 'les landes'... and the importance of these for increased productivity in agriculture and dairy farming. The local people farmed the foreshore for sea-weed which made an excellent fertiliser for use in the fields, and when burned, its ash yielded kelp which supplied industry with the raw material for the production of iodine. There was also a healthy industry associated with the local sardine and tuna fisheries and factories in nearby Concarneau, where approximately 13,000 people were employed.

The widely held view of Brittany as a region of social and economic backwardness and of extreme poverty is probably linked to the many observations made by numerous researchers on Gauguin's own life style, and what has generally been accepted as his search in Brittany for 'the primitive'. His often quoted words from his own rather subjective and emotive writing have been taken to be applicable to life in Brittany in general. In a letter from Pont-Aven to his artist friend Emile Schuffenecker, Gauguin wrote:

'I love Brittany; I find there the savage, the primitive. When my clogs resound on the granite soil, I hear the muffled dull powerful tone which I seek in my painting.' (5)

A year later, in a letter to his wife Mette, Gauguin described his working environment:

'I am at the seaside in a fisherman's inn near a village of 150 inhabitants, living like a peasant and regarded as a savage. And I've been working day in, day out, in a pair of canvas trousers....I don't talk
to anyone and I haven't had any news from the children. I'm completely alone.' (6)

Some writers, in commenting on Brittany's distance from Paris, have implied that the province was so remote as to be virtually inaccessible. However, after 1880, railways and improved roads had established Brittany as an attractive locality for tourists as well as artists. In his book, 'The Narrative of a Walking Tour through Brittany' published as early as 1859, J.M. Jephson wrote:

'Brittany - in its easy accessibility, in the beauty of its natural scenery, in its historical and poetic associations, in the abundance of its Celtic and medieval remains, in its quaint traditional manners and picturesque costumes - possesses unrivalled attractions for the jaded Englishman...' (7)

The traditional dresses and the intricate lacework of the distinctive Breton headdresses known as 'coiffes', which were worn by the women, and the quaint customs of the indigenous population had a romantic appeal for the painters, and there was no shortage of Breton folk willing to sit for them as models. Henry Blackburn described some of the advantages for the artists who were in Pont Aven:

'Pont-Aven is a favourite spot for artists, and a terra incognita to the majority of travellers in Brittany. Here the art student, who has spent the winter in the Quartier Latin in Paris, comes when the leaves are green..... Pont-Aven has one advantage over other places in Brittany; its inhabitants in their picturesque costume (which remains unaltered) have learned that to sit as a model is a pleasant and lucrative profession, and they do this for a small fee without hesitation or "mauvaise honte." This is a point of great importance to the artist'. (8)

The practice of using the local inhabitants as models was so well established that it was common to find references to their availability in the tourist literature supplied by the town council. Artists in need of this service were advised to make enquiries at their own hotels. Henry Jones Thaddeus described in vivid terms how the artists gradually infiltrated Pont-Aven in the summer season, and revealed the extent to which their presence was apparent throughout the town:

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'Nobody came to Pont-Aven in those days excepting painters, and they regarded the place as their own private property. The village itself resembled a gigantic studio, with its picturesque streets full of painters at work, whilst the villagers, from long practice, were excellent models, and posed anywhere and everywhere.' (9)

At regular intervals throughout the religious calendar, the numerous pardons and fetes and the costumes worn at them, became integral features of the attraction of the area for painters and tourists alike. These traditional costumes were regarded by many visitors as being quaint and picturesque, as indeed they were. For the Bretons however, the costume was also an indicator of their social position, identifying the wearers place in the social hierarchy of a system which was still semi-feudal. For those familiar with the subtle variations, the differences in the costumes could identify the region, locality, class, wealth, and marital status of the wearer. Details such as these, and the significance of the costumes for the local people, were not always appreciated by the visitors from the urban environment who tended to superimpose their values and culture on those of the Brittany people.(10)

The majority of the visiting artists therefore rather naively believed that the Breton peasants continued to live a simple and even primitive existence in a society which detached them from the pressures of contemporary life as they understood it. In adopting this view however, they rather chose to disregard the profound changes which were then occurring in the way of life for the people who lived in Brittany, and they remained oblivious to the complex social structures which lay behind the outward and romantic appearance of the environment and its inhabitants. When the American painter Edward Simmons was active in Concarneau in the 1880's, his view expressed later in his memoirs, was that the superstitions, traditions, customs, dress, ideas, and rhythms of life which he encountered there, were
unchanged from the 13th. century. (11) In her description of Brittany as it was in the late 1880's, Jaworska was probably more accurate in her analysis when she wrote:

'no other part of France was so fitted to the needs of artists who yearned for romantic scenery and dreamed of a primitive life, in close touch with nature and the lives of the inhabitants.' (12)

Having taken the decision at some point in 1891 to go to Brittany, O'Conor would have found that his most convenient means of travelling westwards would have been by train. The Paris train arrived at Lorient station after an overnight journey, and there was then a connection to Quimperlé with an arrival there at 12.09 p.m. The final stage of the journey had to be completed by coach, with a departure later in the day from Quimperlé at 6.24 p.m. and this connection also carried despatches and parcels in the same vehicle as the passengers. (13) Champney described this 'coach' as a rough little letter-carrier's cart which conveyed him at creeping pace to Pont-Aven. (14) Arrival there was about 10.00 o'clock from Quimperlé, Baye, and Riec, the journey taking about one and a half hours as the road went up rugged hills and down steep slopes, for a distance of approximately fourteen kilometres. According to Champney once in Pont-Aven, the options for travelling outwards from the town into the surrounding area were either on horseback, by carriage, or on foot.

By no means could it be said that all of the artists who came and went to and from Pont-Aven were experimental or progressive. Most were in fact aligned with the academic tradition of French landscape painting which had been well established by the second half of the nineteenth century, and almost all of them projected their rather romantic view of Brittany life into their own paintings. Most of the visiting foreign artists, particularly the
Americans who were active in Pont-Aven, continued to work under the influence of Bastien-Lepage.

The Pont-Aven Environment

The most popular place for the artists to stay was at the Pension Gloanec right in the centre of the village adjacent to the old stone bridge across the river, and when O'Conor exhibited in the 1892 Salon des Indépendants exhibition, he gave the name of this pension as his Pont-Aven address. This well-known establishment had originally been a 'débit de boisson' or what we would know today as a wine and spirit shop. The property had been owned by Joseph Gloanec since 1842 and after his death it was taken over by his widow in 1855 and first listed as an 'auberge' in 1863. (15)

Photographs of the period show the exterior of the Gloanec house with groups of artists seated outside on the narrow pavement, and with at least one painting hanging above the door signifying that this was almost exclusively an artists' pension. (16) The building was relatively small, having only two rooms on the ground floor, the first one opening directly on to the square and serving as both kitchen and living room. The dining room to the rear, according to Sellin, was 'panelled from floor to rafters with sketches and studies'. (17)

When the few beds which were available there were taken up, Marie-Jeanne Gloanec the proprietor usually made arrangements for the artists to take rooms elsewhere in the village and to have their meals served in the
pension. Rooms or lodging without meals were charged for at the rate of only 20 francs a month, and for a further payment of 55 francs a month the artists could have full meals with wine included. These charges were minimal and it is both interesting and illuminating, for example, to compare this aggregate figure for full board and lodging of 75 francs a month, with the monthly allowance of 150 francs which Theo van Gogh had sent regularly to his brother Vincent in 1888, when Vincent was living and painting in Arles. (18) It also seems that some of Marie-Jeanne's clients received even more favourable treatment than this. Emile Jourdan in reference to rates charged at the pension, praised Marie Jeanne as 'that excellent lady' who rented him a studio bedroom for only 15 francs a month, and then charged him 55 francs for full board.(19)

Henry Blackburn described the pension Gloanec as:

' the true Bohemian home at Pont-Aven, where living is even more moderate than at the inns. Here the panels of the rooms are also decorated with works of art, and here, in the evening, and in the morning, seated round a table in the road, dressed in the easy bourgeois fashion of the country, may be seen artists.... whose works are known all over the world'.(20)

In general the standard of accommodation was quite adequate for the needs of the artists, and those who took their meals at the pension Gloanec were very well looked after. Its popularity was also due in no small measure to the sympathetic and accommodating nature of its proprietor, Marie-Jeanne. When the young Swiss artist Cuno Amiet wrote to his father to tell him of life in the village, he gave this vivid description of his circumstances:

'Ma chambre est somptueuse, vaste, avec un grand lit à baldaquin et de lourdes tentures, tout l'ameublement nécessaire, deux larges fenêtres et un balcon. J'habite dans la plus belle maison de Pont-Aven, tout près de l'église, en plein cœur de village. Le prix? 20 francs par mois. Mes repas, je les prends là où vont tous les artistes, à la Pension Gloanec, pour 55 francs par mois. Tous les jours des sardines, d'autres poissons et toutes les viandes possibles et imaginables... C'est merveilleux. (21)

Almost as popular as the Pension Gloanec was the much larger establishment known as the Hôtel des Voyageurs, also situated in the town's central square,
which was run by an equally well known and compassionate owner in the person of Mademoiselle Julia Guillou. Julia, as she became known, had a reputation as a shrewd judge of talent among the many then little known artists who stayed in her hotel, and she often gave them credit. (22) Their way of repaying this favour, if not always in monetary terms, was to paint a panel in her dining room and over the years it became something of a status symbol to have been so honoured as an artist. The hotel had been enlarged in 1881 and a large annex was added in 1900. O'Conor also stayed there on numerous occasions as is revealed from his personal correspondence and Salon exhibition addresses. (23)

Even in the sheltered and idyllic environment of Pont-Aven with its easy way of life, and in spite of the numerous distractions which surrounded them, the artists took their work seriously and ensured that they maintained an organised and structured working day for themselves. When in 1866 the American painter Earl Shinn wrote home from Pont-Aven to his sister in Philadelphia, he described a daily routine which began for him at 6.30 in the morning by which time he was up and about and on his way to the studio at the Lezaven farm where he began to paint at 7.30 a.m. (24) There a group of artists had arranged to have a young girl in peasant costume sitting for them in a rather contrived pose which had her placed beside an old spinning wheel, holding a distaff in her left hand and apparently in the act of setting the wheel in motion with her right hand. By noon the artists had returned from the studio to their respective pensions for lunch, and they resumed work again at 2.00. in the afternoon.

Shinn's description to his sister of their working session in the afternoon is particularly colourful, and worth quoting in full as it tends to reveal a
specific type of subject matter, and an attitude to painting which was favoured by the first generation of painters in Pont-Aven:

'at 2 we return to the atelier, where we always find our other model waiting for us. He is an old man with a head of black hair as long as thine, nearly, and three blue jackets at once, and white linen knee breeches 'gauged' half way down to the knee and having immensely wide pockets at the sides, and linen leggings buttoned at the ankles, and no stockings but the straw in the sabots; and sabots.' (25)

A similar disciplined pattern to the day's work in the studio emerges from Amiet's correspondence in his own description of his and O'Conor's work habits during the year 1892, when they were both in daily contact while based in Pont-Aven. (26) Mornings and afternoons were set aside for painting in their respective studios, and in the evenings the two men developed the habit of taking a walk in the countryside together, at which time they talked about their own work and about art in general. They also made visits to one another's studios to criticise each other's work and the painting done during the earlier part of the day.

In almost every respect it certainly seems that in comparison with Grez-sur-Loing, for example, life for the artists in Pont-Aven was altogether much more purposeful. Although the social contact between individuals was an important aspect of being there, there are fewer reports of any high-jinks or good natured horseplay, although it is known that in earlier years two rival groups of American artists, one from Concarneau and the other from Pont-Aven, had arranged for some diversion from the serious business of painting, and had staged a baseball game at Pont-Aven with a return played at Concarneau. Appropriately enough, each side won a game. (27)

As we have seen, there was a quite large artistic population in residence at Pont-Aven and it was a characteristic of that population that its membership changed frequently for not all of the artists who made the journey to Pont-
Aven chose to stay there. Some moved further along the coastline to Concarneau, and some were merely 'en passage' seeking a change from life in the city but with no real inclination to stay put for any length of time.

The School of Pont-Aven

By the time O'Conor arrived in Pont-Aven in 1891, the artists who had gravitated towards Gauguin in 1886 and again in 1888 had identified themselves as a loosely formed group, distinct and separate, at least in their theoretical stance from the majority of painters then active in the region. The composition of this group changed frequently as individual artists made the journey to and from Paris in connection with exhibitions, or to other nearby towns and villages in the area where some of their friends were located. Jaworska has suggested that another reason for the frequent changes in membership was due to 'the master's (Gauguin's) whimsical and capricious temperament.' (28)

The original artists associated with this group, for whom Gauguin was the inspirational force, included Charles Laval, Emile Bernard, Emile Schuffenecker, Henri Moret and Ernest de Chamaillard. They were soon joined by Emile Jourdan, Meyer de Hann, Paul Sérusier, Charles Filiger, Władysław Slewinski, Maxime Maufra, and Armand Seguin. (29) As a group they had not published anything like a manifesto, but they had met under Gauguin's leadership and had been involved in heated debate and discussion of some of his more radical ideas. In their very different ways they had also attempted to take up some of Gauguin's theories in their own work, at
times taking direct instruction from Gauguin himself. Because of O'Connor's contact with these artists almost from the date of his arrival in Brittany, and because of their influence on his work and his own interaction with their membership, it will be necessary to outline the sequence of events which had led to the group's formation, and to describe the theoretical position which Gauguin had assumed.

The earliest beginnings of the style which eventually became identified with what came to be known as the School of Pont-Aven, may be traced to Cormon's private atelier in Paris, where the youthful Emile Bernard, Louis Anquetin and Toulouse-Lautrec had been students together in 1885-86. At that time they felt that the Impressionists' preoccupation in their work was merely with visual effects and little else, and in their own paintings they had therefore sought to find ways to extend what they considered to be the Impressionists more traditional and 'superficial' means of expression. From this contact between Bernard, Anquetin and Lautrec, it was Bernard, then only 19 years of age, who emerged as the best informed theorist, and it was perhaps somewhat fortuitous that shortly afterwards he decided to make a visit to Brittany. Through an introduction from a close friend of Gauguin's, Emile Schuffenecker whom he met in Concarneau, Bernard and Gauguin were to meet in Pont-Aven.

Gauguin had first gone to Pont-Aven early in the summer of 1886, at which time he was painting landscapes as well as the day to day events which he observed in the lifestyle of the Breton peasants, in an impressionist idiom which owed much to Pissarro's approach. His work from that period also reveals a tendency towards divisionism in his use of short brushstrokes, frequently with a left to right diagonal emphasis, although his
colour was then already more intense with greater contrasts in evidence than those which were to be found in the softer atmospheric effects achieved by Pissarro. Although these early Brittany pictures of Gauguin's are much closer to Impressionism in their technique, his letters prior to 1886 show that he was also searching for a new means of expression which would move away from the imitation of Nature, and which would give a more central role to the artist's imagination and to his ideas. In essence, Gauguin was looking for an alternative to the process of analysis on which Impressionism relied, and he was trying to come to terms with an alternative approach which would bring the synthesis of ideas, colours, forms, and imagination to the forefront of his own pictorial expression.

The critical year for the introduction of a new approach into Gauguin's painting has been shown to have been 1888, with the most important event being his meeting with Bernard for the second time in Pont-Aven. (33) This renewed contact helped Gauguin to resolve some of the questions to which he had been seeking answers, and thereafter his way of painting underwent a rapid transformation resulting in the emergence of a new style which became popularly known as 'cloisonnisme'. (34) The term is derived from a technique used in enamelling, where flat areas of pure colour (the fused enamels) are bounded and enriched by darker lines. In visual terms, particularly in Bernard's work, it led to a flattening of pictorial space and a greater simplification of the forms in his paintings, although Gauguin's cloisonnisme quickly gave way to synthèse and a greater introduction of the symbolic into his work. According to Jaworska, synthesis for Gauguin meant the interpretation of the object as an artistic whole, in such a way as to reflect the artist's psychic state. In Bernard's case, he wrote that his synthesis was achieved through a dual approach in which at times he worked...
from nature, but rigorously simplified it, while on other occasions he relied on memory and gave a greater role to the use of imagination. (35)

The important aspect about Pont-Aven, and one which is frequently overlooked, was well expressed by Sérusier, one of the main theorists in the group.

'The group was not a school consisting of a master surrounded by pupils. Its members were individuals who contributed their own ideas, and, in particular, their hostility to the official teaching, to the common stock.' (36)

For this reason, as Jaworska correctly points out, it is misleading to rely on mere stylistic comparisons between Gauguin's work and that of any other group member, in order to judge the extent of that individual's involvement. Nevertheless it was Gauguin's personality and ideas to which the group responded, even if they did not always completely understand him.

The genesis of the group's activities in Pont-Aven can reasonably be dated to the year 1886 and to that first meeting between Gauguin and Bernard, before Gauguin left Brittany and returned to Paris in October. Schuffenecker and Laval were in contact with Gauguin in Pont-Aven that summer (37), but as far as the group was concerned little happened until 1888 when Gauguin returned to Brittany once again, after his visit to Panama with Laval which had taken him out of France from April of 1887 until November of the same year.

In the summer of 1888, Bernard again met up with Gauguin and Laval, and it was Bernard's tendency to reduce the three dimensional forms of nature into flat shapes in his pictures (38) which revealed to Gauguin a possible way to proceed in his own work. Bernard brought together his knowledge of Gothic stained glass, medieval textiles, cloisonné enamelling and Japanese prints,
as points of departure in the development of his new style. For example
Bernard's painting 'Breton Women in Green Meadow', emphasises the shapes of
the figures as flat areas within the painting, and stresses their flatness by
surrounding the figures with a black line setting them against a green
background (the meadow), having no sense of spatial recession. The only
depth reading which is possible in this painting is that due to the
reduction in the scale of the background figures. This picture incidentally
also so excited van Gogh when it was shown to him by Gauguin that he
commented on its style in a letter to his brother Theo, before painting a
gouache study of it for himself. (39)

Gauguin's response to Bernard's picture of the Breton women against the
green background, was to paint 'Vision after the Sermon' a picture also
sometimes known as 'Jacob wrestling with the Angel.' He composed his
enlarged figures on the diagonal in the lower half of the picture, reduced
the spatial reading and set them against an unnatural red ground which
symbolised for him the context within which it might have been possible to
experience such a vision. Gauguin's own description of this painting as
'superstitious' may be puzzling at first, but this description has to be
understood in the context of his statement that he was trying in this work
to imply that the 'landscape and the wrestling only existed in the
imagination of the people praying as an after-effect of the sermon.' (40)

By the autumn Gauguin had imparted his new philosophy to Paul Sérusier and
is reported to have taken him to a well known Pont-Aven beauty spot beside
the river overlooking the town, known as le Bois d'Amour, and there
introduced Sérusier to his new ideas, particularly those to do with his use
of colour in non-naturalistic modes and at full intensity. Sérusier's near
abstract painting which resulted from this interaction, now known as the Talisman, was taken back to Paris by him, shown there to his artist friends Ibels, Ranson, and Maurice Denis at the Académie Julian, and is said to have been instrumental in helping to clarify for them another set of theories related to those of Gauguin, which quickly brought them together as the Nabis group. (41)

Gauguin therefore already had the beginnings of an audience in Pont-Aven in 1888, and if in any way he needed to have his theories reinforced, that was achieved later in the year through his contact with van Gogh who was then in Arles in the South of France, and whom Gauguin visited in October of 1888 for two months. (42) Years later in his book 'Avant et Après', Gauguin wrote: 'it was through him (van Gogh), that I strengthened and consolidated my previous ideas about picture making.' (43) The working relationship between Gauguin and van Gogh was at first friendly and interactive in a positive way, but eventually their respective personalities clashed, and the productive relationship which they had hoped to effect did not materialise. The earlier hopes which they had exchanged in letters prior to Gauguin's visit to Arles, in which they proposed a joint school of collaboration in Brittany, in the end came to nothing.

Following the breakdown of his dialogue with Vincent, which resulted in van Gogh's act of self mutilation in severing his own ear, Gauguin returned to Paris and within a few months he availed himself of the opportunity presented to him by Schuffenecker, to stage an exhibition of his most recent work and that of his carefully screened supporters, at the Café Volpini in Paris, between June and October in 1889. As previously discussed, (see Chapter III) this exhibition marked the first public appearance of the group,
and it introduced for the first time to a Parisian audience, the new work which Gauguin and his advocates had embarked upon in Pont-Aven. After the exhibition, Gauguin returned once again to Pont-Aven but soon found it to be too crowded and over populated with foreigners, causing him to move with his entourage further south to the quieter and more remote location of le Pouldu, a scattered community beside the estuary of the river Laita. According to Jaworska's account it was only at le Pouldu that the identity of the group was really established, and there in a small inn run by Marie Henry, Gauguin's theories were most heavily debated and finally accepted by those closest to him. (44)

It was at le Pouldu that the synthesis which he sought in his work really came into existence in paintings such as the 'Yellow Christ', (collection Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, New York), a painting which he may have begun in Pont-Aven for its subject is clearly derived from the seventeenth century figure of Christ crucified which still hangs in the nave of the chapel of Trémalo, just outside the town. Gauguin's related painting depicting the descent from the cross, known as the 'Green Christ,' or 'Breton Calvary,' (Collection Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels), and his self portrait 'Self portrait with halo' (collection National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.) are further examples of the newly achieved 'synthesis' in his work in that year.

In the autumn of 1889 those in Gauguin's company at le Pouldu included Jacob Meyer de Haan, Charles Filiger, and Paul Sérusier. During their stay there, the artists under Gauguin's direction proceeded to decorate the interior of the dining room at the inn with their paintings, many of which were done directly on door panels and on the walls. The membership soon expanded to
include de Chamaillard, Maxime Maufra, and Henry Moret. According to an account written by the Polish painter Tade Makowski, and quoted by Jaworska, there is a suggestion that O’Conor was also present in le Pouldu at that time, and that he was then actively involved with Gauguin and the other members of the group. Makowski’s reported version of the personnel involved is as follows:

‘Gauguin was surrounded by his colleagues; Filiger, Sérisier, Bernard, O’Connor the Englishman (sic), de Haan the Dutchman, Slewinski the Pole and others. They used to gather every day and they all thought along the same lines’. (45)

The accuracy of this account must be questioned however, as the information published by Makowski was given to him verbally by Slewinski in 1914 - a full twenty five years after the le Pouldu events had taken place. The evidence is that O’Connor was in Grez in 1889, (see Chapter III), and there has been nothing found to corroborate Makowski’s second hand account of his having been in le Pouldu at that time.

In February of 1890, Gauguin went back to Paris, presumably to try to raise some interest in his pictures among the dealers, before returning to le Pouldu in July where Paul Emile Colin aligned himself with the new tendencies, as did the Polish artist, Władysław Slewinski. There was further decoration of the interior of the inn, and as a result of the frequent discussions between the members of the group, with Gauguin taking the central role, his own decorative style was strengthened and his commitment to the symbolic content of his work became more intense.

The adoption of ‘synthetism’ by Gauguin which was at the heart of his new painting style after 1888, has been viewed primarily as a reaction to the analytical bias of Naturalism and Impressionism. Such a view, however, does not adequately recognise that 19th century critics were very much
aware of certain subjective qualities in impressionist painting, qualities which make for greater subtleties in the general debate on the nature of impressionist painting itself, and on the transition through the work of the Neo-impressionists to Gauguin's version of syntheticism. As early as 1874, for example, in the year of the first Impressionist group exhibition, the critic Jules Antoine Castagnary had already begun to identify and write about a subjective component in the work of Impressionists such as Pissarro, Monet, Sisley, Renoir, Degas and Morisot.

"...they are impressionists in the sense that they render not the landscape but the sensation produced by the landscape" (46)

Castagnary went further by suggesting that in their work the Impressionists moved from reality into what he defined as a world of full idealism. By this he meant a state of extreme subjectivity in which individual ideas, sensations and imaginations became paramount. In retrospect, these early observations of Castagnary's and his reference to the imaginative component in painting, seem to predict some of the later ideas which Gauguin was to introduce into his work between 1886 and 1888. Gauguin's concept of syntheticism and of symbolic content in his painting was also closely paralleled by the theoretical concerns of much symbolist literature and poetry. Rookmaaker has however been careful to point out that in any discussion of Symbolist art it should be realised that theory and practice were integrated from the outset, and that the theories were not invented later in order to justify the art. (47)

There was nevertheless considerable interest in the visual arts on the part of some of the literary critics, writers, and poets, for they considered that Gauguin was attempting to deal in visual terms with similar concepts and ideas to their own.

One of the earliest critics to comment publicly on some of the then new tendencies in the literary arts was Jean Moréas, who introduced the term...
'symboliste' in 1885 in order to classify the new school of literature,(48) and in the following year Moréas published a manifesto in which he set out the principles which defined the movement.(49) It was Moréas' view that art was limited in its ability to derive anything other than what he termed 'a simple and extremely succinct point of departure' from a purely objective approach. In this Moréas was quickly supported by another symbolist poet, Gustave Kahn, who wrote: 

"... 'the essential aim of our art is to objectify the subjective (the externalisation of the Idea) instead of subjectifying the objective (nature seen through the eyes of a temperament)'" (50) 

Kahn therefore sought to put the greater emphasis on the bringing into existence of those inner thoughts, feelings, and ideas, which taken collectively would express the work of art, rather than to depend on a personal interpretation, however unique, of a world which was already in existence. There were views presented as to how this transformation might best be achieved. For Dujardin the aim of painting and of literature was to give the sensation of things through means specific to painting and to literature, and he stressed that what ought to be expressed was the character (of the model) rather than the image alone.(51) 

This notion of 'sensation' found a parallel in Mallarmé's ideas when he wrote of 'suggestive meaning' by which he meant something implied or suggested rather than explicitly described. Monet had earlier insisted that the quality which he was seeking in his paintings was that of 'mystery' so that in his case his suggestiveness was based on sensation alone. 

Through synthesis, Gauguin and his closest followers therefore sought to go beyond the mere external appearance of things, relying increasingly on simplification and the elimination of detail in their attempt to reveal the object's essential character. Their earlier preoccupation with the recording
of an impression of the landscape in which objectivity became modified by their own subjective responses (nature seen through the eyes of a temperament), was replaced by their increasingly subjective view of an inner world of ideas, and their simplified style became a powerful synthesis of reality, experience, imagination, and the symbolic. (52)

It was Jaworska's view that those changes in painting which can be attributed to the activity of Gauguin and his supporters, were significantly enhanced by virtue of their having taken place in Brittany. (53) The landscape, its folklore, its architecture and the traditions of its inhabitants, according to her, had a profound effect on Gauguin and those artists who were associated with him. In the case of Filiger, Verkade, and Ballin, the influence was mystical. For Gauguin, Bernard and Sérusier it manifested itself in a passionate love for the primitive and archaic way of life and they found their inspiration in Breton Romanesque architecture, in primitive carvings in wood and stone, and in the landscape itself, for the landscape with its clearly defined fields, yellow gorse bushes, and red roofed cottages, seemed inherently to retain its own synthesis of form and colour. Gauguin's view was that the artist had the freedom to receive, select, and retain visual information from the external world, and that thereafter his mission was to sift and simplify from such experiences - to synthesise these experiences into a new order. It was also an important part of his philosophy that the artist should recognise that art was above all an abstraction, and that in the process of painting he should not hesitate to paint from memory.

The achievements of Gauguin and his entourage in Brittany, were first publicly acknowledged and disseminated to a wider audience by the
distinguished symbolist critic and writer Albert Aurier, in his article 'Le Symbolisme en Peinture - Paul Gauguin.' Aurier published this important piece of art criticism about one week after the much publicised sale of Gauguin's paintings which the artist himself had organised at Hotel Drouot in Paris, in February 1891. The article elevated Gauguin to the position of innovator of the new symbolist tendency in painting, without making any mention of Bernard's role:

'Paul Gauguin seems to me to be the initiator of a new art, not in the course of history, but at least in our time...'

It has been previously suggested (in Chapter III), that O'Conor probably went to Pont-Aven on the recommendation of his friends and because of his interest in, and awareness of Gauguin's art. Aurier's timely and scholarly analysis of Gauguin's oeuvre in his Mercure de France article, probably also had an influence on his decision. This article was so specific in its theoretical analysis and directly praiseworthy of Gauguin's painting, that it merits quoting more fully to aid our understanding of the theories associated with the School of Pont-Aven:

'The normal and final goal of painting, as of all arts, cannot be the direct presentation of objects. Its ultimate goal is to express Ideas by translating them into a special language....'

In this brief statement, Aurier appears to be echoing the views already expressed earlier by Moréas, Kahn, and Dujardin. He went on to clarify how this shift in emphasis would impact on the artist as he sought the means to express his inner world of ideas:

'The strict duty of the ideological painter is therefore to make a rational selection among the multiple objects combined in objectivity, to utilize in his work only the general and distinctive lines, forms, colours, which serve to put down clearly the ideological significance of the object, in addition to some partial symbols which corroborate the general symbol. The artist will always have the right - an obvious deduction - to exaggerate, to attenuate, to deform these directly significant characters (forms, lines, colours, etc.) not only according to his individual vision, not only according to the form of his personal subjectivity (such as happens even with realistic art), but also to
exaggerate, attenuate, and deform them according to the needs of the Idea to be expressed.

Thus, to sum up and conclude, the work of art as I have chosen to evoke it logically will be:

1. Ideological, because its sole ideal is the expression of the Idea;
2. Symbolistic, because it expresses this Idea through forms;
3. Synthetic, because it presents these forms, these signs, in such a way that they can be generally understood;
4. Subjective, because the object is considered not merely as an object, but as the sign of an idea perceived by the subject
5. (And therefore) decorative, since truly decorative painting as conceived by the Egyptians, and probably by the Greeks and the primitives, is nothing but a manifestation of art which is at the same time subjective, synthetic, symbolistic, and ideological.'

There are several concepts embedded in Aurier's theoretical analysis which would then have been radically new, certainly to those nineteenth century artists whose painting activity was geared to an interpretation of the visual world ...Nature as seen through the eyes of a temperament. There was initially the new notion of reference to the external visual world, not merely to represent it, but to use it as a source for subject matter which the artist would then adapt or change, in order to better express ideas. Aurier's statement, allied to Gauguin's activity, can be seen in retrospect to have made it acceptable for the artist to depart from an approach to pictorial expression which was based solely on the appearance of the visual world, and to propose as an alternative a move towards a world of the artist's own making. Aurier was also very much aware that this would need a measure of simplification and selection, with a conscious effort by the artist to come to terms with the essential nature of the object to be used to express the idea. The way was therefore increasingly opened up for a process of abstraction from reality into a pictorial form which would be of the artist's devising... where abstraction may be defined as the forming of a general concept from consideration of particular instances, or of
representing ideas, not just the forms of nature. Gauguin, in a letter to his friend Schuffenecker, expressed similar principles in very practical terms for Schuffenecker's guidance when he wrote:

'Don't paint too much from nature. Art is an abstraction, let yourself dream in front of nature to derive this abstraction, and then think of the creation which is to be the outcome.'(55)

We should also note in conclusion that in this statement Gauguin is shifting the emphasis to conceptual rather than perceptual processes, in his advice to Schuffenecker to make use of his imagination, (the dreaming) and to bring his intellect (the thinking) to bear on the process of transformation from nature (the creating) in the realisation of the idea. Much the same sentiments were echoed in 1892 by Georges Lecomte through his references to the significance of Thought (La Pensée), and the Dream (La Rêve) in his analysis of the changes in painting which had emanated from the work of the impressionists.(56)

Central to Aurier's theoretical position was his view that the primary concern of symbolist art should rest with the expression of the inner spirit of the artist - "the Idea" - and that this expression should properly arise from the realm of imagination and fantasy. Nature should merely be the inspiration for the idea to be expressed and the artist would have the means, through synthesis, of engaging the viewer in a shared experience in which the emotions and feelings of the artist would be capable of being transmitted back to the spectator. Aurier's concluding summary statement also asserts that in painting this would be realised through decorative means, for in his view the decorative was capable of embracing each one of the main principles which were at the core of his theoretical analysis.
In all of this it must be acknowledged that we have no written or recorded evidence of any type from which we might conclude that Roderic O'Conor was sympathetic to any of these theories at the time of his transfer to Pont-Aven. Neither is there any indication in the paintings which he completed in France between 1886 and 1890, that he was in the process of setting aside the impressionist and neo-impressionist influences which he had absorbed, in favour of a greater use of imagination and the symbolic. In these circumstances it is much more likely that the move to Pont-Aven, significant as it was to prove to be for the development of O'Conor's painting, was initially made out of a combination of curiosity and the desire to experience a new environment which must have appeared to have been more challenging than that of Grez-sur-Loing.
FOOTNOTES


2. Subject matter of this type, in many different styles, is commonly found in the paintings which the artists made in Brittany.


6. Quoted in Jaworska, (1972) op.cit., p.87


8. Blackburn, Henry, Breton Folk, London (1880), pp. 128-130


12. Jaworska, Wladyslawa, (1972) op.cit., p.87

13. LePaul, Charles Guy, 'Pont-Aven At The End Of The Nineteenth Century', in Sellin, op.cit., p.91, quoting from the minutes of the Pont-Aven Council of December 24, 1890


15. ibid. p.39


19. Jaworska, (1972) op.cit., p.208

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20. Blackburn, Henry, 'Pont-Aven and Douarnenez,' *The Magazine of Art*, 1879, p.6-9

21. Amiet, Cuno, letter dated 26 May 1892 sent from Pont-Aven to his father in Switzerland, private collection (A) Switzerland.

22. Sellin, (1982) op.cit., p.32

23. His exhibition entries in the Salon des Indépendants of 1903 and 1904, for example, were sent in from the Hotel des Voyageurs, Pont-Aven.


25. ibid.

26. Amiet, Cuno, letter dated 21 December 1892 sent from Pont-Aven to his sister in Switzerland, private collection (A) Switzerland.


29. For a complete analysis of the formation of the School of Pont-Aven see Jaworska, Wladyslawa, *Gauguin and the Pont-Aven School*, London, (1972), passim.

30. ibid. pp.13-14


32. See for example Gauguin's painting 'The Breton Shepherdess,' 1886, in the collection of the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne.

33. Rewald, (1978), op.cit., see pp.177-86 for a detailed account of this encounter.

34. The term was first used by Edouard Dujardin in his review of the Salon des Indépendants exhibition of 1888, in reference to paintings by Anquetin and Bernard. See Dujardin, Edouard, 'Le Cloisonnisme', *Revue Indépendante*, May 19, (1888)

35. Jaworska (1972) op.cit. at p.231 gives a more complete analysis of the differences in interpretation between Bernard and Gauguin.


37. Jaworska, (1972) op.cit., p.12

38. ibid. p.20

39. ibid. p.20

41. Rewald (1978) op.cit., pp.183-84 and pp.253-54

42. Pickvance, Ronald, van Gogh in Arles, exhibition catalogue, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (1984). See the detailed chronology of events in Arles, from the date of Gauguin's arrival there on Tuesday 23 October, until the date of his quarrel with van Gogh on 23 December, 1888, at pp.193-95

43. Jaworska, (1972) op.cit. quoted at p.62

44. ibid., see pp.87-95 for a full account of events at Marie Henry's inn at le Pouldu. This chapter in Jaworska's book is the source for much of the information included here on Gauguin's activities at le Pouldu.

45. ibid., p.91


49. Moréas, Jean, 'Le Symbolisme,' Figaro Litteraire, September 18 1886

50. Kahn, Gustave, 'Réponse des symbolistes,' L'évenément, 26 September 1886.

51. Dujardin, E. 'Le Cloisonnisme,' Revue Indépendant, May 19, 1888

52. For a full account of the theoretical foundation of Gauguin's syntheticism, see also Rookmaaker,H.R., Gauguin and 19th. Century Art Theory, Amsterdam, (1972), passim.

53. Jaworska (1972) op.cit., p.228


55. Malingue, M., (1946) op.cit. Letter LXVII, August 1888

As we have established the year 1891 as the year which marks the beginning of Roderic O'Conor's association with Brittany, it is important to the analysis of his early Brittany works to try to identify those artists then in the Pont-Aven district, with whom he may have come into contact. Gauguin of course was not in Brittany during the course of that year having left the region as early as November of 1890 to go back to Paris to make preparations for his planned journey to the South Seas. Within five weeks of the Drouot sale of his paintings which was held late in February of 1891 to raise funds for his lengthy sea voyage, he had actually left France for Tahiti. (1) There has always been some speculation that O'Conor and Gauguin may have met before this first visit of Gauguin's to Tahiti, but any meeting between them prior to 1891 is thought to have been most unlikely. Before leaving from Marseilles for Tahiti on 1 April, Gauguin was honoured at a banquet at the Café Voltaire in Paris which was presided over by Mallarmé and attended by some forty guests, but as the Irishman's name does not appear on the guest list, we may safely assume that he and Gauguin were not close at that stage. (2)

O'Conor may well have known some of the French painters from Paris who were then in Pont-Aven, but there is no evidence to show that he had previously met any of the artists who had been associated with Gauguin in the forming
of the new attitudes to painting at le Pouldu in 1889 and 1890. In all probability it would have been the Anglo-American group of artists in Pont-Aven with whom O’Conor would have come into contact in the first instance. We have previously suggested that his friends from Grez-sur-Loing, Brooks, Chadwick and Maynard, may have had some influence on O’Conor’s decision to go to Pont-Aven at the time that he did, (see Chapter III) and in speculating about whether or not O’Conor may have travelled to Pont-Aven with a colleague or friend, there may be some significance in the fact that in 1891 Guy Maynard is also known to have been in the Pont-Aven district. Maynard was in the company of his fellow American painter, John White Alexander, who was staying at le Pouldu with his wife, his child and the child’s nurse. (3) Even if the friendship between Maynard and O’Conor was then only in its infancy, it is probable that there would have been some contact between them which could have been either at le Pouldu, or in Pont-Aven. Pont-Aven was a small place, and the artist’s grapevine for news and gossip would have been so active that O’Conor is almost certain to have picked up information about Gauguin’s activities in the area, and about his former base in Marie Henry’s inn at le Pouldu. He may well have learned about the decorated dining room at the inn, where paintings and wall decorations by Gauguin, Meyer de Haan, Filiger, Sérusier and Bernard were in situ, from any one of the artists then in Pont-Aven, or even directly from Maynard himself who must have visited the inn when he was in le Pouldu with the Alexanders, after which he could quite easily have transmitted a description of the place on to O’Conor. (4)

There was also a small colony of English speaking artists in Pont-Aven in 1891 which included Eric Forbes-Robertson, who had been there since August of the previous year, and from brief inscriptions in his sketch book it is
evident that he had then come across both Maufra and Gauguin. Forbes-Robertson's name may also be linked to that of the French artist Armand Seguin, through an annotated sketch by Seguin of Forbes-Robertson himself, which is among those in the English artist's sketchbook. The inscription in question is dated quite specifically 'Pont-Aven, Avril, 1891' (5)

Armand Seguin emerges as a useful informant on some of the other contacts likely to have been made by O'Conor in Pont-Aven, as he mentioned O'Conor's name in a letter to Eric Forbes-Robertson, and made passing reference to yet another painter, James Henry Donaldson, then also in Pont-Aven, to whom he extended his good wishes. (6) In the same letter Seguin sent his salutations to one 'Beuren', possibly a mis-interpretation of the surname 'Bevan'. If this was in fact Robert Bevan, yet another English artist, he too was known to have been in Pont-Aven in 1890 and again in 1891. (7)

There is also the evidence that the American painter Alexander Harrison and O'Conor were known to one another as a result of their contact in Brittany. The evidence is in the form of a letter sent by Harrison to O'Conor from Paris, in which he thanked him for the safe receipt of a case which O'Conor must have sent to him from Pont-Aven. This letter is possibly from the year 1891, (8) as it also makes passing reference to 'Julia,' the proprietor of the Hotel des Voyageurs, and more significantly to 'Smith,' the same name which is included in the late 1891 letter from Armand Seguin to the English painter Eric Forbes-Robertson. (9) Incidentally, a further reference in this letter to (Gustave) Loiseau, confirms that he too was known to Forbes-Robertson, and probably therefore to O'Conor as well. Finally an interesting photograph taken outside the Hotel Julia and dated quite specifically 15 March 1891, confirms the presence of several other artists
who were also in the village. Included in this group are William Hunter, Gaston Linden the Belgian artist, and Sherwood Hunter, as well as Donaldson and Eric Forbes-Robertson who also appear in the picture. (10)

None of these English speaking artists however, with the possible exceptions of Eric Forbes-Robertson and Robert Bevan, appears to have been much influenced by any of the new theory which had been introduced into painting by Gauguin and his group. O'Connor may have picked up something from either of them in the first instance, although Boyle-Turner has suggested that Bevan's work from a year later may actually have come under O'Connor's influence. (11) It is more likely that O'Connor's primary source of information would have come from one or more of the artists who had worked directly with Gauguin. However the lack of firm evidence about which members of Gauguin's group were still in Pont-Aven in 1891, and precisely for how long, makes it almost impossible to determine which of them O'Connor might have met during his first few months there. This search is made even more difficult because of uncertainty about the precise date of O'Connor's arrival in Pont-Aven. It is however reasonable to assume that if and when he made contact with any one of Gauguin's group, from that person he would have obtained information about the group's activities in general. Who then might have introduced him to the new ideas about painting which had emerged at Pont-Aven and le Pouldu? Bernard, for example, was some distance away at St. Brieuc in the spring, staying there with his sister Madeleine, although Verkade and Ballin were in residence in the Pension Gloanec between April and June. (12) For part of June, Verkade and Ballin joined Sérusier at Huelgoat, and then at the end of June, Verkade moved to le Pouldu where he linked up with Filiger and Maufra, who had spent about six months in Pont-Aven, and all three stayed at Marie Henry's inn until October.
Sérusier was still in Huelgoat at the end of July, painting in the company of Ballin and the painter/ceramicist Georges-Joseph Rasetti. Emile Bernard was to remain in Brittany for an unspecified period during the summer and by the winter he had met up with Armand Seguin who by then was staying at the Hotel Julia. Further information about Seguin's sojourn in Pont-Aven is available to us from Verkade's account - he confirmed that Seguin was staying in Pont-Aven in May, at the Hotel Julia, just at the time Sérusier arrived from Paris.(13)

From these fragments of evidence, it is likely that the most significant individual contact for O'Conor would have been that which he made with Armand Seguin. Seguin appears to have been more settled that summer in Pont-Aven, in comparison with the frequent movements of for example, Sérusier, Bernard, Verkade and Ballin. Seguin, like O'Conor, had not been in Pont-Aven prior to 1891, and was therefore not then part of the group which had been close to Gauguin although he may have been in a position to act as a link for O'Conor to some of the other artists, particularly to the French painters, some of whom he probably knew from Paris. In view of the bond of friendship between Seguin and O'Conor, which was to grow and deepen from 1891 onwards,(14) it is a fair assumption to make that together they probably set about informing themselves of the events of the previous two years, and they may well have sought out the key personalities who were still in the district, in particular those who had been directly associated with Gauguin. Because of Bernard's confirmed contact in Pont-Aven with Seguin during the winter of 1891, he emerges as the one most likely to have informed Seguin, and thus O'Conor, about the activities of the group.
The first Brittany paintings

O'Conor was far from meticulous in maintaining records of his pictures, and because he did not always follow the normal practice of applying date and signature close to the time of execution of the work, there has always been a problem in identifying his earliest Brittany painting. Some writers have opted for the work known as 'La Jeune Bretonne' (REF.PTGS.NO.029) which is in the collection of the National Gallery of Ireland. (15) However the imprecisely inscribed date on this picture, which has been interpreted as being '90', (that is 1890), could just as easily be '93, '95, or even '98.(16)

The first official confirmation of O'Conor's painting activity in 1891 in Pont-Aven is that which is provided by the 1892 Salon des Indépendants Catalogue. The pictures which O'Conor exhibited there included several with Brittany titles, some of which must have been painted in 1891 to have been included in the Salon exhibition which opened in March. Unfortunately none of these pictures has been identified with certainty through any of the inscriptions on the reverse of the works which have been traced. The titles of these exhibited paintings do not even supply us with much information, apart from the fact that three of them were still-life pictures.(17) The remaining five were rather anonymously titled 'En Bretagne', but with such a loosely defined title they could have been of almost any Brittany subject from landscape or seascape, to portraits.

The earliest Brittany paintings of O'Conor's which have been traced, apart that is from the speculation on the date of two early portraits (see Chapter III), are almost all of vigorously painted landscapes.(18) They are characterised by their use of elongated brush strokes which conform to the
contours of the land and to the foliage of the trees which they describe, and their obvious relationship is to the paintings of Vincent van Gogh rather than to those of Gauguin.

Before discussion of these important paintings however, and in the search for the origin of O'Connor's characteristic striping in these works, and an analysis of the van Gogh influence, we shall first of all consider two still life pictures, one of which is clearly dated '92 (1892), 'Still Life with Bottles,' (REF.PTGS.NO.011), a work which he may well have painted shortly after arriving in Pont-Aven. (19) The other undated still life, known by its ascribed title, 'Flowers, Bottles, and Two Jugs' (REF.PTGS.NO.010) shares rather similar characteristics, but because it is rather more restrained in feeling it is thought to have been painted somewhat earlier.

The most noticeable characteristic of 'Flowers, Bottles, and Two Jugs' (REF.PTGS.NO.010) is the vertical emphasis which is given to the brush strokes describing the background, and the wine bottle which is placed just to the right of centre in the composition. Several of the paintings which were to be seen in the dining room at Marie Henry's inn at le Pouldu were painted in a style which used similar elongated parallel brush strokes, and like O'Connor's still life the emphasis in these works is also very much towards the vertical. Paintings in which this tendency was present included Meyer de Haan's portrait of the inn's proprietor known as 'Maternité: Marie Henry Allaitant sa Fille Lea,' as well as Gauguin's 'Vue de Pont-Aven, Prise de Lezaven,' painted in 1889. Filiger, who was at le Pouldu throughout 1891 and 1892, (although he and O'Connor were not to meet until 1893), also favoured a vertical emphasis in his paintings using long brush strokes which were of very closely related tones, and his paintings.
were also to be seen hanging in Marie Henry's inn. We must also
consider that there may well have been some influence from Emile Bernard in
O'Conor's approach to this still life painting, for Bernard also made
frequent use of similar brush strokes as a means to reduce or flatten the
sense of pictorial space in his work. O'Conor's painting, in which the
objects are placed on or against a background wall, is a very flat
composition which does not permit any significant reading in depth, and it
may be that in his use of the vertical stripes that O'Conor was directly
acknowledging Bernard's techniques.

While the emphasis in the brush strokes of 'Flowers, Bottles, and Two Jugs'
(REF.PTGS.N0.010) is very obviously towards the vertical, in 'Still Life with
Bottles,' (REF.PTGS.N0.011) the more energetic and shorter brush strokes have
been given a distinctive left to right diagonal emphasis. The division of
colour and the use of these marks may owe something to Pissarro's Neo-
Impressionist style which had been an influence on Gauguin's method of
painting in his earliest Brittany landscapes. Gauguin at that time applied
his colour in short brush strokes of closely related tones, leading the
painter Charles Delavallé to describe this work to Charles Chassé as being
'très zébrée'.

Both of O'Conor's still life pictures share a quite deliberate sense of
ordering and arranging which is consistent with the precise composing
generally found in the work of the Divisionists or Neo-Impressionists, and
the underlying compositional structure of these two pictures appears to
relate their method of organisation to the proportions of the Golden
Section. In 'Flowers, bottles and two jugs,' (REF.PTGS.N0.010) there is
even some measure of contrivance in the arrangement, particularly in the
placing of the two jugs which are hanging from nails on the wall, and it is their apparent instability which helps to enliven and animate an otherwise static composition.

The distribution of light is also interesting in both of these still-life pictures, in its left to right transition from light to dark to light again. This way of controlling light, as we shall see in the discussion of later paintings, is a frequently adopted O'Conor method of introducing interest and a sense of drama into his compositions, particularly in those works where objects were being painted in the studio, as in still-lifes, or where portraits or figures were the subject matter.

Although Gauguin was using a similar but more refined and subtle brush technique in his 1886 Brittany pictures, this was a style of painting which he eventually rejected. He and Bernard had derided the work of the Divisionists and the pointillistes when they had been together in Pont-Aven in 1888, and Gauguin had painted a pointillist landscape which he signed 'Eripipoint', in a tongue in cheek reference to a tendency in painting of which he became critical, and to a fictitious character invented by Bernard and himself for their own amusement, on whom they could exercise their derision. It is unlikely in these circumstances that this technique of painting would have been passed directly on to O'Conor from any of Gauguin's circle even though Bernard, Schuffenecker, and Filiger had all flirted with the style.(24) What is more likely is that the divisionism of the neo-impressionists had already been adopted by O'Conor in his work during the course of his last year at Grez-sur-Loing.
There remains the possibility that the painting, 'Still Life With Bottles,' (REF.PTGS.NO.011) may not have been one of the three still life pictures which were shown in the Salon des Indépendants in 1892, and if we therefore accept the accuracy of its inscribed date specifically to '92 (1892) - and there is no reason to doubt it - then the most likely inspiration in that year for such a painting would have been straight from the works of Seurat and the other Neo-Impressionists. The 1892 Salon included a special tribute section to Seurat who had died in 1891, and included in the main exhibition were important divisionist works by van Rysselberghe, Signac and Cross. O'Conor in all probability saw this exhibition, as we know that he was then in Paris, presumably for the Salon which opened on 18 March and closed to the public on 27 April. A few days after the Salon des Indépendants closed, he was recorded as having arrived in Pont-Aven on May 1, the official record showing that he had travelled to Brittany from Paris.(25)

In contrast with Seurat's much more deliberate method of painting, the divided brushwork of 'Still life with bottles,' (REF.PTGS.No.011) is just as direct in its approach as are the landscapes which O'Conor had painted at Grez in the two years immediately preceding his transfer to Brittany. O'Conor's version of the Neo-impressionist style appears to be more directly related to Signac's early divisionist works, particularly in those passages where there is a certain looseness and much flecking of the paint in a series of quick marks on the canvas.

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O’Conor’s tendency to separate the brush strokes in his paintings and to allow them to become the dominant stylistic feature in these two still-life pictures was a new development in his work, which in retrospect seems to have had an important influence on his approach to painting the Brittany landscape. It would appear that the shorter brush marks of a work such as ‘Still life with Bottles’ (REF.PTGS.NO.011) were soon to be replaced by longer and more expressive brush strokes in his attempt to adequately describe the foliage of trees, and the undulations of pasture lands and cultivated fields. A further source which may well have played a part in the development of these long parallel brush strokes or stripes of colour in O’Conor’s work, may have been that of the Brittany landscape itself. The cultivated fields with their narrow drills of reddish brown earth and the green foliage of their planted crops and vegetables, are a further possible source of the contrasting red and green stripes of colour which began to appear in his paintings. If O’Conor’s way of painting the landscape was in part to evolve quite naturally from his own painterly concerns as his distinctive style developed, it is in his 1892 landscape works in particular that we can also sense the beginnings of a direct influence from the paintings of van Gogh, which in O’Conor’s case is really quite remarkable given the early date by which he had begun to adopt such a similar style.

We have already speculated in chapter III on the possible date of a reported visit to Van Gogh’s studio made by O’Conor and Alden Brooks in the winter of 1887-88, at which time O’Conor could have become familiar with van Gogh’s early Paris pictures. There were also several public exhibitions of van Gogh’s work in Paris between 1887 and 1890, as well as works to be seen at
Theo van Gogh's home and at Tanguy's, which had become a meeting place for artists and critics. (26) In addition to these exhibitions, Albert Aurier's pioneering article on van Gogh which was published in January 1890, and a report by Octave Mirbeau which appeared in l'Echo de Paris at the time of the commemorative showing of his work in the 1891 Salon des Indépendants, would have further reinforced O'Conor's appreciation of van Gogh's achievements. (27)

Van Gogh exhibited in the Salon des Indépendants for the first time in 1888 and although O'Conor was not an exhibitor he was represented in the Paris Salon that year, and we can be fairly certain that he would have visited the Indépendants to see their exhibition. Van Gogh's three paintings which were shown in 1888, 'Romans Parisiens', 'La Butte Montmartre', and 'Derrière le Moulin de la Galette' (28) had no influence on O'Conor's style at that time and were probably too far back in his memory to have had any direct influence on his paintings of the Brittany landscape, although the three van Gogh pictures were early examples of his use of short parallel brush strokes within a much lighter colour and value range than that associated with his earlier Parisian pictures. In 'Romans Parisiens' for example, the colour scheme is a subtle combination of yellows and ochres, against which there is some green and blue-green hatching with the brush which follows the directional plane of the table surface on which several books are lying. The walls beyond the table surface are hatched with short vertical brush strokes in soft yellows, reds and greens. In 'La Butte Montmartre' greater use is made of short, energetic directional brush strokes, frequently of darker contrasting values to the underlying pale yellow and light coloured ground. There are also numerous hatched brush strokes throughout the picture which describe different types of vegetation, and vertical brush strokes describing...
boundary fences. The style in 'Derrière le Moulin de la Galette', the third work exhibited, is much closer to impressionism but in the foreground there is the introduction of complementary contrast between the colours of red and green, and blue and orange, through the use of various combinations of short brush strokes. O'Conor's Brittany landscapes often make use of the same contrast between red and green with these two colours set down side by side in parallel stripes.

In the 1889 Salon des Indépendants, van Gogh was represented by two paintings which he had sent from Saint-Rémy to his brother Theo in Paris. O'Conor must surely have seen these paintings of van Gogh's as he showed three pictures which were sent from Grez-sur-Loing where he was then in residence at the Hotel Laurent. Van Gogh's painting 'Irises' is not overtly characterised by the use of his typical short brush strokes, except for the area in the immediate foreground to the lower left of the composition, where the warm yellows, oranges, tans, and ochres describe the parched earth below the sword like leaves of the flowers. These warm earth colours and the orange heads of the marigolds beyond the irises are in vivid and near complementary colour contrast with the blues and greens of the flowers. O'Conor's paintings were described in this exhibition as 'flamboyants paysages' so we can be reasonably certain that van Gogh's use of rich colour contrasts in his picture would have been of particular interest to him.

Van Gogh's second exhibit that year, 'Nuit étoilée' was altogether much more dramatic as a painting, its dark blues, violets and burnt siennas in contrast with the warm yellow halos surrounding the stars and the orange crescent moon. Vincent's short directional brush strokes in this painting are used in
sweeping and rhythmic surges across the canvas. The hatched brush marks combine to define spiral-like forms and are also used in circular rhythms around the yellow stars and the orange crescent moon in the dark blue and blue violet sky. In the night landscape beneath, directional brush marks follow the contours of the line of low hills in the background, and are used to describe the softly rounded forms of trees. Linear hatching defines the buildings and houses. The foreground cypress tree is expressed with near vertical and rhythmic brush strokes in a most dramatic painting full of energy and expressive power. While O'Conor's landscapes never aspired to this pitch of intensity and frenetic energy, several of the landscapes which are discussed in more detail later in this chapter do make use of very similar brush strokes and marks.

Apart from the annual Indépendants exhibition, Van Gogh's pictures also continued to be available at Tanguy's during the course of the year 1889, and some of the work to be seen there was favourably commented on by Albert Aurier in Le Moderniste - 'here are canvasses tremendous in fire, intensity, sunshine.' (31)

In the 1890 Salon des Indépendants, O'Conor and van Gogh were each represented by ten works and those exhibited by van Gogh with titles from Provence, Saint-Rémy and Arles, were exceptional paintings which attracted many favourable comments, especially from the other artists. In mid March his brother Theo sent to Vincent his congratulations on behalf of many people who had seen his paintings and added that Gauguin had commented that his canvasses were the chief attraction of the exhibition that year.
Gauguin himself wrote to van Gogh:

'I want to pay you my sincere compliments. To many artists you are the most remarkable one in the whole exhibition... among those who work from nature you are the only one who thinks.'(32)

Van Gogh's 1890 exhibits were all painted in the mature style for which he is best known and they were characterised by a full and expressive use of his familiar and distinctive short rhythmic brush strokes. Their subject matter lent itself to the development of a bright and luminous colour scheme throughout most of the exhibits with many works introducing rich yellows and golds expressive of southern light and sunshine. The works also embraced a range of technical approaches from the heavy impasto of 'Le Cyprès' to the use of brush strokes over a washed ground as in 'Lever de soleil en Provence'.

A close examination of O'Conor's picture, 'Field of Corn, Pont-Aven' (Ref.PTGS. NO: 015) reveals a similar approach. His method in this painting was to lightly sketch in the composition and his subject matter, and then to proceed to a very direct form of painting and drawing with the brush, using longer rhythmic strokes and frequently leaving some areas of bare canvas to show through. An approach even closer to Van Gogh's use of the stain with superimposed directional brush marks is in evidence in his rather later and un-finished painting of a Breton peasant in a field. (REF.PTGS.NO: 061)

Van Gogh's 1890 exhibit 'Le Cyprès', identified by Pickvance as being the Metropolitan Museum of Art's picture known as 'Cypresses',(33) is a heavily impastoed painting full of rhythmic emphasis and energetic brush work, which must also have made a major impression on O'Conor. This painting is relatively flat in spatial terms because of the use of the base line from which there is no obvious compositional lead in to the immediate foreground.
area of writhing vegetation, which is painted in a range of yellows and yellow-greens. The sense of vertical movement is continued upwards through the active brush work in the dominant foreground cypress tree. Although compositionally very different, O'Conor's much smaller painting, 'Field of Corn, Pont-Aven 1892', is also relatively flat with the base line disturbed only by a heavily textured foreground area to the lower left which is described with flecks of red, green, and blue paint against the yellow cornfield. O'Conor's remarkably versatile technique is very assured here, and the directional brush strokes which describe distant hills, trees and vegetation are directly borrowed from van Gogh's approach.

Van Gogh also exhibited in 1890 a number of paintings of trees among which the painting now known as 'The Road Menders', exhibited as 'Rue à Saint-Rémy' is a particularly striking example. Predominantly painted in yellows and yellow ochres, this picture is dominated by four massive plane trees with dark outlines whose huge trunks are vigorously painted with upward moving brush strokes. Beneath the trees there is a sense of immediacy and directness in the painting which is compatible with a work executed on the spot. Heavily painted passages have been directly drawn into with the brush and further mauve and pale green brush strokes have been superimposed on piles of rocks and sand beneath the trees. There was also on exhibit a painting of olive trees and although this painting has not been specifically identified, almost all of van Gogh's paintings of olive trees and olive groves made extensive use of short jabbing marks and deliberately defined brush strokes. In this exhibition alone, O'Conor would therefore have had available to him several forceful and dramatic examples of van Gogh's most recent paintings although the evidence from those works of O'Conor's which were exhibited in the same exhibition and which have been tentatively
identified, (see Chapter III) does not indicate that any direct van Gogh influence was present in his work at that time.

In a closer consideration of O'Conor's Brittany landscapes and in an attempt to trace the gradual appearance of the van Gogh influence, 'Pâturages Bretons' (REF.PTGS.NO.013) is thought to be early in the series because of its rather restrained qualities and its more controlled and subdued use of longer brush strokes. The range of colour which has been used to describe the foreground field in this landscape is also echoed in some of the colouration to be found in the still life, 'Flowers, Bottles, and Two Jugs,' (REF.PTGS.NO.010) specifically in the painting of the background. A further reason for proposing this as one of the early Brittany landscapes is based on an analysis of qualities in the painting technique which may be described as 'tentative', particularly in the brush work of the foreground hedge and the trees beyond. Such qualities are of course relative, and only make sense when they are compared with those landscapes thought to be later, which are unquestionably more expressive and revealing of an artist in command of his medium, and in full and vigorous creative flow.

'Raging Torrent,' (REF.PTGS.NO.014) is probably a painting which was made from the banks of the Aven river, a short distance up-stream from the village where the river bed is particularly rocky. Judging from the absence of foliage on the bushes this painting is likely to have been made late in the autumn, probably in the year 1891. Its energetic and relatively short brush strokes relate it to the two still life pictures previously discussed, particularly to the lively painting 'Still Life with Bottles,' (REF.PTGS.NO.011) and in its introduction of red/green contrasts it seems to predict the vigour of the more heavily striped landscapes to follow.
Although there are noticeable differences in stylistic terms between the painting of the stream in flood and the small landscape with the ascribed title, 'Field of Corn, Pont Aven' (REF.PTGS.NO.015) there are also similarities in some of the details in both works, particularly in a comparison of the colour range and way of painting the furthermost river bank, and the way of painting the trees in the small landscape. The painting of the landscape, in comparison with that of the stream, uses an even looser brush technique and it appears to have been executed quickly suggesting that it may well have been a study for a larger painting. In this case some of its features - the red/green striping in the left foreground which suggests a cast shadow, for example - appear to have been taken up with greater resolution in the larger landscape 'Yellow Landscape, Pont-Aven' (REF.PTGS.NO.017)

'La Ferme' (REF.PTGS.NO.016) which is almost certainly a view over some Pont-Aven buildings from the high ground above the river, where there are similar outcrops of rock, may be considered as a painting which significantly advances the pictorial use of O'Conor's elongated brush strokes, seeming to pick up on the vigour and energy of 'Raging torrent' (REF.PTGS.NO.014), but without a full and free translation into the expressive power of a painting such as 'Yellow Landscape, Pont-Aven'. (REF.PTGS.NO.017) In 'La Ferme', (REF.PTGS.NO.016) O'Conor has given a greater definition to the main areas within the painting, and we see for the first time the suggestion of a boundary line particularly to the edge of the trees. The overall sense of space in this landscape is comparatively shallow, but the predominantly diagonal direction of the brush strokes which run from right to left in the foreground, another favourite pictorial device of O'Conor's, tend to have a contradictory effect to any deliberate flattening of the space in the painting. The tendency of these lines is to open up the sense of recession
from foreground to background so that in compositional terms, the eye is led into the picture, towards the cluster of buildings in the distance. Van Gogh's painting, 'Lever de Soleil en Provence' which he exhibited in the 1890 Salon des Indépendants has similar characteristics to 'La Ferme' (REF.PIGS. NO.016) in its use of a comparatively high horizon line and a right to left diagonal emphasis to the brushstrokes in the immediate foreground area.

There is also some evidence of O'Conor's influence on other artists who were active in Pont-Aven and with whom he came in contact soon after his move to Brittany. There was for example a friendship with the Swiss artist Cuno Amiet which probably began shortly after Amiet's arrival in Pont-Aven in May of 1892.(35) In the latter half of that year Amiet recorded that he was spending increasing amounts of time in the company of O'Conor and it is evident from his letters that he was clearly impressed by the quality of the Irishman's paintings. Both men were taking evening walks together, and talking about art after having visited each other's studio to discuss and criticize the paintings on which they had been working during the day.(36) Amiet was eight years younger than O'Conor and it is evident from the tone of his letters that he was impressed by the Irishman's personality, his knowledge, and his status as a painter which Amiet noted had begun to be established in Paris largely as a result of his exhibits at the previous year's Salon des Indépendants (1892).

In these circumstances it comes as no surprise to see in Amiet's work, the evidence of a direct influence from O'Conor's style. Amiet's 'Champs en Bretagne 1892' is pure O'Conor in its use of a high horizon line and its elongated brush strokes which describe a landscape rather devoid of individual distinguishing features.(37) So too is his 'Vue sur Pont-Aven,
1893' in its use of vigorously painted directional brushstrokes which conform to the undulations of the foreground fields and distant hills, and which are also used to describe the village houses.(38) The work of the English painter and printmaker Robert Bevan also suggests that he too may have been influenced by O'Conor's use of rhythmic lines in his prints, drawings, and paintings. Bevan's lithographic prints of the Brittany landscape are drawn with the same type of undulating and contour-like lines which we associate with this period in O'Conor's career.(39)

'Yellow Landscape, Pont-Aven,' (REF.PTGS.NO.017), arguably O'Conor's best Brittany landscape, bears a title which was only given to this picture in 1956 although there is little doubt that the buildings in the background are those of the village of Pont-Aven, with the church spire just recognisable to the left.(40) The predominant use of yellow throughout this painting makes an immediate association with the work of van Gogh, in particular with the Arles and Saint-Rémy pictures, some additional examples of which were exhibited in Paris in April 1892 in the exhibition organised by Emile Bernard at le Barc de Boutteville's Gallery. As O'Conor was then in Paris for the Salon des Indépendants, we may be fairly certain that he would have seen this exhibition before he left for Pont-Aven, (41) and this group of paintings, perhaps more than any other, may have been the major influence on his decision to adopt a similar style. It is also the case that any decision to follow van Gogh's example would in many ways have been an easier decision to take after van Gogh's death in 1890, rather than during his lifetime when he was actively exhibiting.

Although the stylistic parallels with van Gogh's work are self-evident, O'Conor's brush strokes in this picture tend to have more elongation than
those of van Gogh - he seldom set them down in short parallel emphasis but preferred to use them with a free flowing contour-like directional emphasis to describe the flow and the undulations of the terrain, and the rhythms to be found in trees and foliage. O'Conor's method of describing the trees in this painting is directly influenced by van Gogh's way of painting cypresses specifically through the use of upward moving brush strokes to define the dominant tree in the middle ground in which he combines ochre, green, blue and red stripes in rhythmic and near vertical emphasis. Further, the undulations of O'Conor's background hills are very similar in their striping to van Gogh's way of painting similar landscape details in 'Nuit étoilée'. In terms of painting technique there is, if anything, even more daring and versatility in O'Conor's approach. In an O'Conor painting such as 'Yellow Landscape, Pont-Aven' (REF.PTG.S.NO.017), there is an extremely rich variety of textural effects, some of which have been achieved using a heavy impasto applied either with brush or palette knife. In the left foreground, the red and green stripes laid over blue and red even appear to have been squeezed straight from the paint tube.

Similar qualities have been carried over to the impressive painting with the ascribed title 'The Glade' (REF.PTG.S.NO.018) but there are also significant new characteristics present in this painting which should be noted. There is for example, the choice of a much more intimate landscape context and with that an overall reduction in the number of pictorial elements - tree trunks, cast shadows and patches of sunlight have become the main features in the composition. The vaguely defined trees in the background play only a minor supporting role to the overall theme of the painting which is taken up in a more decorative style than that of any of the landscapes already discussed. Van Gogh's 1890 Salon painting 'Sous bois', in its depiction of
ivy covered ground and the lower trunks of trees, may possibly have served as the inspiration for this picture of O'Conor's.

Perhaps more than other landscape, with the possible exception of 'Landscape - Brittany' (REF.PTGS.NO.022) O'Conor's painting also seems to embody in a uniquely personal way, many of the characteristics which were shared by the Pont-Aven group of artists directly influenced by Gauguin. For example, the underlying structure of the work has been emphasised by the use of a strong light to dark contrast which has been made between the sunlit patches on the ground, the cast shadows of the trees, and the curving rhythms which they make at their borders. Throughout the painting there is a strong feeling for the decorative which has been achieved through an emphasis of these rhythms enhanced by O'Conor's familiar linear striping, which in its red/green contrast is very much in evidence here. The treatment of pictorial space in this work also echoes the preferences of the School of Pont-Aven artists for a shallow spatial reading. O'Conor has used the same dark green for the cast shadow in the foreground as he has used for the most distant trees and shadows, and this is also the case with some of the underlying reds and blues. In this way he departs from the normal conventions of aerial perspective by not reducing the tonal values to give the illusion of space and depth. Indeed this work might well be presented as an acceptable resolution of Gauguin's instructions which were reported to have been given to Serusier as he painted, it was said, in le Bois d'Amour at Pont-Aven.

"Comment voyez-vous cet arbre," avait dit Gauguin devant un coin du Bois d'Amour: "il est vert? Mettez donc du vert, le plus beau vert de votre palette; - et cette ombre, plutôt bleu? Ne craignez pas de la peindre aussi bleu que possible." (42)

The conscious development of the decorative boundary which is given to the shapes in this painting, and the use of an overlay of curving and rhythmic
lines in this work, relate it very directly to O'Conor's stylistic approach in a series of etchings which he made at le Pouldu in the company of Armand Seguin in 1893. These etchings, which are discussed fully in Chapter VI, consist in the main of landscape images in which rhythmic lines give a rather stylised treatment to features of the landscape, similar to that which is achieved in paint in this work.

Not all of O'Conor's work at this point in his career was in response to his observations of the Brittany landscape for, as his drawings more frequently reveal, he often made sketches of the Breton people. Curiously enough none of these drawings appear to have been made in preparation for any particular painting and although some of the characteristics of one of his most impressive pictures 'Breton Peasant Woman Knitting' (REF.PTGS.NO.019) may be found in drawings such as 'Breton girl knitting' (REF.DRGS.NO.013) and 'Girl, view from back', (REF.DRGS.NO.015), this work too appears to have been painted with the same sense of directness which is to be found in his landscapes.

'Breton Peasant Woman Knitting' (REF.PTGS.NO.019) is a remarkable tour de force by any standards, and a painting to which O'Conor has brought a completely free and uninhibited use of his striping technique, successfully unifying the figure and its background. The work encapsulates a strong sense of movement, up and down through the figure from the head to the hands, and back to the head again, offering a complete synthesis between colour, expression, and content which goes far beyond the mere appearance of the subject, and which manages to express with great surety and conviction the very activity in which the sitter is engaged. Although the stripes are pure O'Conor, one wonders to what extent this work may have been inspired by
Pissarro's painting 'Young Girl Sewing' of 1885, or perhaps even by Van Gogh's painting entitled 'La Moussée' of 1888. In the case of Pissarro's painting, the visual similarities are to be found not just in the pose, but also in the use of stripes of colour in the blouse which the sitter is wearing, and in the striping of the tablecloth directly behind her. In the case of the Van Gogh painting, the striping of the figure's blouse is remarkably similar to O'Conor's treatment of the peasant's dress in this painting.

'Breton peasant woman knitting', (REF.PTGS.NO.019) which is dated '93 (1893) was probably painted in the first half of that year before O'Conor made his etchings at le Pouldu in Seguin's company. One of these etched prints (REF.PRTS.No.034) is specifically inscribed 'Le Pouldu aout '93', and there is further confirmation that O'Conor was still in the same district over the course of the next 4-8 weeks for he registered as a foreigner at the Town Hall on 2 October. (43) This evidence is invaluable in the attempt to be specific about O'Conor's movements during the rest of that year, for with the death of his father in Dublin on 14 October 1893 it was imperative that he should return to Ireland. As his father's sole surviving son, O'Conor became the chief beneficiary under the terms of his will, and he inherited the Milton property and lands and began to benefit from the income from rents paid by tenant farmers in Roscommon.

It is evident from a series of letters which carry closely related dates from the month of November 1893, that his late father's land agent Godfrey Clarke was then in regular correspondence with Roderic O'Conor, who remained in Dublin after his father's funeral, presumably staying at 37 Pembroke Road with his sister Elizabeth. (44) In these letters, Clarke...
outlined some of the procedures he had been following for O'Conor's father and he commented on some of the problems associated with the collection of rents in Roscommon. One such letter dated 15 November 1893 made reference to a particularly difficult tenant Matthew Flanagan, of whom he wrote:

...'when he (Flanagan) goes up to Dublin you ought (sic) to try and settle and get as much money as possible from him....' and in a later letter dated 29 November in reference to Clydagh tenants he commented...'they wanted to know when you would come down....' Then on 30 November Clarke wrote....'if you find it convenient to come to see them (the tenants) in spring I will be very pleased to show you over the estate.'

Roderic O'Conor remained in Dublin until the end of the year as one of the joint executors of his father's will, which was admitted to probate in Dublin on December 7.(45) In January of 1894, Clarke was still under the impression that O'Conor would visit the Roscommon estate in the spring (46) however it is clear that a spring visit to Roscommon was not being considered by O'Conor who by early February had already left Dublin to return to France. Mail addressed to him in Dublin was then being redirected from 37 Pembroke Road to the Arundel Hotel in the Strand in London, where he must have spent some time on his way back to Paris. Shortly after that date letters were sent to a legal firm in Paris which he was then using as a forwarding address.(47) It is probable that he also spent some time in Paris in the month of February for early in March O'Conor exhibited at le Barc de Boutteville's gallery 'in the 6e Exposition des Peintres Impressionnistes et Symbolistes, showing six works.(48) By 25 April he was back in Pont-Aven where he registered as a foreigner at the town hall.(49)
The return visit to Ireland may have interrupted the flow of O'Conor's work as only one painting which is secure in its dating to 1894 and which has similar characteristics to the landscapes of 1892-93, has been traced. 'Landscape - Brittany' (REF.PTGS.NO.022) is the painting in question and in this work the striping of colour has been radically developed. Two other paintings, the work known by its ascribed title 'Breton Peasant Girl' (REF.PTGS.NO.020) and 'Nature morte aux pommes' (REF.PTGS.NO.021) together with 'Landscape - Brittany' (REF.PTGS.NO.022) constitute a small group of paintings in which the use of the long stripes of colour has been taken to extremes. In each of these works the paint has been used even more thickly than in any of the landscape paintings already referred to, with the possible exception of 'The Glade' (REF.PTGS.NO.018), and the stripes themselves have become even more decorative. The pose of 'Breton Peasant Girl' is similar to that found in several O'Conor drawings (50) where a seated figure has been given a rhythmic and decorative profile.

Although the subject matter of 'Nature morte aux pommes' (REF.PTGS.NO.021) shares some similarities with a work painted by van Gogh in 1887, entitled 'Still-Life, Apples' (51) O'Conor's development of the stripes of colour in this work as a major pictorial device, is altogether more adventurous. As was the case with 'Breton peasant Woman Knitting' (REF.PTGS.NO.019) a close association is made in this painting between the stripes of colour which describe the objects and those which describe the background. The landscape painting entitled 'Landscape - Brittany' (REF.PTGS.NO.022), which has been signed and dated 1894 by O'Conor on the stretcher, then advances this formal concern still further, hinting at a complete union between figure and ground, which, if followed to its logical conclusion might well have led O'Conor into the realms of pure abstraction. The secure dating of this work.
to the year 1894, through the notation on the stretcher bar, places this painting to the year immediately following his work with Armand Seguin on the series of linear etchings which have already been referred to, and which are discussed in detail in Chapter VI. It seems very likely that his approach to the etchings, in which he used a drawing technique based on an accumulation of rhythmic lines, was instrumental in his arriving at this well nigh completely linear interpretation in paint. Although referring to nature, the painting was probably completed in the studio, and thus cannot in any sense be said to be a direct representation of nature as O'Connor would have observed it. In stylistic terms the picture shares many of 'The Glade's' characteristics, and in some of its details, for example in the manner of painting the tree trunks, it is almost identical. This wholly synthetist painting of O'Connor's confirms the extent to which he had become influenced by the theories which had originated with the Pont-Aven group, this particular work fitting very comfortably alongside a statement which Charles Morice attributed to Gauguin:

'Mieux de peindre de mémoire, ainsi votre œuvre sera votre; votre sensation, votre intelligence et votre âme survivront alors à l'œil de l'amateur.... Cherchez l'harmonie.' (52)

In an earlier letter to Emile Schuffenecker, Gauguin's advice was to work from the landscape and from things observed, but only as a means towards the achieving of a synthesis between images, ideas, thoughts and feelings.

'Un conseil, ne peignez pas trop d'après nature. L'art est une abstraction, tirez-la de nature en rêvant devant et pensez plus à la création qui résultera.' (53)

Although such an approach may not seem in the least unusual to us now, at the time Gauguin set these principles down they would have been thought to have been quite radical and probably gave rise to much confusion. Maurice Denis in later years described Gauguin's methods as essentially intuitive and wrote that he was not a particularly good teacher,(54) and even Serusier
revealed that he personally had experienced some problems in trying to follow Gauguin's recommendations with respect to the relationship between observation and imagination:

"Ce qui m'a surtout embarrasse, le voilà: quelle part la nature doit-elle avoir dans l'œuvre? Où s'arrêter? Enfin, au point de vue matériel de l'exécution, faut-il travailler d'après nature, ou seulement regarder de se souvenir?" (55)

Although the van Gogh influence in O'Conor's 1892-1894 pictures is perhaps the dominant influence, these paintings also indicate that O'Conor had adopted some of Gauguin's ideas and incorporated them into his own way of painting. However in analysing these early Brittany paintings of O'Conor's, it is important to realise that any influence from Gauguin's often ill understood synthetist theories would have been based on second hand information, gleaned from artists who had been close to him in the preceding two years. According to Jaworska, it was de Haan, Chamaillard, and Moret who communicated the new ideas to O'Conor in the first instance. (56) None of these painters, it must be said, was particularly well known as a theorist. However Jaworska also informs us that in Brittany O'Conor was 'permanently in touch' with Sérusier, who was very much a theorist, although no references are given to support this statement. We may also assume that the friendship with Filiger in 1893 and that with Slewinski was important to the development of his painting style at that time. Jaworska also points out that O'Conor's determination to follow his own instincts as his work progressed tended to set his paintings rather apart from those of Gauguin's group, lending to them an aspect which was specifically expressionistic in feeling. In following his own path he was well enough informed of the most advanced painting of the period to adjust his earlier Impressionist style to the divisionism of the Neo-Impressionists, and to link his expressionist tendencies to the work of van Gogh in the
development of his own distinctive striped pictures. This being said, there
still remains enough by way of stylistic influence in O'Conor's early
Brittany paintings to link these works to Gauguin's synthetist theories,
although as Jaworska correctly points out the underlying tendency which is
omnipresent in these works is primarily expressionistic. That O'Conor was
both impressed and influenced by Van Gogh's work is not in doubt as this
analysis of his 1892-1894 paintings has shown. Written confirmation of
his appreciation for van Gogh did not come until later years, when, in his
correspondence with Clive Bell he made reference to a van Gogh exhibition
which he had just seen, describing his pictures as 'Wonderful examples of
expression of character pushed to the point of hallucination.'(57)
1. Rewald, John, (1978) op.cit., p.454

2. For a list of guests attending, together with an abbreviated version of the speeches and toasts, see *Mercure de France*, May 1891, pp.318-20.


4. O'Connor had until November 1893 to become fully acquainted with the site at le Pouldu and the paintings in Marie Henry's inn. After that date anything that could be removed was removed by Marie Henry herself, when she retired from business to live at Pors-Moelan in Moelan-sur-Mer. See *Le Chemin de Gauguin - génése et rayonnement* exhibition catalogue, Musée Départemental du Prieuré, (1985) p.127

5. Sutton, Denys, (1964) op.cit., illustrated at p.404

6. Letter from Seguin to Forbes-Robertson dated 26 December, from his Paris address at 54 rue Lepic, written after a period of time spent in the Pont-Aven area. See Sutton, Denys, *Apollo* (1964) op.cit., pp.405 - 06, where the letter is published. It was in this letter that Seguin also referred to a visit made by O'Connor to England in the course of the year 1891. See also this work, Chapter III

7. Boyle-Turner, Caroline, (1986) op.cit. See the chapter on Bevan at p.129


9. Sutton, op. cit. The 'Smith' referred to is assumed to be Stuart Smith who has been identified in a photograph taken in Pont-Aven circa 1891, *Mémoire de Pont-Aven* (1986) op.cit., p.60-61

10. A copy of the picture was published by Denys Sutton in *Apollo* (1964) op.cit.,see p.403


14. O'Connor in a letter to Maurice Denis, presumably written shortly after Seguin's death in 1903, revealed that his friendship with Seguin had begun in 1891. Denis Archives, Musée Départementale du Prieuré, St.Germain-en-Laye, France

15. Campbell, J. op.cit., and Benington J. op.cit., have both speculated that this work is O'Connor's earliest Brittany picture.
16. Giving rise to doubts about the '90 interpretation of this date, is the supporting evidence from another O'Conor painting in a similar vein, which appears to be of the same girl. This second painting is in a private collection in France and is quite clearly dated '1895'. (REF.PTGS.NO.030). 'La Jeune Bretonne' is in fact more consistent with O'Conor's 1895 style. Finally there is no evidence of O'Conor's having been in Brittany in 1890, as all of the information available suggests that he spent that year at Grez.

17. Among the eight exhibited works were five pictures each one of which was titled simply, 'En Bretagne', the five works being differentiated from one another by the numbers 1-5. There were three 'Nature Morte' pictures also identified only by the numbers 1-3.

18. See for example 'Yellow landscape, Pont-Aven', (REF.PTGS.NO.017); Field of corn, Pont-Aven (REF.PTGS.NO.015)

19. This picture is possibly one of the 'nature mortes' which O'Conor exhibited in the 1892 Salon des Indépendants, as there is a partial inscription on the back which includes the numerical reference 'no.2' suggesting that it is the painting in the catalogue which was simply titled 'Nature Morte 2'.

20. For a complete description of the dining room interior at Marie Henry's inn and of the paintings which were installed there, see Le Chemin de Gauguin. (1986) op.cit., pp.110-27

21. See for example Bernard's painting 'Les Bretonnes dans la Prairie', 1888

22. Quoted by Denys Sutton at page 6 in the introduction to the exhibition catalogue, Gauguin and Pont-Aven, Tate Gallery, (1966) (Arts Council of Great Britain)

23. The Golden Section is a harmonious division of a given line in such a way that the proportion of the shorter length to the longer length is the same as the proportion of the longer length to the whole.


25. O'Conor is officially recorded as having arrived in Pont-Aven on 1 May 1892, having travelled from Paris. Archives Départementales du Finistère, Quimper, Gendarmerie Nationale - avis d'arrivée et des départs des étrangers.

26. de la Faille, J.-B. The Works of Vincent van Gogh: His Paintings and Drawings. Amsterdam (1970) p.14 de la Faille's list of Paris exhibitions includes: Restaurant la Fourche; Cabaret du Tambourin (La Segatorl); Salon des Indépendants, 1888,1889, and 1890; Martin; Thomas; Tanguy; Théâtre Libre.


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28. Salon des Indépendants exhibition catalogue, (1888) Vincent van Gogh, catalogue nos. 658 'Romans Parisiens'; 659 'La Butte Montmartre; and 660 'Derrière le Moulin de la Galette'


31. Aurier, Albert. 'En Quête de choses d'art,' Le Moderniste, 13 April 1889, p.14 (Published under the pseudonym of Lucilelaneur)


34. idem. See catalogue entry no.44 (de la Faille 657)

35. In a letter to his father dated 27 April 1892, presumably written from Paris, Amiet indicated his intention to go to Pont-Aven and he confirmed his arrival there in a further letter to his father sent from Pont-Aven on 26 May 1892, in which he described his new surroundings. Private collection (A) Switzerland.


38. Idem., catalogue No.4, Ill. p.27


40. O'Conor did exhibit a similarly titled painting in the Salon des Indépendants of 1893 (Catalogue No.957), and he may have shown an identical work in the sixth exhibition of Impressionist and Symbolist painters at le Barc de Boutteville's Gallery in March 1894, (Catalogue No.38), but in spite of the similar subject matter, and due to the absence of any inscriptions on the reverse put there by O'Conor himself, we cannot be certain that this work was the painting in question.

41. See footnote 25

42. Denis, M. Théories 1890-1910, Paris (1912), p.160. The outcome of Gauguin's instructions to Serusier resulted in his painting known as 'The Talisman,' a painting which so impressed Serusier's friends in Paris that it...
played a significant role in bringing them together in search of a new painterly language which they found as a related group, assuming the title of Les Nabis.


44. Godfrey Clarke to Roderic O'Conor, in letters of November 1,3,8,11,13,15,18,28, and of 29,30 November 1893. Private collection (L) France.

45. Last will and testament of O'Conor, Roderic, or Roderic Joseph. See the Calendar of all Grants of probate and letters of administration made in the Principal Registry of the High Court of Justice, Ireland. Wills and Administrations. 7 December 1893, Public Record Office, Dublin.


47. Letters in a private collection (L) in France.


49. O'Conor's Registre d'Immatriculation, op.cit.

50. See for example 'Breton woman' (REF.DRGS.NO.012; 'Jeune Bretonne' (REF.DRGS.NO.016); and 'Breton girl, seated' (REF.DRGS.NO.025); in which the figures depicted have been drawn in profile view and a decorative and rhythmic emphasis has been given to the contour of the figure in each case.


52. Morice, C. Gauguin Paris (1919) p.23

53. Malinque, Maurice, Lettres de Gauguin à sa femme et à ses amis, Paris (1946) see LXVII

54. Denis, M. (1912) op.cit., p.162

55. Serusier, Paul, (1950) op.cit., p.39

56. Jaworska, Wladyslawa, (1972) op.cit., p.220

57. Roderic O'Conor to Clive Bell in a letter sent from Paris and dated 18 February 1908. ROC/CB No.6, 18 February 1908. Archives of the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin. There were two exhibitions of van Gogh's paintings shown in Paris in January of that year. Bernheim Jeune showed approximately 100 works, and Druet in a smaller exhibition showed 35 paintings.
CHAPTER VI

THE PRINTS OF RODERIC O'CONOR

Le Pouldu, and the collaboration with Armand Seguin (1893)

Those prints of O'Conor's which have been signed and dated in the plate, with one exception, (1) give 1893 as the year of their production, although it is clear from certain stylistic changes which will be discussed later that some of the undated prints were made in subsequent years. Only one of the 1893 prints, (REF.PRTS.NO.034), has a more precise dating - in this case to "août '93," which, together with information about O'Conor's movements presented later in this chapter, rather indicates that the prints were made specifically in the summer of 1893. Sutton was the first writer to speculate that O'Conor, in all probability, learned the technique of etching from his close friend Armand Seguin, (2) and there is indeed ample evidence in O'Conor's prints to indicate that he began with little or no previous experience in this medium.

An analysis of O'Conor's preferred subjects reveals that some of them were based on the landscape in and around the Laita river estuary at Le Pouldu, while others were drawn from the pathways along the cliff tops to the west of the port. In general he preferred the landscape close to the shoreline, and small cottages nestling in clumps of trees appear frequently in his work. There are also a few prints of Breton peasants and several portraits. Among the forty two prints which have now been traced, (3) thirty-eight were produced by the etching process, one work is a lithograph, one is a
monoprint, and two images were reproduced in the review L'Ymagier(4). Their most obvious feature is that they progress from relatively simple images and a fairly rudimentary form of linear expression, through various stages of technical refinement consistent with the acquisition of a new skill.

It is clear from the class lists at the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts in Antwerp, that O'Conor did not take any formal courses in printmaking while he was a student there. (5). He must, however, have been aware of at least some of the prints made by his Professor of painting, Karel Verlat. Verlat was also an accomplished etcher and he had taken an active interest in the renaissance of both engraving and etching at the Académie.(6) It was Sutton's view that Seguin transmitted both the technique, and the way of drawing contour like lines to O'Conor.(7) Field, on the other hand, gave O'Conor the credit for influencing Seguin's style.(8) In making comparisons between their prints, it is now clear that once O'Conor had learned the process and had then gradually come to terms with the technique, it was his method of drawing which began to influence Seguin's approach.

Abel-Félix-Armand Seguin was born in Paris in 1869, and he died from ill health in Paul Sérusier's house in Châteauneuf-du-Paou on 30 December 1903.(9) According to Malingue, Seguin had studied at the École des Arts Decoratifs,(10) and Jaworska has suggested that he also attended the Académie Julian in Paris.(11) Although he produced many more prints than any of the other Pont-Aven artists, Seguin really considered himself to be a painter, in spite of the fact that he achieved little success in this medium at any stage during his lifetime.(12)
He and O'Conor first met in 1891, although it is not known with certainty whether or not that initial meeting took place in Paris or in Brittany. What is sure is that Seguin was in Pont-Aven in the Spring of 1891, a fact confirmed by the date on a portrait of the English artist, Eric Forbes-Robertson, drawn by Seguin in April of that year. As it has already been established that O'Conor was active in and around Pont-Aven in 1891, it is probable that their first meeting took place in Brittany. There is ample evidence of the closeness of the friendship which developed between the two men, and it is probably significant that, for O'Conor, his association with Brittany ended very soon after Seguin's death. Seguin was described by Jaworska as being shy, gentle, and discreet. He was also said to have been frail, tuberculous, and poor. According to Field, Seguin's progress was 'marked by indecision, experimentation, regression, and lack of insight.' Given what we now know of O'Conor's personality, a personality described in later years by Clive Bell as being 'formidable', their friendship might be thought to have been unlikely to have lasted for as long as twelve years. There was too a significant difference between them as far as their respective ages were concerned, for Seguin who was only twenty-two when they met was nine years younger than O'Conor. Seguin was then already an accomplished etcher but he was much less knowledgeable and not as experienced as the more mature Irishman. It is probable that in Seguin O'Conor found a friend on whom he could exercise his considerable knowledge, critical appraisal, and aesthetic judgements, and that in O'Conor, Seguin found a strength of character, allied to the type of positive lead and encouragement which he most needed. It seems that those qualities of O'Conor's, on which Cuno Amiet commented favourably in correspondence with his sister, were the same qualities which sustained the relationship between Seguin and O'Conor.
Although O'Conor's first prints were not made until 1893,(20) he must have become familiar with the etchings which Seguin was then producing, very soon after their first meeting in 1891. O'Conor owned at least two of his prints from that year, on which Seguin had written personal dedications to his Irish friend.(21) These two prints represent different approaches to subject matter, which in Seguin's case can be attributed to environmental differences existing between cosmopolitan Paris and rural Brittany. It is fairly evident from the modish appearance and the fashionable dress of the two figures in Seguin's print 'Seated Couple', that this image was based on a Parisian scene, probably set in a cafe, and as such it shows a tendency towards the more decorative style associated with the intimate interiors of the Paris based Nabis artists. 'The Wanderer', on the other hand, while being executed within the conventions of similar imagery already well established in Paris, also expresses something of what Field referred to as 'the nature based but synthetic art of Pont-Aven which sounded the deep ties between the peasant and his environment'.(22)

Seguin's work in the two years prior to the summer of 1893, during that period when the friendship with O'Conor would have been consolidated, gradually moved away from Nabis related themes and imagery towards a greater preoccupation with the landscape.(23) Such a development obviously owed something to his change of environment as he began to spend more time in Brittany than in Paris. Seguin also gradually modified his concern for the technical complexities of the etching process about which he had been so enthusiastic in the Winter of 1891 when he was working in Paris,(24) to a more traditional approach which depended to a greater extent on linear, rather than tonal differentiation, for the masses and forms within his prints.(25) Jaworska made the interesting comparison between Seguin's use
of lines in his prints, and the general process of painting when she wrote of his work: 'he uses them (lines) like colour, so that his engravings have a gently modulated character which brings them close to painting'. (26) The elongated brushstrokes and linear elements which were already present in O'Conor's more bold and expressive paintings such as 'Yellow Landscape, Pont-Aven', (REF.PTGS.N0.017), or in 'Field of Corn, Pont-Aven', (REF.PTGS.N0.015), must have been a major influence on Seguin's choice of both subject matter and style at this time.

As well as being fully aware of both the general and the specific issues which were embedded in Seguin's work in the two years prior to the Summer of 1893, O'Conor, because of his wide knowledge and active interest in the work of the old masters as well as more contemporary figures, would almost certainly have known the prints of artists as diverse as Rembrandt, Jacque, Daubigny, and Pissarro. O'Conor could also have seen the albums of zincographs made by Gauguin and Emile Bernard which were available 'sur demande' at the 1889 exhibition which Gauguin and his friend Claude-Emile Schuffenecker had organised at the Cafe Volpini in Paris. (27)

In French art there had been a general revival of interest in the various printmaking techniques, which may be said to have begun in 1850 with Charles Meryon's first mature etching, 'Le Petit Pont,' the earliest in his series of 'Eaux-fortes sur Paris'. (28) Alongside the increased interest in printmaking, there had been a growth in the number of workshops, clubs, societies and publishing enterprises in Paris. One such group, La Société de l'Estampe Originale, had already introduced in 1888 the first in a series of albums of prints, consisting of the work of its members. There were also numerous books available to give guidance to the inexperienced, such as
Maxine Lalanne's 1866 publication, 'Traité de la Gravure à l'Eau Forte'.

In seeking further possible reasons for O'Conor's interest in etching in 1893, it now seems very plausible that he may have been motivated by the appearance on March 30 of the first of a series of nine albums of original prints, published quarterly by Andre Marty for l'Estampe Originale. Among the prints which appeared in the first edition were works by Maurice Denis, Felix Vallotton, Vuillard, Bonnard, and Roussel. Little of this activity would have escaped O'Conor's notice for he was a compulsive reader, a very capable scholar, and well known for his gallery visiting. However in spite of all the interest on the part of the public and the individual artists, there is no firm evidence to show that O'Conor made any prints prior to the Summer of 1893.

From the young Swiss artist, Cuno Amiet, we learn that O'Conor went from Pont-Aven to le Pouldu early in the Spring of 1893. In a letter to his father he wrote: 'Also O'Conor took a break. He went off for a couple of days to Le Pouldu where there are always some painters.' Although we know from the inscriptions on O'Conor's prints that most of them were made in that year, the implication in Amiet's letter is that O'Conor was at that time making only a brief visit to Le Pouldu. If the visit was purely for social reasons, he would in all probability have seen Filiger, who was then in residence at the small inn run by Marie Henry, which had been the meeting place and residence of Gauguin's group between 1889 and 1890. Whether or not Seguin was then in Le Pouldu is not clear, although it is known that he too was a frequent visitor to the inn. Accommodation there was limited, due to the fact there there were only three bedrooms, and it is probable that O'Conor stayed elsewhere, possibly with Seguin who may already have been in residence in the house known as St. Julien, which was
situated close to the river estuary and the port. This house, at some distance from the inn, was spacious enough to permit the setting up of a print workshop or studio, and therefore the most likely place for the prints to have been made. Many of Seguin's 1893 landscape etchings bear the inscription, 'le Pouldu', but the addition of the specific dating on many of them to 'juillet' rather suggests that few, if any of the prints, were actually made before the summer. It may well be that the spring visit to le Pouldu was to help prepare for the work which was to follow in the summer months.

The Le Pouldu location may have been chosen for several reasons, the most likely being that it afforded more peace and privacy than did Pont-Aven where it could become excessively crowded in the summer. Some reasonable studio space to support the activity might have been difficult, though not impossible to find in Pont-Aven, and St. Julien being both spacious and quiet was an ideal base. The Le Pouldu community was small and isolated, and the environment was quite different to that to be found at Pont-Aven. The coastline was much more open and exposed, and was subject to the off-shore elements. There were rolling dunes and stretches of sandy beach with outcrops of rock visible at low tide, and set back from the shore at some distance from the cliffs, were numerous small cottages surrounded by clumps of trees which afforded some shelter from the winter storms. Along the coastline the trees were bent and weathered by the prevailing winds. Many of O'Connor's prints reflect this type of environment, although, as is the case with his paintings from this period figures appear only rarely as subject matter, that is apart from their use in portraiture.
Le Pouldu may also have been chosen by O'Conor and Seguin that summer for purely emotional or nostalgic reasons. Although there is no evidence of their direct involvement with Gauguin when he had been in Brittany in the years prior to 1891, le Pouldu and Marie Henry's inn had special significance as the focus of activity for Gauguin and his closest followers between 1889 and 1890. It was during that period, according to Jaworska, that the themes and the theories of what later came to be known as the School of Pont-Aven, or the Pont-Aven style, were finally resolved under Gauguin's leadership. (36)

A close examination of O'Conor's means of establishing the image on the plate shows that he usually began with a boundary line to delineate the forms in his compositions. The use of this limiting line should, however, not be confused with either Gauguin's or Bernard's use of a boundary line in their paintings from 1886. In O'Conor's case the line was lightly incised only to define the main compositional elements, and once these had been set down the main method of building up tonal areas was to use the etching tool with vigorous and rhythmic movements across the surface of the plate. (37)

The weight of these incised lines remains relatively uniform because usually the plates were submitted only once to the acid bath. The visual effect of such a method was towards a reduction in the spatial reading, the prints having close similarities to the way in which pictorial space was used in his paintings.

A further distinguishing feature of O'Conor's prints is his use of 'retroussage', which is a wiping technique usually done with a soft muslin rag. The muslin draws the ink out of the lines spreading it along their edges, and deposits a thin film of ink on the plate surface which then prints as an area of tone. Differences in tone depend on the amount of
pressure and the variety of texture in the muslin, so that it is possible
within any one print to combine wiping with cleaned off areas and to relate
these to the etched lines. (38). O'Conor probably developed this method of
adding tone as a result of his own experiments and working processes, but he
may also have learned some of this from Seguin who in turn may have been
influenced by similar techniques in Eugène Delâtre's work.(39) The other
traditional methods of introducing tone into the etching process, for example
using aquatint, or by direct application of acid to the plate, were not used
to any significant extent.(40)

Almost all of the images show traces of foul biting in the original plates,
which may be attributed to a lack of thoroughness in the preparation, or to
excessive handling while they were being carried back and forth between the
various sites. The variation in the line quality and the rather imprecise
definition about some of the etched lines is typical of zinc plate etching,
which, as a metal, is not capable of producing the same fine and precise
qualities which are characteristic of the copper plate (41). Because the
prints exist in many cases in as few as two or three proof examples it is
likely that O'Conor used his prepared plates rather like leaves from a
sketch book, taking a few proofs only from each plate. For this reason, and
given the variations of the retroussage technique, the prints are not all of
uniform quality and they display those individual differences which are more
commonly associated with the making of monoprints. Different grades and
qualities of paper were used to pull the prints, ranging from medium to
heavy-weight cream wove paper, and from thin to medium-weight cream laid
Arches paper. No prints with edition numbers have been traced, nor have
any prints been found which have written notes in the paper margins, which
would suggest that it was not his intention to further develop any of the images, prior to running an edition.(42)

As the majority of O'Conor's prints were made in a relatively short period of time, and only have a generalised date to the year, the drawing up of a chronological order presents particular difficulties. An attempt has however been made based on the principle that he was new to the medium, and that his level of skill gradually improved as he became more familiar with the process. That is to say that the prints have been considered as evidence of his learning process, and they have therefore been placed in a theoretical order which demonstrates how he progressed from simple linear images to those of greater refinement and complexity. There are limitations with this type of ordering however, founded as it is on the premise that artists are logical and consistent in the development of their work. It does not, for example, take note of the fact that an artist may choose to abandon an image which is not to his satisfaction, or for some other reason, at any time in the process of its development. In O'Conor's case this tendency to abandon a work in progress was a characteristic of his working method, not just in reference to his prints, but is also seen in the number of unfinished paintings which were in his studio.(43)

The Prints

'Paysage à la chaumière Bretonne', (REF.PRTS.No.001) is a typical O'Conor subject, that of a small cottage nestling among a clump of trees. In this print few changes are made between the various elements in the composition and there is little use of any light to dark contrast in the tonal range.
There is also some hesitancy and a certain clumsiness or awkwardness about some of the etched lines, with most of the landscape forms having been built up with short and rather jerky lines of similar weight. The quality of these lines indicates that the etching tool was not being used with any great degree of fluency, suggesting a very early print before the potential of the medium was fully appreciated.

'Buste de Bretonne,' (REF.PRTS.NO.002) is a difficult print to place with exactitude in the chronological order, because it is one of only five portraits which O'Connor is thought to have made. It has rather forced and unyielding linear qualities which relate it to the previous print, although it displays both early and late characteristics in some of its drawn lines. The image is largely a linear one, although the combination of a variety of overlapping lines in the hairline which appears just below the coiffe, and those in the coiffe itself, indicates that there was some knowledge of a means of introducing tonality into the print through the use of line alone. The degree of uncertainty which is present in some of the drawn lines, may be due as much to the choice of subject matter as it is due to O'Connor's relative inexperience in the technique.

'Landscape with river', (REF.PRTS.No.003) is possibly a view over the Laita river, from high ground looking towards the sea. The landscape forms have been defined through largely linear means, and the tonal differentiation which is present in this print has also been achieved through the use of a type of linear scribbling, where many lines have been overlapped to give contrasts between light and dark areas. This method of adding tone should be seen in contrast with later prints where there is much more distinction and differentiation between the forms than is the case here.(44) Another
characteristic of this print is its comparative lack of flow or rhythm in
the drawing, for example in comparison with an image such as 'Le Bois
d'Amour', REF.PRTS.No.011) thought to have been made later in the series.

'Landscapen', (REF.PRTS.NO.004) is one of the more linear prints which O'Conor
made, its rather tentative approach and its uniformly weighted lines
suggesting that it was an early work. Some of the lines and the described
forms are rather confusing, and there does not appear to be a understanding
of how to select and simplify in order to bring out the essential features
of the subject matter. There is also some trace in this work of the use of
a brush to add ink to the plate surface in the foreground area around the
tree to the right of the composition.

'Dune et maison au Pouldu', (REF.PRTS.NO.005) although being a linear image,
has more sensitivity for the medium in comparison with the previous print,
'Landscapen', (REF.PRTS.NO.004) with which it shares certain characteristics.
Both images depend almost entirely on pure line to define their subjects, but
in this print the main compositional lines have been drawn with much more
rhythm and flow. The composition, being set against the diagonal, is also
more adventurous and the shorter marks which have been introduced into the
plate help to provide an appropriate visual contrast to the longer flowing
lines of the dune crests.

'Untitled', (REF.PRTS.NO.006) uses a largely linear build up to define the
forms of the landscape and trees, but this print also shows a greater
awareness of how to develop contrasts and differences for compositional
effect, through the skillfull use of light and shade. The foreground, for
example, has been left relatively free of any incised lines so that it reads
as a light area against the more heavily etched lines of the middle ground. A dark emphasis, introduced into the two tall foreground trees, is repeated in the shadow area beneath them and then taken up in the middle ground in the group of smaller trees to the left, thereby encouraging the eye to read into the composition and to establish some feeling of recession and depth. The simplification of the tree foliage, defined by rhythmic contour-like lines, is then echoed in the treatment of the sky and the large cloud masses, so that this distinguishing feature of the background is effectively linked to the dominant trees of the foreground. O'Connor, through these means, maintains a comparatively shallow sense of space throughout the composition, emphasising and unifying the decorative and rhythmic boundaries of trees, landscape, and clouds. Such values, already present in his paintings from the same period, (45), were implicit in the synthetist principles which had been emphasised by both Gauguin and Sérusier. (46) This print also shows evidence of O'Connor's growing technical competence through a more ambitious approach to etching in which he has combined traditional methods with dry point lines to emphasise the darkest tonalities. He has also made subtle and judicious use of the plate wiping technique, particularly in the area describing the field in the middle ground where ink has been left on the plate surface in contrast with the cloud area and the foreground, where the surplus ink has been removed prior to printing.

'Pleine lune sur la côte', (REF.PRTS.NO.007) could almost equally be a view into the sun, although the way in which the radiating lines have been used to darken the sky does rather suggest a night-time scene. This print is by no means restricted to the use of rhythmic lines, for somewhat unusually for O'Connor, there are more straight lines and a modified cross-hatching technique than in any of his other 1893 prints. This type of view, looking
directly into either the sun or the moon as the natural light source, was also taken up by him on other occasions in his paintings, (47) as well as being the principal characteristic of another print, 'Effet de soleil dans un nuage' (REF.PRTS.NO.021). In spite of the dark tonality of this image almost all of the depth of tone has been achieved through the use of line alone.

'Untitled Landscape', (REF.PRTS.NO.008) has a rather clumsy feeling about some of the etched lines, in spite of a certain vigour in the way in which they have been drawn. This rather suggests that there may have been problems in finding the most appropriate type of line to adequately describe the belt of trees which runs across this composition. The plate also includes some drypoint lines, and there has been extensive wiping prior to printing to the extent that some plate areas have been overloaded with ink, resulting in a loss of definition and a rather imprecise print.

'Le Verger', (REF.PRTS.NO.009) is a print which has been built up from an accumulation of rhythmic lines made by an etching needle which has been in constant flow and movement on the surface of the plate. There is less linear definition to the forms through the use of any boundary lines, and much more emphasis has been given in this plate to the separation and identification of areas and masses through the use of tonal contrast. To achieve this, lines of varying weight and thickness including drypoint, have been accumulated and overlaid to produce a rich range of contrasts which almost approaches a dense black in the foreground. At this point, and in the line of trees in silhouette against the skyline, so many lines have been used that the ink build up has almost been to excess. To counter this
O'Conor appears to have removed some of the surplus ink in wiping the plate, particularly in the middle ground.

'La prairie aux grands arbres', (REF.PRTS.NO.010) has similar characteristics to the previously discussed print 'Pleine lune sur la côte,' (REF.PRTS.NO.007) particularly in the way in which sweeping left to right lines have been used to describe the field in the foreground. The distinguishing feature of the trees in this print, apart that is from the accumulation of lines with which they have been drawn, is the emphasis which O'Conor has given to their rhythmic boundary line. This has been emphasised by setting this edge in silhouette against the lighter sky, the uniform tone of which has been achieved by removing surplus ink from the plate surface through careful wiping. The composition of the print and its visual interest then depends to a large extent on the inter-locking of the positive shape made by the trees, and the negative shape of the sky - where both meet the rhythmic line divides them dramatically and with maximum visual emphasis. In essence the print is composed of three main interlocking areas, those represented by the field, the trees and the sky.

'Le Bois d'Amour', (REF.PRTS.NO.011) has no firm visual or other evidence to link the image to this specific locality, which is a well known landmark bordering on the village of Pont-Aven. Such groups of trees were to be found at le Pouldu, and generally throughout the Brittany landscape. The trees have been treated similarly to those in the next print, 'Sentier à travers les arbres', (REF.PRTS.NO.012) although more attention has been given to the darker tree trunks in this work. The tree foliage is a mixture of rhythmic lines, cross hatching, and a type of graffiti-like scribble, and there is infinite variety in the sweeping left to right lines of the
foreground. This type of view, looking across open ground from beneath a
group of trees was favoured by O’Conor on more than one occasion (48), and
there is also something of a relationship between the rhythmic treatment of
the trees and ground in this print, and similar features in his painting
‘The Glade’, (REF.PTGS.No.018).

‘Sentier à travers les arbres’, (REF.PRTS.NO.012) has a previous scholarly
attribution to Seguin (49), which rather emphasises the difficulty in
differentiating between the 1893 prints of Seguin and O’Conor, as they
frequently share very similar characteristics. The greater expressive and
rhythmic vigour which is present here, is however, much more typical of
O’Conor’s mature style than that of Seguin, who always appears more
tentative and hesitant in his drawing. The defining of the trees is
consistent with similar details in ‘The Verger’ (REF.PRTS.NO.009) and the
staccato like and jabbing marks in the foreground are also typical of
O’Conor’s touch. The fact that this image with its greater detail has been
printed from a copper plate rather than from zinc, has perhaps contributed
to the previous uncertainty about its authorship. (50) The use of the more
refined copper has given a print which has quite different technical
qualities to the mainstream of O’Conor’s work. In every respects it is a
more ambitious print in comparison with his other works, and although there
is no evidence to confirm it, it may be that this image was etched and
printed in more sophisticated surroundings than those available at le Pouldu.
If this were to be confirmed, then Seguin’s studio in Paris at 54 rue Lepic,
or indeed the studio of master printer Eugène Delâtre, in the same street,
would have been the most likely places for O’Conor to have worked the
plate (51) O’Conor is recorded as being at Grez in December of 1893, (52),
and from there he could have easily have travelled into Paris where,
according to Field's speculation, Seguin was spending the Winter and beginning to experiment with lithographic prints from the stone. (53)

'Paysage', (REF.PRTS.NO.013) is an especially interesting print as it was originally published in the review L'Ymagier, (54) and this, and the work which follows, represent the only two known printed images of O'Conor's which were destined for a wider public. A second drawing, which had been left by O'Conor with Le Barc de Boutteville in his gallery for collection by Alfred Jarry, the editor of L'Ymagier, did in the event not appear. (55)

The composition of this landscape print can be interpreted as an expression of the rhythms to be found in Nature, in which the emphasised contour of the cloud forms finds its parallel in the boundary line of the trees which it clearly echoes. The trees have not been given a naturalistic treatment, but have been kept as a rather flat shape within which multi-directional lines emphasise their dark tonality against the much lighter sky. The records do not show whether or not this was an image which O'Conor had already made, and which was then later considered by Jarry to be suitable for publication, or if it was specially produced for the review. O'Conor was reluctant to exhibit his work in contexts other than those afforded by the annual Salons and it is therefore more than likely that the commission came as a result either of recommendation by a third party, or through the editor's direct contact with O'Conor. (55) Seguin may even have been the link between them, although his prints were not published in L'Ymagier until the following year. (56)

'L'enfant', (REF.PRTS.NO.014) also appeared in the same edition of L'Ymagier as the previous print, the appearance of the sitter comparing very closely with O'Conor's drawing of a young boy, (REF.DRGS.NO.019) to which this image
obviously relates. The reproduced image is not particularly distinguished however, and it does not have the same degree of expressive power as the drawing.

'Landscape', (REF.PRTS.NO.015) with its relatively uniformly etched lines, appears to have been printed from a plate which was etched only once. Any differences in weighting for example between the lines of the foreground and those of the sky, are due to the use of different grades of etching needles. The lines themselves, particularly those which describe the silhouetted buildings on the crest of the low hill, have been drawn with a controlled scribble with the etching tool in more or less continuous contact with the plate surface. The shorter interrupted lines in the foreground are also similar to those that appear in 'Dune et Maison au Pouldu.' (REF.PRTS.NO.005) suggesting that the two prints may have been made within a relatively short time scale.

'Paysage avec des arbres', (REF.PRTS.NO.016) is one of the smallest prints which O'Conor made, and is thought to exist in only two examples. As with so many of his prints at this stage, the drawing has been executed with great speed, the etching needle making rhythmic sweeps on the plate, and combining these with a graffiti-like scribbled build up to the foliage of shrubs and trees.

'Trees near an estuary', (REF.PRTS.NO.017) is typical of the coastline at le Pouldu, where the prevailing winds have given a quite specific character to the vegetation and the landscape. Both are well depicted in this print, where the visual effect of an otherwise straightforward scene has been enriched through a sense of speed and movement achieved by the rhythmic
linear elements which run from right to left across the plate. Trees and landscape have been closely integrated, and the print shows O'Conor's increased competence in successfully bringing together, within one print, a variety of linear qualities to represent cast shadows, the dark headland across the inlet, and the foreground trees. In contrast with these precisely stated areas, the foreground uses meandering and graffiti-like lines which enrich the rhythmic feeling of the entire composition.

'Trees in a landscape', (REF.PRTS.NO.018) is a print which has a more conscious development than many of O'Conor's earlier and more spontaneous works. In the course of making this image, O'Conor has deliberately exploited the pattern of light and dark shapes which interlock to give this print its visual appeal. Some of the lines in the background appear rather clumsy - rather like those in the cliffs and headland of 'Effet de soleil dans un nuage', (REF.PRTS.NO.021) and their separation off from the sweeping horizontals of the foreground, using a sinuous passage of light, is an interesting departure within this work. The tree foliage has been loosely scribbled and rhythmically drawn, and the darker dry-point lines on the lower branches and tree trunks, introduce further contrast into the print which remains essentially flat, being composed of inter-related and inter-locking shapes.

'Paysage sur la côte', (REF.PRTS.NO.019) with its undulating terrain, has provided more scope for the development of O'Conor's etching technique and much more variety and linear contrast has been introduced into this print as a result. Some of the lines use the drypoint technique, and there is also evidence of extensive plate wiping. The contrast which exists between the much lighter underlying lines and those of heavier weight which are
superimposed on top, suggests that the plate was immersed in the acid bath on at least two separate occasions. The upper, or second set of lines have also been drawn into the plate with a much coarser etching needle than that used initially. The combination of these various elements and techniques in this one image, is indicative of the expressive approach which O'Conor was able to introduce into his prints, similar to that which was already present in his paintings from 1892 and 1893.

'House under restless skies', (REF.PRTS.NO.020) was also attributed by Field to Seguin, who for some inexplicable reason did not see the signature which O'Conor had added to the plate and which appears in the bottom left hand corner of the print. The entire image in this work is covered with numerous rhythmic and intertwining lines which effectively unify the various elements, linking the sky to the writhing forms of the trees and the landscape. The approach is closely paralleled in his landscape paintings from the same period, and the means of drawing in this work also clearly relates to Van Gogh's drawing style. Within this one print, O'Conor has managed to achieve several different grades of tonal change by careful wiping of the plate after it had been placed in the acid on two separate occasions. In order to maintain the light cloud shape to the right, some of the surplus ink has been wiped off after the retroussage was added.

'Effet de Soleil dans un nuage,' (REF.PRTS.NO.021) takes a similar subject to that of the previously discussed 'Pleine lune sur la côte' (REF.PRTS.NO.007) but in this case there is much more simplification in the way in which the image has been conceived. Taken to be one of the several headlands jutting out into the sea close to le Pouldu, the landscape has been transformed into three distinct but inter-related 'divisions', namely those of the horizontal
plane of the beach, the near vertical cliff face, and thirdly the generally horizontal landscape set above the cliffs. The cloud has been treated simply, with a defining and rhythmic boundary within which shorter and almost vertical lines have the visual effect of adding to the feeling of flatness and near abstraction in this print. Within each of the main areas, O'Conor has used directional and rhythmical lines which are consistent with the direction of the planes which he is describing. It is a way of treating the landscape which was also adopted by Seguin in at least one of his prints, 'Striped Landscape', (59), but O'Conor's print, in comparison with Seguin's, retains a much greater sense of energy and expressive power. The radiating rays from the partially visible sun are treated schematically, and the absence of any linear definition to the sun itself has an altogether enriching effect on the brilliance of light in this part of the image. In producing this etching, O'Conor used the acid bath on only one occasion, so that the lines have a similarity of depth throughout. There is also evidence of plate wiping, using a coarse cloth, which has given a rather grainy texture to some of the intermediate tones.

'Maison et arbres', (REF.PRTS.NO.022) is an excessively dark print which suffers from clarity in definition through having been over bitten in the acid bath. The plate, when printed, has been heavily charged with ink so that the forms of the houses in the background are rendered in near total silhouette. The quality of the etched lines is similar to those in the print already discussed, 'Effet de soleil dans un nuage,' (REF.PRTS.NO.021).

'Maison et des arbres' (REF.PRTS.NO.023), like 'Effet de soleil dans un nuage' (REF.PRTS.NO.021) has taken a conventional subject and greatly simplified the image. The way of drawing trees, combining a free scribble-like line with

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a more regular overlay of parallel lines and the writhing forms of foliage partially obscuring the house, have resulted in near abstract qualities. O'Conor has used relatively few incised lines set some distance apart from one another, which, because of their boldness and consistent weight throughout the print, indicates that this plate too was etched on only one occasion. There is a particularly rich and dark tonality introduced through wiping, in which a cloth of coarse texture has drawn the ink up and out of the etched lines. Some of the ink deposited on the surface has then been removed to introduce a lighter tone into the sky.

'La maison du pendu au Pouldu', (REF.PRTS.NO.024) is a print of a well known landmark overlooking the beach known as les Grands Sables, at le Pouldu. This particular house was also the subject of one of Seguin's prints (60), although his viewing position was from on top of the promontory. The same dwelling also appeared in a Filiger painting which was made in 1890 or '91, 'La maison du pendu (paysage parabolique)', (61), and it had also featured in three of Gauguin's paintings even earlier than that. (62) The quite specific architectural treatment of the house is in contrast with O'Conor's more usual rhythmic lines which appear here in the rock face of the cliff. Extensive plate wiping has introduced a dark and velvet-like range of deep tones to the promontory, so that it, and the house above, appear in dark and foreboding silhouette.

'Maison sur la falaise', (REF.PRTS.NO.025) uses a light and undulating line to describe the contours of the cliff face, so that the drawing is kept open and legible. Plate wiping has been carried out rather more thoroughly in this work, almost as though the plate was to be prepared for printing in the traditional manner. For this reason, a relatively even film of ink which
remained on the plate prior to printing, has introduced a uniformly consistent and overall lightness of tone to the final image.

'Le Bois d'Amour à Pont-Aven,' (REF.PRTS.NO.026) bears a title given to this print by its present owner, although as has been previously stated, there is no positive evidence that O'Conor actually made any prints either at Pont-Aven, or of Pont-Aven subjects. As is the case with the previously discussed 'Le Bois d'Amour', (REF.PRTS.NO.011) the view here could equally be of any group of trees in the area around le Pouldu. This carefully wiped print achieves a range of tonal contrast, showing that O'Conor by this stage fully appreciated the potential of the technique. The lines appear to have been drawn with great speed and urgency, and from the different thicknesses of line which are present, it appears that two different etching needles were used. O'Conor has simplified and generalised much of the detail in the background, and by building up the lines in the foreground to achieve a darker tone, he has created a feeling of depth and recession, passing from the shaded foreground trees into the strong sunlight of the field beyond.

'Mer et nuages', (REF.PRTS.NO.027) takes the process of simplification yet further, so that this view over the sea is very generally treated with lines quickly drawn on the plate. The directness of approach has given this print a lively and energetic quality, making this one of the most satisfactory images which O'Conor made through his linear methods. There is a sense of movement in the cloud forms and a swelling in the sea, which powerfully expresses the forces of Nature. This plate was also etched on only one occasion, but through skilfull plate wiping, O'Conor has achieved a suitable and satisfactory tonal range.
'Jeune paysanne Bretonne', (REF.PRTS.NO.028), uses a similar compositional device to the next print, 'Paysanne Bretonne,' (REF.PRTS.NO.029), but it relies to an even greater extent on the simplification of areas, and the use of line alone. The confident use of the drawn line is typical of O'Conor's ability to involve himself immediately and directly with his subject, and the absence of any detailed working was probably conditioned by his choice of subject matter in this instance. The uniformity of the lines indicates that this plate too was etched only once.

'Paysanne Bretonne, (REF.PRTS.NO.029), is an etching which is consistent with O'Conor's graphic style in his drawings of similar subjects, particularly in its adoption of the profile view. The composition has been organised in such a way that the shape of the girl's apron and the dark dress form a triangular-like arrangement, drawing attention to the head. This upward movement is aided by the directional lines of the apron, and those of the background. In this respect, the work shares similar compositional characteristics with O'Conor's painting 'Breton peasant woman knitting,' (REF.PTGS.NO.019). The print also employs some cross hatching, not in a meticulous and deliberate build up, but rather in a boldly expressed manner having similar qualities to those of the painting.

'La falaise' (REF.PRTS.NO.030) is a well conceived composition, which effectively combines most of the techniques which were then within O'Conor's repertoire. The rhythmic and cross hatched lines of the immediate foreground are in contrast with the more heavily drawn and etched cliff face in the middle ground, and because this appears as a much darker area there is a greater feeling of recession and depth in this print. The much lighter vertical lines, contained within the sinuous boundary of the clouds,
help to divert the eye downwards so that we share with the artist that sensation of looking over the edge of a cliff to the beach below. Within the darker tonal areas, O’Conor has maintained the retoussage technique as a means of adding a further tonal dimension to the print.

One specific proof print of ‘La falaise’ is of particular interest because of an inscription on its reverse, indicating that it was one of a number of prints which O’Conor sent from Nemours, close to Grez-sur-Loing, to Georges Chaudet in Paris. Chaudet, who at that time was acting as Gauguin’s agent, was also a painter, and he had probably met O’Conor on one of his frequent visits to Brittany. The inscription on the print gives rise to the speculation that this, and several other proofs, were sent for Chaudet’s approval perhaps with a view to publishing an edition. On the other hand, the fact that no examples of any edition prints have been traced rather suggests another reason for their despatch. They may have been intended for exhibition, for sale as proofs, or may even have been a gift. The receipt of the package was duly acknowledged by Chaudet in a letter to O’Conor in which he expressed an interest in coming to Grez to see his paintings, in the same letter passing on a message from Seguin ‘who hopes that you will come to work at rue Lepic.’

‘La Maison auprès du bois,’ (REF.PRTS.NO.031) is an image dominated by a large clump of trees on a low hillock, rather dwarfing the smaller cottage which appears to the left. Taking the collective evidence of the Le Pouldu prints into consideration, it is extremely unlikely that this print was attempting to make any symbolic association between these two main features. There is also some degree of ambiguity about the shape beyond the cottage, which could be a headland but is more likely to be a billowing cloud. Linear rhythms of opposing directional emphasis are used to describe the
tress, cottage, and the field, and the plate has been carefully wiped to enrich the tonal effect.

'Sans titre,' (REF.PRTS.NO.032) is probably a view over the Laita from the high banks which border the river some distance back from the sea. In many respects this print stands as a good example of some of the problems which can be encountered in the analysis of O'Conor's work. For example, the line of trees against the light reflecting river has almost lost its identity through an excess of ink. If looked on as a technical defect, this feature may have arisen because the plate was etched in a bath that was too strong, or it may have been left for an excessively lengthy period in the acid. It could also be that there was not full control over the use of the retroussage technique, which would have been especially difficult as the etched lines were so close together, leaving no reasonable surface on which the ink could sit. On the other hand the print could represent O'Conor at his experimental best, in what might be considered as an attempt to capture the dark and mysterious moods of Nature as dusk approaches.

'La Laita', (REF.PRTS.NO.033) is a view of the river estuary, its sombre tonality suggesting that it was drawn late in the day as dusk was approaching. The shallow river bed at this point often reveals curving sand bars at low tide which are similar in shape to the dark triangular area in the bottom right hand corner of this print. The rich and deep tones come from an exceptionally dense overlay of near horizontal lines, some of which in the distant shoreline, have been cross-hatched. The sheer number of these lines has given an excess of ink which has then been wiped in a controlled fashion across the plate. In contrast with the stability provided by the left to right directional lines of the land mass across the
river, the treatment of the clouds here has introduced a sense of movement across the sky.

'Sans titre', (REF.PRTS.NO.034) is the only print from the series made at le Pouldu in 1893, which has been quite specifically dated by O'Conor - in this case to the month of August. The linear elements of the foreground, and the flat plane which they denote, suggests that O'Conor drew this image of the house and trees from a vantage point on the beach. In comparison with some of the earlier prints, this work shows a greater understanding of how to use the etching process to differentiate between light and dark areas. This is particularly apparent in the way in which the house to the left has been separated out from the trees beyond. There is also a much better balance in this excessively horizontal composition, not just between light and dark, but also between actively worked areas and those which have been left relatively free of etched lines.

'Deux femmes de profil dans un paysage', (REF.PRTS.NO.035) is O'Conor's only known lithographic print.(67) As far as is known there were no facilities for lithography at St. Julien, so that, unlike his etchings, this print because of its generalised treatment was probably made elsewhere and would have been drawn from memory using imagination. It is also one of the few works of O'Conor's which can be said to have any symbolic content. The posture of the two mysterious cloaked figures, bent by the extremes of the wind in a barren landscape, is deliberately echoed in the shape of the weathered tree beyond them. This visual similarity between the figures and the tree symbolises the dependence of both on Nature for their existence, and represents the hardship of life as it was experienced on the exposed coastline at le Pouldu. The fusion of the two figures together, almost as
one, is also very reminiscent of some of Millet's drawings for the 'Gleaners',
in which by understating the details of dress and personal features he found
a means of representing the general condition of 'peasant', rather than that
of specific personalities.(68) Further comparison is possible with a
drawing by Claude Emile Schuffenecker, at one time Gauguin's closest friend,
in his 'Study for mystic landscape at Meudon' thought to have been made
about 1890.(69) Schuffenecker's drawing introduces two mystical
personages, similarly shrouded, into a landscape setting in front of a house
beyond which there is a tree. Similar forms also appear frequently in the
work of Maurice Denis,(70) so that there were several sources from which
this image may have absorbed some influence.

As to the dating of this solitary lithograph, there is reason to believe that
it may relate to the period before the issue of L'Ymagier, in which O'Conor
had two works published, one of which was reproduced by the lithographic
process. The most likely period for the printing would therefore have
been in the Winter of 1893-'94, at a time when O'Conor was at Grez-sur-
Loing,(71) and, according to Field, Seguin was in Paris carrying out his
first experiments in lithography.(72)

'Portrait de Seguin', (REF.PRTS.NO.036) is a soundly drawn image which
underlines O'Conor's ability as a draughtsman.(73) The drawing is
particularly assured, and although there cannot have been a great time scale
between the execution of his portrait 'Buste de Bretonne', (REF.PRTS.NO.002)
and this work, there is a significant difference in the means of realisation.
This difference may be attributed to his increased confidence in the medium,
and to his greater appreciation of how to adapt the technique to his
purpose. Seguin and O'Conor were in continuous contact in the summer of
1893, and this portrait could have been drawn at any time during that period. Its technique, and its linear qualities compare very closely with O'Connor's approach to the le Pouldu landscape, and it is clearly from a different period to the more precisely dated and later portrait of Sérusier. (REF.PRTS.NO.037)

'Portrait de Sérusier', (REF.PRTS.NO.037) is an equally well drawn head to that of the portrait of Seguin, (REF.PRTS.NO.036) although in terms of their technique the two prints are quite different. (74) In this portrait, which O'Connor made two years after his le Pouldu prints, he has taken a much more measured approach to his subject, and given more attention to detail. The resulting image is much less stark, not as robust, and the tonal changes throughout the print have become much more subtle because of the carefully developed use of line. Such methods rather confirm the view that O'Connor's work began to take on a more traditional approach after Gauguin's final departure for the South Seas, early in 1895. (75). This particular print was therefore most likely made in the second half of that year, some time after Sérusier had taken up residence at his house in Chateauneuf-de-Faou in June. (76)

'Paul Gauguin', (REF.PRTS.NO.038) is a print which is thought to be of Gauguin, although the similarity between the features of the sitter in this portrait, and those of Gauguin, is not wholly convincing. The chin and jaw line seem to be less rugged than Gauguin's, and his characteristic hooded eyelids have quite a different appearance to those which appear in this portrait. The identity of the subject therefore remains uncertain, and it is not impossible that it may be even be a self-portrait for the eyes have that type of stare associated with the intensity of looking which is a
The method of establishing the image is also quite different in this print when compared with those from Le Pouldu, although there are some similarities in technique to those used in the portrait of Sérusier. O'Conor has resorted to the traditional methods of applying tone through a meticulous cross-hatching process in which the play of light across the features is much more deliberately controlled and developed than in the Sérusier print. The subtle tonal relationship which links the head to its background is very much within the conventions of academic portraiture, and this distinguishing feature of the print relates the work to the more conservative painting style which O'Conor adopted between 1897 and 1903.

'Sans Titre,' is a print in which almost all of the plate surface has been covered with lines which, for O'Conor, are unusually uniform and evenly spaced. Their combined effect is rather more mechanical in this work, particularly as the subject has not given him much scope for his more frequently used rhythmical lines. The different technique suggests a print which was made some time after 1893, possibly at Grez-sur-Loing, where the surrounding landscape, as in this print, is particularly flat. Some wiping of the plate has given an emphasis to the belt of trees in flat silhouette against the lighter sky.

'Paysage avec des arbres,' is further evidence of O'Conor's adoption of an altogether traditional view of the landscape, which was in complete contrast to his approach at Le Pouldu. There is an obvious attempt at a naturalistic rendering of this scene, with, for example, more attention being given to details. Where O'Conor at Le Pouldu had seen the trees as large and rather flat tonal masses, in this print he has given more
attention to individual branches and to the details of leaves and foliage. As with the previous print, 'Sans titre,' (REF.PRTS.NO.039) a different location is suggested by these landscape features with Grez being the most likely environment.

'Maison au-delà des arbres', (REF.PRTS.NO.041) has some of the characteristics of cross-hatching seen in the portrait thought to be of Gauguin, (REF.PRTS.NO.038) and those of the two landscapes 'Sans Titre,' (REF.PRTS.NO.039) and 'Paysage avec des arbres', (REF.PRTS.NO.040) However, in mood and feeling it is quite different from all of these prints, particularly in assuming a conventional view of the landscape, and in the way in which the spatial qualities of depth and recession have been introduced. In comparison with the images from Le Pouldu, which were almost without exception of more expansive tracts of the environment, viewed from a distance, this print takes a much more detailed view of elements selected from within the landscape. By giving foreground emphasis to the tree trunks and using them as a type of screening device, O'Conor has increased the spatial reading from the foreground trees to the distant cottage. The suggestion of distance and recession within the print, relates this work to the previously discussed 'Paysage avec des arbres,' (REF.PRTS.NO.040) which is equally spatial and naturalistic in its character.

'Nu debout,' (REF.PRTS.NO.042) is unique in O'Conor's œuvre, as it is his only example of the mono-print technique.(78) It has also been previously attributed to Seguin (79), although its style has little in common with the main thrust of Seguin's work. Seguin's early Parisian prints included figures in interiors, but his use of the nude model was almost always couched in more restrained imagery, and when nude figures appeared in the
later works they were much more deliberately posed and more precisely worked than is the case here. (80) The generalisation in the treatment of the figure in this work is due in part to the mono-print technique, but the drawing which is included to clarify the image is not typical of Seguin's more hesitant and uncertain line. On the other hand, the rhythms of these lines and the apparent fluency with which they have been drawn, is much more a characteristic of O'Conor's drawing style. (81) In addition, the mono-print technique which is used here is altogether closer to the activity of painting, and it has close similarities to those quick oil sketches of nudes in his studio interior, which he painted after his return to Paris in 1904. (82)

O'Connor may have been motivated to try this method of reproducing an image for at least two reasons. First of all he had in his possession a print by Gauguin which was personally dedicated to him, and which exploits a water colour mono-print technique. (83) He may have wanted to try something similar, or the other possibility is that this print may have been made at one of the studio sessions organised by the American Club of Paris, where O'Connor held membership status. At regular intervals, usually once a month, the artist members of the club came together to make mono-prints, which were then auctioned off among those present to boost club funds. (84)

Summary

In the overview and analysis of O'Conor's known prints, we may identify two main groupings. To begin with there are the prints from Le Pouldu, made initially under Seguin's guidance, which then emerged as examples of
O'Conor's own personally expressed imagery in boldly drawn works which had a reciprocal influence on Seguin. His drawing style in these prints, with the tendency towards the use of parallel or near parallel lines, was closely related to his means of using linear stripes of colour in his paintings. Unfortunately, due to the absence of reliable and exact dating it is difficult to be precise about the extent to which work in the one medium was influencing work in the other, but their inter-relationship is self-evident. While O'Conor may have been reluctant to give himself fully over to synthetist theories in his painting, prints such as 'Le verger' (REF.PRTS.NO.009); 'La prairie aux grandes arbres' (REF.PRTS.NO.010); 'Le Bois d'Amour' (REF.PRTS.NO.011); and 'Paysage' (REF.PRTS.NO.013); do show a very positive relationship to the principles which had been established earlier by Gauguin. For example in 'Paysage' (REF.PRTS.NO.013) the way of treating the trees and foliage is certainly not naturalistically, for this feature of the landscape has been transformed into an essentially flat and decoratively bounded shape. Its relationship to the area representing the ground emphasises the flatness of these natural forms, and there is in addition an overall flattening of pictorial space in the work which was also characteristic of the synthetist style.

Included with this main grouping of O'Conor's prints are those two images which were reproduced in L'Ymagier, although only in the case of the landscape can any stylistic similarity be claimed with the Le Pouldu prints. The image of the young peasant has no particular characteristics to commend it, being little more than a sketch from a notebook. These two prints are the only two images which were specially commissioned and reproduced for a wider distribution. The solitary lithographic print (REF.PRTS.NO.035) may be said to share some of the feeling for rhythmic forms present in the
prints, but in spite of differences in the medium, and as a result, differences in style and technique, it is also clearly an image from le Pouldu.

The post 1893 work does not display the same coherence, with respect either to technique or to imagery, and it has to be presumed that O'Conor was not as fully engaged in the print process as he had been during that period of concentrated activity at le Pouldu in the company of Seguin. The change towards more naturalistically rendered landscape views was consistent with his adoption of similar attitudes in his paintings, which in comparison with the earlier expressive vigour of his work from 1892 and 1893, can be seen as something of a regression.
FOOTNOTES

1. The one exception is the print thought to be of Sérusier, (REF.PRTS.NO.037) which is signed and dated 1895.

2. Sutton, D., (1968) op.cit., see p.174

3. ibid. Sutton referred to twelve prints by O'Connor, but did not analyse their content nor list them in his article.


5. Registre d'Inscriptions, (1883) op.cit. Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts d'Anvers.


12. ibid. p.140.

13. O'Connor gave this information in an undated letter to Maurice Denis, written after Seguin's death in December 1903. Denis Archives, op.cit.

14. Sutton, D. (1974) op.cit., Seguin's drawing is annotated 'Pont-Aven', April 1891, presumably by Forbes-Robertson, and is reproduced at p.404. See also Chapter V this work.

15. More than one hundred letters from Seguin to O'Connor which have been in the private collection of Mr. D. Sutton since 1956, are to be published in an edited form in 1989 by the Musée de Pont-Aven. Some extracts from Seguin's correspondence appeared in Jaworska, (1972), op.cit.


17. Field, op.cit. see p.6.

19. Cuno Amiet in a letter which he sent to his sister from Pont-Aven, 21 December, 1892, wrote 'he (O'Conor) neither pays cheap compliments nor starts making fun of it (his work) but he simply tells me frankly his opinion. Afterwards I go to his studio and do the same.' Letter in a private collection (A) Switzerland.

20. Sutton, (1968), op.cit. at p.174 mentioned a portrait of 1888, which he attributed to O'Conor, but which has not been traced by the writer.

21. Field, (1980), op.cit. see catalogue number 3, 'The wanderer' or 'Breton fisherman' which is inscribed 'A l'ami O'Conor/A. Seguin '91', and catalogue number 4, 'Seated couple' dated by Field to 1891, which is similarly inscribed and dated by Seguin (<'92).

22. ibid. at pp.5-7, Field gives a full analysis of the conflict of subject matter, style, and environment on Seguin's work.

23. ibid. see Field's commentary at p.11, and also catalogue numbers 7-12.

24. Sutton, (1974), op.cit. see p.405 where a letter sent by Seguin from Paris in December of 1891 to Forbes-Robertson in Pont-Aven, is published. Seguin indicated that he was totally absorbed by his interest in etching adding 'I have been so wrapped up in etching - from morning to night I am digging away and when I have a good plate I'll send you and Donaldson some proofs.'

25. Field, (1980), op.cit. see in particular pp.9-12 for a full analysis of the changes in Seguin's work.


27. Even if O'Conor did not see these prints, he would almost certainly have been told about them by Seguin.

For a full description of the content of the two albums see Boyle-Turner, C. (1986) op.cit. For Gauguin's zincographs see pp.35-41, and for Bernard's see pp.47-51.

28. Dodgson, C. French etching from Meryon to Lepère, London (1922). This gives a comprehensive historical survey of the development of printmaking in nineteenth century France


31. Cuno Amiet to his father, in a letter from Pont-Aven dated 7 March '93. Private collection (A) Switzerland.


34. Field, (1980), op.cit. see for example Seguin's prints, catalogue numbers 27,30, and 42, all of which have the 'juillet' notation.
35. Hartrick, A.S. *A Painter's Pilgrimage through Fifty Years*, London (1939). At p.30 there is a particularly graphic description of le Pouldu, by someone who knew the district at the time Gauguin was active there - 'Imagine a country of gigantic sand dunes, like the mountainous waves of a solid sea, between which appeared glimpses of the Bay of Biscay and the Atlantic rollers. All this, peopled by a savage-looking race, who seemed to do nothing but search for driftwood, or to collect seaweed, with strange sledges drawn by shaggy ponies; and with women in black dresses who wore the great black "coif" (sic) (like a huge black sun-bonnet).'


37. See in particular 'Mer et nuages', (REF.PRTS.NO.027).

38. See in particular 'Bois d'Amour à Pont-Aven', (REF.PRTS.NO.011).

39. Delâtre had a studio at 87 rue Lepic in Paris, which was a few doors away from Seguin's Parisian address, 54 rue Lepic. It is possible that Seguin made some prints there on his return trips to Paris. Delâtre, in his own technique had systematically developed the use of heavy plate tone, but from as early as the 1870's he had introduced into his own work, the creative use of interpretive inking, which led directly to a subsequent fascination with the monotype.

40. 'Sentier à travers les arbres' (REF.PRTS.NO.012) is one of the few prints in which the use of aquatint is apparent, but even here it takes second place to the preferred plate wiping technique.

41. The only print which O'Connor made on a copper plate was 'Sentier à travers les arbres,'(REF.PRTS.NO.012). Only copper could give this degree of detail and fine line quality. In comparison zinc is a very porous metal and it requires only about one quarter of the time necessary for copper, with the same strength of acid. A zinc plate, when bitten, tends to be coarse without either delicacy or depth in the etched lines. It was probably favoured by O'Connor because it was cheaper than copper, and it gave quicker results.

42. Any notation on the bottom edge of the prints was not put there by O'Connor, but by the Parisian expert, M. Jean Caillac, who was in charge of cataloguing all the works which were dispersed at the auction of the contents of O'Connor's studio. Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 6/7 February, (1956).

43. Typical of the numerous unfinished paintings in O'Connor's studio, sold at auction in 1956 were 'Promontory, Brittany' (REF.PTGS.NO.053); 'Nude lying on red couch' (REF.PTGS.NO.104); and 'Nude on a couch' (REF.PTGS.NO.112)

44. See for example 'Trees near an estuary', (REF.PRTS.NO.017), and 'Trees in a landscape', (REF.PRTS.NO.018), in which the landscape forms have been clearly defined through a selective drawing process, and through using tonal contrasts to separate them out from their background.

45. See for example 'La Ferme', c.1892, (REF.PTGS.NO.016) and 'The Glade' 1892, (REF.PTGS.NO.018)

à penser sur ce que l'on veut représenter, à attendre une résultante de faits et d'idées, à simplifier pour intensifier à étudier les éléments de force, d'élanement de souplesse que possède la nature.' at p.231.

Sérusier, in *ABC de la Peinture* (1950) op.cit., at p.61 wrote, 'Je veux un dessin ferme et simple, fini. J'entends par la non pas que tous les détails y soient, mais que toute ligne soit voulue et ait son rôle, expressif et décoratif, dans l'ensemble; je veux que toute ligne soit nécessaire.'

For further evidence of Gauguin's and Sérusier's theoretical stance see Jaworska, (1972) op.cit.

47. See 'Charging bull by moonlight', (REF.PTGS.NO.034) in which the figure of an angry bull is set in silhouette against a troubled sky, dominated by a full moon.

48. See the similarly titled 'Bois d'Amour à Pont-Aven,' (REF.PRTS.NO.026), in which the same compositional device is used.

49. Field, (1980) op.cit. catalogue no.13 as 'The Majestic Trees'. Field acknowledges in his notes to the catalogue entry that the work 'could be taken for one by Seguin's long term friend, Roderick (sic) O'Connor (1860-1940) but we prefer to see it as a point of extreme rapprochment instead', indicating an element of uncertainty in the process of making his final attribution.

50. The original plate which has been examined by the writer, is, as Field suggested, a copper plate. It was one of twelve O'Connor plates sold at auction in Paris, by Ms. Laurin, Guilloux, Buffetaud, and Tailleur, at Hôtel Drouot on 17 November 1975. See Lot no.172,(1), 'Chemin sous bois'. The plate has since been used to produce an unspecified number of re-strikes.

51. Delatère's atelier was at 87 rue Lepic, a few doors along the street from Seguin's place of residence. It is probable that Seguin knew Delatère at this time, although the earliest confirmed contact between them is contained in a letter which Seguin wrote to him in 1895 to enquire about a printing press on behalf of the English painter Mortimer Menpes. A copy of the letter is in the archives of the Musée de Pont-Aven, Finistère, France.

52. O'Connor's Registre d'Immatriculation, those documents on which foreigners resident in France were required to record their changes of address, show that he was in Grez-sur-Loing on 15 December 1893. Private collection (L) France.

53. Field, (1980) op.cit. p.16, and see also p.22 and footnote 114, where Field corrects the previously held opinion of Jaworska's that Seguin apprenticed himself to the lithographer Feuerstein in 1889.

54. See footnote 4.

55. Jarry, in an undated letter to O'Connor, thanked him for the receipt of three works which had been left at Le Barc's Gallery, all of which were destined for publication in L'Ymagier. Letter in a private collection (B) France.

56. Field (1980) op.cit. catalogue nos.76 and 84.

57. See for example 'Field of Corn, Pont-Aven', (REF.PTGS.No.015) and 'Yellow landscape, Pont-Aven' (REF.PTGS.NO.017)
58. Field (1980) op.cit. catalogue no.29 as 'The house under restless skies.'

59. ibid. Reproduced as catalogue no.34, 'Striped landscape' c.1893, etching.

60. ibid. Reproduced as catalogue no.42, 'House on a hilltop overlooking the sea, 1893 - La maison du pendu.'


63. See for example 'Jeune Bretonne' (REF.DRGS.No.016)

64. The full inscription reads, 'Gravures-épreuves / Monsieur Georges Chaudet, 7 rue Rodier, Paris. Envoi de M. O'Conor.' The date, 6 mars 1895, is written in pencil, and the parcel post label reads Nemours/Paris.

65. Gauguin gave this information in a letter sent to Ambrose Vollard from Tahiti, April 1897, published in Rewald, J., Studies in Post-Impressionism, (London 1986) op.cit. at p.178.

66. Letter in a private collection (L) France. The reference to 'rue Lepic' in taken to refer to Seguin's address known to be at number 54, where it is assumed that he had his own studio and printing facilities. However in view of Seguin's limited means it is not impossible that he may have been using Eugène Delâtre's atelier which was in the same street at number 87. See also footnote 51.

67. Apart that is from 'L'enfant', (REF.PRTS.No.014) a drawing using the lithographic process which was published in L'Ymagier, Vol.I, (1894-'95).

68. See for example Millet's drawing, 'Les Glaneuses',1850-'51, Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin.

69. Illustrated in the exhibition catalogue, Claude Emile Schuffenecker.1851-1934, State University of New York and Hammer Galleries (1980) Fig.61 at p.97.

70. See his 'Paysage Aux Arbres Vertes', 1893, which includes a number of similarly shrouded figures.

71. See footnotes 52, and 53.

72. ibid.

73. This portrait compares very closely with a published photograph of Seguin in Guy, Cécile, 'Le Barc de Boutteville', L'Oeil No.124, (April 1965) pp.30-36, and 58-59.

74. ibid. See the published photograph of Sérusier.

75. This view of O'Conor's post 1895 work was first suggested by Sutton, (1968) op.cit.

77. See also O'Conor's self portrait (REF.PTGS.NO.060)

78. The monoprint technique, being quite different to that of the etching process, requires some clarification. In this print it seems that a layer of ink which had been partially diluted by solvents, was set down on a flat surface which might have been either a glass slab or a metal plate. Variations in the tone indicate where the ink and the diluting agent have mixed unevenly. Thin ink may have been initially applied with a brush or a rag, and then drawn into with the end of a brush, indicated here by the white lines on the image. Larger tonal areas indicate where more ink has been removed, either with a scraper, a rag, or even the thumb or the side of the hand. Although properly described as a monoprint, it is some times possible to take more than one impression from such an image, although each successive print will be lighter in tone and progressively more imprecise in its detail as more ink is lifted each time a print is taken. At least two prints are known to have been made from the printing surface prepared in this way.

79. Field, (1980) op.cit., no.78 as 'Study of a nude' 1894-'95.

80. ibid. Seguin's 'Reclining nude', no.20, and 'Reclining nude with chignon', no.21, are purely linear images of a discreetly posed female figure, drawn with a hesitant line.

81. See for example 'Breton Women' (REF.DRGS.NO.031) and 'Man in profile' (REF.DRGS.NO.039)

82. See for example 'Nude before mirror' (REF.PTGS.NO.108) and 'Nude on a couch' (REF.PTGS.NO.112)

83. 'The Angelus in Brittany', 1894, Paul Gauguin. The print is inscribed 'for my friend O'Conor one man of Samoa'; and signed 'P.Gauguin 1894.' Private collection, Switzerland.

84. A receipt for O'Conor's club membership was found among papers in a private collection (L) in France. For a summary of the Club's activities see Frantz, Henri,'Une Colonie d'Artistes Americains à Paris', in Revue Illustrée, (Paris 1904). I am grateful to Gloria Groom of the Art Institute of Chicago for bringing this article to my attention.
CHAPTER VII
PARIS AND BRITTANY (1894-1904)

La Galerie de Le Barc de Boutteville

Although the official Salon endeavoured to maintain its position throughout the late nineteenth century as the main exhibition forum in Paris, the launching of the Salon des Refusés exhibition in 1863, and the presentation of the first Impressionist group exhibition in 1874, had already introduced the public to exhibitions which reflected the changes taking place in French painting at that time. By the time the more liberal Salon des Indépendants presented its first exhibition in Paris in 1886, the city had also witnessed a gradual increase in the number of commercial galleries and the emergence of several key entrepreneurial figures who were specifically interested in the promotion of the new generation of painters as well as the more widely accepted and better known artists. Durand-Ruel, for example, had been established as the impressionist's dealer as early as the 1870's and he subsequently began the promotion of a series of several one man shows for the impressionist artists in 1883. Durand-Ruel's position was soon challenged by Georges Petit through his invitations to Monet and Renoir to be included in his series of 'International Exhibitions' the first one of which was held in 1885. Père Tanguy, colour merchant, and Arsène Portier, framer, often took in pictures in lieu of payment and made them available to interested clients and artists at their respective places of business. Père Thomas who also showed pictures was considered to be one of the more risk-taking dealers in the city, and of course Theo van Gogh, through the Boussod...
and Valadon Gallery, was instrumental in bringing his brother Vincent's work, and that of numerous other well established artists, before the art buying public.

Theo van Gogh's death in 1891, and that of Père Tanguy in 1894, created something of a vacuum leaving openings for two new personalities, Le Barc de Boutteville and Ambrose Vollard. Vollard opened a small shop in 1893 on the rue Lafitte and organised the first one-man show of Cézanne in 1895 and a van Gogh retrospective in 1897. Le Barc de Boutteville was already established as a dealer in Old Master art, but he was persuaded by Paul Vogler to give his support to the new generation of lesser known artists and he promoted a series of exhibitions in which he included several of the artists who were associated with the Nabi movement and who at that time had no commercial outlet for their work.

With the exception of the year 1891 when he was not an exhibitor, O'Conor's work was shown in Paris in four separate Salon des Indépendants exhibitions between 1889 and 1893, but up until that date there is no record of his having exhibited in any of the commercial galleries in Paris. However the year 1894 was a significant one for O'Conor, marking the beginning of a wider recognition for his talents, particularly in Parisian art circles. He exhibited three times during the course of that year at Le Barc de Boutteville's Galerie, at 47 rue Peletier in the Montmartre district of the city. (1)

Le Barc was a rather flamboyant character and one who made artists and writers welcome to his gallery at all times, for he was particularly sympathetic and encouraging in his attitude towards the new generation of
painters. His policy in exhibitions at the gallery was to treat his artists as fairly as possible, and to ensure that each of them was represented in his group exhibitions by the same number of works. The artists for their part were enthusiastic about the opportunity to show their paintings with him, for most of them were considered by the other galleries to be too radical for exhibition. It was for reasons such as this that Le Barc de Boutteville's gallery was described as 'le véritable berceau de la peinture moderne' (2) Group exhibitions were shown under the general title 'Peintres Impressionnistes et Symbolistes', a title which Le Barc had obviously borrowed from the Cafe Volpini Exhibition of 1889, where Gauguin and his followers had exhibited their new work for the first time. In addition to works from the School of Pont-Aven, Le Barc also exhibited the Nabis artists, the neo-Impressionists, and a fourth un-named group which had been formed by Valtat, Albert André, and d'Espagnet. (3) Among the painters whom Le Barc showed in the year immediately prior to O'Conor's inclusion in his 1894 exhibition series were Bonnard, Maurice Denis, Filliger, Guillaumin, Maufra, Sérusier, Signac, Lautrec, Vallotton and Vuillard.

O'Conor's debut exhibition with Le Barc was the sixth in the series, in March 1894, and he was represented by six paintings (4) in an exhibition which also included work by Anquetin, Bonnard, Chaudet, Denis, Filliger, Gauguin, Loiseau, Ranson, Seguin, Sérusier and Vuillard. Although none of O'Conor's exhibits has been positively identified among his traced paintings, it is tempting to speculate that 'Paysage Jaune' may have been the same painting as 'Yellow landscape', Pont-Aven, (REF.PTGS.NO.017) or that 'Vieille Femme' may have been the painting known to-day by its ascribed title as 'Breton Peasant Woman Knitting' (REF.PTGS.NO.019).
The inclusion of works by Gauguin in this exhibition may have been of the utmost significance for O'Conor who was exhibiting with Le Barc for the first time. Gauguin had been active in Paris since his return from Tahiti at the end of August of the previous year, and he was represented in the same exhibition by two paintings. In the circumstances it is highly likely that both O'Conor and Gauguin would have attended the opening of this exhibition, and probable that if they did they would have met there for the first time. Even if they were not to have met on this occasion, Gauguin being an exhibitor himself, could scarcely have been unaware of the paintings which O'Conor was showing, leading to the conclusion that in the first instance it was probably the quality of O'Conor's work rather than his personality alone which brought him and Gauguin into rapport, and which led to the foundation of the friendship between them.

We may also conclude that the quality of O'Conor's work in this exhibition made a direct impression on the highly respected critic Paul Fargue, who wrote a letter to O'Conor at the end of April in connection with an article which he was then in the course of preparing. Whether or not O'Conor failed to reply, or whether or not Fargue changed his mind about the article's content is not clear, for in spite of this approach no article by Fargue mentioning O'Conor's work has been found. The likelihood is that Fargue was then in the process of preparing a type of artistic profile on O'Conor and his work for the second volume in the series 'Portraits du prochaine siècle - poètes et prosateurs', published in 1894 by the review Essais d'Art Libre. The second volume, which unfortunately never appeared in print although its contents were announced in advance, was to include studies of some painters including Filiger, Anquetin, Bernard, Gauguin, and van Gogh among others. The proposal to include O'Conor alongside such
distinguished company would surely have had a significant impact on his reputation, had this work been published at this period in his career when his creative powers were at their peak.

Later in the year, in July, O'Conor exhibited again with Le Barc, on that occasion showing four landscapes only, and each of these he quite simply entitled 'Paysage.'(8) There was also a brief acknowledgement published in the October edition of the review 'L'Ymagier,' to the exhibition at Le Barc de Boutteville's gallery - presumably because of the date of publication its reference is to the seventh exhibition in July - in which O'Conor's name is listed as an exhibitor of 'Paysages' alongside the names of the other exhibitors singled out for a mention, Filiger, Henri de Groux, Robertson, and Rousseau, (9) Although we do not unfortunately have information on the specific content of any of these exhibits of O'Conor's, we may conclude that they were considered to be works of the highest quality to have been admitted to an exhibition of this standard in such distinguished company. The catalogue preface for the sixth exhibition was written by Charles Morice, and the critic René Barjean, writing in the review, 'Essais d'Art Libre' made this reference to O'Conor's exhibits:

"....deux paysages, signés O'Connor (sic). Quel chantre émis de la lumière! Il ne semble pas qu'on ait jusqu'ici proclamé suffisamment l'atelier rayonnement de ses hymnes." (10)

Roderic O'Conor and Paul Gauguin (1894-1895)

After the March exhibition at Le Barc's gallery, O'Conor returned to Brittany again, the records showing that he made a formal declaration of his change
of place of residence at the town hall in Pont-Aven on 25 April, 1894. It may be purely co-incidental that Gauguin, accompanied by his youthful mistress and model Annah the Javanese who kept a pet monkey, also arrived in Pont-Aven at approximately the same time - it is thought at the end of April. (11) One detail about which we can be sure in view of the close relationship between their respective dates of transfer from Paris to Pont-Aven, is that O'Conor and Gauguin did not travel there together, as Gauguin is known to have attended the opening of the Salon for the Société des Beaux-Arts in Paris on 26 April, (12) the day after O'Conor's arrival in Pont-Aven. On the other hand, given what we now know about their contact in Pont-Aven which was to develop significantly in that year, they may even have made an arrangement in Paris to rendezvous in Brittany.

Assuming that some initial contact had been made between them in Paris, probably at Le Barc's gallery, it is not surprising to discover that the friendship between Gauguin and O'Conor took on a deeper significance in Brittany during the early part of that summer. Neither is it a surprise to find that the name of Armand Seguin, along with Roderic O'Conor's, is linked into the events which took place at the infamous brawl at the port of Concarneau, in which Gauguin had his ankle broken. Seguin after all, had been O'Conor's closest friend since 1891, and Seguin himself, in later years, recorded the significance both for him and for O'Conor, of their association with Gauguin:

'Ses (Gauguin's) élèves l'entouraient, tous avides de vérités, jeunes et ardents; plus tard à Pont-Aven, O'Conor et moi-même furent ses amis. Je parlerai de tous dans d'autres pages, je dirai l'Art de ceux qu'il aimait et qui furent compagnons de ma jeunesse. Denis, Bonnard, Vuillard, Verkade.' (13)

The Concarneau incident has been so embellished in the numerous accounts about Gauguin's 1894 visit to Brittany, that it has almost taken on the
status of popular legend. To be wholly accurate, O'Conor is not specifically named in any of the surviving reports which record this affair, although his name has always been linked to it in published biographies on Gauguin's life and work. There seems little doubt however, that O'Conor was a participant, as a letter of Charles Filiger's reveals:

"Vous savez peut-être déjà par les journaux que Gauguin a eu la jambe cassé à Concarneau la semaine dernier. La cause, une partie offerte par ce dernier aux amis, Seguin, Jourdan, un Anglais, et les dames de ces messieurs." (14)

The 'Anglais', although not named, was without doubt Roderic O'Conor.

The incident to which Filiger made reference happened on 25 May 1894, during a visit to the port of Concarneau, when Gauguin, Annah, and her pet monkey were with Seguin, Jourdan, O'Conor and their respective female companions. As far as can be ascertained from the reports available, (15) several youngsters began to taunt the group, and they appear to have singled Annah out for their insults beginning to throw stones in her direction, taking exception it seems to the colour of her skin (16). Seguin's response was to pull the offender's ear, an action which precipitated the fight in which the chief attacker was identified as René-Yves Sauban, 44 years of age, employed in the port as a pilot.

Gauguin spent the rest of the summer in Pont-Aven, recuperating from his injuries and beginning to plan yet again for another visit to the South Seas. He, O'Conor, and Seguin must have drawn more closely together, particularly during the period of Gauguin's recuperation from his injuries, and both Seguin and O'Conor must have been involved in discussions with Gauguin about his proposed journey. By the autumn their plans had advanced to the point where Gauguin wrote in September to his musician friend in Paris, William Molard, to tell him that he would shortly return to Paris and make one final attempt to get enough money together for his journey. Gauguin wrote to
Molard that he would take two friends with him, 'Seguin and an Irishman.' (17) The Irishman was unquestionably O'Conor, but in the event, as history has shown, neither Seguin nor O'Conor left with Gauguin. When asked about this incident in future years, O'Conor is reported as having said 'snuffling indignation': 'do you see me going to the South Seas with that character?' (18)

There is further evidence of the close friendship between Gauguin and O'Conor from the well known monoprint entitled 'The Angelus in Brittany,' which Gauguin inscribed and dedicated 'for my friend O'Conor/ one man of Samoa/ P. Gauguin 1894.' Field has suggested that this was one of a number of monoprints which Gauguin made during the period of convalescence from his Concarneau injuries, when he would have been less mobile and unable to get around. (19) Such a view might lead us to conclude that this gift not only symbolised their friendship, but that it was also Gauguin's way of thanking O'Conor for his help at that time.

Also to be taken into consideration in our analysis of the contact between Gauguin and O'Conor is the report that O'Conor (and Seguin) were in Gauguin's company at Seguin's house at St. Julien in le Pouldu, when Gauguin is said to have drawn the image known as 'La femme aux figues' on an etching plate. It is alleged that Seguin later oxidised and retouched the plate which was subsequently printed by Delâtre. (20) This event has historically been placed to the year 1895 but by this date Gauguin was back in Paris. If the events did happen in this fashion they were more likely to have taken place in 1894.
Two further prints exist with dedications from Gauguin to O'Conor. A lithographic print made in 1894, although of a Tahitian subject, 'Manao Tupapau' (Elle pense au revenant) has the inscription 'A l'artiste O'Conor, Aita Aramoe Paul Gauguin.' (21) There is also the woodblock print made by Seguin to illustrate the poem written by Charles Morice and dedicated to Paul Gauguin, which Gauguin gave to a number of his friends, including Dolent, Maufra, Sérusier, and Mallarmé, before leaving France in 1895. The inscription varies on each print, on that given to O'Conor it reads 'taata O'Connor (sic) vau hinaaro oe nafeu oe parahi Samoa fenua P. Gauguin' which has been translated as 'Mr. O'Conor, I would like to see you living in Samoa, but when?' (22)

O'Conor, at this stage, had consolidated his position as an exhibitor at Le Barc's gallery and was beginning to be referred to more frequently in important critical reviews which appeared in Paris. His association with the gallery had already identified him with some of the other established painters active in Pont-Aven, including of course Seguin and Filiger who had exhibited with Le Barc in 1893 and again in 1894. This association would have been known to the writer and noted art critic, Alfred Jarry, who was in Pont-Aven in July of 1894 staying at the Pension Gloanec,(23) and when he published an article on Filiger's work in the Mercure de France in September, he made a point of referring to O'Conor's subject matter and to his attitude as a painter. This reference must have been to his recent paintings which Jarry would have seen in Pont-Aven that summer, and it is all the more intriguing if only for the reason that it is to subject matter which has not clearly emerged as a result of the search for paintings by Roderic O'Conor.
The passage in which Jarry refers to O'Connor's work, (and to that of Seguin's), was in the context of his evaluation of that which an artist—Filiger in particular—might consider to be 'beautiful,' and therefore that which would appear as his subject matter:

'Disant que tout est beau dans la nature, il (Filiger) oublie que tout est beau pour quelques-uns seuls qui savent voir; et que chacun du moins eit un beau spécial, le plus proche de soi...Ainsi:...O'Connor les modèles suggérés, à l'heure de la sieste, par les passants locaux de la place triangulaire, dédain un peu de choix, par croyance que le peintre, hors du temps, n'a que faire du lieu et de l'espace... (24)

What, apart from confirming O'Connor's known independence of mind, did Jarry mean to imply by describing his (O'Connor's) belief that the painter is outside time, and is therefore not concerned with place or space either? A possible interpretation is that the paintings which Jarry had seen did not lend themselves to any recognised grouping, association, or contextual relationship to the work of his friends in Pont-Aven, and that O'Connor was deliberately working outside accepted theories and conventions. This, from the evidence of the landscapes of 1892 and 1893, is an acceptable enough assumption to have made, but we may also infer from Jarry's comments that in 1894 O'Connor was developing new subject matter in which figures were playing a more important role than hitherto. Were these paintings possibly the fore-runners of the more naturalistic portraits which O'Connor was to paint towards the end of the century, and were they for that reason 'different' from the work of the others, or were their differences to be found in a more radical form of expression, unique to O'Connor's own sensibility? Jaworska tends to the view that in Pont-Aven, O'Connor 'was in a state of permanent opposition to everything that those about him were doing' and that his work never completely adopted Bernard's cloisonnist principles, nor did it reflect any of Sérusier's theories even though O'Connor was in more or less constant touch with him while in Brittany. (25) While this is to a certain extent true, at least as far as Bernard's style is
concerned, as we have seen (Chapter V) there is evidence in O'Conor's work of changes in his style of painting after he arrived in Pont-Aven, which must have been directly related not only to his change of environment, but also specifically to his contact with those artists who had been associated with Gauguin. It may therefore be the case that Jarry quite simply found it difficult to locate his paintings, which Jaworska has described as 'eclectic', within the context of the Pont-Aven style and without the evidence from the actual paintings themselves these observations of Jarry's, on which Jaworska seems to have based her conclusions, will continue to remain something of a puzzle.

Taking all these circumstances into account, in particular the evidence of the contact with Gauguin, it can scarcely be co-incidental that that year also appears to mark the end of O'Conor's involvement with the series of heavily striped paintings. 'Landscape - Brittany' (REF.PTGS.NO.022) signed and dated by O'Conor to 1894, is clearly the most adventurous and pictorially advanced work in the series of striped pictures. Indeed no works from subsequent years have been traced in which the striping of colours has been pushed to such extremes, although there are some paintings such as 'Flower Piece' - an ascribed title surely - (REF.PTGS.NO.025) and 'La Jeune Bretonne, Pont-Aven' (REF.PTGS.NO.027) which use a quite different version of the striping. When the colour is applied in this way to a portrait thought to have been painted several years later, 'Bretonne' (REF.PTGS.NO.077) the striping is so underplayed as to suggest a reference to a former style rather than a continuing pre-occupation with a technique which O'Conor had made very much his own.
The landscape 'La Ferme de Lezaven, Finistere' (REF.PTGS.NO.023) also dated to 1894 is a very fine work, but its method of painting is quite different from that used in the boldly striped 'Landscape - Brittany' (REF.PTGS.NO.022) which is from the same year. The group of farm buildings has been painted with much thinner paint and the striping which is present has a vertical emphasis rather than having the rhythmic or flowing interpretation of the Pont-Aven landscapes from the previous two years. The Lezaven farm was a cluster of buildings on the edge of the village of Pont-Aven, a part of which had served for a studio for numerous artists for as much as twenty years before Gauguin's arrival in Pont-Aven. (26) As Gauguin himself is known to have painted there, this location would have had particular significance for O'Connor and indeed there is more than a hint of Gauguin's influence in this work which suggests that a new direction was being followed. 'L'Approche de Lezaven' (REF.PTGS.NO.028) undated but painted in the same environment, more closely resembles Gauguin's style particularly with reference to its colour range and to its rather schematic representation of trees, foliage, and shrubbery. The use of vertical tree trunks as a type of screen to help cut down on the spatial reading of his paintings, was a favourite device of Gauguin's, suggesting that O'Connor in these paintings was working more directly under his influence.

Before the year ended, both O'Connor and Gauguin were back in Paris. O'Connor may have travelled back early in November to deliver two landscape pictures to the eighth exhibition staged by Le Barc de Boutteville, which opened on 8 November (27), and Gauguin is known to have returned to Paris on 14 November after the conclusion of the legal proceedings arising from the Concarneau brawl. By December 15, O'Connor was back in residence at Grez once more, presumably staying with the Chadwicks. (28) He may well have
attended the exhibition of wood-cuts, watercolour transfers, wood sculptures, and Tahitian paintings, which Gauguin staged in his rue Vercingetorix studio at the beginning of December, and he would almost certainly have been in attendance at the opening of Seguin's exhibition at Le Barc de Bouteville's gallery in February 1895, where there would in all probability have been further contact with Gauguin, who had been asked by Seguin to write the catalogue introduction for the exhibition.

O'Conor is also known to have been present at the sale of Gauguin's paintings which was held in Paris at Hôtel Drouot on 18 February, at which time he purchased Gauguin's picture entitled 'Te Nave Nave Fenua.' For this splendid painting O'Conor paid the sum of 500 francs. Gauguin's intention was to raise as much money as possible for his forthcoming journey, and the sale was supported in the main by his artist friends. At some point after the sale, when the painting had passed into O'Conor's hands, Gauguin wrote a letter to him in Grez thanking him specifically for the receipt of an undisclosed sum of money which Seguin had delivered to him. This is unlikely to have been the purchase money for the painting which O'Conor had bought at the auction, for this would properly have gone to Hôtel Drouot, the auction house which had conducted the sale. The more likely explanation is that O'Conor had made an extra gift of money to Gauguin to supplement what little he had, and to help towards the cost of his proposed journey. In March, O'Conor was again in residence at Grez, where he probably stayed with Francis Chadwick, and at the end of June Gauguin finally left France on what was to be his final trip to the South Seas.

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The last occasion on which O'Conor exhibited at Le Barc de Boutteville's gallery was in the tenth exhibition in September 1895, when he showed three paintings which, from their titles, we may conclude to have been still lives. (32) It is evident that O'Conor's name and his work had by then become closely identified with Le Barc's gallery, for Francis Jourdain, in his reminiscences, chose to link his name with other artists with whom he had come in contact:

'Chez Le Barc, j'ai connu aussi Seguin, Gausson, Roy, Razetti, Guilloux, O'Connor, (sic) Rippl-Ronai, Maufra, Fauché, Iker, Marc Moucher, Durenne, Jeanne Jacquemin, Amiet.' (33)

The change in subject matter away from landscapes and towards subjects normally associated with the studio, probably owed something to a year in which he had once again been involved in a certain amount of change and in a transfer of his location. With Gauguin finally gone from France there probably seemed to O'Conor little reason to go back to Pont-Aven, and in any case the place had begun to lose its previous sense of excitement. Gauguin's group had begun to drift apart and its members were beginning to go their own separate ways. In Paris, O'Conor may have found that he was attracting too many inquisitive people who would have been curious to know more from him about Gauguin's personality, and about his paintings, and he may have felt in need of a quieter and more contemplative existence somewhere off the beaten track. At some point after the September exhibition with Le Barc de Boutteville, O'Conor moved yet again for he is known to have been in residence by 12 December 1895 in Rochefort-en-Terre, a quiet and somewhat remote picturesque village of stone houses, situated in Morbihan in the far west of France. (34)
1. Le Barc de Boutteville, prior to 1891, had specialised as a dealer in classical and historical paintings, before being persuaded by the impressionist painter Paul Vogler, who had studied with Sisley, to show the best of the new and up and coming artists. The established galleries such as those of Georges Petit, Boussod et Valadon, and Durand-Ruel were following a more conservative policy and exhibiting paintings by Monet, Sisley, and Pissarro, who, although they were still considered to be controversial by many in Parisian art circles, had at least been given full recognition by the critics.


3. ibid. p.95


5. Gauguin's paintings were 'Nave, Nave, Moe' (Wildenstein 512), and an unidentified nude entitled 'Taurna.'


7. The full list of artists to be featured in the second volume, and their writer/critics, included the following names: Fénex by C. Saunier, Filiger by J. Bois, Anquetin by Roinard, Bernard by Charles H. Hirsch, Gauguin by Dolent, Gausson by Frantz Jourdain, Hayet by P. Fort, Luce by Francis Jourdain, Puvis de Chavannes by Morice, van Gaugh by Gauguin, Whistler and Manet by Mallarmé, Seguin, Vuillard and Willumsen by L.P.Fargue. O'Connor's name appeared in the pre-publicity for the second volume which was published by Essais d'Art Libre, Paris (1894)

8. Le Barc de Boutteville, 7e Exposition. July 7, 1894, catalogue nos. 42, 43, 44, and 45; Each entitled 'Paysage'

9. L'Imagier, Tome 1er.1894-'95, published October 1894, Paris p.66

10. Barjean, René, Essais d'Art Libre, August/September/October, 1894, p. 198


13. Seguin, Armand, 'Paul Gauguin', l'Occident, March (1903) p.163

15. Maurice, René, 'Autour de Gauguin—sa rixe à Concarneau avec les marins Bretons,' *Nouvelle Revue de Bretagne*, novembre-decembre 1953, pp.432-41
Maurice in this article analyses the evidence from newspaper accounts which were published at the time, and from those legal and judicial records which survive from the court case which followed the fight. Unfortunately the most valuable records, namely the depositions of the participants and the witnesses, no longer exist.

16. Annah, known as 'the Javanese' was born in Ceylon, and although she has been described by some writers as being a negress, her appearance in Gauguin's painting, 'Aita Tamari vahine Judith te parari' shows her as a young dark skinned woman. Other descriptions of her as a 'mulatto', that is a person of mixed race, are probably more accurate.


18. This information was relayed on to Denys Sutton by Alden Brooks, and included by him in his article which was published in *Studio* in November 1960, op.cit. Brooks, who had met up with O'Connor in later years in Paris had apparently received this response from him when he asked why he did not travel with Gauguin. See the letter dated 12 July 1956, from Brooks to Sutton in the Tate gallery archives, from which this quotation is taken.

19. Field, Richard S., *Paul Gauguin: Monotypes*, exhibition catalogue, Philadelphia Museum of Art, March/May 1973, p.15 and catalogue no. 25. Field describes this print as a 'watercolour transfer monotype' and links it to a number of similar prints which he speculated were made through a transfer process, going from one water colour on paper to another sheet of paper.

20. For a full description of the history of this reported event, and for an analysis of the probable authorship of the print see Boyle-Turner, Caroline, (1986) op.cit., catalogue number G.5a at pp.114-15.
Although O'Connor is not referred to specifically by Boyle-Turner in her account, his name was linked to this event by Jean Caillac, the Parisian expert who had the responsibility of drawing up the catalogue for the sale of O'Connor's effects in 1956 at Hotel Drouot, and his version was included in a brief catalogue description of lot No. 36, 'La femme aux figues.'

21. Illustrated in the O'Connor sale catalogue, Hôtel Drouot, February 6/7, 1956 See planche II.

22. Illustrated in Boyle-Turner, (1986) op.cit. at p.105. The translation is given as footnote 2 to the text describing this print on p.104

23. Jaworska, (1972) op.cit., p.167

24. Jarry, Alfred, 'Filiger', *Mercure de France*, septembre 1894, pp.73-77

25. Jaworska, (1972) op.cit., p.220

26. For a full account of the history of the Lezaven farm as a studio base for Pont-Aven artists see Sellin, David, (1982) op.cit., pp.11-16 et passim.
27. *Le Barc de Boutteville, 8e Exposition*, November 8, 1894, catalogue nos. 38, and 39, both entitled 'Paysage.'

28. The date is recorded on his Registre d'Immatriculation. O'Conor papers, private collection (L) France.

29. 'Te Nave, Nave, Fenua' (The delightful land), Wildenstein 455, is now in the collection of the Ohara Museum of Art, Kurashiki, Japan.


31. O'Conor received a letter when he was in Grez from Gauguin's dealer and representative, Georges Chaudet. Private collection (L) France. See Chapter VI this work, for an analysis of the contents of this letter.

32. *Le Barc de Boutteville, 10e Exposition*, catalogue nos. 83, Un Sentier; no.84, Un Sentier; and no. 85, Nature Morte.


34. The date is noted on O'Conor's Registre d'Immatriculation. Private collection (L) France.
CHAPTER VIII

ROCHEFORT-EN-TERRE AND PONT-AVEN (1895-1904)

Rochefort-en-Terre

There was already something of a tradition for artists to work at Rochefort-en-Terre, and as in Pont-Aven, and indeed as there had been at Grez, there was an artists' hotel there where visiting painters were well received by a sympathetic owner, in this case François Lecadre, owner of l'Hotel Lecadre where O'Connor chose to stay.

This deliberate decision of O'Connor's not to return to Brittany from Paris seems to have been taken in order to remove himself to a quieter location where he could assimilate the events of the previous year, and where he could consider the relevance to his own paintings of his contact with Gauguin and the artists who had formed his group in Pont-Aven. It may be stating the obvious to point out that Rochefort-en-Terre was neither Paris, nor Pont-Aven, but in all probability it was precisely because it was a viable alternative to both of these very different locales, that the remote Morbihan village appealed to him at that particular time. It was also probably the case that because of the association of Gauguin's name with Pont-Aven and his position in Paris, together with the much published events of the previous year - including the Concarneau incident, the Drouot auction and Gauguin's subsequent departure from France - that in Pont-Aven O'Connor would have been seen as something of a celebrity, too frequently in the public eye for his own liking. He would almost certainly not have thrived
on being too frequently referred to as having been a follower of Gauguin, nor
would he have been likely to have enjoyed all the attendant publicity that
such a position would have held for the curious. As an associate of
Gauguin's he would have had a reputation to maintain and he may not have
been prepared to put himself in that position, fearing that too much would
have been expected of him as a result.

Also for O'Conor to consider were the changes in his own personal
circumstances as the chief beneficiary under his father's will, and with that
his status as an absentee landlord with an assured income from the letting
of lands and labourer's cottages on the O'Conor estate in Roscommon. This
income, and the financial security which it afforded him, was in direct
contrast to the completely hazardous financial existence with which some of
his friends like Seguin and Filiger had to cope in their every day lives.
The realisation that he was now in a privileged financial position must have
required some adjustment on his part, for the natural tendency in such
circumstances would have been to worry much less about his future financial
security. In relative terms it would no longer have been quite as critical
for him to continue to build on the exhibition successes of the previous
year in Paris, so that he might consolidate his artistic position and thus
ensure an ever increasing audience for his work, with the prospect of sales
to come in the future. (1)

Although there was a guaranteed income due to him from the letting of lands
and buildings on the Milton estate and in adjacent townlands, there were
also logistical problems associated with being a landowner in Ireland while
residing in France. Milltown House, the former family home, had to be
maintained and as a landlord he had a responsibility to see to the needs of
his Roscommon tenants. O'Conor's way of managing his affairs while in France was through his agent in Ireland, Mr. Godfrey Clarke, who had also acted in a similar capacity for his father. (2)

There were on-going problems with some of the tenants almost since the date of his inheritance, particularly with one named Matthew Flanagan of Milton, Castleplunket, who had fallen into arrears with the payment of his rent and who had been particularly evasive in meeting his commitments in spite of numerous approaches made by Clarke. Several other tenants, perhaps taking advantage of the fact that the estate had passed into the hands of an O'Conor who was not actually living in Ireland, had also been slow to pay rents. Clarke reported regularly to O'Conor on his progress with the collection of rents and sent him various amounts of money which he had received on the dates when collections were made. Most of the tenants were poor and they depended heavily for their own meagre incomes on their ability to successfully farm their holdings, and to sell their produce and animals at small profits at market. As a result Clarke began to find it a better tactic to wait until fair days had passed and crops and livestock had been sold, in order to collect those sums of money which were due to O'Conor.

Flanagan continued to be a problem, however, and writs were issued against him and some of the other defaulters in order to secure the money which was owed. In July of 1895 it had been decided that proceedings should be initiated through the courts in order to have Flanagan evicted from Milltown, a tactic, which if successful, would then require the appointing of caretakers to look after the property. By 17 October in the same year O'Conor had decided to proceed with the eviction notice, and to seek the two years arrears of rent which were due to him, together with the costs of
eviction. At the eleventh hour Flanagan paid up, and against the advice of his solicitors in Ireland O'Conor allowed him to retain his tenancy on the strength of his promise to pay regularly in future.

In spite of the promises which had been given, Flanagan's ways did not change and the problems continued with his late payments and sometimes none at all. By 1897 the over all position had worsened, with more tenants falling behind with their rents. When the weather was bad and crops were lost, if grazing rents were not to hand and if the sales at the fairs in Strokestown and Castlerea were down, the tenants had no other sources of income to meet their own financial obligations. As a result there were frequent requests for some abatement of rents and the tenants on O'Conor's estate adopted the tactic of waiting to see what abatements would be granted on neighbouring estates, in order to strengthen their own bargaining position. The former family house in Roscommon gradually fell in to disrepair so that by 1898 it was badly in need of painting and additional repair work, and the new tenant, Thomas Higgins, was asked to see to the proper maintenance of the property.

Not only was there rent to be collected in Ireland, there was also rent to be paid out in respect of just over twenty eight acres of land at Emlagh, which was part of the demesne of Milltown House and which was included in the lease to Thomas Higgins. The arrangement was not a particularly favourable one for O'Conor, as Clarke drew his attention to the fact that more was being paid out than was coming in. There were also additional financial obligations to be met in connection with succession duties arising from O'Conor's inheritance, and from the correspondence which passed between Godfrey Clarke in Roscommon, Roderic O'Conor in France, and his solicitors.
In Dublin, we may conclude that almost every procedure was fraught with unexpected difficulties and rather intricate legal procedures. Letters also went astray and had to be re-directed, and the management of the whole affair probably took up a considerable amount of his time and gave him unnecessary worry.

It can scarcely be mere co-incidence that during the period when he was involved in these transactions with his tenants in Ireland, acting through his agent and his solicitors, O'Conor did not exhibit any work in Paris. One conclusion we may reasonably draw from this absence from exhibitions is that the role of being an absentee landlord, with troublesome tenants in Ireland, was a constant worry to him and he may in such circumstances have found it difficult to sustain his painting at a significantly high level. His exhibitions with le Barc had placed him in distinguished company alongside the most advanced artists of the day, and the competition to sustain himself at that level in Paris would have been intense. O'Conor's comparative isolation in Rochefort at a considerable distance from the centre of things in Paris, allied to Gauguin's departure from France and the gradual dispersal of the members of the Pont-Aven School, probably created something of a vacuum for him, and would not have been the ideal circumstances for the development of his work to even higher levels. The facts are that no work was exhibited in Paris between September 1895, the date of his last exhibition with le Barc de Boutteville, and March of 1903, when, after a lapse of eight years he exhibited once again in the Salon des Indépendants as well as in the inaugural exhibition of the new Salon d'Automne in October of the same year. It is possible that there may even have been some disenchantment with le Barc himself, for O'Conor is known in later years to have been generally suspicious of most gallery dealers, and it
was an observation of those who knew him that he kept as far away from commercial dealers as possible. In any case, even if there had been the possibility of exhibiting there again, all that would have changed with the death of Le Barc de Boutteville in 1897. (3)

Rochefort paintings and the marine pictures of 1897-1898

We must assume that there were not all that many paintings produced at Rochefort, for in the search for O'Conor's paintings few have emerged which through their dates alone, or through their inscriptions, can be confidently said to have been painted there. That is not to say that he was completely inactive during this period which looks increasingly like a period of partial withdrawal and re-adjustment, but in trying to establish a chronology for his work in Rochefort it is particularly difficult to find a central theme or unifying concept which could help to coherently link or group paintings. 'La Jeune Bretonne' (REF.PTGS.NO.029) for example and 'Jeune Bretonne au bonnet' (REF.PTGS.NO.030) dated 1895, are clearly of the same Breton girl although the pictorial effect is deliberately different in each case. 'La Jeune Bretonne' (REF.PTGS.NO.030) emphasises the leading edge of the figure and the head body profile allowing the figure to emerge from dark to light so that the subtle rhythm of the profile is emphasised. These same qualities and the use of the decorative contour, much liked by the Pont-Aven circle also appears in O'Conor drawings such as 'Jeune Bretonne' (REF.DRGS.NO.016) and 'Breton Girl seated' (REF.DRGS.NO.025)
'Still Life' (REF.PTGS.NO.031) is a straightforward and academic painting which, if it is correctly dated '96, shows a remarkable degree of conservatism when compared with a vigorous painting such as 'Nature morte aux pommes' (Ref.PTGS.NO.021) which was painted two years earlier in Pont-Aven. 'Femme Bretonne' (REF.PTGS.NO.032) if correctly placed with other likely Rochefort paintings, is equally academic in concept without any evidence of the earlier syntheticism which made 'Breton peasant woman knitting' (REF.PTGS.NO.019) such a remarkable painting, and it really is closer to early Manet portraits of the 1860's. Its scale, allied to its degree of realism, leads to the speculation that this may have been a commissioned portrait painted while he was in Rochefort, for a photograph of the painting was included in an album which once belonged to O'Conor, being placed alongside another photograph of a well known and easily identified Rochefort house, presumably where the sitter lived.(4)

There is no firm evidence either to confirm that undated paintings such as 'La Ronde des Korrigans' (REF.PTGS.NO.033), 'Charging bull by moonlight' (REF.PTGS.NO.034) or 'Study of a young girl' (REF.PTGS.NO.035) belong to the Rochefort period, although these three very different subjects do have similar brushwork suggesting that they may have been painted at roughly the same time. The key work in helping to date this group may be 'La Ronde des Korrigans' (5) in which one senses strong similarities with Gauguin's painting 'Upaupa' (Fires of Joy) (6) which was painted during the first visit to Tahiti and included among the works which Gauguin put up for sale at Hôtel Drouot in 1895 - a sale which O'Conor attended. Both Gauguin's and O'Conor's paintings have similar compositions and both depict nocturnal scenes which refer to the mysteries of strange ritualistic dances, the beliefs for which are embedded in the folk history of the two distinct
cultures from which the imagery is drawn. Gauguin was more explicit in his painting through the inclusion of figures which add to the sense of drama and ritual, while O'Conor has tried to convey a sense of mood and atmosphere in which figures are alluded to, but never explicitly stated.

'Charging bull by moonlight' (REF.PTGS.NO.034) is equally mysterious in its mood and in every respect is a most unusual choice of subject matter for O'Conor. It has been suggested by one writer that this image carries some measure of sexual symbolism (7) but the relationship between the viewer and the figure of the bull is altogether more threatening and ominous. The likelihood is that O'Conor was responding in this painting to a set of circumstances of which he had direct experience, and the interpretation of this image is therefore more overtly emotional rather than symbolic.

The portrait by O'Conor 'Self portrait' (REF.PTGS.NO.060), is tentatively placed to this period despite the signature and dating which suggests a later work. It really is inconceivable that such a refined self portrait should have been signed in such a clumsy and insensitive way by the artist himself. In terms of its technique and its colour range, the painting compares favourably with the details found in some of O'Conor's marine paintings from 1897/'98, shortly to be discussed. O'Conor's portrait also relates to a self portrait by Delacroix in the Louvre which may have been the inspiration for this picture. Both artists are depicted in formal attire with similar expressions of aloofness and detachment. Clive Bell in later years confirmed that O'Conor had a great admiration for the work of Delacroix (and incidentally for that of Ingres as well).(8)
The three more heavily textured paintings, 'Figures in a pool' (REF.PTGS.NO.063), 'Landscape' (REF.PTGS.NO.064), and 'Les toits rouges' (REF.PTGS.NO.065) seem to allude to the earlier Brittany techniques and might well have been painted at Pont-Aven rather than at Rochefort. 'Landscape' (REF.PTGS.NO.064) in its treatment of cast shadows in contrast with areas of rich sunlight, also seems to relate to 'The Glade' (REF.PTGS.NO.018) where similar effects were achieved through different means. The three paintings are however sufficiently dissimilar from the earlier works to consider them in this context. 'Figures in a pool' (REF.PTGS.NO.063) is a most unusual picture in the way in which the two figures have been combined, and it may be that O'Connor was trying to suggest some symbolic relationship between them, wishing to explore some visual possibilities which were different to his usual painting practice. The painting of the pool ripples compares favourably with similar details in one of the 1897-'98 sea-scapes, 'Remous' (REF.PTGS.NO.055) but equally, some of the heavily textured effects which have resulted from an excessive use of the palette knife, are also to be found in much later paintings made between 1920 and 1930.

A significant number of sea scapes have been traced, some of which are dated 1897 and some 1898. No evidence has been found to confirm the visit to the coast in 1897, other than that provided by the paintings themselves, but it is known that O'Connor was in Pont-Aven and at le Pouldu in the summer of 1898,(9) and these marine paintings with their foreground rocks are consistent with the appearance of the rocky shoreline to the north of le Pouldu. (10)

O'Connor's interest in the picturesque rocky foreshore and the turbulent sea invites comparison with the series of marine pictures which Monet had
painted on Belle-Isle in 1886. Some of these were first exhibited in 1887 at Georges Petit's Gallery in the Sixth International Exhibition, and two years later Monet included twelve of them in his retrospective exhibition with Rodin. Although O'Connor may well have seen these paintings of Monet's at the time they were exhibited in Paris, they are unlikely to have had much direct influence on his own distinctive sea-scapes some ten years later. Where Monet preferred an expanded view showing the opposing forces of land and sea at their most elemental, in which he described the rocks of Belle-Isle as having a 'sombre and awesome appearance',(11) O'Connor's vision was expressed through a rather more intimate view of the coastline in which he was primarily concerned with the visual effects of waves and surf breaking and foaming against the rocky foreshore. O'Connor also pursued a rather more decorative treatment of the foaming waves and the rocks themselves, in paintings which are much less threatening and ominous than Monet's sea-scapes.

O'Connor had already made at least two paintings of the sea as early as 1885 which were inspired by naturalism, (see Chapter III and his 'Between the Cliffs, Aberystwyth, REF.PTGS.NO.002; and 'On the Shore, Aberystwyth, REF.PTGS.NO.003) but in his approach to the Brittany seascapes of 1897 we note an altogether different attitude through which he displays the more expressive approach which had been gradually introduced into his work at Pont-Aven. What O'Connor does share with Monet is the absence of any figurative references in his marine paintings, (with the exception of the unusual painting 'Marine au clair de lune', REF.PTGS.NO.018) preferring instead to focus his attention downwards on the rocks and the foaming sea, and to refrain from making those types of symbolic and narrative associations which were typical of many nineteenth century marine paintings.
where the inclusion of boats, lighthouses, cottages, figures, or fishermen, could in different ways convey the power of the sea and of nature, and of man's relationship to those forces and his dependence upon nature.

Of the painters associated with Gauguin's group, Henry Moret who had painted views of the sea close to Lorient as early as 1883,(12) developed a particular affinity and identity with the Brittany coastline soon after the date of his first visit to l'Ile de Groix in 1892, which he sustained until his death in 1913. In spite of his link to Gauguin, Moret's painting style remained loyal to the traditions of impressionism, and he is unlikely to have had any direct influence on O'Conor, who, as we have seen, had already moved away from impressionist influenced paintings by the time of his arrival in Pont-Aven in 1891.

Another painter intimately linked to Gauguin and his original group at Pont-Aven and much closer in friendship to O'Conor than Moret, Wladyslaw Slewinski, was also especially attracted to the sea as subject matter and it is surely not without coincidence that he too was known to have been active at le Pouldu in 1897. From there he wrote to his friend Zenon Przesmycki: 'You can't imagine the splendour of this sea, and how many pictures one could turn out if one could stay here for a year or two.' (13). Could it be that O'Conor and Slewinski worked together at some point in the course of that year on their respective marine pictures? There is no firm written evidence to confirm this but it would be the most likely outcome if O'Conor did indeed travel from Rochefort-en-Terre to le Pouldu to spend some time in Slewinski's company, and to share Slewinski's enthusiasm for paintings of the sea. Comparison between their respective approaches shows little in common however, as both men had by that date already adopted quite
different styles in their paintings. Slewinski's sea scapes are almost always more restrained and not as expressive as O'Conor's with respect both to their drawing and to their colour range. Where O'Conor continued whenever possible to use his colours at nearly full strength, Slewinski almost always preferred a sombre and more closely related range of tonal values. The evidence from their paintings in that year would suggest that there were no specific theoretical concerns which they might have been exploring together.

There is also evidence that the young Breton painter Adolphe Beaufrère, who was born at Quimperlé, may have had some contact with O'Conor in 1898 at Le Pouldu.(14) In fact O'Conor is given the credit, along with Filiger, for having introduced Beaufrère to painting in Pont-Aven as early as 1892 when he would have been only sixteen years of age. When Beaufrère painted his 'La cabane des douaniers au Pouldu' in 1898 he was just twenty two years of age and although by that time he had benefitted from several years of study in Paris, his use of colour at full strength and his vigorous sense of drawing and paint application in this picture does rather confirm Le Paul's view that he had come directly under O'Conor's influence.

Jaworska has already commented on some stylistic variation in O'Conor's marine paintings (15) where the similar motifs of cobalt and emerald-green sea, and red and black rocks, have been expressed in several different ways varying from the calm and restful to the agressive and rough. There is also considerable variation in the technique - some of them have been vigorously painted with the brush as in 'Seascape with pink foam' (REF.PTGS.NO.039) while others have been more heavily worked with the palette knife as in 'Sur la côte, Finistère,' (REF.PTGS.NO.057) There are
also some which appear to be studies or unfinished works such as 'Promontory, Brittany' (REF.PTGS.NO.053) making it almost impossible to put this group of paintings into precise chronological order. If however we assume that the qualities found in the latest reliably dated works, namely those of 1898, 'La Vague' (REF.PTGS.NO.059) and 'Sur la côte, Finistère,' (REF.PTGS.NO.057) are the qualities to which O'Conor was aspiring, then pictures such as 'Seascape with yellow sky' (REF.PTGS.NO.040) and 'Red rocks and sea, Brittany' (REF.PTGS.NO.045) were probably early in the series, and 'Les rochers rouge' (REF.PTGS.NO.056) and 'Sur la côte, Finistère,' (REF.PTGS.NO.057) perhaps rather later. The lightly painted pictures do give us a valuable insight into at least one aspect of O'Conor's technical approach in this series of works. For example in his painting 'The promontory, Brittany,' (REF.PTGS.NO.053) O'Conor began by setting down a few light charcoal lines to establish the composition, used the merest hint of staining in vital areas to reinforce the distribution of colour and tone, and then moved to an immediate and vigorous application of paint. We must assume from the evidence of this work, and from other partly finished paintings such as 'Rocks and sea' (REF.PTGS.NO.052) that his practice with the sea scapes, as it was with his Pont-Aven landscapes, was to make just such a beginning and then to complete the work in the studio.

'Sur la côte, Finistère' (REF.PTGS.NO.057) certainly has the appearance of having been more thoroughly worked than any of the other pictures in this group, almost as though it had been taken to this more advanced stage in preparation for exhibition. It was in fact first exhibited in 1903 in the Salon des Indépendants (16) several years after it was painted in 1898, when it was among the first of O'Conor's paintings to be publicly exhibited in Paris after his eight year absence from exhibitions. In comparison with
the majority of the sea scapes which were boldly painted with an expressive brush, there is much more evidence of palette knife work in the build up of this painting just as there is in another sea-scape, 'La vague' (REF.PTGS.NO.059) which was also among those exhibited in 1903 in Paris.

Among the works thought to have been painted during this period is a striking and richly coloured painting known as 'Landscape' (REF.PTGS.NO.062) which is of a lane way or a road leading to a group of buildings, which closely resemble the architecture of those at Rochefort-en-Terre. There is nothing in the environs of Rochefort itself which would specifically suggest such a colour range although the vigour of the brushwork in this painting, and to some extent echoes of its colour range, may be detected in some of the seascapes previously referred to. The question must be asked in view of the looseness of the brush work in this painting whether or not it is a finished work. There are similar characteristics to be found in another painting to which this one may have some relationship, that is the picture known by its ascribed title, 'Paysanne Bretonne' (REF.PTGS.NO.061) (17) In this painting the subject matter has been blocked in with areas of paint in a very generalised fashion, and then directional strokes have been superimposed on the stained ground as if in preparation for a more thorough build up of the familiar O'Connor striping technique.

These characteristics are less evident in the landscape and it may be that O'Connor considered this painting to be an adequate statement in itself. If it were possible to be certain that this was his intention, then this work should be properly regarded as a radical new development in his work, setting him on a pathway which, had he followed it, would have identified him directly with the practices of the Fauves - who were incidentally not to
emerge as an recognisable group until the 1905 Salon d'Automne Exhibition in Paris. A painting such as this, with its high degree of colour intensity, does therefore appear in retrospect to be rather in advance of its time, and it may be that it was a just such a work which led the English painter Matthew Smith to conclude in later years that O'Conor was 'fauve before the Fauves'. (18) However the absence of a significant body of work in this style must lead us to conclude that this was probably an unfinished work, or alternatively, yet another example of O'Conor's experimentation.

Although not exhibiting in Paris at this time, there was one highly significant exhibition invitation which came his way while he was in Rochefort-en-Terre, and which he was probably very flattered to accept. In 1898, he was invited to exhibit with La Libre Esthétique in Brussels. (19) La Libre Esthétique and its immediate predecessor, the exhibiting group which had been formed in 1883 by twenty Belgian artists who had appropriately enough taken the name 'Les XX' - was an avant-garde group which had come into existence in Belgium in opposition to the conservative policies of the Salon. Early in 1884 the group appointed Octave Maus as their secretary, and under his guidance they established an exhibition policy which allowed them to issue to noted Belgian and foreign artists, invitations to show their work in the annual exhibitions which they organised. (20)

Among the invited artists in the 1898 exhibition, in addition to O'Conor, were Maurice Denis, James Ensor, Aristide Maillol, Theo van Rysselberghe, and J. F. Willumsen. Although resident in a remote part of France when he received the invitation to exhibit, O'Conor was able to enlist Georges Chaudet's assistance with the framing of pictures which he sent from Rochefort to Paris. Chaudet then had the paintings transported to Brussels,
using the firm of Neuilly and Company whose offices were in the Montmartre
district at 128 Boulevard Clichy. For this service, and to cover the
transportation costs, O'Conor sent Chaudet the sum of 210 francs on 22
January 1898. (21)

Unfortunately the titles of the paintings which O'Conor sent for exhibition
do not provide much information about his painting pre-occupations at that
time, although from the range of work which he submitted we may conclude
that there was no preferred subject matter which had his complete attention.
There was one landscape, one portrait, two still life paintings, and the
fifth painting, judging by its title - 'A la fenêtre,' probably included a
figure. Neither do we know whether or not these were recent paintings or
if they were brought forward from his earlier period in Pont-Aven, but it is
something of a surprise to find that he did not include at least one of the
1897 marine pictures among the works to be shown. One plausible
explanation for this is that none of these marine-scenes which have been
traced were considered by him to be finished works of exhibition standard,
and although they have always been accepted as vigorous and expressive
paintings in themselves, it was probably the case that they were not then
meeting his own expectations. Lending weight to this line of argument is
the knowledge that the two 1898 seascapes, 'La vague' (REF.PTGS.NO.059) and
'Sur la côte, Finistère,' (REF.PTGS.NO.057) which we know to have been
exhibited in the Salon des Indépendants of 1903, are both carrying much more
paint and have an altogether much more 'finished' look about them as though
they had been specially worked for exhibition. The same may be said of two
further marine pictures which were also exhibited in later years, 'Marée
montante' (REF.PTGS.NO.049) and 'Remous' (REF.PTGS.NO.055) (22)

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Although geographically separated from his friends during the period of time that he was in Rochefort, O'Conor maintained contact with some of the other artists who had been associated with Gauguin, and who were then dispersed throughout Brittany. He corresponded with Filiger who was living a solitary life at le Pouldu, and sent him money when he was hard pressed. From Filiger we know that Jourdan visited O'Conor at Rochefort-en-Terre at some point in the late autumn of 1896, and in the same letter Filiger wrote that he too hoped to visit O'Conor in the spring. There was also a brief exchange of letters with Georges Chaudet late in 1897 when Chaudet, writing from Paris, asked O'Conor to lend him 100 francs. This O'Conor willingly agreed to do and when his friend Seguin also needed financial assistance early in 1898, O'Conor also came to his aid with a loan of 60 francs.

As we have seen through his visits to le Pouldu in 1897 and 1898 O'Conor was not continuously in residence at Rochefort-en-Terre, and it was perhaps because of his on-going contact with some of his former friends, coupled with a desire to see them again, that he decided to re-visit Pont-Aven. By August of 1898 O'Conor was back in Pont-Aven although his absence from the Rochefort-en-Terre district was not officially recorded until January 19 of the following year.

Given what we now know of O'Conor's personality, and taking all the circumstances into account, the relative seclusion afforded by Rochefort-en-Terre's location off the beaten track was probably a necessary relief for him at that time. The village had a certain charm because of its architecture and its quaint stone walls and buildings, having the ambience of many similar rural villages in England, and to this day it closely
resembles the village of Ampleforth in Yorkshire where he had gone to school. He probably felt very much at home there and he must have welcomed the opportunity which Rochefort's more peaceful environment afforded. However, his period of isolation and at least partial withdrawal to Rochefort did little to strengthen his imagery or to advance his painting into yet more radical areas of expression. This period in his artistic career seems to be lacking a real sense of commitment to any one specific way of painting or to any dominant subject matter or group of ideas. His isolation at Rochefort also seems to mark the first stage in a process of gradual withdrawal from all but his closest friends which was to become a characteristic of his personality in subsequent years.

The return to Pont-Aven, 1898-04

Roderic O'Conor's last confirmed contact with Rochefort-en-Terre was on 1 March, 1898, when he telegraphed the sum of 60 francs from the local post-office to Armand Seguin in Paris. At some point after that date and before June 9, he moved back to Pont-Aven.

Pont-Aven in 1898 would have been no less popular with artists and painters of diverse nationalities than it had been during those years when Gauguin was active in the region, but by that date most of the members of his former group had already drifted apart and resettled elsewhere. There was no longer any sense of group identity, and after Gauguin's final departure those artists who had come directly under his influence in Pont-Aven began to develop their work in virtual isolation from one another. Several of his
circle continued to maintain their links with that part of France although they seldom stayed in any one place for any length of time, moving backwards and forwards to and from Paris, or frequently changing their preferred places of residence within Brittany. (28) Ernest de Chamaillard, whose father was an avocat in Quimper, remained loyal to his native Brittany for many years before going to Paris in 1911, and Filiger stayed on in residence at le Pouldu and then later moved to Morbihan. Armand Seguin divided his time between Brittany and Paris, and Sérusier spent some time at Beuron and later at Châteauneuf-de-Faou. He and Maurice Denis visited Pont-Aven in the summer of 1899, and Filiger in 1900 moved to the village of Landmarc'h. In 1900 Seguin was in Châteaulin, and later he went to live with Sérusier at Châteauneuf-de-Faou, and Slewinsky, Jourdan and Moret also continued to spend various periods of time painting in Brittany. Although they preferred to live and work separately from one another, these artists also kept in contact through occasional visits and letter writing.

Although earlier differences clearly existed in their work, both in terms of preferred subject matter and individual stylistic approaches, (29) the possibility exists that the continuing contact between these remaining artists in the years following Gauguin's departure, may have been based on a philosophical coming together prompted by new and emergent themes in their paintings. On the contrary, an examination of their work from the post-Gauguin years reveals very little in common, and there is even evidence of a growing scepticism among them on the appropriateness or otherwise of much that Gauguin had said. (30) This had led to a rejection by some individuals of much of his theory and even a return to earlier impressionist influenced styles, which is especially noted in the case of Moret and Maufra. In O'Connor's case it would appear that the period of retreat or withdrawal at
Rochefort-en-Terre had done little to advance his subject matter or content within a coherent body of work, and we see instead a variety of stylistic approaches and indeed some return to naturalism in his paintings.

There is ample evidence in the form of more than one hundred letters from Seguin to O'Conor, sent between 1895 and 1903, of a particular bond of friendship existing between them which we know to have had been consolidated at le Pouldu in 1893 where Seguin introduced O'Conor to the technique of etching. (31) It is clear from his correspondence with O'Conor that Seguin retained a deep seated desire to be successful as a painter, an ambition of which he reminded O'Conor in a letter dated May 1898 when he wrote: 'As for me you know that my sole object in life is to paint.' (32) Later in 1898 he informed O'Conor in another letter that he hadn't worked from nature for a year, that he was born for better things than being an illustrator - 'I dream of pictures which I have no chance of painting.' (33)

It has been suggested that Seguin's frustration had arisen from his having come to maturity rapidly and his own subsequent inability to exploit and develop a personal vision. (34) As a result he was not considered by his contemporaries to be a painter of note, and in view of his closeness to O'Conor it is particularly unfortunate that no record exists from this period, of O'Conor's opinions on Seguin's paintings. The evidence suggests that in the years between O'Conor's return to Pont-Aven in 1898 and Seguin's eventual death late in 1903, that Seguin was painting very little and thus very few paintings are available for cross-comparison, although it is evident from Seguin's letters that he greatly admired O'Conor's work.
Seguin's ill health and his recurring financial difficulties increasingly directed him towards illustration as a means of earning sufficient money for his day to day needs, and in 1900 a commission from Ambrose Vollard to illustrate Gaspard de la Nuit by Aloysius Bertrand, helped to relieve some of his difficulties. Nowhere in O'Conor's work do we sense anything which might be termed 'illustrative' nor indeed is there any evidence of a narrative content in his painting and it is fairly clear that his relationship to the younger Seguin was that of benefactor and supporter, confidant and friend. Seguin himself stressed the differences in their approaches when he wrote to O'Conor:

'I think that what you see first of all is (sic) the colours round about you ; whereas what charms and takes hold of me is, above all else beautiful lines.' (35)

Seguin lived at Châteaulin from 1900 onwards and presumably would have had frequent contact there with de Chamaillard and with Sérusier, both of whom were then living close by in Châteauneuf-du-Faou. De Chamaillard had actually been living in Châteauneuf since 1893 and stayed there until 1905,(36) and although as in Seguin's case there is confirmation of written contact between him and O'Conor, their work really shared very little in common.(37) O'Conor's earlier strong and assertive drawing and his sense of directness and immediacy in working with a bold and expressive high colour key and rich impasto paint, was very different to de Chamaillard's light, airy watercolours which were described by Seguin as 'charming, but it seems to me that they are not artistic enough, they're superficial.' (38) According to Bernard, qualities such as these had endeared de Chamaillard's paintings to Gauguin, leading Bernard to conclude that de Chamaillard, Laval, Sérusier, de Haan, and Moret were as he put it 'the real pupils of Gauguin.' In spite of Seguin's criticisms this naive quality in de Chamaillard's work — described by Denis as 'awkwardness' — had been appreciated earlier by both
Seguin and O'Connor who had responded positively to the qualities of simplicity and naivety and of delicate colour which were characteristic of his style. (39) De Chaimallard was said to be sociable, talkative, and self-assertive (40) and these qualities, rather than the style of his paintings may have brought him close to O'Connor who had also earned a reputation as a strong conversationalist.

Because of the extent of O'Connor's contact with Seguin, and due to Seguin's proximity to Sérisier at Châteauneuf-du-Faou, O'Connor must have seen Sérisier from time to time especially after June of 1903 when he took the ailing Seguin into his house where he eventually died late in December. On one occasion when O'Connor was visiting de Chamaillard at Châteaulin, Denis found him in the company of Sérisier, Seguin, Maufras, Moret, and Jourdan, evidence which confirms that there was still some coming together as a group. (41)

In comparison with the others artists who had been associated with Gauguin, Sérisier was much more knowledgeable across a range of subjects which included pure science, philosophy, and oriental studies. Ambroise Vollard had earlier described Sérisier as the theorist in the party. (42) Sérisier also knew both Arabic and Hebrew and he could speak Latin fluently and given O'Connor's knowledge of the classics, literature, and music, he would be expected to have held Sérisier's intellectual abilities in high regard although their personalities were significantly different. (43) With reference to their paintings, O'Connor's more strident and aggressive colour range was very different to Sérisier's work, most of which was executed in a low colour key resulting in much quieter and more contemplative pictures so that his Breton paintings have been described as being 'as sad, as simple, and as beautiful as their creator.' (44)
Sérusier's work also retains an underlying sense of structure and of deliberate construction in the composition which he frequently defined in terms of flat colour. Modelling or colour gradation is used sparingly and Jaworska has defined his later figurative work as being 'static'. This is not surprising as it is known that Sérusier himself was opposed to movement as a compositional element. Sérusier's pictures should properly be evaluated not within the normal conventions of easel paintings but as 'decorations', which is how Sérusier himself referred to his work. (45) In almost every respect O'Conor's expressive paintings were significantly different to Sérusier's and no evidence exists of any collusion between them or of any cross-influences in their work from this period.

Moret, who was also known to be of a rather quiet nature with a preference to keep himself to himself, also continued to be active in the area, although he had never fully adopted Gauguin's theories despite coming briefly under his influence. His work between 1893 and 1900 absorbed both impressionist and synthetist influences (46) but by 1900 he had re-adopted an impressionist style and he too continued to follow his own path.

There were also similarities between Moret and Maufra, to the extent that both painters may be said to have represented a compromise between nature as directly observed and a synthetist vision. There is a much closer connection between Maufra and O'Connor through their respective graphic styles which shows in their etchings where both of them use very similar swirling and rhythmic lines to build up the forms. These similarities are most pronounced in their earlier work from 1893-'95 and O'Connor's influence seems to be present for example in an 1893 etching by Maufra,'l'Anse de Bilfot.' In some of Maufra's later drawings and paintings of the cliffs and
sea at La Pointe du Raz and at Belle-Isle one can also sense something of O'Conor, but despite this there is no evidence to indicate that they were working together at that particular time.

Emile Jourdan had also remained in the Brittany area after the break up of Gauguin's group although he tended to move around a great deal, spending much of his time in and around the Clohars-Carnoët district. Jourdan and O'Conor both came from wealthy family backgrounds having strong links to the legal profession, so that the two men presumably felt that they had much in common.

Like O'Conor, Jourdan also painted in a rich colour range and his pictures are full of active and energetic brush strokes. There is also considerable variation in the paint texture in Jourdan's work with some of his earlier paintings such as 'La rue de Concarneau à Pont-Aven', circa. 1892 (47) being painted fairly thinly, so much so that an earlier sketch shows through from beneath, while his works after 1895 are frequently more heavily painted. His 'Nature Morte à la Palette' painted in 1899 has something of O'Conor about it in the painting of the draped folds of the white tablecloth or napkin and the two books and the cooking pot included in this composition. The red green contrast of 'Pluie à Pont-Aven' painted in 1900, is also reminiscent not just of O'Conor's colour range but also of the energetic brush marks associated with his earlier 1891 and 1892 still-life paintings. In Jourdan's painting 'Nature Morte aux Pommes et au Bouquet' the directional brushstrokes which define the form of the apples are very similar to O'Conor's, particularly those which he introduced into his earlier Brittany landscape paintings. In their technical approach and to a certain extent in their style of painting, O'Conor and Jourdan perhaps shared more in common.
than any of the other artists referred to here, although in their case too there is no strong and conclusive evidence to confirm that there was any direct influence from one to the other.

From the contents of a letter which O'Conor received from Filiger in August 1889, we know that he had made a visit to his house at le Pouldu a short time beforehand. The distance between Pont-Aven and le Pouldu is only 20 kilometres and it is apparent from a reference in Filiger's letter that O'Conor was using a bicycle to get around the district. O'Conor's correspondence with Filiger has been lost, but a number of Filiger to O'Conor letters exist which provide us with an interesting insight into the relationship between them. Filiger had been living cheaply at Portier's hotel paying 100frs. a month for his lodgings. He had chosen to be alone, preferring his own degree of isolation and a solitary existence to the more busy ambience associated with Pont-Aven. He had a worsening drink problem, and it is also known that his general health was poor because of his addiction to ether. The letters which Filiger sent to O'Conor during this period in their respective careers reveal that he was generally unhappy and depressed. He admitted to being lonely but it is also evident from his letters that he greatly valued his contact with O'Conor as it helped to ease his sense of isolation. His respect and admiration for O'Conor also shows through in his letters and he frequently entreated his Irish friend to visit him again as soon as he could. When Filiger received a letter from Schuffenecker he passed it on to O'Conor to read in confidence, asking for his observations and comments. O'Conor also performed small errands for Filiger, sending him at his request some tracing paper bought from the artists' supplier in Pont-Aven, and Filiger kept him informed of his own progress with specific paintings which presumably O'Conor had seen when he
had visited his studio at le Pouldu. When Filiger's patron le Comte de la Rochefoucauld withdrew his financial support, O'Conor came to the rescue with loans of small sums of money which helped keep Filiger going.

Comparison between Filiger's and O'Conor's paintings from this period reveals that they too had very little in common. Most of Filiger's work was small in scale - Maufra spoke of his 'miniscule decorations' - and it has a sense of deliberateness and pre-planning in its composition with a restricted colour range and a use of simplified and stylised forms to the extent that in his portraits a head may be described as an almost perfect oval. Filiger put infinite care into each of his works and he was something of a perfectionist, working slowly, organising, changing, and altering his compositions. Anquetil writes of a feeling of simplicity which is present in his paintings, (51) and Filiger in a letter to Schuffenecker wrote:

'I dream of simplicity...I am a simple straightforward person...but simple to an extreme...absolutely!

The painting referred to by Filiger which O'Conor had seen during his visit in August was 'Le Jugement Dernier.' (52) This was a three panel painting (of which the middle panel is now missing) which presents an extreme example of Pont-Aven synthetism with a very flat sense of pictorial space. While ROC may well have appreciated the sense of organisation, design and deliberateness in the composition, the restrained and deliberate painting style and the schematic figures preferred by Filiger were all very different to O'Conor's much more expressive approach. (53)

In addition to maintaining this benevolent relationship with Filiger, O'Conor also continued to act as a moral and financial supporter to Armand Seguin although Filiger definitely did not have the same degree of patience for the ailing Seguin nor could he understand why Seguin did not do something to
take himself out of his own miserable existence. He did not really trust him and he made a point of asking O’Conor not to reveal to Seguin any of the information which passed between them. Neither did Seguin’s work impress Filiger who saw nothing remarkable there, but he admitted to O’Conor that he knew very little about his illustrations. He felt that there was something missing in Seguin’s work describing it as ‘hurried’, as if he hadn’t had enough time, and for him there were too many discrepancies in Seguin’s drawing, often under the pretext of distortion or deformation for symbolic effect. (54) There are however in Filiger’s letters no clues to O’Conor’s reaction to such criticism of his friend Seguin’s work.

In the summer of the year of his return to Pont-Aven, perhaps in preparation for an immediate return to painting, O’Conor wrote to the firm of E. Blanchet, artists’ suppliers in Paris, about a crate of paintings which he had deposited at some earlier date with Georges Chaudet. (55) He may have needed the contents of the crate for his new work, or perhaps he required some previously finished paintings for exhibition. Whatever the reason this exchange of correspondence was not resolved until the following year, when Chaudet’s brother wrote to Blanchet, after Georges Chaudet’s death on September 20, 1899, to inform him that the crate of paintings left with his late brother was available for collection. (56) Presumably O’Conor then regained possession of his belongings shortly thereafter.

A small group of paintings thought to belong to the period of transition from Rochefort-en-Terre to Pont-Aven in 1898 are, in comparison with the marine pictures of 1897-98, altogether more sombre in their colour range. The justification for their grouping to this period is based on a comparison of a still life ‘Chrysanthèmes et roses de Noel’ (REF.PTGS. No.066) which is

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dated '97 (1897), and a landscape 'Vue de Pont-Aven' (REF.PTGS.NO.072) about whose date (1899) we can be reasonably certain because of the inscription on the stretcher bar, which is clearly in O'Conor's hand. The view of a river estuary thought to be at Doelan, 'Le Port de Doelan', (REF.PTGS.NO.070) through its method of painting, seems to effectively link these two works which have been realised through the use of slightly different brush techniques. A further painting known as 'Roof-tops, a village' (REF.PTGS.NO.067), which is in all probability a view over Pont-Aven, has similar brush marks to those of 'Chrysanthèmes et roses de Noël' (REF.PTGS.NO.066) and it therefore also seems to belong to this group. In this particular work O'Conor has become involved with the visual pattern of the roof-tops and the buildings which he has treated as a series of horizontal and vertical stresses, an approach which has tended to flatten the sense of space in the painting. Although the identity of buildings, roofs, and trees has been retained, his approach in this picture introduces a degree of simplification tending towards abstraction, which is quite different to the other pictures in this group.

The vigorous and bold landscape with the ascribed title 'Village en Bretagne' (Ref,PTGS.No.068) is of a location which has not been precisely identified although it must be said that this vista also bears close topographical similarities to views of the Seine valley painted by diverse artists late in the nineteenth century in and around Giverny, for example. The buildings and the distant river could even be those of Montigny-sur-Loing or possibly of Grez-sur-Loing although the first confirmed date of a brief visit to either of these locations after the return to Pont-Aven did not occur until 1902. (57) There is however sufficient difference in the method of painting to suggest that if this Brittany title were to be confirmed as accurate, then
it could well be a work which O'Conor may have painted on a later return visit to Pont-Aven, after he had moved to live permanently in Paris.

'Landscape with river' (REF.PTGS.NO.071) which is almost certainly a view over the lower reaches of the Aven river below Pont-Aven, is a rather dark and moody painting, the inspiration for which probably came from one of O'Conor's evening walks after the day's work in the studio had ended. There is also something about this picture which is vaguely reminiscent of Whistler's evocative nocturnal landscapes which were celebrated in Paris in 1890, although O'Conor was not in any sense an admirer of his work. (58) The subdued colour range also seems to relate to some of the sombre tonality of Munch's work which could be seen in Paris exhibitions from 1896 onwards, and the composition is not very different to that of Monet's 1889 painting, 'Vallée de la Creuse.' Although probably not influenced directly by any one of these works, O'Conor's general knowledge of the work of other artists seems to have made a subtle entrance into much of his own painting, lending an air of eclecticism to much that he did.

'Vue de Pont-Aven' (REF.PTGS.NO.072), is a work which hints at a return to the expressive and more informal approach of the marine-scenes of a year or so earlier. In comparison with the landscapes just discussed for example, there is a much more spontaneous approach in this painting in which quickly applied brush marks and jabs of colour have been applied over a lightly stained ground. Some areas of contrast give the impression of having been painted with pigment taken straight from the tube, which has then been directly mixed on the canvas. The blues, pinks, and mauves which O'Conor has introduced into the painting of the buildings also reveal a new colour range and a variation in his technique. This painting, in its details,
also compares favourably with the earlier 'La ferme de Lezaven' (REF.PTGS.NO.023) which is dated 1894, and this must inevitably lead to speculation about the accuracy of the date on the 'earlier' work as the inscription on 'Vue de Pont-Aven' (REF.PTGS.NO.072) is clearly in O'Conor's hand.

No clear pattern emerges with respect to preferred subject matter in the overview of Roderic O'Conor's paintings in the years immediately following his return to Pont-Aven from Rochefort-en-Terre. There was certainly a renewed interest in portraiture as evidenced in a number of sensitive studies of Breton girls in traditional costume, but on the evidence of the paintings which have been traced there is little or no indication of any return to landscape themes for example, and only one or two still life pictures seem to belong to this period in his career. None of the portraits have anything like the daring or dash of the earlier 'Breton Peasant Woman Knitting' (REF.PTGS.NO.019) with the possible exception of 'Bretonne' (REF.PTGS.NO.077) which includes the unlikely combination of red and green brush marks, not very different to those of the 1893-94 paintings, in the shadow area of the cheek. The background in this painting is also animated with short diagonal brush marks using deeper tones of red and green which provide a dark background, and the softly modelled shadow area on the side of the head effectively links the figure to the ground.

This sitter is the same girl who is the subject for 'Une Jeune Bretonne' (REF.PTGS.NO.075) but here, in contrast with the rather aloof and haughty expression which she has in 'Bretonne' (REF.PTGS.NO.077) O'Connor has given her an added intensity and a distant look which is both serene and melancholy. We know from the traditions of every-day life in Brittany that in this painting the young girl has been depicted in mourning, a state which
is confirmed by the lowering of the Pont-Aven head-dress, and the wearing of a black shawl to cover the distinctive deep collar of her Breton costume. This painting is of particular interest as it was included by Sir Hugh Lane in the exhibition of work by Irish artists which was held at the Guildhall in London in 1904, an exhibition which was the only officially designated exhibition of Irish Art to which O'Conor was invited during his lifetime. While the portrait would have been in keeping with the work of Lavery, Osborne, and Orpen, who were also in the exhibition, it remains a very conservative choice in comparison to the more adventurous and experimental work from 1893-94. It was possibly the case that neither Hugh Lane, who only began to buy Impressionist paintings in 1905, nor the city of London, were then quite ready for a painting as radical as 'Breton Peasant Woman Knitting' (REF.PTGS.NO.019) for example. Further portraits such as 'La fille qui rit' (REF.PTGS.NO.073) and 'Breton Girl' (REF.PTGS.NO.074) are, in comparison with the portraits just discussed, much more sentimental and altogether less ambitious indicating a return to a more academic and romantic attitude to painting.

The same might be said of the still-life, 'Nature morte aux pommes et aux pots bretons' (REF.PTGS.NO.076), a brilliantly lit painting which seems to relate to the rich colour range of some of the 1897-98 marine pictures. Here the objects themselves have been painted with remarkable clarity and with precision in the drawing, without, it seems, any further ambition other than to produce as truthful a picture as possible. There is some hint of O'Conor's earlier striping technique in the way in which the apples have been painted, and there may even be a reference here to the early Gauguin techniques or to Cezanne's more complex still-life compositions.
A further still-life 'Faience' (REF.PTGS.NO.078), uses a group of domestic crockery vessels which are typical of the hand painted pottery which was made at Quimper some 30 kilometres to the north of Pont-Aven.(60) Painted against the light, this rich picture with its many subtle nuances of colour worked into the texture of the paint, seems to refer back to O'Conor's earlier methods of working in some of his Brittany landscapes. The technique also acknowledges Pissarro's methods and shows some influence from Monet in the way in which the heavily textured paint has been given infinite variety of touch without any loss in the refinement and sensitivity of its colour range. Similarities in the use of darker red/green brush marks in the foreground shadow edge of the drapery in this painting, and those in the background of the portrait known as 'Bretonne' (REF.PTGS.NO.077) suggest that these two pictures were painted within a closely related period of time. The similarities in the quality of light which is introduced into these paintings, to which may be added 'Une jeune Bretonne' (REF.PTGS.NO.075) although treated with noticeable technical variations in each case, also suggests some inter-relationship between them, and the dating of 'Une jeune Bretonne' (REF.PTGS.NO.075) by O'Conor to 1903 in preparation for the London exhibition of 1904, would tend to suggest that these works were among the last which he painted in Brittany.

While O'Conor was in Pont-Aven he continued to receive information from his agent in Ireland, Mr. Godfrey Clarke, about the administration of his land and property in Ireland. The problems which had arisen soon after O'Conor's inheritance of the Milton estate late in 1893 had shown no signs of settling down in the intervening years, and eventually O'Conor took the decision to sell off his estate in Roscommon and instructed Clarke and his Irish legal representatives to begin the process of negotiation with the
Congested Land Boards under the terms of the 1903 Land Act (Wyndham Act) (61) in order to obtain as good a price as possible for his estate. This process did not prove to be any more straightforward than any of the other legal processes in which he had been more or less continuously engaged throughout the previous ten years. (62) O'Conor did not in fact complete these financial and legal transactions until 1910.

A number of excessively textured paintings which share similar impasto techniques, have been particularly difficult to place in the theoretical chronology of O'Conor's works. 'Paysage aux moutons' (REF.PTGS.NO.082) for example, might just possibly be one of O'Conor's earliest Brittany landscapes which he painted in 1891 just after arriving in Pont-Aven. No fewer than five paintings were exhibited under the general title 'En Bretagne' in the 1892 Salon des Indépendants, and this heavily textured evening landscape with a flock of sheep dimly lit in the foreground, has an inscription on the stretcher bar in O'Conor's hand which reads quite simply 'Bretagne', together with his signature 'Roderic O'Conor.' This in itself is scarcely enough evidence to be confident about such an early date, especially because there are no reliably inscribed pictures from this period to which this work might be compared although it almost seems to refer back to Millet's 1868-'75 painting 'Autumn, Grainstacks', now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The picture known as 'Sunset at Pont-Aven' (REF.PTGS.NO.084) has no inscriptions of any sort, but its technique is very similar to that of 'Paysage aux moutons' (REF.PTGS.NO.082) suggesting some relationship between these two works. Their precise location within the span of O'Conor's work will not be determined until more similar and reliably inscribed paintings are found.
There is also the rather unusual painting of a moonlit bay known as 'Marine au Clair de Lune' (REF.PTGS.N0.081), which includes a two masted sailing ship and a cottage with two lighted windows set on the cliffs above the sea. The excess of paint on this canvas suggests a build up of impasto layers over a period of time, and there is much scumbling in evidence and overpainting of heavily textured areas. The work, through its generalised drawing gives the distinct impression of having been painted from memory or from imagination. The painting has a strange dream-like quality, which is enhanced by the degree of stylisation given to the clouds, landscape, boat and foreground cottage, which could all be symbolic links for O'Conor between his adopted life in France and his native Ireland. It is therefore tempting to associate this painting with a period in his life when his thoughts would have been directed homewards, such as that following the death of his father late in 1893. This work may possibly relate to that period following Gauguin's final departure for the South Seas in 1895, when O'Conor withdrew to Rochefort-en-Terre, but whatever its precise location it stands apart from the mainstream of his preferred subject matter during the period of association with Brittany between 1891 and 1904.

A further painting which uses a similar colour range to 'Paysage aux moutons' (REF.PTGS.N0.082) and to 'Sunset at Pont-Aven' (REF.PTGS.N0.084) and which is equally heavily painted, should also be considered in association with these works. 'Personnage avec un cheval' (REF.PTGS.N0.083) has a particularly ambitious surface quality and a rich, moody colour range evocative of evening light. The painting includes two female figures, one of whom is clothed and appears to be trying to control a plunging horse, or possibly trying to mount it. A second figure, un-clothed, placed rather incongruously in the bottom right hand corner of the canvas has no apparent
interest in the activity which is taking place beside her, nor for that matter is she in the least disturbed by it. Through her posture, however, she conveys a very explicit attitude of sexual offering and in that sense a clear association is established between the main figurative components in the painting, and their symbolically linked actions. It is possible that the inspiration for this picture came from Gauguin's painting 'Le Cheval Blanc' of 1898. The horse as depicted in O'Conor's painting is virtually a mirror image of the horse in Gauguin's picture, and indeed the two landscape settings are not all that dissimilar although O'Conor's technique of painting with such a heavy impasto is uniquely his own. There is no one work by Gauguin which includes a nude female figure in precisely this pose, but enough is suggested there to describe it as 'Gauguinesque'. Although painted in 1898, 'Le Cheval Blanc' was not seen in Paris until it was exhibited after Gauguin's death in 1903, when it was shown at the 1906 Salon d'Automne where there was a special commemorative exhibition of Gauguin's work, consisting of some 227 items. The similarity with Gauguin's work is surely more than coincidental, and in this case the accurate dating of this painting and those which share similar technical characteristics, becomes much more problematic.

'Romeo and Juliet' (REF.PTGS.NO.080) a painting with another ascribed title which was given to the work in 1956, is also difficult to date for the same reasons. This painting of a couple locked in a passionate embrace could scarcely have been conceived in advance of his becoming familiar with Munch's painting 'The Kiss', which was first shown in the Salon des Indépendants of 1897. O'Conor himself was not an exhibitor in that year, but it is more than likely that he became familiar with Munch's image, which so closely resembles this couple, through the numerous prints which Munch

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published. O'Conor, who was known to be something of a ladies man, was probably projecting his own sexual fantasies and drives, perhaps those of a personally experienced and passionate love affair, into this painting. Apart from its symbolic references the painting shows the use of a quite deliberate compositional structure based on a triangular shape which draws our attention upwards from the right and left corners to converge at its apex, coinciding with the act of union between the two lovers - their passionate embrace and kiss.

At the turn of the century O'Conor was still maintaining regular contact with those friends of his who had remained in Brittany, and there was also continuing contact at the Christmas season with François Lecadre. Just after the end of the year, in January 1902, Lecadre wrote to thank O'Conor for the gift of some chocolates informing him that Filiger had been staying at his hotel in Rochefort-en-Terre for the previous three months and that he was in bad shape through his heavy drinking. (63) Members of his family who were living in England also maintained contact with O'Conor by letter, acknowledging his generous gifts to them at Christmas. (64)

In 1903, after a seven year interval, O'Conor returned to the exhibition scene in Paris showing seven of his paintings at that year's Salon des Indépendants. (65) One of these had a title linking it to Montigny-sur-Loing confirming that he had been painting there in the previous year, at which point he had sent 200 francs from the local post-office to Seguin in Châteaulin on 21 September. (66) He also exhibited works in the inaugural exhibition of the Salon d'Automne that year, and following the opening of the exhibition he received a letter of invitation from the Parisian dealer, Clovis Sagot, in which he offered to be his representative. (67) As Sagot
was already an advocate of the tendency in painting which was shortly to become identified as the Fauvist movement, and was also to exhibit Georges Braque's early fauvist works in the following year, this was a most significant approach. There is no record of O'Conor's reply and no evidence that he did in fact exhibit with Sagot, a decision which would confirm those later held opinions that O'Conor had a general distrust of the dealers. We may however reasonably conclude from Sagot's interest in O'Conor's work that there had been a return to a more expressively bold colour range.

O'Conor was still in Pont-Aven in 1903 when news of Gauguin's death reached France, and that year also marked a deterioration in the health of his friend Armand Seguin who by that stage was being looked after by Ségrusier in his house at Châteauneuf-de-Faou. O'Conor visited Seguin towards the end of 1903, shortly before his eventual death on 30 December, and very soon thereafter he received the news from Jahier:

'Poor Seguin, as you might have expected from what you saw, has died without suffering and without regaining consciousness, he went out like a lamp.' (68)

Surprisingly enough O'Conor did not attend Seguin's funeral although it is clear is that de Chamaillard set out for Châteauneuf-de-Faou to pay his last respects to Seguin and was especially asked by O'Conor to retrieve the letters which he had sent to Seguin over the previous years. (69) Although the reason for this request is not clear, we may surmise that O'Conor did not want the contents of his letters to become publicly known for they must have contained comments which were less than complimentary about some of their mutual friends and acquaintances. De Chamaillard, who was travelling by horse, encountered some particularly foul weather with freezing rain which made his progress lamentably slow. His mare had problems in maintaining a foothold and eventually, fearing that she might fall and
possibly break a leg, he abandoned his journey. As soon as he was able to he contacted a notary in Châteauneuf-de-Fau (de Chamaillard himself was an 'avocat') but when this un-named colleague went to the house where Seguin had been living he found that Seguin's brother, who had signed the death certificate, had already left for Paris with his late brother's possessions. These letters of O'Conor's were presumably lost in later years for they have never been published.

The death of his closest friend Armand Seguin probably left a void in O'Conor's life which he felt keenly. Filiger in a letter to O'Conor revealed that Seguin's death had had a big effect on him too, and he wrote that he was almost as upset as O'Conor himself was. It is therefore more than a little surprising to discover that early in 1904 O'Conor declined an invitation from Maurice Denis to write an obituary on Seguin who had, after all, been his closest friend throughout the previous twelve years. 

Quite co-incidentally Slewinski, who was then in Paris, wrote to O'Conor on the precise date of Seguin's death to enquire if he had any plans to visit the city (71) and in February of 1904 he wrote again with the news that he had been talking to one of the organisers of the Salon des Indépendants who would be pleased to see O'Conor exhibit with them again. The loss of his friend Seguin, allied to Gauguin's death earlier in the year, must have left O'Conor feeling very much alone and with indications of a renewed interest in his work coming from Paris via Slewinski and Sagot, he probably concluded that there was little point in his remaining any longer in Pont-Aven. After at least one more visit to see Filiger who was still at le Pouldu in January 1904, O'Conor left Brittany, probably late in the spring,
so ending an association with that part of France which in retrospect can now be seen as the most important period in his painting career.
FOOTNOTES

1. This point was first made by Denys Sutton in his article in Studio (1960) op.cit., see p.170

2. The summary of events in this section has been based on an analysis of the contents of letters which were sent by Godfrey Clarke to Roderic O'Conor between 1893 and 1910. Private collection (L) France

3. L'Eclatement de l'Impressionnisme. Exhibition catalogue, Musée du Frieuré (1982). See the chronology of events at p.170

4. The album is in a private collection (L) in France.

5. In Brittany folklore it is believed that the 'korrigans' or 'little people' dance around a fire at night. 'La ronde des Korrigans' was previously exhibited as 'Danse des farfadets' in the exhibition Le Groupe de Pont-Aven, Galerie Mons, Paris, (November-December 1962). Catalogue No.38


7. Benington, J., 'From Realism to Expressionism: the early career of Roderic O'Conor', Apollo Magazine, (April 1985), pp.253-61. In building his rationale for O'Conor's allegedly symbolic intention in paintings prior to 1900 such as 'Charging bull by moonlight' (REF.PTGS.N0.034), Benington has grouped together a number of paintings which in the writer's opinion belong to a later period in O'Conor's career.


9. O'Conor sent a small sum of money - 7frs.60 - through the post office in Pont-Aven to an unknown person in London on June 9 1898. The receipt for this transaction is in a private collection in France.

10. Filiger was then in residence at le Pouldu from which location he wrote to O'Conor at his Pont-Aven address and referred to his visit of a few days earlier to le Pouldu. Private collection (L) France.


12. Paris Salon catalogue, 1883, entry nos.1753, 'Les bords de la Laïta and 1754, 'La plage de Larmor'.

13. cited in Jaworska, (1972) op.cit. at p.112 in reference to MS National Library, Warsaw, no.7140

15. Jaworska, (1972) op.cit. p.220

16. Salon des Indépendants Catalogue, 1903, entry no.1877, 'Sur La Côte (Finistère)'

17. From the head-dress of the subject in this painting we know that the woman depicted was from the Pont-Aven district, and there is therefore the possibility that this may be a slightly earlier work, or alternatively it may well have been painted during O'Connor's visit to Pont-Aven in 1898.


19. La Libre Esthétique, Brussels, 24 February - 1 April 1898. Catalogue Nos. 283. Paysage...1,000frs; 284. Fleurs...500 frs; 285. Tête de jeune fille...500frs; 286. À la fenêtre...500frs; 287. Poules...500frs.

20. For a full account of Les XX and the Libre Esthétique, see Maus, M. Octave, *Trente années de lutte pour l'art*, 1884-1914 Brussels, (1926) The exhibiting rules of Les XX allowed each member to show up to six works and as part of their activities they also put together a programme of lectures, concerts, poetry and play readings to coincide with the annual exhibition.

21. A Post Office receipt for the amount of money transferred has been found by the writer among some of O'Connor's papers and other memorabilia. The details of the arrangements were included in a letter from Chaudet to O'Connor, written at a time when Chaudet was also acting as Gauguin's agent. Private collection (L) France.

22. 'Marée montante' was exhibited in 1906, in the Salon des Indépendants, catalogue no.3733, and 'Remous' is most likely the painting of the same name which was shown in the 1903 Salon des Indépendants.

23. Letter from Filiger to O'Connor dated December '96 (1896), written just after Filiger had returned to Brittany from a visit to Paris. Filiger enclosed a 50 franc note for O'Connor to repay an earlier loan. Private collection (L) France.


25. O'Connor received a letter from Filiger in August which was sent to him in Pont-Aven, in which he referred to O'Connor's bicycling and entreated him to visit him again soon. Private collection (L) France.

The record of O'Connor's departure from Rochefort-en-Terre was made by the local Gendarmerie Nationale to the regional Préfet de Police. The full text of the report is as follows:

"J'ai le bonheur de vous faire connaître que le nommé O'Connor, (Roderic) age de 38 ans, artiste, peintre, célibataire, résidant à Rochefort-en-Terre, a quitté cette localité pour se rendre, croit-on, à Roscommon, (Irlande) son pays d'origine. Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Préfet, l'expression de ma respectueux considération." Archives Départementales, Vannes, Mouvements des étrangers.

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26. The receipt for this transaction is in a private collection (L) in France.

27. A post-office receipt for 7f.60 confirms that on June 9 O'Conor sent this sum of money from the Pont-Aven post office to an indecipherable name in London. The receipt is in a private collection (L) in France.

28. See the chronology in L'école de Pont-Aven dans les collections publiques et privées de Bretagne, exhibition catalogue, Musées des Beaux-Arts, Quimper, Rennes, Nantes (1978-79), which is the source of the information summarised in this paragraph.

29. It was a characteristic of the original Pont-Aven group members that the theories put forward by Gauguin were used, adopted, and introduced into their work, only to the extent that they considered them to be appropriate and relevant. As has already been noted, the evaluation of any individual’s contribution to, or place within the School of Pont-Aven, cannot be considered to be dependent on the extent to which his work resembled Gauguin’s or for that matter Bernard’s, even though varying degrees of influence are certain to be present. See also the discussion in Chapter IV.

30. Seguin wrote to O'Conor on 3 September 1902 informing him that he had begun work on a book about the Pont-Aven School which would include reference 'to all of us and our different opinions,' and in a subsequent letter dated 30 December 1902, he informed O'Conor that the end of the section on le Pouldu 'will amuse you and make you roar in protest.' Seguin to O'Conor letters in the collection of Mr. Denys Sutton, cited by Jaworska (1972) op.cit., pp.244-45, footnote 103.

31. The letters are in the collection of Mr. Denys Sutton and are to be published in 1989 by le Musée de Pont-Aven in connection with a retrospective exhibition of the work of Armand Seguin.

32. Cited in Jaworska (1972) op.cit., p.141

33. ibid. p.142

34. Field, R. (1980) op.cit., p.5

35. Cited in Jaworska (1972) op.cit., p.141

36. le Bihan, Olivier, Ernest de Chamaillard, unpublished thèse de maitrise, Université de Rennes (1977). See the chronology of events in this work.

37. Letters from de Chamaillard to O'Conor, private collection (L), France

38. Cited in Jaworska, (1972) op.cit., at p.188

39. ibid. p.188. In a letter to O'Conor, cited by Jaworska, Seguin wrote: 'He's (de Chamaillard) the only painter now at Pont-Aven who has recovered the colourful, simple, naive qualities which are what we like about his work.'

40. Jaworska, (1972) op.cit., p.182

41. Le Bihan, Olivier, (1977) op.cit., p.16 'A Pont-Aven pendant l'été, et malgré l'absence de Gauguin quelques anciens estivants se retrouvent pour perpétuer à leur manière son souvenir. Parmi eux on compte notamment Henri
Moret, Maxime Maurra, Emile Jourdan, Wladyslaw Siewinski, Roderic O'Conor, et bien sûr Ernest de Chamaillard.' Le Bihan does not give the source of this information.

42. Vollard, A, *Souvenirs d'un marchand de tableaux*, (1938) p.236

43. Jaworska, (1972) op.cit., p.123

44. ibid. p.138 quoting from Gabriela Zapolska. Source not more precisely identified.

45. ibid. p.134 citing Seguin.

46. ibid. p.186


48. Letter from Filiger to O'Conor dated August '89 in which he asked the question - 'Faites-vous encore de la bicyclette?'. Private collection (L) France.

49. The letters, numbering 14 in total, cover the period between December 1896 and April 1904. Information in this section is based on a summary of the contents of this correspondence. Private collection (L) France


52. Filiger wrote: 'You will see or see again the last judgement which I have finished, finally.' Filiger letter to O'Conor, August 1898. Private collection (L) France. For an illustration of the painting see the Filiger exhibition catalogue, op.cit., (1981), catalogue no.60, p.71

53. O'Conor acquired at least five of Filiger's works which were included in the dispersal sale of the contents of his studio, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 6/7 February 1956. See also the Filiger catalogue, op.cit.,(1981) catalogue no.68 'Le Cavalier à l'oiseau' which was painted in 1898 and presumably acquired by O'Conor at that time, and catalogue no.69, 'Projet de poterie,' originally in O'Conor's collection.

54. The letter is undated but from its contents it was probably written in January 1904 soon after Seguin's death.

55. This conclusion is based on the contents of a letter which passed between Blanchet and Georges Chaudet in August 1898. Many of O'Conor's canvasses from this period in his career have a stencilled print of Blanchet's business symbol, in the shape of a palette, on the back of the stretched canvas. The letter is in a private collection (L) in France.
56. A post-card dated 17 November 1899 sent by Chaudet's brother to Blanchet informed him that the crate of paintings was available for collection. Private collection (L) France.

57. In September 1902, O'Connor transferred 200 francs to Armand Seguin through the post office in Montigny-sur-Loing. The receipt for this transaction is in a private collection (L) in France.


59. Exhibition of Works by Irish Painters, The Guildhall, London (1904), Catalogue no. 23, Une Jeune Bretonne, Roderick (sic) O'Connor, canvas 36x29. Lent by the artist. Illustrated in the catalogue at p.11 This exhibition was brought together at the request of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, and was intended to form a part of the Irish section of the St. Louis exhibition. There is no information on any meeting between Lane and O'Connor to inform us of how they may have come into contact, although after the exhibition O'Connor donated his painting to the Dublin Municipal Gallery of Modern Art which Lane helped to establish at 17 Harcourt Street, Dublin, in 1907.

60. Similar ceramic pieces appear in other still-lives painted by O'Connor. See for example 'Flowers, bottles, and two jugs' (REF.PTGS.NO.010) and 'Still life with three jugs' (REF.PTGS.NO.151)

61. The 1903 Land Act (Wyndham Act) was one of a series introduced by British Governments between 1860 and 1922, which had the aim of transferring holdings from landlords to the tenants. One condition was that individual purchase would not be permissible, and that the landlord should sell off large areas including non-tenanted land as well as tenanted. As an incentive to sell, the Government undertook to pay a bonus of 12% over and above the valuation of the land and property to be sold.

62. It was to these protracted negotiations that O'Connor was referring in a letter written to Clive Bell on 30 December 1909 from Paris....'I am rather hard up as your excellent government will not pay up but prefer paying me a small interest on what they owe.' Letter ROC/CB 8, National Gallery of Ireland Archives, Dublin.


64. Letters from his sister Marie (Robinson), married to Bernard Robinson and living in Stafford. Private collection (L) France

65. Salon des Indépendants catalogue 1903, O'Conor (Roderic), Hôtel des Voyageurs, Pont-Aven, Finistère. Catalogue numbers 1877 'Sur la côte' (Finistère); 1878 'Le gué', Montigny-sur-Loing; 1879 'La vague'; 1880 'Lezaven, la ferme de Finistère'; 1881 'Pleine mer'; 1882 'Remous'; 1883 'Fruits."

66. A post-office receipt for this transaction is in a private collection (L) in France.

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67. Letter from Clovis Sagot to Roderic O'Conor dated 20 November 1903, in which he commented favourably on O'Conor's work at the Salon d'Automne. Private collection (B) France

68. See Jaworska, (1972) op.cit., where an extract from the letter is quoted at p.148

69. The information is contained in a letter from de Chamaillard to O'Connor, in which he describes the funeral arrangements and his attempt to get to Chateauneuf-de-Faucon for Seguin's interment. Private collection (L) France

70. In a letter of reply to Maurice Denis sent from Pont-Aven, O'Connor expressed the view that Denis himself, being used to writing and publication, would be better able to write about Seguin than he would. Undated letter in the Denis archives, Musée Départementale du Prieuré, St.Germain-en-Laye, France

71. Slewinski to O'Conor, letters of December 1903 and 5 February 1904. Private collection (L) France.
RODERIC O'CONOR

PART THREE
PARIS AND THE LATE YEARS
1904 - 1940
CHAPTER IX

PARIS

Paris and Montparnasse, (1904-1913)

On his return to Paris, probably late in the spring of 1904,(1) Roderic O'Conor chose to live in the Montparnasse district of the city where an increasing number of artists and writers had begun to group in preference to the more popular Montmartre district. Montparnasse offered them cheaper living than in Montmartre; there were reasonable studios and inexpensive rooms available, and pavement cafés such as Le Dôme, the Café de Versailles, and the Closerie de Lilas, as well as the restaurants of La Petite Lavenne, the Lafond, and the Alençon, were all popular meeting places.

The studio which O'Conor took was at 102 rue du Cherche-Midi, on the corner with the narrow rue St.Romain.(2) His studio overlooked an enclosed courtyard from which a narrow staircase led up to two large doors on the first floor, giving access to an interior space approximately thirty feet square and twelve feet high. A large window with small panes of glass filled one wall, and three steps led up to a tiny kitchen and a bedroom about nine feet by twelve. Clive Bell, whom O'Conor was to meet shortly after moving to Montparnasse, described the interior as 'spacious but gloomy', (3) and his published memoirs and O'Conor's letters to him which are more fully discussed later in this chapter, are the most useful source of information on O'Conor's life-style in Paris at that time.
There has also been speculation that at some point in his career O'Conor allowed Gauguin to work in his studio, and it has always been assumed that the studio in question was the one at rue du Cherche-Midi. This is thought to have been unlikely for there are no instances prior to 1904 when O'Conor can be confidently linked to this address, neither through exhibition records nor through letters and correspondence which he either sent or received. If Gauguin did borrow O'Conor's studio, it is more likely that the studio in question was the one which O'Conor was using in Pont-Aven at the time of his meeting there with Gauguin in 1894-95.

Shortly after his return to Paris, and before the end of the year 1904 a second invitation was issued to O'Conor by the organisers of the Annual Libre Esthétique Exhibition in Brussels, as a result of which he exhibited four paintings with them in their 1905 exhibition. The theme of the exhibition was 'l'Evolution externe de l'Impressionnisme', and O'Conor was one of eighteen artists grouped in the foreign section with other exhibitors from Germany, England, Canada, Spain, U.S.A., Holland and Russia. As might be expected from someone who had just settled in to a new environment, Brittany titles featured among the exhibits which he chose to send, and with the possible exception of one painting 'Fruits', a work which has not been positively identified among the traced works, the other three exhibits were all from significantly earlier years. O'Conor's work drew some favourable comments from the critics, one of whom wrote:

''... puis il y a les belles œuvres de O'Conor, dont les Fruits et les Faïences dénotent une grande observation. C'est peut-être le peintre qui sait le mieux rendre la matière qu'il veut représenter. La Vague est un effet prodigieux'. Le Petit Messager Belge. 26 mars 1905

Another critic referred to 'les robustes nature-mortes et la vague tumultueuse de l'Irlandais Roderic O'Conor.' Le Soir. 21 février 1905.
O'Conor gathered a group of friends around him in Montparnasse and the most highly thought of painter in this social circle of O'Conor's was the Canadian painter James Wilson Morrice. (6) Morrice was a heavy drinker and O'Conor's regular reporting to Clive Bell about Morrice's escapades, together with Bell's own analysis of their friendship, confirms that Morrice and O'Conor were especially close. Morrice, like O'Conor, was known not to be a theorist, at least in so far as his own work was concerned, and their friendship was therefore more likely to have been based on a healthy respect for each other's painting, and probably also on their shared enthusiasm for landscape. At the time they met in Paris Morrice's methods and preferred subject matter were quite different to O'Conor's, for the Canadian artist was a compulsive recorder of life in the streets and of activity in and around the popular cafés and artists' meeting places, whereas O'Conor's work was becoming largely studio based. There are exceptions however, as O'Conor is known to have painted the landscape on his return visits to Grez-sur-Loing although there is no confirmation that Morrice ever went there with him. O'Conor probably stayed in Grez with his friends the Chadwicks. Morrice's pictures almost always included figures, and even when his subject matter was the landscape, the presence of one or more figures, sometimes a domestic animal, or yachts and buildings, made his compositions significantly different to O'Conor's.

Apart from differences in their subject matter, Morrice's refined colour range and his preference for a range of closely related values was quite different to the richness of O'Conor's earlier intense colour contrasts. In subsequent years Matisse on recalling his acquaintance with Morrice described him as 'the artist with the delicate eye, so pleasing with a touch of tenderness in the rendering of landscapes of closely allied values.' (7)
Buchanan has suggested that O'Conor's discussions on the content of painting had a direct influence on Morrice's art. (8) Could it be that some of the toning down to be seen in O'Conor's colour range in Paris was attributable to his contact with Morrice as much as it was due to his change of environment? Whatever the reason both men clearly shared a sense of directness and spontaneity in the act of painting which in Morrice's case is apparent not just in his lively and intimate 'pochades' painted 'sur le motif' but which also carried over to his portraits in particular.

Morrice had also experimented with paintings of night scenes and the presence of one such subject in O'Conor's oeuvre which was exhibited in 1906 at the Salon d'Automne, may well have been prompted by his knowledge of Morrice's work. It is also of some significance surely that this work 'Boulevard Raspail' (REF.PTGS.NO.089), one of the very few urban landscapes which O'Conor painted, included two groups of two small figures, unusual for O'Conor but a common feature in Morrice's numerous paintings of city views. The Boulevard Raspail was then, and it still remains to this day, a busy thoroughfare linking the Boulevard St.Germain with the Boulevard Montparnasse, crossing over the much narrower rue du Cherche-Midi within 600 metres of O'Conor's studio. Although signed and dated to the year 1907, presumably by hands other than O'Conor's, this work must properly belong to a year prior to 1906 when it was exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants. (9)

The method of painting, in spite of the elongation of the brush strokes, is quite different from the Brittany paintings in which this characteristic was dominant. Much more medium has been added to the paint which has then been brushed and blended on the canvas using a wet on wet technique. There are similarities with the earlier 'La ronde des Korrigans' (REF.PTGS.NO.033) particularly in the brush-strokes of the background, and also with the
loosely painted landscape 'Le Barrage' (REF.PTGS.NO.085) which is dated 1902 and which was also shown in the same Salon exhibition as 'Boulevard Raspail' (REF.PTGS.NO.089) The expressionist vigour of the brush marks in the latter work, and the introduction of the dark cloaked figures in silhouette also appear to refer to Munch's work, which was shown in three successive Salon des Indépendants exhibitions in Paris between 1896-'98 and again in 1903.

O'Conor also had a long running acquaintance with Joseph-Milner Kite, who was quite dismissively referred to by Bell in his memoirs as 'a follower of Lavery - a joke'. Kite, Morrice, and O'Conor are said to have dined together at the Chat Blanc each evening and then to have walked down the rue d'Odessa to the Café de Versailles in the Place de Rennes where the three of them could be seen night after night. (10) O'Conor would scarcely have been expected to have responded positively to Kite's rather sentimental paintings of children playing in pools of shallow water on Brittany beaches, but Kite's painterly style may well have owed something to O'Conor.(11) For example his undated painting 'A quiet drink' shows two figures, a man and a woman who appears to be in Breton head-dress, sitting under the shade of a leafy tree in a courtyard dappled with sunlight, all of which has been vigorously painted with rich contrasts of colour and light using extremely fluid brush strokes. His 'Afternoon tea' (also undated) also depicts two figures at a small table in a garden, the woman's long white dress catching the sunlight while the head and shoulders of the man opposite her, who bears some resemblance to O'Conor, are also broadly expressed with similar bold brush strokes to those used for the woman's dress.
Other known artist friends of O'Conor's were rather more peripheral figures in Paris at that time although George-Hume Barne, another member of O'Conor's circle, did exhibit for several years at the Salon d'Automne after 1909. His subject matter was as wide ranging as O'Conor's and he too painted portraits, landscapes, still-lives, and flower paintings but in the absence of sufficient examples of his work, cross-comparisons with O'Conor's style have been rather problematic. The same can be said of the American painters Orville Root and Edward Emerson Simmons and of the Bridgewater born painter, Gabriel Thompson, who were also part of O'Conor's social group. O'Conor's letters to Bell give us some information about painters whose work most definitely did not impress him, and they included Carrière, Gerald Kelly, and to a lesser extent Sir Joshua Reynolds. While not being explicit about his reasons for being so dismissive of these painters, we may surmise that O'Conor did not respond to their rather romantic view of the world which they presented in paintings devoid of any real expressive or emotional content. In Kelly's case, O'Conor dismissed his paintings as 'a disastrous product of photography' and equated his paint quality with 'some excrementious matter'.

Not all of O'Conor's time was given over to painting at this period, for we know from Bell's account that he was an avid reader and that he spent many hours browsing at the 'bouquinistes' along the quays bordering on the river Seine near Place St. Michel. He was also well informed about painting in general through his visits to the commercial galleries, and to an increasing extent he began to buy and collect works by artists who were then still establishing their careers, but who to-day are acknowledged as masters. From Vollard, for example, he bought a copy of Cézanne's lithograph 'Les Baigneurs' for 50 francs, a work which remained in his collection throughout
his lifetime and which was among the prints which were sold at the
dispersal sale of his studio effects in 1956.(12)

As might be anticipated, the transfer to Paris is reflected in O'Conor's
choice of subject matter with the emergence of a pre-occupation with those
subjects traditionally associated with the studio - nudes, still-life
compositions, figures in interiors, and portraits. When O'Conor wanted
access to landscape themes he went to paint at Montigny-sur-Loing and at
Grez-sur-Loing, and paintings with titles linked to both places were
exhibited in the Salon d'Automne and Salon des Indépendants exhibitions
between 1903 and 1906. (13) Among the traced paintings, works such as 'Le
Barrage' (REF.PTGS.NO.085), 'Le Loing à Montigny. (REF.PTGS.NO.090) and 'Soleil
en Forêt' (REF.PTGS.NO.091) are in all probability works which were painted
during this period. There were also instances when he chose to exhibit
works from earlier years so that paintings with Brittany titles were seen in
the 1905 Salon d'Automne, and in the 1906 and 1907 Salon des
Indépendants.(14) It is of course possible that O'Conor returned to
Brittany for short painting visits after 1904, but there is no evidence to
confirm this.

It is difficult to be certain about precise dates with respect to the early
paintings of nudes which gradually became more prevalent in O'Conor's work
at this period in his career. As with the earlier un-dated works from
Brittany, an attempt has been made to group paintings which share
similarities in their techniques or methods of painting. 'Standing nude'
(REF.PTGS.NO.092) cannot be said to be a particularly inspiring painting and
there are obvious discrepancies in the drawing of the model's hand on the
shoulder nearest to the viewer, but it seems to relate to 'Sitting nude'
in which a similarly reduced colour range has been given added visual interest through the placing of the figure against the light. The same visual effect is also the dominant characteristic of the more ambitious 'Femme à contre-jour' (REF.PTGS.NO.096) which is dated 1907 and is in all probability the painting otherwise known as 'étude' which O'Conor exhibited in 1909. (15) In comparison with 'Sitting nude (REF.PTGS.NO.093), this painting also re-introduces much more energy into the painting method, relying heavily on the use of texture effects in the paint which have been achieved through a process of drawing with a brush which has been well loaded with paint.

O'Conor's 'Self Portrait' (REF.PTGS.NO.095) has also been composed against the light, and the artist has depicted himself in dark silhouette to the extent that his features are barely discernible. His image and general manner in this self portrait fit well with Clive Bell's recollection that when he met O'Conor for the first time in 1904, there was nothing Bohemian about his appearance. (16)

One of the more interesting works from this period, because of its provenance as well as its quality, is the painting of a woman asleep in a studio chair known by the title 'Repos' (REF.PTGS.NO.088). This work was exhibited in the Salon des Indépendants in 1905 (17) from which exhibition it was purchased by the wealthy Russian art collector, Ivan Morosov. Morosov was a member of a wealthy family in Moscow who had prospered through the financial success of their cotton mills. In 1903 Morosov visited Paris for the first time and at that time he began to buy and collect the work of French painters such as Sisley, Renoir, and Monet.(18) He developed a friendship with Maurice Denis whom he also consulted about
purchases, and he soon acquired paintings by Cézanne, van Gogh, and Gauguin. 'Repos' employs a much lighter palette in comparison with the works just discussed, and there is in this work continued evidence of a looser and more gestural technique, particularly in the treatment of the subject's pink and white shawl and the soft green drapery partially covering her chair. The face in contrast is treated with greater precision and a much smoother application of paint which adds to the overall mood of rest and tranquility. In comparison with some of the works which we have just discussed, this painting has been developed to a more refined level, almost as though it has been specially painted for exhibition.

O'Conor was also associated with the specially convened exhibition of Paul Gauguin's work which was a feature of the 1906 Salon d'Automne Exhibition, to which commemorative exhibition he was acknowledged as a lender in the introduction written by Charles Morice. O'Conor was an exhibitor in the main exhibition where he showed two works,(19) and he also featured in profile view in a large tribute painting which Paul Girieud exhibited as an act of homage to Gauguin's memory. The setting for Girieud's painting is a landscape which is sparsely filled with trees, having an altogether more arid appearance than any of the landscapes which Gauguin painted in Tahiti. A number of figures, including Gauguin himself who is placed at the centre of the group along with Sérusier, Maurice Denis, Daniel de Monfreid, Charles Morice and Girieud, are seated on both sides of a long white covered table which is the setting for a feast or banquet. Several nude figures, some of whom are not very well drawn, are derivations from some of Gauguin's figures, and they have been integrated into the painting along with the others.(20)
O'Conor did not exhibit in the 1907 Salon d'Automne as he was a member of the selection jury, a task which did not appeal to him as he later confessed to Clive Bell: 'Since I was on the jury of the Salon d'Automne last year I have nothing but disgust left for juries'. Among the exhibitors who would have come under O'Conor's scrutiny that year were Rouault, Redon, Modigliani, Lavery, Matisse, Derain, Dufy, Braque, and Bonnard. Then in 1908, probably as a result of connections with his English artist friends, O'Conor showed five works at the first exhibition of the Allied Artists Association in London which was held at the Albert Hall. Included among O'Conor's exhibits was a Brittany landscape and a marine painting known as 'Remous' (REF.PTGS.NO.055) which, in terms of its technique and far from naturalistic colouring, would surely have been among the more daring and avant-garde works exhibited. The exhibition presented no fewer than 3061 works in the catalogue listing, although more than this number were finally hung, and with the exhibition date falling in July it is just possible that O'Conor would have gone to London to see this exhibition.

In 1909, O'Conor was again on the jury for the Salon d'Automne, and more significantly he was elected as joint Vice-President of the Salon with Charles Plumet, and would have worked closely with the Fauvist painter Henry Manguin who was the exhibition organiser. De Chamaillard was also a jury member that year and if he and O'Conor had in any way lost contact since the transfer from Brittany, this event would have brought them into association once again and helped to renew their friendship. Exhibitors in the Salon included Brancusi, Duchamp, Matisse, Kandinsky, Leger and Sickert. O'Conor was an exhibitor that year with six works, so we may safely assume that he had been painting regularly and with some success in the previous year.
The negotiations with the Land Commissioners in Ireland, concerning the sale of his Roscommon estate, were still occupying a great deal of O'Conor's time and were not finally resolved until 1910. When he eventually received the settlement due to him, he invested his capital in the stock market in the United States and with his future financial needs largely resolved he was able to visit Italy, apparently on his own. (24) In reference to a visit to Italy, which may well have been this one, an observation of Clive Bell's adds to our understanding of the comparatively private world which O'Conor increasingly sought for himself. Bell wrote:

'I have suggested that he was solitary by choice; yet I remember once when I met him he said he had just returned from Italy, and added that he had stayed there picture gazing until he began to feel lonely: evidently there was a degree of solitude which he could not stand'. (25)

The more highly resolved work of a painting such as 'Repos' (REF.PTGS.NO.088) should be contrasted with a number of loosely painted studies of nudes, most of whom have been depicted lying on a divan or chaise-longue which has been covered with a deep burgundy red drape. In analysing these paintings, no clear stylistic similarities emerge with reference to technique alone, which might indicate that they belong to a concentrated and comparatively short period of activity. Some of these paintings such as 'Nude, back view' (REF.PTGS.NO.100) include longer brush strokes and elongated stripes of colour of closely related tones which seem to be a reference to an earlier painting style associated with his Brittany pictures. These super-imposed marks are at times well integrated into the drawing and painting of the form as they are in this painting, and on other occasions they contribute very little, either to our understanding of the human anatomy or to the overall pictorial aspect of the work. Taken as a group, and making allowances for the fact that they may represent works from a wider range of years than is suggested here, they do not reveal any one central concern or thematic pre-occupation. They might therefore be more properly considered as sketches
and studies for possible paintings, most of which seem never to have progressed beyond the initial stage.

The painting known as 'Hu' (REF.PTGS.NO.109) is an exception, however, as it is clearly the result of a more considered approach which has been based on the sketch which has preceded it, known by its title 'Nude before a mirror' (REF.PTGS.NO.108). The composition of the finished work has altered very little from that of the sketch, and is very similar to that of the well known painting by Velasquez, 'Venus at her mirror' (also known as the Rokeby Venus) in the collection of the National Gallery in London, a painting with which O'Connor would surely have been familiar through his appreciation of Velasquez' work. The sketch also shares some of the qualities to be found in Couture's 'étude de Nu', which, although not acquired by the Louvre Museum in Paris until 1924, raises the possibility that his methods of painting were also an influence on O'Connor's approach here. Couture advocated the use of an 'ébauche', best described as a light underpainting based on a thin staining of the ground, and over this he would drag a well charged brush in a single decisive stroke. The essence of this method was one of spontaneity and directness which immediately gave the 'ébauche' its own expressive qualities. The more heavily painted 'Hu' (REF.PTGS.NO.109) shows only marginal changes from the sketch, and apart from a slightly more elongated figure, little else has been altered. (26)

In contrast with the quick sketches previously referred to, there is much more cleverness in the composition here through the use of a reversal of the 'contre-jour' principle. The artist has viewed the model with his back to the light so that the incident light falling on the model's body gives a soft illumination indicative of a naturally lit interior. Thereafter, because of
the use of the mirror, the progression through the painting is from light to
dark to light again, so that in compositional terms we are made aware of the
reflected image which is against the light, rather than that of the much
larger foreground figure. Rather than achieving these effects through the
use of semi-transparent washes of thinly diluted paint as in the sketch,
O'Conor has instead developed the painting using more heavily textured and
opaque paint. There are few paintings from this period which share such
characteristics although to some extent this technique matches some of the
details in his figurative painting 'Romeo and Juliet' (REF.PTGS.NO.080)
suggesting that it may properly belong to a date closer to that of 'Nu'
(REF.PTGS.NO.109).

In contrast with the density of the paint on the surface of 'Nu'
(REF.PTGS.NO.109), a work such as 'A quiet read', (REF.PTGS.NO.110) which is a
charming study of a woman in the studio interior, has been painted with very
thin stains of colour allowing areas of bare canvas to show through from
beneath. This work, like 'Nude before a mirror' (REF.PTGS.NO.108) with
which it shares similar visual and compositional characteristics through the
use of the reflecting mirror, is best considered in the category of a study.
O'Conor may have drawn some inspiration here from Morrice's lively
'pochades' and just as Morrice admitted to an influence from Bonnard these
two studies of O'Conor's also share similarities with Bonnard's intimate
interiors.

'Bleu et Rose' (REF.PTGS.NO.111) which is dated 1911, does not carry any more
paint than these two smaller pictures but the economy of expression which
seems to have been O'Conor's pre-occupation in most of his paintings at this
time, has here produced a painting in which the quality of light and the
broad generalisations of the brush have been brought into near perfect harmony. The heavier brushed details appearing here as a yellow and white emphasis on the drapery on the end of the divan, again seem to reflect Couture's pictorial methods.

In contrast with these thinly painted works, 'Portrait' (REF. PTGS. NO.115) which is signed and dated to 1911, uses much thicker and more opaque paint, particularly on the blouse of the sitter and on her arms where a texture has been developed from the application of several paint layers. The fine sense of drawing which underpins this work, and the more detailed painting method, rather suggests that this may have been a specially commissioned portrait although there is no information available as to who the sitter may have been.

The lively brushwork in 'Model Reading' (REF. PTGS. NO.116) seems to relate this work to O'Conor's method of approach to the painting of still-lifes in his rue du Cherche-Midi studio, even though there is rather more paint in evidence in some of its details. 'Nature morte, azalées' (REF. PTGS. NO.117) for example, also makes use of a similarly stained ground over which more vigorous and animated brush marks have been quickly applied. In the still-life nothing appears overworked or laboured and the flowers have taken on a rich sensuous glow set as they are on a low table or shelf in front of the atelier window, against the light. The inclusion of a replica stauette of the Venus de Milo in this composition is rather reminiscent of Cézanne's frequent introduction of the replica of Cupid into his still life paintings, although no other parallels can be said to exist with Cézanne's work in this case, either with respect to O'Conor's composition or to his method of painting.
Further still-lives from this period, 'Still-life, flowers in a vase' (REF.PTGS.NO.119); 'Still-life, roses' (REF.PTGS.NO.120); 'Vase de fleurs' (REF.PTGS.NO.126); and 'Geraniums and pivoines' (REF.PTGS.NO.127) reveal an ongoing interest in bold and rich colour effects and a contrast between quick and vigorous brush marks and rather flamboyant palette knife work. To an extent, O'Connor was giving free expression to the activity of painting in these works, and does not appear to have had any higher order ambitions for their content. Like the paintings which he had begun shortly after his return to Paris, these works were executed apart from any theoretical issues which emerged in the first decade of the twentieth century, revealing that O'Connor was then intent on following his own path irrespective of developments around him.

As is frequently the case with O'Connor there is no evidence, other than that provided by the paintings themselves, from which we might draw conclusions about his intentions in his work in the years immediately after his return to Paris. The inclusion of paintings with Brittany titles in Paris Salon des Indépendants and Salon d'Automne exhibitions between 1904 and 1907 suggests more than one return visit to Pont-Aven - and indeed this possibility cannot be ruled out - but equally this could indicate that O'Connor was not especially active during this period in his career and that the Brittany exhibits were in fact earlier paintings which he had never previously shown. The lack of any coherent theme or central preoccupation in his painting, a conclusion which is not inappropriate given the evidence of the variety of approaches, techniques, and subjects represented in the work which has been traced and tentatively dated to this period, also indicates that there may have been diminished enthusiasm for painting and no real involvement in depth. Certainly the evidence supplied by Clive Bell
which comments on O'Conor's early years in Paris after his return from Pont-Aven and which is evaluated in the next section, is rather more weighted towards the social and inter-personal relationships enjoyed by O'Conor than it is to any significant studio activity. This is also confirmed by the content of O'Conor's letters to Bell and the frequent references to his social circle in Montparnasse, and occasionally to gallery exhibitions, while avoiding commentary on his own paintings.

In retrospect it is perhaps especially disappointing that O'Conor, on his return to Paris, did not choose to further develop his predilection for highly saturated and intense colour contrasts, which had been such a strong characteristic of his work more than a decade earlier when he was painting in Pont-Aven. Had he done so, and accepted Clovis Sagot's invitation to exhibit with him, he might well have become identified with the group of Fauve artists who emerged at the Salon d'Automne of 1905. To have followed such a course however would have required a further shift in his approach to painting, away from a response to nature which was governed by the appearance of things, towards a yet more subjective use of colour increasingly liberated from reality.

The critical point for O'Conor on this pathway, the stage at which he can be seen to have deviated from such a course, appears to have occurred around 1894-95 and is best represented by the previously discussed painting 'Brittany Landscape' (REF.PTGS.NO.022). Given his decision to shun such a development for his own work in favour of a re-assertion of more conservative attitudes to form and content in his painting, it was inevitable that the pattern of his own progress in the early years of this century would be set apart from the more radical changes in art and society.
as a result of which fauvism, cubism, futurism, abstraction, and orphism, were all introduced as major art movements in the years prior to the outbreak of the war in Europe in 1914.

Roderic O'Conor and Clive Bell

The initial meeting between Roderic O'Conor and Clive Bell in Paris, which marked the beginning of their friendship, probably took place late in the summer of 1904. Bell's account of their friendship in his published memoirs is one of the most informative sources from which much can be gleaned about O'Conor's habits and personality, during the years immediately following his period in Brittany. (27)

Clive Bell's background had certain similarities to that of O'Conor's, although when they met there was a difference in their ages of twenty one years. Bell was born in 1881, into a wealthy family whose money had accumulated from their various business interests in the coal industry. The family home, Cleeve House, was a large Victorian gothic mansion set in the Wiltshire countryside. Bell was educated at Marlborough, and then in 1899 he went to Cambridge and very soon after his arrival there he became friendly with Thoby Stephen, Leonard Woolf, and Lytton Strachey - the nucleus of what was later to become the Bloomsbury group. (28)

Bell progressed to become a post-graduate student of Trinity College at Cambridge, and he arrived in Paris in January of 1904 to research at the National Archives into British policy at the Congress of Verona. He was
carrying a letter of introduction from E.S.P. Haynes to Gerald Kelly, whose studio was in the rue Campagne-Première in Montparnasse, not far from O'Conor's studio in rue du Cherche-Midi. Bell was then only twenty three years of age, and he soon began to identify with the pattern of living on the left-bank and warmed to the atmosphere of the local bars and cafes to which Kelly had introduced him before deciding, with some encouragement from Kelly, to move there from his pension which was situated behind the Trocadéro on the other side of the river.

One of the more popular meeting places for the artists in Montparnasse was the Chat Blanc restaurant in rue d'Odessa, where the proprietor had set aside an upstairs room for the exclusive use of a group of artists, their friends, models, and mistresses. It is likely that it was in the Chat Blanc restaurant that Bell and O'Conor first met, through Kelly's introduction, and when Kelly moved his studio to Montmartre within four months of meeting Bell, the friendship between Bell and O'Conor took on a deeper significance. From Bell's account we learn that O'Conor was at that time also friendly with the Canadian painter, James Wilson Morrice. In spite of a considerable difference in their ages - O'Conor was then forty three and Morrice thirty nine, while Bell was barely twenty three and much less experienced than either of them - the three became very close and Bell acknowledged a particular debt of gratitude to both Morrice and O'Conor, writing about his early Paris years in Old Friends:

'as at that time I was young they left deep impressions in my tender mind...... they played as influential a part in my life as any of my Cambridge contemporaries......they and Gerald Kelly were the first painters I knew really well...... to these three English speaking painters I owe a vast debt of gratitude.' (29)

O'Conor, according to Bell, was at that time the most formidable figure in the quarter and on only one occasion did he see that he had been intimidated
by another individual, and that was when he met Virginia Woolf (Stephen), of
whom O'Conor later said, 'she put the fear of God into me.' (30) Bell
found O'Conor to be a highly intelligent and well educated man who read a
lot in French and in English, and who also had a good knowledge of the Latin
masters. It is fairly evident from Bell's description that O'Conor's
classical education at Ampleforth had exercised a profound influence on his
knowledge of, and love for literature, which remained with him throughout his
adult years. Bell also informs us that at the Chat Blanc restaurant
conversations with O'Conor seldom touched on art, except on those occasions
when O'Conor chose to criticise what he saw as an over valued reputation.
The works of Sargent, Whistler, Conder, Carrière or Cottet were all thought
of highly by the Anglo-American artists in the district, but O'Conor, through
his criticisms, made it clear to Bell that he had little time for their work.
This revelation should come as no surprise to us, for their rather romantic
and tasteful view of the world as revealed through their paintings, was in
sharp contrast to O'Conor's more aggressive painting technique and his
liking for rich colour combinations and contrasts.

By the autumn of 1904, O'Conor and Bell were meeting almost every day for
lunch at le Petit Lavenne, and on these occasions and during the gallery
visits which usually followed in the afternoons, O'Conor, according to Bell,
became a little more enthusiastic about pictures and books. In general
though it seems that O'Conor presented a rather formidable front to those
with whom he came in contact, and in his personality and dealings with
others he was said to be 'gruff and disobliging as a rule.' (31) This
description of him is very much in contrast with what Cuno Amiet had found
in O'Conor's character at a time when they were in working contact in Pont-
Aven in 1892, approximately twelve years before Bell knew him. At that
time Amiet wrote in a letter to his father that what he most admired about O'Conor was that he never spoke unkindly of anyone, neither those with whom he was then in company, nor those whom he had previously known. For reasons such as these, according to Amiet, and in recognition of the depth and extent of his knowledge both on literature and art, everyone had great respect for him. (32)

What Bell and Amiet had in common was that they were both considerably younger men than O'Conor, as indeed Armand Seguin had been. There was probably something in O'Conor's personality which needed reinforcing through a certain degree of admiration and respect from others, and he appears to have found that with each one of these three younger men. The more agreeable description given by Amiet of the earlier O'Conor, does rather confirm the view expressed previously (see Chapter VIII) that after Gauguin's departure and the breaking up of the Pont-Aven group, O'Conor's period of relative isolation in Rochefort-en-Terre may have coincided with a time when his personality was undergoing something of a transformation.

Other information from Bell concerning O'Conor, informs us that his tastes in music were 'austere' and that he often criticised Morrice's preference for the more romantic composers, for whom O'Conor had little time. If, after a round of such criticisms, Morrice would then seek Bell out for an evening of 'lenient music,' O'Conor would stubbornly refuse to accompany them even though they were all close friends, and he would not budge from the quarter. Although O'Conor could play the violin it was at a level purely for his own entertainment and enjoyment, and although he was said to love music, it seems he only rarely made the effort to go to a concert. Morrice, we learn from Bell, was an accomplished flautist, and another painter friend,
Gabriel Thompson, played the piano and from time to time O'Conor would visit Thompson’s atelier to hear him play. (33)

There were also joint social outings involving O'Conor, Morrice, and Bell, on those occasions when they made the trip across the city to visit Arnold Bennett. Bennett was relatively new to the city and spoke little French, and it appears that they enjoyed calling for him at his apartment, after which they would all go out to visit a local triperie. Bennett had been introduced to the Chat Blanc circle by Gerald Kelly, (34) and he sometimes dined there with the other regulars. There are brief references in Bennett’s published journals to these meetings, and he recorded on 19 January 1906, that he had dined with O'Conor and the American illustrator Stanlaws at the Chat Blanc. (35) It seems that on this particular occasion, both O'Conor and Stanlaws appeared to Bennett to be 'rather sad, bored, and deserted,' probably because they had not left Paris for Christmas, as most of their friends had done.

In a later journal reference dated 20 February, Bennett noted that O’Conor had dined with him the previous evening at which time ‘he still slanged Sargent, and said that Renoir was a master.’ (36) In making this comment to Bennet, O'Conor may have had in mind some of the nine paintings which Renoir had exhibited in the previous year in the 1905 Salon d'Automne exhibition, a show in which O'Conor himself was represented by five paintings, and the year which also saw the emergence of the Fauves as a group. There had also been a special exhibition of Renoir's work at the Salon d'Automne of 1904, in which he was represented by thirty five paintings, while O’Conor showed one landscape 'Le Loing à Montigny'.
From what we know of O'Conor's work, especially that associated with his return to Paris, we may conclude that he would have been especially enthusiastic about Renoir's sense of touch in his paintings and his unparalleled ability to deal with the subtleties of light falling across the human form. In looking at O'Conor's nudes, one senses there an aspiration to capture the more sensuous elements of the female form, often with sexual overtones. Such qualities are present in the painting entitled 'Nude' (REF.PTGS.NO.098) and in 'Reclining Girl' (REF.PTGS.NO.106). A similar feathery brush stroke to Renoir's technique is used in 'Nude' (REF.PTGS.NO.107) and in the pose of the figure in 'Model Reading' (REF.PTGS.NO.116) as well as in her appearance, we can detect distinct similarities to many of Renoir's subjects. Renoir's landscapes also managed to achieve similar sensuous qualities to those of his nudes, and in a painting such as 'Landscape at Beaulieu' in the collection of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the luxurious natural vegetation and the red green contrasts in the painting, which is itself bathed in a warm and glowing light, are all qualities to which O'Conor may have responded positively. Renoir also painted nudes in an outdoor setting linking them to the landscape and it may well be that the context in which he painted his 'Bather' of 1881, also known as 'Blond Bather I', provided the inspiration for O'Conor's painting 'Baigneuse à la Mer' (REF.PTGS.NO.187) We should also note similarities in the appearance of O'Conor's much favoured model, as depicted in 'Seated Nude' (REF.PTGS.NO.190) and Renoir's female model whose long red hair is such a distinctive feature in several of his paintings. (37)

O'Conor also provided Bennett with a clever criticism of Conrad's writing style and displayed his enthusiasm for Thackerey. When they returned to Bennett's place late one evening, O'Conor spent some time going through his
collection of books and it was evident to Bennett, as it had been to Bell, that his knowledge in this field was considerable. Bennett also recorded that in his opinion, some of O’Conor’s ideas on other matters, such as religion, were ‘a strange mixture of crudity and finesse.’ Some years later, in 1910, O’Conor who was accompanied by the American painter, Orville Root, met Bennett at the Salon des Indépendants exhibition. (38) It seems from this shred of evidence that although O’Conor had stopped showing at the Salon des Indépendants after the 1908 exhibition, through his general dissatisfaction with the quality and quantity of work to be seen there, (39) he nevertheless was still prepared to visit the exhibition. One may suppose that he found lots of pictures there which were beneath his contempt, and on which he could release his cynical and bitter criticisms.

If the social cuttings to Bennett’s apartment were reasonably congenial, somewhat less appreciated by a surprised host, was the impromptu visit which O’Conor, Bell and Thoby Steven paid to Rodin in his studio on a New Year’s day. Rodin would have been known to O’Conor as he had occasionally lunched at the Chat Blanc and he must have assumed that on this occasion he would have received a reasonably warm welcome. Rodin however, rebuffed the three and send the message that he was only at home to his ‘amis les plus intimes.’ (40)

Bell’s memoirs also include the names of other regulars at the Chat Blanc including the American painters, Alexander Harrison and Orville Root, and the sculptors, Brooks, and Paul Bartlett. In addition there was the illustrator Penrhyn Stanlaws, and the English painters Milner-Kite and of course Gabriel Thompson, and one named Howard. Kite, according to Bell, was a follower of Lavery and thought of as a joke, (41) a description with which O’Conor may
not have agreed, judging by the evidence of the life-time friendship between Kite and O'Conor. This circle must have been fairly tightly drawn, for all of these names feature in O'Conor's correspondence with Bell in later years.

In spite of O'Conor's secretive side, for it is clear from Bell that he was naturally reticent about events in his past, Bell was aware that O'Conor was from a land owning family in Ireland and that he had done reasonably well out of his settlement through the Land Purchase Act. Bell's description of O'Conor's physical appearance as 'a swarthy man, with a black moustache, greying when I met him, tallish and sturdy, and not particularly Bohemian in appearance,' is certainly consistent with the photograph published by Sutton in his article in Studio magazine in 1960, and with O'Conor's own self portrait which, although inscribed with the date '03, is probably a rather earlier painting. (REF.PTGS.NO.060).

Because of his closeness to O'Conor, Bell was able to establish important details about the Irishman's personality, and from him we learn that O'Conor was without question distrustful of almost everyone with whom he came in contact. This may have been O'Conor's natural reaction to his being thought of as someone who had a never ending supply of money, and who could be easily persuaded to part with some of it on request. Bell concluded that outside some special friendships of his own, O'Conor was something of a hater of mankind in general. Allied to this observation was the comment that O'Conor was 'a solitary by temperament' probably through his own choice, although Bell learned that after one of O'Conor's visits to Italy, possibly in the year 1910, O'Conor told him that he had begun to feel lonely after he had spent most of his time looking at paintings there. Bell also observed that there was a secretive side to O'Conor, and he
concluded that there had possibly been some traumatic event or events prior to their meeting, which had contributed to the sense of tragedy which seemed to surround him.

There may well be something in this conclusion of Bell's, particularly when all of the events which had occurred in O'Conor's life within the previous ten years are taken into account. There was for example, the importance of the Gauguin friendship and the possibility that O'Conor could have, had he so wished, gone with Gauguin on what had proved to be his last voyage to the South Seas. As Bell put it:

'What seems to me clear is that Gauguin's strength of character and convincing style of talk made a deep impression on the young or youngish Irishman, and I dare say it was the only deep impression he ever received from a fellow creature. That Gauguin had a way of talking and moving and looking which caught his imagination I feel sure.' (45)

Coupled with this was O'Conor's acceptance by the group loyal to Gauguin, an acceptance which must have owed as much to the quality of his own paintings, as it did to his extensive knowledge of painting and literature in general. In terms of their technique alone, O'Conor's best paintings between 1892 and 1895 were among the most advanced work to be seen, and yet apart from the group exhibitions with le Barc de Boutteville, and an invitation to exhibit with La Libre Esthétique in 1898, he had little else to show for it all. With the gradual breaking up of the group and its loss of impetus following Gauguin's departure, the period of intro-spection and re-adjustment at Rochefort-en-Terre had done nothing to advance O'Conor's work. The death of his father in 1893 in Ireland and the assuming of responsibilities as his heir, coupled perhaps with some crisis of conscience as to whether or not he should then have left France and returned to Ireland to manage the family affairs; the protracted negotiations with his tenants, his land agent, his solicitor and the Congested Lands Board over the sale of
the Milton estate, must all have taken their toll. When considered collectively, there had been enough major changes and disruptions in the previous ten years to deviate O'Conor from his true course, at a time when it appeared in retrospect that new avenues and a wider recognition for his talents were opening up to him.

Bell may therefore have been close to the truth in his assertion that while O'Conor had a discriminating and knowledgeable eye for good painting, he also had the self realisation that his own capacity as an artist was, in comparison with the leading artists around him, rather limited. If there had been one specific tragedy in his life up to that point, then O'Conor never revealed it, but Bell felt that it might have had something to do with O'Conor's awareness that although he had gifts and abilities as a painter, 'he was conscious too that he lacked powers of expression.' (46)

In later years, when Clive Bell had time to reflect on O'Conor's refined sense of judgement, he recalled that his preferences in painting were anything but narrow, and that artists whom he admired included Ingres and Delacroix, Cézanne and le douanier Rousseau. O'Conor then had works by Gauguin, Bonnard, Rouault, and Laprade in his own collection, and Bell noted that he was then appreciative of Cézanne, and to some extent influenced by him, at a time when Cézanne's name was not widely known. (47) We now know that O'Conor had in fact bought from Vollard, a lithograph of Cézanne's 'Les Baigneuses' for 50 francs, on 4 October 1905, at a time when the friendship with Bell was well established, and it was likely therefore that this specific print would have been among the various pieces in O'Conor's collection which Bell would have seen. (48) It may be that in some of
O'Connor's paintings of nudes in his rue du Cherche-Midi studio, Bell detected a relationship to this print.

After Bell completed his work in Paris and returned to England, he maintained contact with O'Connor by letter, and saw him on those occasions when he was visiting Paris in subsequent years. The letters which O'Connor sent to Bell also provide us with useful information from which we can draw further conclusions about O'Connor's personality, and also about his preferences in painting. We know for example that he continued to admire van Gogh's paintings from his comments in a letter to Bell sent from Paris in February 1908 in which he wrote: 'There has been nothing here to see in the picture line but some van Gogh's - very fine examples of expression of character pushed to the point of hallucination.' (49) This may have been in direct reference to the January exhibition of van Gogh's work at Bernheim Jeune's gallery, when more than one hundred works were exhibited, or to the exhibition of some thirty five works, also during January, at Druet's gallery. (50) More than a year later, in December of 1909, he again referred to another van Gogh exhibition which he had recently seen: 'I have not seen many pictures lately - a fine show of van Gogh's a couple of months ago the most remarkable.' (51) In other instances O'Connor had complimentary comments to make about the work of Laprade and Puy, particularly with reference to the 1909 Salon d'Automne exhibition when he had served as a member of the selection jury, and he also praised Delaunay's work in the 1913 exhibition. (52)

Artists criticised by O'Connor include Carrière - 'for him I have not a scrap of respect,' (53) and Gerald Kelly, despite, or possibly as a result of their brief acquaintance in Paris. O'Connor's criticisms of Kelly were directed
towards his paint quality which an unnamed London critic had praised in comparison with that of Sir Joshua Reynolds. For someone who had previously confessed to Clive Bell that he did not write more regularly because he 'had a natural repugnance to pen and ink,' O'Conor's criticism is at once scathing and revealing of a facility with words which probably made him a compelling conversationalist:

'I am not a fanatic of the art of Sir Joshua but when this wiseacre tells me that Mr. Kelly's <fresh paint> had a disastrous effect on the neighbouring Reynolds I can only assume that it was for the same reason that any excrementious matter would be disagreeable at close quarters.' (54)

In a follow up letter, O'Conor implied that the critics mistake was in taking Kelly's work seriously in the first place,(55) and he re-affirmed his own previous criticisms through an attack on Kelly's large portraits which were exhibited in that year's Salon exhibition, classifying them as 'a disastrous product of photography.' In the same letter O'Conor expressed the view that in his opinion the sculptor Maillol had come to the end of his tether.

Correspondence between O'Conor and Bell was still active in 1925, by which time it was the work of Picasso which had fallen under O'Conor's criticism:

'Your friend Picasso is booming they tell me. It seems that pictures are selling like hot cakes at present partly on account of the exchange and also that people don't know where to place their money.' (56)

Other than these rather brief references to individual painters, O'Conor's letters to Bell stop short of any more searching or deeper analytical discussion of the work of other artists. Apart from his revelation to Bell that he was not in sympathy with the introduction of any literary (by which it is assumed he also meant narrative) content into painting,(57) his letters do not reveal any specific theoretical stance of his own, and indeed any reference to his own painting is usually slight, merely commenting on his progress, or indeed his lack of progress with his own work. In
December of 1909 he wrote to Bell: 'I have kept the paint going in my usual plodding way very dissatisfied but hoping against hope,'(58) and in another letter from the same year he wrote: 'I have been jogging along as usual, working perhaps more steadily though the result seems small when I look back.' (59)

O'Conor's letters to Bell are more revealing of his attitude towards the critics and it is clear that he had very little sympathy with their views, particularly when opinions were being expressed on the basis of what he saw as their rather flimsy knowledge about the art and the craft of painting.(60) In particular, O'Conor was directly opposed to the language of criticism which had then become current, and he was very forthright in conveying to Bell his own opinion that in order to be effective, the critic had to have 'the natural intuition' which would allow him to come to terms with the work of artists such as Matisse and Cézanne. In criticizing the work of these artists, according to O'Conor, the critic needed to have something more than art historical knowledge alone. As O'Conor put it in the same letter...... 'he (the critic) must be almost as much of an artist as the painter he criticizes.'

When the subject for comment was politics, O'Conor proved to be no less scathing and cynical in the views which he expressed to Bell about certain English politicians such as Lloyd George and Churchill......' For unscrupulous ambition and blatant vulgarity I think they take the cake' (61) Nor did he feel that writers of the day, in particular Shaw, Wells, or Galsworthy, had any useful contribution to make to political events in England at that time. These writers, he alleged, really had nothing new to say having picked up ideas or pilfered them from 'better men.' They were, according to
O'Connor, little more than 'literary scavengers.' Such passages however brief they are in his correspondence, do give us some insight into what O'Connor must have been like when he was in full critical flow among his own circle at the Chat Blanc restaurant. When his comments were as severely critical as this they really bordered on the sarcastic and the totally dismissive, and it appears that the main reason for his ability to hold an audience was directly related to his considerable knowledge about the matters he was prepared to put down, helped along by his own facility with language and words. It was little wonder that Bell viewed him as the most formidable character in the quarter.

The bulk of the correspondence between the Irishman and Bell was however given over to that other great passion of O'Connor's - his love of literature and books in general. In his memoirs, Bell acknowledged O'Connor's expertise in this field and he gave him regular commissions to find books for him in Paris which were not easily available in London. To this task, O'Connor appears to have responded with enthusiasm and good will, and nowhere do we detect any thing other than the most helpful and considerate of attitudes to these requests. Beneath the commentary on the availability of certain books, and his search for them on Bell's behalf, is an underlying sharpness and critical awareness of the shortcomings of some of the book-sellers themselves. Clearly O'Connor was not prepared to stand for any compromises as was evident in his attitude to one book-seller who, after a request to have one volume of a set of Flaubert re-bound, had the binding done in a different colour to all the other volumes, leading to a disagreement between seller and purchaser, and to O'Connor's eventual withdrawal from the deal. (62)
The letters also reveal something of his own reading preferences at that time, and although he admitted in December of 1909 that he was not reading many new books - by which it is assumed he meant newly published books - he did comment on the fact that he was reading Rossetti, and he compared this writer's strong sense of individuality with that of Byron, expressing an interest in acquiring his published letters which he knew to be available in three volumes. Bell had previously formed the opinion that O'Conor's reading tastes were then so advanced that he was probably the only one on the group he had known in Paris who would have read Mallarmé. (63) He also intimated to Bell that he had read a couple of novels by Galsworthy which as he said, 'I thought clever,' but he added nothing further. (64) O'Conor and Bell also had common ground for numerous exchanges of views on articles which were published in the Athenæum, which O'Conor received regularly in Paris, and from Bell in December of 1909 came information about forthcoming exhibitions such as that of the New English Art Club, in which, from O'Conor's reply, we may infer that Bell was anxious to see him represented as an exhibitor. O'Conor's words in his reply, it must be said, are not the words of someone who was totally confident about the content of his own painting. (65)

Also included in the letters to Bell are brief references to the artists and writers, friends and acquaintances of O'Conor's, whom Bell would have met at the Chat Blanc - Morrice, Kite, Barne, Root, Thompson, Harrison, Stanlaws, Bennet, Crowley, and Maugham - and O'Conor kept Bell up to date with snippets of information about their whereabouts and their well being.

The contact between Bell and O'Conor gradually diminished over the years although it was, according to Bell, (66) reasonably frequent up until 1914.
With the outbreak of the war, communications were probably more difficult to maintain, but afterwards there were occasional points of contact between them in Paris, and Bell specifically mentions one such meeting late in the twenties involving the painter Segonzac, who referred to O’Conor as ‘le père O’Conor,’ a term of reference which rather surprised Bell, but which, as he confirmed in his memoirs, he had heard used before. After they had lunch with Bell, O’Conor and Segonzac went off to the Petit Palais together as Segonzac was serving on the hanging committee of the Salon d’Automne and O’Conor had sent pictures to the exhibition. The last occasion on which Bell met O’Conor was, in Bell’s words, ‘some years later than this,’ from which we may infer that it may have been in the late twenties or early thirties. O’Conor, accompanied by his ‘amie’ who at that time was Renée Honta, stopped to have a brief word with him when he was having a coffee at the famous left bank cafe and meeting place, les Deux Magots. After that, Bell never saw him again although he was given to understand by Matthew Smith at a later date, that O’Conor had married his mistress and gone to live in the Midi. (67)

In retrospect, this friendship was an important one for both men. For Bell it was his first real introduction to painting, fortunately for him it took place in Paris, and it is clear from his account that he learned a great deal from the older O’Conor. He acquired at least one of O’Conor’s paintings for his own collection, and perhaps somewhat subjectively described his work as being ‘full of austere intention unrealised.’ (68) This may have been a conclusion of Bell’s which was based on the evidence of a painting which is particularly thinly and loosely painted, and which remained in his own collection for many years, the still life known as ‘Flowers’ (REF.PTGS.NO.118). Although there is not a great deal of pigment on the
surface making it appear to be a sketch or a study, and therefore giving it a rather unfinished appearance, O'Conor would scarcely have let it leave his studio if he were not completely satisfied that the work was indeed finished. Perhaps it was this painting which for Bell was ' unrealised ', yet this preference for thinly diluted pigment and little more than staining of the canvas, was a quite definite characteristic of O'Conor's paintings between 1911 and 1913.

It was perhaps inevitable that the contact between O'Conor and Bell should gradually diminish. Both men had separate careers to follow in different countries, but it is significant in Bell's case when making an appraisal of his later accomplishments, to realise that his introduction to painting and his education in the ways of artists owed a great deal to O'Conor's guidance and to his instruction in Paris.

Roderic O'Conor and Somerset Maugham

It is something of an anomaly to discover that a great deal of what has previously been published about Roderic O'Conor's personality and life style, in articles which are otherwise factual, appears to have been derived from the fictional writings of Somerset Maugham. Maugham is known to have based some of his characters in his novels on the personalities of people that he knew, and having met O'Conor in Paris and spent some time in his company he freely borrowed aspects of his personality and grafted them on to fictional characters in at least two of his books. In order to better understand why the fictional O'Conor was portrayed as he was, it will

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be necessary to analyse what is known about the relationship between Maugham and O'Conor.

Somerset Maugham first came into contact with Roderic O'Conor at the Chat Blanc restaurant shortly after Clive Bell had made the acquaintance of the Irish painter. He was introduced to the Chat Blanc circle by Gerald Kelly, to whom incidentally he responded favourably, describing him as 'highly talented, abundantly loquacious, and immensely enthusiastic.' (71) The mere fact that Maugham was so appreciative of Kelly's painting, while in comparison O'Conor was almost totally dismissive of his work, (72) gives us some indication of how far apart the two men were on matters of aesthetics and the judgement and appreciation of paintings. In his published memoirs about that period in his life, Maugham was remarkably frank in revealing his attitude to some of the other Chat Blanc regulars with whom he had come in contact. About one of these, the writer Aleister Crowley, who dabbled in the occult, he wrote in pointed and very direct terms, 'I took an immediate dislike to him.' (73) In the same introduction Maugham also wrote that Crowley was a fake, 'but not entirely a fake,' and that he was a liar 'and unbecomingly boastful.' (74) He found Maurice (sic) to be a quiet friendly man who kept away from the heated arguments which went on among the assembled company of artists, writers, and models at the Chat Blanc, and in the case of O'Conor, he paid him the back handed compliment of being the most interesting person in the group, but he also found him to be sullen and bad-tempered. (75) According to Maugham, it was O'Conor who took an immediate dislike to him, a dislike which he made no effort to conceal. According to Crowley, the man that Maugham most hated was Roderic O'Conor. (76) Lest there should be any doubt about how Maugham viewed O'Conor, we have only to refer to a letter which he sent to Clive Bell

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shortly after 'Old Friends' was published in 1956, in which he gave Bell a polite but firm rebuke for not being more critical of O'Conor who, according to Maugham, 'was needlessly rude and vile mannered.' (77)

Whom Maugham published his own memoirs in 1962 he elaborated on some aspects of the relationship between himself and the Irishman, and included the information that his (Maugham's) mere presence at the dinner table was sufficient to irritate O'Conor. (78) It seems that almost any remark made by Maugham would lead O'Conor to respond with a critical retort, and Maugham recalled a specific instance when there had been a particularly nasty disagreement between them on the subject of the the sonnets of Heredia. Maugham did concede, however reluctantly, that O'Conor had talent although he qualified this by saying that in his view it was not a great talent. He also acknowledged at the time of writing, that is in 1962, that he was aware that O'Conor was gaining more appreciation for his work in Ireland. Significantly perhaps, for it adds a further snippet of information to our knowledge about O'Conor's personality, Maugham's view was that this recognition would probably have infuriated O'Conor had he been alive at the time.

It seems that in spite of the bad feeling between them, Maugham did have some respect for O'Conor's worth as a painter, and perhaps as an act of bravado he asked O'Conor if he might visit his studio to see his pictures. (79) During this studio visit to an interior, which, as he described it 'gave one an impression of abject poverty,' (80) Maugham bought two paintings, both still lifes, of which one has been traced, that is the painting known as 'Still life with flowers in a jug,' (REF.PTGS.NO.209) (81) and he paid a very modest price to a surprised O'Conor. These two works
by O’Conor were, as revealed by Maugham himself, the very first paintings
which he had ever bought, (82) and they therefore marked Maugham’s
beginnings as a serious art collector and one who in subsequent years,
continued to purchase and build a valuable collection of Impressionist and
Post-Impressionist works. When Maugham recalled this transaction in his
letter to Clive Bell in later years, he added the information that at the
time of the sale O’Conor conveyed to him the distinct impression that
through buying his pictures, he was actually insulting him.

If, as seems likely from the date on one of the paintings, that the two
pictures were not purchased until 1923, by then both of Maugham’s novels,
‘The Magician,’ (1908) and ‘Of Human Bondage,’ (1915) had been in print for
some years, and in both of these novels we can identify fictional characters
whom Maugham substantially based on his own subjective response to the
personality of Roderic O’Conor. As neither of these fictional characters
has been given qualities which are in the least flattering, we can assume
that O’Conor’s reaction would have been one of acute embarrassment and
probably outrage. It might be expected in these circumstances that O’Conor
would have every right to feel insulted when asked to sell a painting to
Maugham. What is more than a little unusual about this transaction, is that
from what we know of O’Conor’s personality, if he had been maligned in print
even as a ‘fictional’ character and had therefore suffered some degree of
ridicule, he would probably not even have admitted Maugham to his studio in
the first place.

‘The Magician’ was a novel of which O’Conor had been aware within the first
year of its publication, for in correspondence with Clive Bell in April
1909,(83) he mentioned that he had heard that Maugham had published a new
satirical novel in which he had, as O'Conor put it, 'crucified the White Cat.'

In the novel the Chat Blanc is transposed into the Chien Noir, and the central character the magician, Oliver Haldo, is a fictional character based on Aleister Crowley's personality. James Wilson Morrice is thinly disguised as Warren in the book, and as he was in reality, he is presented as an artist and colourist of talent who drank to excess. O'Conor's character, Mr. O'Brien, is described in these quite cruel words when we are first introduced to him at the Chien Noir:

'That is Mr. O'Brien, who is an example of the fact that strength of will and an earnest purpose cannot make a painter. He's a failure and he knows it, and the bitterness has warped his soul. If you listen to him you'll hear every painter of eminence come under his lash. He can forgive nobody who's successful, and he never acknowledges merit in anyone till he's safely dead and buried.' (84)

In the same chapter in the novel when Oliver Haldo, the magician, arrives at the Chien Noir, he greets O'Brien with the words:

'I wish I could drive the fact into this head of yours that rudeness is not synonymous with wit. I shall not have lived in vain if I teach you in time to realise that the rapier of irony is more effective an instrument than the bludgeon of insolence.' (85)

One can imagine the effect that such words in print would have had on an artist who was less than confident about his own painting at the time. In several letters to Bell between 1906 and 1909, more than a hint of difficulty comes through from O'Conor himself....'I am going along in the usual sleepy way'; (86) ....'I did not send this year (to the Salon) though I was on the jury,' (87) 'I have kept the paint going in my usual plodding way very dissatisfied but hoping against hope,' (88)....'I have been jogging along as usual, working perhaps more steadily though the result seems small when I look back.' (89)

Both of these brief references in The Magician, effectively sum up Maugham's view of O'Conor, and it must be said in his defence that they do echo some
of Clive Bell's words of description, although in so doing they also push some of the least amiable aspects of O'Conor's personality into rather greater extremes. If further confirmation were needed of the extent of the bad feeling between Maugham and O'Conor, them we have only to refer to the words of Aleister Crowley to learn that to O'Conor, Maugham was not even funny. According to Crowley he compared him to a bed bug, 'on which a sensitive man refuses to stamp because of the smell and the squashiness.'

(90)

It is in the fictional character of Clutton, in the novel 'Of Human Bondage,' that we can recognise something of Roderic O'Conor's personality and attitudes. The choice of name for the character is no less interesting for it seems likely that Maugham, having knowledge of O'Conor's family background and his own position as a landowner in Ireland, deliberately chose for his fictional character a name which was then, and still is today, synonymous with that of a well known firm of estate agents dealing in land and country estates in Sussex for more than two hundred years. How much of the character of Clutton is based on fact and how much is purely fictional is impossible to determine, and some of the description of Clutton's appearance does not match well with Bell's previously related description of O'Conor.(91) Maugham was of course careful not to make a precise translation of all of O'Conor's habits and characteristics, and to graft these without any modification on to the character of Clutton. His technique appears to have been to exaggerate and to distort in such circumstances (92) so that we are, for example, informed that Clutton never read,(93) that he refused to show his work because he could not cope with criticism of what he himself painted, and that he would not take the chance of being rejected by the Salon.(94) The reality is that O'Conor was of
course an informed book-man and avid reader of literature, and contrary to what is generally believed, he did exhibit regularly at the Salon, so that between 1883 and his solitary one man exhibition at the Galerie Bonaparte in Paris three years before his death, he had shown in almost sixty group exhibitions. (95)

In 'Of Human Bondage,' the character of Glutton is given an air of 'sardonic indifference,' (96) and elsewhere of 'hostile aloofness.' (97) Also introduced into the character is that sense of tragedy which Bell was to write about in later years in his memoirs (98)... 'there had been in him a tragic force which sought vainly to express itself in painting.' (99)

Elsewhere in the book he is described as 'a man of strength' ...'perhaps the mask concealed a strange weakness' and further, ....' Glutton had grown more harsh and bitter...though he would not come out into the open and compete with his fellows, he was indignant with the facile success of those who did.' (100) In his summary of the character Maugham wrote:

'......' he (Phillip) saw Clutton in twenty years, bitter, lonely, savage, and unknown; still in Paris, for the life there had got into his bones, ruling a small cenacle with a savage tongue, at war with himself and the world, producing little in his increasing passion for a perfection he could not reach; and perhaps sinking at last into drunkenness.' (101) ....'It was plain anyway that the life Clutton seemed destined to was failure.'(102)

There is also a reference in the book to an unnamed stockbroker whom Clutton said he had met in Brittany... 'He's just off to Tahiti,' (103) clearly a passing reference to Gauguin which Maugham sought to include. Maugham was aware that O'Conor had spent some time in Brittany with Paul Gauguin and he revealed that he would have liked to have learned more from O'Conor about him,(104) an opportunity which never really arose because of the animosity between them. The fictional Clutton also recounts in the book the significance for him of a visit which he made to Spain, at which
time the works of El Greco made a lasting impression on him. (105) O'Conor is indeed known to have been appreciative of El Greco's paintings, (106) and there is confirmation that he did in fact make a visit to Spain in 1912. (107)

Roderic O'Conor, as we have seen, was not the only individual known to Somerset Maugham in Paris, on whom he based his fictional characters. (108) However in assessing the extent to which we can accept that the fictional characters which emerged as a result of this practice were faithful and true representations of the real individual, we must be guided by Maugham's own words on the subject:

"Of Human Bondage is not an autobiography, but an autobiographical novel; fact and fiction are inextricably mingled; the emotions are my own, but not all of the incidents are related as they happened and some of them are transferred to my hero not from my own life but from that of persons with whom I was intimate." (109)

From this it is fairly evident that the two fictional characters of O'Brien in 'The Magician,' and Clutton in 'Of Human Bondage,' would at best have been freely adapted by Somerset Maugham from aspects of O'Conor's personality. Any assessment of the accuracy or otherwise of the personalities of the fictional characters as being representative of O'Conor's true personality should therefore be tempered by the realisation that to put it mildly, Maugham and O'Conor detested each other's company.
FOOTNOTES

1. O'Conor was still in Pont-Aven in March and April, and his exhibiting address in the Salon des Indépendants catalogue for that year (the exhibition was in February and March) was given as Hôtel des Voyageurs, Pont-Aven, Finistère. In the Salon d'Automne catalogue he exhibited under his Paris address, 102 rue du Cherche-Midi.

2. The writer has had the opportunity to visit the interior of the studio and from the evidence of the present resident, also an artist, little has been changed since the time that O'Conor was in residence there. The present occupant took the studio in 1934, immediately after O'Conor moved out.

3. Bell, Clive, (1956) op.cit., p.167. See also the section which follows in this Chapter, for an analysis of the friendship between Roderic O'Conor and Clive Bell.

4. This suggestion originated with Alden Brooks, Edward Brooks' son, and was passed on by him in a letter to Denys Sutton who was then preparing his article on O'Conor for the Studio magazine. Tate Gallery Archives, London.

5. La Libre Esthétique, 12th.Exhibition, Brussels, 21 February-23 March 1905. Roderic O'Conor. 102 rue du Cherche-Midi, Paris. Catalogue no.79 La Vague, (REF.PTGS.NO.059); no.80 La ferme de Lezaven, (REF.PTGS.NO.023); no.81 Fruits, (not identified); no.82 Faïences, (REF.PTGS.NO.078)

6. The French Government purchased Morrice's painting 'Quai des Augustins' in 1904, and in the same year he also sold his 'Fête oraine, Montmartre' to the Russian collector Ivan Morozov.

7. Cited by O'Brian, John, in James Wilson Morrice 1865-1924, exhibition catalogue, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal (1986) at p.94. This reference is from a Matisse letter to Armand Dayot, undated [late 1925], included in the introduction to a Morrice memorial exhibition organised by the Galerie Simonson in Paris in 1926.

8. Buchanan, Donald, James Wilson Morrice, a Biography (1936) According to Buchanan, it was O'Conor's 'intellectual' analysis of painting, his knowledge of Cézanne and Gauguin, and his position as 'the theorist' in their social group which most influenced Morrice.....'that the intellectual content of O'Connor's (sic) appreciation of painting had some effect on Morrice there can be little doubt.' p.57


10. Buchanan, Donald (1936) op.cit., p.62.

12. A receipt for this transaction, signed by Vollard himself, has been found among other O'Conor papers in a private collection (B) in France. See also the sale catalogue, *Vente O'Conor*, Hotel Drouot Paris, 6-7 février 1956. Catalogue nos. 13 and 14, 'Les Baigneurs', Cézanne (P.).

13. See for example the following catalogues: *Salon des Indépendants* (1903) catalogue no.187, Le gué, Montigny-sur-Loing; *Salon des Indépendants* (1904) catalogue no.174, Moulin de Montigny; *Salon des Indépendants* (1905) catalogue no.3097, le Loing à Montigny; *Salon des Indépendants* (1906) catalogue nos.3735, Le Barrage à Montigny; 3736, Un gué sur le Loing; 3737, le Loing à Montigny; 3738, Le soir à Montigny. See also *Salon d'Automne* catalogues for the following years, (1903) catalogue no. 421, Montigny-sur-Loing paysage; *Salon d'Automne* (1904) catalogue no. 950 bis. Loing à Montigny.


15. There is an inscription on the middle bar of the stretcher which the writer has identified as being in O'Conor's hand. This reads as 'étude' and has the number '3' assigned. When 'étude' was exhibited it was the third painting in the list of works submitted by O'Conor for exhibition that year, catalogue number 1319.

16. Bell, Clive, op.cit p.163. See also this Chapter for an analysis of the relationship with Bell.


18. For a full account of Morosov's collection see Ginsburg Michael, 'Art Collectors of Old Russia, the Moroso's and the Shchukins', Apollo, December, 1973, pp. 470-85. After the Russian Revolution Morosov's house and collection was opened to the public under state control. In 1919 the house and collection became a section of the Museum of New Western Art, eventually being transferred to the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad.


20. Girieud's painting, 'Hommage à Gauguin', includes the following identifiable persons: Paul Gauguin, Francisco Durrio, Maurice Denis, Charles Morice, Racui de Mathan, Georges Dufrenoy, Paul Sérusier, Daniel de Montfreid, Roderic O'Conor, an un-named collector, and Paul Girieud.

21. This information was contained in a letter which O'Conor sent to Bell on 18 February, 1908. National Gallery of Ireland Archives, ROC/CB No. 6.

22. The exhibition was based on the model established by the Société des Artistes Indépendants in Paris, and each exhibitor had the right to show no more than five works, without submitting them to any selection jury.
Allied Artists Association, Albert Hall, London (July 1908) O'Conor, Roderic
102 rue du Cherche-Midi, Paris. Catalogue Nos.889, Ferme près de Pont-Aven; 890, La Toilette; 891, Fruits; 892, Moulin à Montigny; 893, Remous


24. The visit is mentioned in the diary of Alden Brooks, at 4 November 1910. Private collection U.S.A.

25. Bell, Clive, (1956) op.cit., p.164

26. Couture's recommendation was to set aside the ébauche, using it as a guide only, putting anything which one liked into the copy. For a more complete analysis of Couture's methods of painting, see Boime, A., *The Academy and French painting in the 19th Century*. London (1971)

27. Bell, Clive, (1956) op.cit., see Chapter IX - Paris 1904, pp. 138-69. Most of the information in this section has been based on Bell's recollections of his early days in Paris, and his friendship there with Roderic O'Connor.


29. Bell, (1956) op.cit., p.139

30. ibid. p.168

31. ibid. p.166

32. Cuno Amiet to his father in a letter sent from Pont-Aven, 7 March, 1893. Private collection (A) Switzerland.

33. This information was conveyed to Bell by O'Connor in a letter written from Paris on 4 December 1906. Archives of the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, ROC/CB No.1
The letter is one of thirteen written by O'Connor to Bell, covering the period from 1906 to 1925. The letters were originally in the collection of the library of King's College, Cambridge, before being purchased at Sotheby's on 21 July 1981, as lot no.385, by the National Gallery of Ireland. Further references to these letters in subsequent footnotes is to the catalogue number of the letter in question, that is ROC/CB No.1. 14 December 1906

34. Buchanan, Donald W., *James Wilson Morrice - A Biography*. Toronto (1936) p.52 Sir Gerald Kelly, as he then was at the time this biography was published, revealed this information in reference to his acquaintance with Arnold Bennett in Paris.


36. ibid. pp. 229-30

37. See especially Renoir's painting 'Seated Bather' of 1883-'84, in the collection of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Massachusetts.

38. Flower, Desmond, ed., (1932) op.cit., p.364
39. ROC/CB No.6, 18 February 1908. op.cit. In this letter O'Conor wrote: 'The Indépendants open the middle of next month. I am sending 5 or 6 things but in such a rout of bad and muddling things do not expect to be seen.'

40. Bell, (1956) op.cit. p.150

41. ibid. p.151

42. This reference of Bell's must obviously be to the events of the years later than 1904, for O'Conor's final settlement did not mature until 1910. Early in 1904, O'Conor was still negotiating with the Congested Lands Board (See Chapter VIII, also the Paris and Montparnasse section in this chapter.)

43. Sutton, Denys, (1960) op.cit. The photograph appears at p.169
The photograph was sent to Sutton by Alden Brooks who found it among the papers which had been retained by his father Edward Brooks from his period of contact with O'Conor at Gres-sur-Loing in 1891-'92

44. Diary of Alden Brooks, November 4 1910, Private collection, U.S.A. There is a reference to O'Conor's visit to Italy.

45. Bell, (1956) op.cit. p.166

46. ibid. p.164

47. The Cézanne influence in O'Conor's work has not been found to any significant degree in the works which have been traced. A still-life such as 'Still life with apples and bowl,' 1916, (REF.PTGS.NO.158) does have a compositional similarity to some of Cézanne's still lifes, but shares little in common with his technique. In comparison with Cézanne's work, O'Conor's almost always veers towards an expressive and emotive realisation of the subject, whereas Cézanne's approach was altogether more cerebral and measured, and to that extent rather more deliberate and purposeful.

48. A receipt for the transaction, signed by Vollard, has been found among the private papers of Roderic O'Conor. Private collection (B) France. This print, one of two lithographs of the same subject which O'Conor owned, must have had particular significance for him, for he retained it throughout his life-time and it was among the more important items to be sold at the dispersal sale of the contents of his and his wife's studio, at Hotel Drouot in Paris in 1956, as Lot no.14.

49. ROC/CB No.6, 18 February 1908, op.cit. This comment is none the less interesting due to the fact that at the time it was made, such issues were not evident in the work which O'Conor was then doing.

50. Post-Impressionism, Royal Academy of Arts, London 1979-80, exhibition catalogue. See chronology at p.294

51. ROC/CB No.8, 30 December 1909, op.cit.

52. ROC/CB No.12, 12/15 October 1913, op.cit.

53. ROC/CB No.6, 18 February 1908, op.cit.
54. ROC/CB No.9, 5 April, (No year), op.cit.

55. ROC/CB No.10, op.cit., undated but dateable to Autumn of the year 1909 on the basis of information contained in the letter about the 1909 Salon exhibition.

56. ROC/CB No.11, 7 October 1917, op.cit.

57. ROC/CB No.10, undated, op.cit.

'It seems to be impossible for the British artist to be contented with painting and concentrate himself on expression in that medium without trying to drag in something else literary or what not.'

58. ROC/CB No.8, 30 December 1909, op.cit.

59. ROC/CB No.10, undated, op.cit.

60. ROC/CB No.8, 30 December 1909, op.cit. A substantial part of this letter is devoted to a scathing attack on art critics in general.

61. ibid.

62. ROC/CB No.5, 24 November, 1907, op.cit.

63. Bell, (1956) op.cit., p.153

64. ROC/CB No.8, 30 December 1909, op.cit.

65. ibid.

'I am much obliged about the New E.(sic) Art club. If Sickert wishes he can have something. It is nearly twenty years since I sent there so they have had time to recover.'

66. Bell, (1956) op.cit. p.168

67. ibid. p.169

68. ibid. p.164

69. Sutton (1960), Jaworska (1972), Benington (1982) op.cit., have all accepted that the descriptions of fictional characters in Maugham's novels are reasonably accurate reflections of O'Conor's character and personality.

70. Maugham, W. Somerset, The Magician, London, (1908), passim, in which Maugham borrowed from O'Conor's character for the fictional O'Brien, and Of Human Bondage, London (1915), passim, in which the character of Clutton is based on Maugham's observations of O'Conor's personality.

71. ibid. See the introduction 'A fragment of autobiography,' to the novel Of Human Bondage (1915) op.cit., p.vii

72. O'Conor expressed his views on the shortcomings of Kelly's paintings in a letter sent to Clive Bell, Archives of the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, ROC/CB 10. In reference to his exhibits at the 1909 Salon d'Automne, O'Conor wrote: 'Kelly has two large portraits probably the worst
things there and only received because as a Sociétaire he has a right to two canvasses.'

73. ibid. p.vii

74. ibid. p.viii


77. W. Somerset Maugham to Clive Bell, undated letter sent from the Dorchester, Park Lane, London. King's College Library, Cambridge

78. Maugham, op.cit. p.8

79. In a letter to O'Conor which is unfortunately not dated, Maugham gave him notice that he was passing through Paris, and despite all the bad feeling between them he wrote in a surprisingly friendly vein: 'I should very much like to come and see your pictures,' and then added the remarks 'perhaps you remember I have had for many years a sketch of yours. It has given me great pleasure.' Somerset Maugham to O'Conor, undated letter sent from 18 rue du Chateau d'Eau, Nord 8580. Private collection (B) France.

80. Maugham, op cit., (1962) p.8

81. All of the pictures which Maugham bought from O'Conor were illustrated in his memoirs, 'Purely for my Pleasure,' op.cit. Plates III, 'Nature morte au choufleur,' (REF.PTGS.NO.182); Plate IV (untraced); and Plate V 'Still life with flowers in a jug,'(REF.PTGS.NO.209) The latter picture was included in the sale of Maugham's collection at Sotheby's of London on 10 April 1962, catalogue no.3.

82. Maugham writing in his memoirs, (1962) op.cit. p.8

83. Roderic O'Conor to Clive Bell, letter dated 5 April, 1909, Archives of the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, ROC/CB 9.

84. Maugham, W. Somerset, (1908) op.cit., p.22

85. ibid. p.26

86. Archives of the National Gallery of Ireland, op.cit., ROC/CB 3

87. ibid. ROC/CB 4

88. ibid. ROC/CB 8

89. ibid. ROC/CB 10

90. Symonds, J. and Grant, K. eds.,(1979) op.cit.,p.349

91. Maugham, op.cit. at p.268...'a young man with thin, black hair, an enormous nose, and a face so long that it reminded you of a horse.'  Bell, op.cit. at p.163. 'a swarthy man with a black moustache, greying when I met him, tallish and sturdy.'
92. Maugham, (1908) op.cit. page x. In reference to 'The Magician' where Aleister Crowley serves as the model for the central character, Maugham wrote that he made his fictional character 'more striking in appearance, more sinister and more ruthless than Crowley ever was.'

93. Maugham, (1915) op.cit. p.346

94. ibid. p.369

95. See Appendix IV for a full list of exhibitions in which O'Conor participated during his lifetime.

96. Maugham, (1915) op.cit. p. 293

97. ibid. p.668

98. Bell, Clive, (1956) op.cit., p.164

99. Maugham, (1915) op.cit. p.668

100. ibid, p.369

101. ibid. pp.369-70

102. ibid. p.370

103. ibid. p.370

104. Maugham's memoirs, (1962) op.cit p.7

105. Maugham, (1915) op.cit., p.344

106. Bell, (1956) op.cit. at p.167 refers to a number of pictures of works by El Greco which he saw in O'Conor's studio.

107. O'Conor was in Madrid on 20 March, 1912, the date being franked on a post-card, co-incidentally of a work by El Greco entitled 'Retrato,' which he sent to Francis Chadwick at his address in Paris. In the possession of the writer.

108. Among the other acquaintances of Maugham's who were also freely adapted for his characters in the novel 'The Magician' were Gerald Kelly who was the model for the fictional Lawson, James Wilson Morrice who was transformed into the character of Warren, Aleister Crowley who became the central character of the magician, and Paul Bartlett who was used for the character of Clayson. In 'Of Human Bondage' there was some borrowing once again from Morrice for the character of Cronshaw, and the American illustrator Penrhys Stanlaws became Flanagan.

109. Maugham, (1915) op.cit., foreword to Of Human Bondage, p.viii
Chapter X

The Visit to Cassis (1913)

After two separate visits which took him out of France to Italy in 1910 and to Spain in 1912, (1) O'Conor moved temporarily to a different location in 1913. He went south to the Midi and rented a villa in Cassis, a small town on the Mediterranean in the Bouches-du-Rhône district of France, not far from Marseilles. (2) In the early part of 1913 however, he was still in Paris and in contact with Alden Brooks who visited him at his rue du Cherche-Midi atelier on two consecutive days in February. (3) On the first of these visits, Brooks was accompanied by Francis Chadwick's daughter Hilma, and they went out with O'Conor to Les Deux Magots for drinks. When they came back the following day to visit him again they brought with them Emma (Lowstadt) Chadwick's sister Eva, who was Hilma's aunt, and Brooks has noted in his diary that on this occasion there was some discussion about a visit to Cassis.

O'Conor probably did not leave for Cassis until late in the spring of 1913, and the villa which he rented was a two storey residence situated in a narrow street in the old part of the town, set on a hill leading up from the port. Villa Marguerite, the name by which the property was known, is still standing to-day, and although the interior has been renovated and improved by successive owners its external appearance has little changed in the last seventy five years. The house backed on to a garden surrounded by a high wall, and there was a balcony to the rear of the villa which afforded a fine
view over the rooftops of the houses further down the hill, towards the Bay of Cassis and the Mediterranean beyond.

This part of the south of France had become popular with some of the Fauve painters, and in the year that O'Conor was there he reported that Camoin had stayed during the summer in Cassis's popular Hotel Cendrillon. Camoin and O'Conor must have spent some time together for O'Conor was able to relay the information back to Bell that the rates at the hotel were only 6 francs a day 'tout compris,' and that Camoin had found it to be very satisfactory.(4) O'Conor also knew that Manguin was then still in the area, and that Marquet, who had also been painting there was due to leave that same day for Paris. From these brief references we may conclude that that there was some fairly regular point of contact for the painters, probably at a café or restaurant in the evening, or perhaps when they were out painting 'sur le motif.' Besides, Cassis was really quite a small place and any artist working there, especially if he was from Paris, would inevitably have crossed paths with others who were painting in the same district. O'Conor informed Bell in his October letters that he had been in Cassis for most of the summer, and that he had just returned from Paris where he had been for the sending in day of the Salon d'Automne. He was represented by six paintings in that year's Salon, and he gave his Paris address as his exhibiting address in the catalogue entry under his name.(5)

The lighter touch which was present in his still life paintings of 1911 continued to be a characteristic of the Cassis paintings, although some adjustment to his earlier working methods is discernible in at least one of these 1913 pictures, 'La Rose du Ciel, (Cassis)' (REF.PTGS.NO.141). Preliminary drawing has, as is usual with O'Conor, been kept to an absolute
minimum, but in comparison with the paintings of two years earlier this work has been painted with a much drier brush and there is much less evidence of that sense of rhythm or movement of the brush which was a characteristic of paintings such as 'Nature morte, azalées'. (REF.PTGS.NO.117) The sense of touch and the exploratory and slightly hesitant contact with the canvas is reminiscent of Bonnard's technique, and he, rather than the Fauve painters seems to have been the influence on his work at this time. The Bonnard influence may also be seen in at least three further paintings, none of which was necessarily exhibited at the Salon d'Automne that year, but which are very Bonnard-like in their treatment. Although one of these works is known by its ascribed title 'Brittany Coastline,' (REF.PTGS.NO.137) its colour range, technique, and topographical details link it directly to the Cassis paintings. 'Landscape,' (REF.PTGS.NO.138), is even closer to Bonnard's style when compared with the brushwork details of a Bonnard painting such as 'Nu à contre jour' of 1908 which was exhibited by Bernheim-Jeune the year after it was painted. Bonnard had in fact been among the exhibitors at le Galerie de le Barc de Boutteville in the 6th. and 7th. exhibitions of Peintres Impressionnistes et Symbolistes in 1894, where O'Conor was also among the exhibitors, so that he would have had some acquaintance with Bonnard's work from that date. These more 'colourful' pictures also probably owe something to O'Conor's change of environment and subject matter, from studio based still-life and interiors to a return to the landscape in search of new themes. The clear light of the Midi and the hot Mediterranean sun which dried out the landscape had made this environment an attractive one for the Fauve influenced painters. The rich foliage and bright flora of this region had an intensity of colour which they introduced into their richly painted canvasses, and although O'Conor has enhanced the colour in this painting, it stops short of the brilliance and purity of Fauve colour. (6)
In terms of its composition, the still-life painting 'Iris' (REF.PTGS.NO.133) refers back to the studio pictures of 1911, and to those paintings in which objects and vases of flowers were placed on a surface beside a window so that they were viewed against the light. An influence from Bonnard may also be detected in this work, largely due to the development of a range of subtle colour changes.

The seascape, 'Landscape with rocks' (REF.PTGS.NO.130) has previously been identified as a Brittany painting (?) although in the writer's opinion it does not have the character of the much more rugged Brittany coastline with its granite outcrops and Atlantic breakers. The brush marks on the headland are more evocative of the low white buildings and red tiled roofs associated with the Midi, and in its method of painting it shares more of the characteristics of the already identified Cassis paintings, to which series it more obviously relates. O'Conor has again used a colour range in this painting which might be described as 'reduced fauvist' which does not really break into the purity of colour which one associates with, for example, Braque's fauvist paintings of 1906 and 1907 which he painted at l'Estaque. However the short directional brush strokes in this painting with the ground left to show through, are so similar to Braque's marks, and to a lesser extent those of Derain, that it is reasonable to assume that O'Conor was sensitive to their approach as he painted this work.

'The Balustrade' (REF.PTGS.NO.136) and the sketch which is related to it, 'Paysage du Midi aux toits rouges', (REF.PTGS.NO.135) is almost certainly the view from the balcony to the rear of Villa Marguerite. This work brings into play an extension of O'Conor's colour range from the still life pictures of 1911 which were painted in his Paris studio, and also includes the
familiar Alizarin Crimson hue which was a recurring feature of the still life works as well as of the paintings of nudes and of the figures in the studio interior.

O'Conor was paying 110 francs a month for the rental of his villa in Cassis, but because of implied difficulties with his landlord, he became anxious to make changes during the course of the year. Clive Bell had written to O'Conor to tell him that he was trying to sub-let Maugham's villa, Villa Croze, which he had arranged to rent, and O'Conor hoped to be able to persuade his owner to release him from their rental agreement at the end of October. Unable to do this, O'Conor stayed on in Villa Marguerite until 1 January, after which date he presumably returned to Paris. O'Conor did not actually attend the opening of the Salon d'Automne but asked Bell to keep him informed of his plans, just in case his own might change. O'Conor on his own admission to Bell indicated that he had been leading 'a very idle life' in Cassis and that as the days were shortening there was not much to do in the evenings other than to read. He also mentioned that he was going to bed early.

Following the opening of the Salon d'Automne, Apollinaire mentioned O'Conor in his review of the exhibition, at the same time linking his name to that of Gauguin: 'Salle XII... le mordant, bon peintre de la Bretagne O'Connor (sic) qui conserve avec un soin jaloux la tradition qu'il recut de Gauguin,'... A specific Gauguin influence is not apparent to any great extent in any of the paintings which O'Conor exhibited so that Apollinaire's reference is one of association with Gauguin, rather than with any specific aspect of content in these works. There is however, more than a suggestion of Gauguin's
colour range in a work such as 'Landscape' (REF.PTGS.NO.139), a painting which continues with the dry brush technique and which introduces some thicker paint with areas of bare canvas left to show through. The overall effect is therefore to arrive at forms which are rather imprecisely defined but with much softer edges than are to found in Gauguin's landscapes for example. Closely related to this painting is the more heavily worked 'Côte d'Azur, un village' (REF.PTGS.NO.140), which appears to be of the same outcrop of rock which is in the former picture, although in comparison, this work has been taken to a higher degree of finish with more attention given to detail.

There are also two further inter-related paintings which seem to have been made in the same environment and in these O'Connor has made significant changes both in the method of painting, and with respect to the colour and tonal range which he has used. One of these works has been relined and any original markings have been obscured, but because of its subject matter and method of painting there is reason to believe that this work was among those exhibited at the Salon d'Automne that year under the title, 'Le Cap Canail, Cassis' (REF.PTGS.NO.142). More colour intensity has been achieved in this painting through the use of the near complimentary colours of yellow and blue-violet, allied to a greater degree of simplification in the forms of the landscape so that they have been generalised and unified into much larger areas of contrast. There is also more fluidity in the paint to which rather more medium has been added, and as a result there is little that can be said to be either tentative or hesitant about the brush work here. The same characteristics are to be found in the related picture 'Landscape' (REF.PTGS.NO.143) although in comparison with the former painting, some of its brush work is rather clumsy and some passages have become almost mechanical in the repetition of marks of similar scale.
Although O'Conor's pre-occupation was with the landscape while he was in Cassis, he also exhibited at least one painting of a figure in the Salon d'Automne that year, which is thought to be the painting known as 'Jeune femme assise' (REF.PTGS.NO.145). This work must have been painted before O'Conor left Paris for the South of France, for not only does the subject matter and environment suggest the rue du Cherche-Midi interior, but the method of painting places it in a closer relationship to the series of still life paintings of flowers, the earliest of which is dated to 1911. The drawing here is very assured and the sense of form and volume has been very well realised within the painting through more explicit means than those used in the still-life pictures.

A second painting of a nude, also dated to the same year, uses a quite different technique. 'Le drap vert' (REF.PTGS.NO.144) has been painted with a brush which was well charged with colour so that effects of texture and brush marks are very much in evidence throughout the work. From the inscription on the verso it is evident that this too is a work which was also among those exhibited that year, although it shares very few technical similarities with any of the Cassis landscapes. Its most distinguishing technical features are those associated with a much heavier application of paint, and with visual qualities which are much more expressive than those which we have identified in the mainstream of his work between 1911 and 1913. This inconsistency of style indicates a lack of continuity in his work which was very possibly the outcome of a period of relative inactivity in the studio. There is the evidence of a visit to Italy in 1910 and of some travelling in 1912, when O'Conor is known to have been in Madrid in the spring of that year, and an entry in Brooks' diary towards the end of 1912 suggests that he was also away from the studio at that time.
Taken as a group, those works which may be identified as having been painted at Cassis in the summer of 1913 show that the change of environment had a direct influence on O'Conor's colour range and method of painting. The studio still-lifes which preceded the Cassis pictures were in the main lightly stained works, painted quite thinly with some additions of more heavily painted areas. Apart from the occasional introduction of bright colour contrasts in these paintings they are in the main rather quiet paintings. The Cassis works in contrast were initially painted with a drier brush and a more extensive colour range. The clarity of light associated with the Mediterranean coastline also appears to have enriched O'Conor's palette, and this experience seems to have re-opened for him the possibility of a return to richer colour contrasts than those which had been present in the work which he had done in his Montparnasse studio, in the period since his return to Paris almost ten years earlier.
FOOTNOTES

1. See Chapter VIII and footnote 20, this work. See also footnote 13, this chapter.

2. This information, and most of that which is included in this section, is based on the contents of two letters which Roderic O'Conor sent to Clive Bell from Cassis in 1913. ROC/CB 11, dated 7 October, 1913; and ROC/CB 12, dated 12/15 October 1913, archives of the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.

3. The diary of Alden Brooks, entries for 5 February and 6 February 1913, private collection, U.S.A.

4. ROC/CB 12, op.cit., Archives of the National Gallery of Ireland.

5. Salon d'Automne, (1913), O'Conor, Roderic, né en Roscommon, Irlande 1593, Le Cap Canail (Cassis); 1594, La Rose du Ciel (Cassis); 1595, L'Arène (Cassis); 1596, Jeune femme assise; 1597, Iris; 1598, Le drap vert.

6. The possibility of developing his work into the area of pure colour, used for its own sake, had been a course of action which he had not followed when the opportunity was there for him to take as early as 1896-98, when he was working at Rochefort-en-Terre. See Chapter VII this work.

7. Collection of the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.

8. ROC/CB 11 op.cit., Archives of the National Gallery of Ireland.

9. ibid.

10. Apollinaire, Guillaume, in l'Intransigeant, 18 November 1913.

11. On the verso, this work has a typed label bearing the title 'Nu brun, assis' (sic), almost certainly an ascribed title, and a faint inscription in O'Conor's hand, which reads 'No. 4 Jeune femme assise...Admit du droit...Roderic O'Conor'. The work exhibited had the same title and was the fourth listed work among those which O'Conor exhibited that year. Salon d'Automne, (1913) catalogue no.1596.

12. The inscription on the middle bar of the stretcher includes the number '6' and a rather indistinct title in which the word 'vert' is quite legible. Salon d'Automne, 1913, catalogue number 1598 'Le drap vert'. This painting was the sixth listed work in the catalogue.

13. O'Conor sent a post-card from Madrid on 20 March 1912, to Francis Chadwick in Paris, in which he mentioned he was travelling with a 'Mrs. Carey'. Collection of the writer.

14. The diary of Alden Brooks, entry for 23 December 1913, where Brooks simply wrote, 'O'Conor not back yet', although no indication is given as to where precisely he was. Brooks collection U.S.A.
Roderic O'Conor and Roger Fry

Denys Sutton was the first writer to reveal that Roderic O'Conor and Roger Fry were, as he put it, 'on good terms,' and that Fry had bought some paintings from O'Conor when they met in Paris. It has been generally assumed that Fry's link to O'Conor would have come about as a result of Clive Bell's friendship with the Irish painter. There may have been a direct introduction made by Bell, or, as seems more likely, Bell may have advised Fry to look O'Conor up on one of his visits to the city.

Roger Fry was born at Highgate in London in 1866 and brought up in a Quaker family in which there was a tradition for the study of science. When he went to King's College Cambridge in 1884, it was to further his own studies in the scientific field, but while a student there he became influenced by the Slade Professor of Fine Art, J.H. Middleton. He began to paint in his final year at Cambridge, and he soon realised that after his graduation it was art, rather than science, to which he wished to devote his time and for this reason he went to Italy in 1891 to further his knowledge of the Italian masters.

Fry first visited Paris as early as 1892 when he studied at the Académie Julian for two months, but as there were was no common ground at that time between him and O'Conor, it is most unlikely that either man would then have
known of the other's existence. It is not impossible, however, that Fry might have heard mention of O'Conor's name from the painter Alfred Thornton, in 1894, when he and Thornton were painting at La Roche-Guyon, a small village on the Seine near Vetheuil. Thornton had earlier painted at le Pouldu and may well have been aware that O'Conor had been active in the region. (3)

Clive Bell and Roger Fry had met for the first time, quite by chance, in January 1910 on a train journey between Cambridge and London. It was on this train journey that Fry revealed to Bell, during their conversation, that he planned to show the most advanced French painting of the day in an exhibition in London. (4) This idea immediately captured Bell's imagination, for memories of his experiences in Paris some six years earlier, when O'Conor had introduced him to the most up to date painting to be seen in the city, were still fresh in his mind. The artists who interested Fry were already familiar to Bell - Manet, Cézanne, Gauguin, van Gogh, Matisse - and his enthusiasm for the idea encouraged Fry to push on with his plans.

In order to put his exhibition plans into effect, Fry, accompanied by Desmond McCarthy, went to Paris in October 1910 and there linked up with Clive Bell with the intention of making a selection of paintings for the forthcoming exhibition. Taking all the circumstances into account, especially those surrounding Clive Bell's then six year old friendship with O'Conor, and the significant role which the Irishman had earlier taken in introducing Bell to the most advanced painting which Paris had to offer, we can be fairly confident that O'Conor's name would have been high on the list of artists to be contacted in Paris for advice. However, it seems very likely that O'Conor was not then in the city, as it is known that he went to
Italy on a visit around that time. Although we do not know the precise dates of this visit, we do know that when Alden Brooks called at his rue du Cherche-Midi studio to see him early in November, that O’Conor had not at that time returned to Paris. Had he been in Paris, it is almost certain that Bell would have referred to O’Conor for information, and that the Irishman would have had a role to play in giving advice to Fry, Bell, and McCarthy, about the leading artists in Paris who were then gaining the approval of the critics.

The earliest written confirmation which links Roderic O’Conor’s name with that of Roger Fry, is contained in a letter dated 11 February, 1911 which was sent by Fry to Clive Bell. In this letter Fry includes the brief line - ‘I’ve no doubt you did well to get O’Conor,’ and added a rider that much would depend on the quality of Duncan Grant’s work, making it apparent from the context in which it was written that the reference was to an exhibition which Bell was organising at the time. This may have had something to do with the February exhibition in the Alpine Club Gallery, Friday Club, which included work by Bell and Grant, or indeed to the proposed 1911 exhibition which was to follow on the considerable success, and indeed controversy, of the 1910 ‘Manet and the Post-Impressionists’ exhibition. In the event the 1911 exhibition plans fell through and Fry put together a second exhibition of French Post-Impressionist works in 1912. This exhibition had an English section, which became Clive Bell’s responsibility, and in these circumstances it is a little surprising not to find O’Conor’s name listed among the exhibitors. It may be as he was strictly speaking neither French nor English, that he was not considered to be eligible, or that with the postponement of the exhibition to the following
year he somehow fell by the wayside, if indeed he was among those originally invited to exhibit.

Fry also made a visit to France in the autumn of 1911, to take a holiday in the environs of Poitiers, and to combine this with a visit to the Salon d'Automne on the way through Paris. On this occasion, he was accompanied by Clive Bell and Duncan Grant, and as O'Conor was an exhibitor at the Salon it is likely that he would have come in contact with the three English visitors when they were in Paris, particularly as at that time letters were being exchanged between O'Conor and Bell. After the success of the 1910 and 1912 Post-impressionist exhibitions, Roger Fry's visits to France gradually became more frequent, so that by 1915, he and O'Conor were clearly on very friendly terms. As Bell had done earlier, Fry began to spend a good deal of time in the company of Morrice, Barne, and O'Conor, whom Fry reported 'that he liked quite a lot.' Presumably there would have been much talk between them about art and painting, and it is probable that O'Conor would have provided introductions for Fry, and acted as a guide to the gallery exhibitions, as he had previously done for Bell. In the same letter, Fry had complimentary things to say about O'Conor's work at that time, and he revealed in this letter that he had just bought one of his recent paintings, a compliment indeed from someone who had previously held such a distinguished and important position at the Metropolitan Museum. The picture to which Roger Fry was referring was probably the painting 'Landscape' (REF:FTGS.NO.138) which has an inscription on the verso 'To Roger Fry' along with Roderic O'Conor's signature. Although this painting was not specifically dated by O'Conor, it does share similar characteristics with the series of paintings which O'Conor made at Cassis in the South of France in
1913, leading to the view that it was either part of the same series or that it must have been painted shortly afterwards. (11)

In 1917, Fry included a passing reference to O'Conor in one of his letters to Rose Vildrac, in which he commented on his hopes for the Burlington Magazine......‘I still think what O’Conor said is true – we must absolutely bring in new material.’ (12) Clearly Fry had the utmost respect for O'Conor's opinion on matters concerning the magazine's editorial policy, at a time when the Burlington was going through a period of change and re-organisation.

There was continued contact between Fry and O'Conor into the 1920's, when Fry's visits to France began to become more frequent. In 1920 there was an exhibition of Roger Fry's paintings at Vildrac's Gallery in Paris, which also included work by Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell. In a letter to his sister Margery, he commented on the success which his own pictures had achieved, and specifically mentioned that among the visitors to the exhibition were Derain, O'Conor, the Russian artists Larionov and Goncharova, as well as Guindet. (13) Later in the same year, when he was accompanied by his daughter Pamela, Fry wrote from Paris to Vanessa Bell and mentioned that he was spending a good deal of time in O'Conor's company. Fry was flattered that O'Conor had commented so favourably on some sketches which Pamela had done at Auray, being particularly impressed by their sense of directness in going 'straight for the right things,' (14) a critical observation which might be expected from a painter who in his own work, was concerned with just such an approach.
Pamela (Fry) Diamand, in conversation with the writer, was unable to recall this precise comment of O'Conor's, nor could she be sure that she had been present when it was made. She had however a clearer recollection of a visit to Paris with her father which she thought took place in 1922:

"in 1922, I think, my father took my husband and me to visit O'Conor in the rue du Cherche-Midi.... he had a large dark studio... fairly grubby.... a lot of pictures there. He and my father were on good terms. Their conversation was interesting and amusing but I only have an impression of it. He was a tall, gruff man....pretty frightening for a young girl. There seemed to be.....no colour there... a high barn like place..." (15)

One of the most interesting references in Fry's correspondence is tantalisingly brief, but quite significant, because it links Roderic O'Conor's name with that of the French painter, Georges Rouault. Rouault had been in to see Fry's paintings at Vildrac's Gallery, and as a result Fry extended an invitation to him to have dinner a few days later, so that he might have the opportunity to meet O'Conor.(16) What is of significance about the invitation to Rouault is that he was being invited to meet O'Conor, and not the other way round as might have been expected. There is unfortunately no further record of the outcome of this meeting, and no-where in O'Conor's correspondence or private papers is there any reference to Rouault, although from Clive Bell's account of his early days in Paris, we know that O'Conor, perhaps as early as 1904, had at least one picture by Rouault in his collection.(17) No pictures by Rouault were listed in the catalogue which accompanied the dispersal sale of the contents of O'Conor's and his wife's studio, which was held in Paris at Hôtel Drouot in 1956. Either O'Conor during his lifetime, or his widow after his death, must have sold off the Rouault work(s) which Bell had seen in O'Conor's collection.

This fairly close contact with O'Conor was maintained through the spring of the year which followed, and in March, Fry relayed the information on to
Vanessa Bell that he was then seeing a good deal of O'Conor and his friend (Guy) Maynard. As with Fry's other letters, this brief reference does not provide much by way of additional information, other than to confirm that when it came to visits to the galleries, both O'Conor and Maynard were as he put it, 'pretty tough.' We may infer from this that their criticisms were thorough and well informed, leading Fry to reveal that not only had they made him work very hard, but that they had in fact exhausted him.

In 1924, Fry was again in Paris and in contact as before with O'Conor. He reported back to Vanessa Bell that he had bought two paintings from him... a nude for the Contemporary Art Society, and a still-life for himself. adding in the same letter that 'O'Conor certainly gets better and better.' The nude which he purchased, 'Femme à la Chemise,' (REF.PTGS.NO.205) is now in the collection of City of Derby Museum and Art Gallery, and is typical of O'Conor's painting style in the 1920's, when he was using his brush much less than formerly, and favouring instead a much greater use of the palette knife, with a heavy build up of paint on the canvas surface. These characteristics are also present in 'Still Life,' (REF.PTGS.NO.208) now in the collection of the Courtauld Institute Galleries in London.

Roger Fry was still maintaining contact with Roderic O'Conor late in the 1920's and in a letter to Helen Anrep, sent from Paris towards the end of 1925, Fry related that as he and O'Conor were having lunch together and talking about Groethuysen's paintings O'Conor had growled - 'What he does now is lazy man's work.' In the same letter there is a passing reference to 'O'Conor's almost too youthful mistress.' The reference is of course to Renée Honta, and the differences in their ages would then have been quite marked, for O'Conor at the time the letter was written was sixty-five and
Renee only thirty-one. O’Conor’s self-portraits from the 1920’s show him with a shock of grey hair and a straggling moustache (REF.PTGS.NO.183) while his own portraits and studies of Renée show her as a young and attractive woman of rather Bohemian appearance. (REF.PTGS.NO.191)

At the end of 1927, Fry wrote to O’Conor with an invitation to participate in an important exhibition of British art which was due to be held in Buenos Aires the following year. (21) Fry had been elected to a committee supported by Lord Duveen, which had been charged with the responsibility of promoting British art abroad and he asked O’Conor for two paintings, a nude and a flower study. In the event O’Conor exhibited a landscape from the south of France and a work entitled ‘La Bandera’. (22)

This letter is the last mention of O’Conor which appears in any of Roger Fry’s correspondence, and it is likely, as was the case with Bell, that their contact gradually diminished after this date, as Fry’s visits to Paris became less frequent and as O’Conor gradually became more private in his every day existence.

Roderic O’Conor and Matthew Smith

Although Matthew Smith had visited Pont-Aven in 1908, and between 1909 and 1910 had divided his time between Paris, Nemours, Dieppe, and Etaples, he and O’Conor did not meet until after the First World War had ended. Smith had been in service in the army, and on his release in March of 1919 he went to France to renew his contact at Grez-sur-Loing with Alden Brooks whom he had
previously met on a visit to France which had taken him to Paris, Grez, and Brittany between 1912 and 1913. Smith was in his fortieth year when he met the fifty nine year old O'Conor for the first time in Paris, the introduction being provided by Brooks in 1919. (23)

This meeting had a profound effect on Matthew Smith who must have recognised in O'Conor's work similar qualities to those for which he himself was striving. As a result of his discussions with O'Conor, Smith concluded that the Irish painter understood and appreciated van Gogh's work before anyone else - although such a claim might be said to be excessive in view of the early articles on van Gogh which had been published by Aurier and Bernard in 1890, and by Mirbeau in 1891. (24) In 1919 Smith was most unlikely to have even been aware of the existence of these publications, and although the first serious article on van Gogh's painting style had been published in the Burlington magazine in 1910, (25) the first catalogue raisonné on van Gogh's work did not appear in print until 1928. (26)

Vincent van Gogh's paintings were almost unknown in England prior to the 1910 exhibition which Roger Fry had organised at the Grafton Gallery in London under the heading 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists.' This exhibition which had introduced the work of Manet, Cézanne, Gauguin, van Gogh, and Matisse to a shocked English public, was substantially an exhibition of work which had been produced more than twenty years earlier. Twenty-two paintings by van Gogh were included, and his work in particular was heavily criticized and indeed scorned by the London critics, many of whom were seeing his work for the first time. In some cases the public were said to have laughed at van Gogh's work and one critic wrote:

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Even by the year 1919, more than twenty years after van Gogh's death, information about his life and work was still being assembled, and outside France there was then only a limited appreciation of his painting. In these circumstances it is somewhat easier to understand Smith's complete admiration for O'Connor, and we can only guess at his absolute astonishment on seeing the Irish painter's work for the first time. Smith's realisation of O'Connor's early awareness of van Gogh was in all probability based on his seeing the Brittany pictures, where the van Gogh influence would have been uppermost for example in the work dating from 1892. Although O'Connor's early response to van Gogh's work would certainly have impressed Matthew Smith, it is probably also true that it would have been O'Connor's bold and direct use of a rich and expressive colour range which would have made the bigger impact, and which would have led Smith to conclude that O'Connor was in fact 'fauve before the fauves.'

It was specifically from O'Connor's landscapes that Smith confirmed he had learned most, particularly with reference to the radiance of light which they possessed. This quality is evident in almost all of the Brittany landscapes, in the marine pictures from 1897-'98, and to an even greater extent in the painting of a Breton peasant woman in rich sunlight, 'Paysanne Bretonne,' (REF.PTGS.NO.061) and in O'Connor's slightly later 'Landscape,' (REF.PTGS.NO.062) which is thought to have been painted at Rochefort-en-Terre. There is of course also evidence of this 'radiance of light' in some of O'Connor's still life pictures, most notably in 'Nature morte aux pommes et aux pots bretons,' (REF.PTGS.NO.076) where the incident light is particularly brilliant. 'Faience,' (REF.PTGS.NO.078) a still life in which the objects are
set 'contre-jour,' also has this quality of inner radiance which Smith detected in the landscapes.

In looking to Smith's paintings in the years immediately following his 1919 meeting with O'Conor for evidence of a possible influence, it is in those landscapes which Smith painted in Cornwall in 1920 that we first sense something of the Irish painter's style. The colour range in these paintings of Smith's, although not as hot as that of O'Conor's, does seem to relate directly to an O'Conor painting such as the previously referred to 'Landscape' (REF.PTGS.N0.062). In later Smith paintings of still-lives and of those sensuous nudes for which he is best known, we also find a similarity of colour range to that preferred by O'Conor when he painted comparable subjects. The subjective and expressive contrast in hue between Alizarin Crimson and Viridian was a characteristic of both men's work, particularly when they painted nudes or figures in interiors, so that when we consider, for example, O'Conor's painting 'Girl Reposing,' (REF.PTGS.N0.173) we appear to be very close to Smith's personal vision.

Just as he had done for Clive Bell some years earlier, O'Conor introduced Smith to the Parisian galleries and it was reported that both men could be seen frequently in each other's company, looking into and through the windows of the commercial galleries. Although it has been suggested that O'Conor would not then step inside the dealer's premises, this is probably an exaggeration of the truth. We have for example the evidence of O'Conor's purchases from the dealers of works for his own collection, and the evidence of Roger Fry who in the 1920's was taken around the galleries by O'Conor and Guy Maynard - a tour heavy with discussion and criticism which he reported had exhausted him. (30) It is more likely that O'Conor was discriminating
enough to know those galleries which showed the best artists, and therefore
those which he was prepared to visit, as well as knowing those to be
avoided. In this we cannot overlook the strong possibility that there
probably were certain personalities among the dealers with whom he would
have preferred to have no contact whatsoever.

Through O'Conor, Smith also became a close friend of the Chilean born
painter Ortiz de Zarate, whose work shared many similar characteristics to
O'Conor's, and not unexpectedly in these circumstances there were frequent
discussions between the three painters who had so much in common. This
contact led to O'Conor and Smith joining the Société des Amis de
Montparnasse, of which Ortiz de Zarate was president.(31)

For many years after his friendship with O'Conor in Paris, Matthew Smith
continued to be enthusiastic about his work and it appears that he brought
his name to the notice of his artist associates in London. Indeed it was
through Matthew Smith's frequent references to O'Conor that his gallery, the
then Roland, Browse, and Delbanco Gallery in Cork Street, London, became
interested in O'Conor's work and as a result bought up many of O'Conor's
pictures at the dispersal sale of O'Conor's and his wife's effects which was
held in Paris in 1956.(32) Within a month of this auction, Smith, who had
visited the gallery by chance with a friend,(33) was invited by the Gallery
director to look at a group of O'Conor paintings from the sale, which had
just arrived from Paris, describing these events in a letter to Alden
Brooks.(34) Smith discovered a painting of his own which had mistakenly
been classified in Paris as being by O'Conor and which had been sold with
the rest. He also expressed in his letter to Brooks, his opinion that 'it'
(presumably the acquisition of O'Conor's work by the gallery for future
exhibitions) would be helpful to his reputation as a painter, and that it was likely that some of his work would be bought by private collectors and the museums. Smith also suggested to Brooks that if he could write a few lines in appreciation of O'Conor, and send it by return, he would see if it could be included in a catalogue introduction.

The exhibition in question, for which a catalogue was in preparation was held in April 1956, and it presented the works of (Sir) Matthew Smith alongside those of Roderic O'Conor. Included among the exhibits was the Smith painting, 'Nude on a red divan' which had formerly been in O'Conor's collection, and the catalogue notes drew parallels between O'Conor's picture 'Girl Reposing' (REF.PTGS.NO.173) and this work of Smith's. The introduction also referred to Matthew Smith's recollection of an account given to him by O'Conor, of how he alleged that he had found some of Gauguin's discarded canvasses in his studio after he had lent it to Gauguin, and how he was flattered to discover that Gauguin had made use of one of his own drawings for a composition. This is impossible to verify however.

In 1956, when Alden Brooks wrote his personal reminiscences about O'Conor for Denys Sutton prior to the publication of Sutton's article in the November 1960 number of The Studio, Smith wrote to Brooks in appreciation of this service;.....'it was truly good of you to write what you did about O'Conor for Sutton.'

All of the above evidence certainly confirms that in Matthew Smith, O'Conor had an artist colleague who was a faithful and staunch supporter of his work. More than that however, it was in recognition of O'Conor's importance to the development of his own painting that Matthew Smith was prepared to
claim O'Conor not just as his friend and mentor in Paris, but in his own
words as 'Mon Maitre.' (37)

Post - 1914

There is much less information available about Roderic O'Conor's artistic
activities in the years immediately following the visit to Cassis in 1913,
largely due to the social and political changes which France and indeed all
of Europe experienced, as a direct result of the outbreak of the first World
war. During the years 1914-1918 for example, no public Salon exhibitions
were held and there is therefore little evidence about the progression of his
paintings during this period in his career, other than that derived from
those few dated works which have emerged as a result of this research.
Neither can we be certain that O'Conor remained continuously in Paris
throughout the duration of the war, although the minimal evidence which
exists either in the form of letters addressed to him, or those which he
sent, do suggest that he continued to live at his rue du Cherche-Midi
atelier.

It was during this period in his life that he first made the acquaintance of
Renée Honta, a young woman who was born in Pau in 1894 and who was
initially O'Conor's model, subsequently his mistress, and the woman he
eventually married in 1933. The earliest documented evidence of an
association between them is confirmed by the contents of a letter which
O'Conor wrote to Renée on 5 October 1916.(38) She was then staying with her
parents near Pau, and from references in this letter it is evident that Renée

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was already familiar with his rue du Cherche-Midi atelier, leading us to conclude that they had met rather earlier, presumably when Renée had visited Paris. Renée Honta was then 21 years old, and although O'Conor's letter is somewhat paternalistic in tone, it is also apparent that he already had a romantic affection for her although it is impossible to be certain from the letter contents of the precise nature of the relationship between them at that time. O'Conor's words of conclusion - 'je t'embrasse bien bien fort' suggests that they may already have been on intimate terms. What is also significant to their relationship is that Renée retained this early letter, and a number of others in similar vein which she received from O'Conor, and that they remained with her until the time of her death when their contents became known after her property was disposed of in 1956.

Twelve letters sent by O'Conor to Renée exist in the same group and although most are undated it is evident from their contents that they span a number of years, the latest date which appears being that of 1925. The letters include references to books, magazines, newspapers and art materials which O'Conor sent to Renée, and also acknowledge in one case, the safe receipt of a present of fresh butter which Renée sent to him through the post. The letters do not relate to a continuous period of absence from Paris but refer to short visits which Renée made in different years, perhaps with financial help from O'Conor, to rural locations which included Lavardin, Cellettes, Arudy, and Tours. In some instances O'Conor included brief references to her paintings, admitting at times that in comparison he was relatively inactive, and from this it seems fairly certain that O'Conor had been instructing Renée in the activity of drawing and painting when she had been in Paris.
From the letters we can also ascertain something of O'Conor's habits through his passing references to visits to Montparnasse restaurants such as La Pergola, le Dôme and la Rotonde. He also kept Renée informed of his contact with a small circle of friends which included the Cranfields from London, (Alden) Brooks and the artists Orville Root, Ortiz de Zarate, Gabriel Thompson, and J. Milner Kite. It is also apparent from O'Conor's letters that he was not particularly productive in the studio and that on some occasions he did not go out at all during the day, nor in the evening, preferring to eat alone in his atelier. There is also a brief reference to a social visit from his niece in a further undated letter, which may refer to a later visit in 1925 which his niece Veronica, then seventeen years of age, is known to have made to Paris at which time O'Conor took her to visit the zoo. (39)

The American Art Association of Paris

Although there was an aspect of O'Conor's personality which made him something of a recluse he also seemed to need, perhaps as a balance to his carefully maintained private world, a quite different form of social contact with groups. O'Conor is known to have been a member of the American Students Club which was affiliated with the American Art Association in Paris. (40) This Association was founded in 1890 largely through the efforts of a Mr. A.A. Anderson who, with the help of a small group of sympathetic American associates and friends who were then resident in Paris, acquired an abandoned and half ruined building at 131 Boulevard du
Montparnasse which was restored and converted to form their first headquarters. (41)

Under the guidance of its first President, Rodman Wanamaker, the association had grown and increased its membership, moving to a new location in 1897 at 2 Impasse de Conti, on the Quai de Conti, and from there in November 1902 to 74 rue Notre Dame des Champs, before finally occupying improved accommodation at 4 rue Joseph Bara, in the Autumn of 1911. The main purpose of the Association was to establish a meeting place for young American artists arriving in Paris for the first time, and to assist them to form contacts with the academies and teaching ateliers. Almost from the date of its inception the Association had maintained a library and reading rooms, and at various points throughout its development it was also able to provide studios, and a restaurant and billiard rooms where entertainments and receptions were held. Given O'Conor's well documented love for literature and books, it is probable that one of his chief reasons for joining the American Student's Club, apart from the social contact which it would have afforded, was to have access to its library and book collection. Exhibitions of work by the members of the Association were held on a regular basis, usually four times a year, and through these exhibitions the younger members had the opportunity to show their work in public, often for the very first time. (42)

The Association's move to rue Joseph Bara in 1911 had also co-incided with a re-organisation of the Association's aims and objectives so that it assumed 'the purpose of helping by all possible means, such as conferences, exhibitions, pamphlets and gatherings, the artistic, literary, scientific and musical studies of American students residing in or passing through France
with a daily meeting place.' (43) As part of the re-organisation in 1911, Wanamaker, the Association's President, established The American Students' Club which took as its aim, 'the grouping of American students staying for a time in Paris.' This group appears to have had the same membership as the American Art Association and also occupied the same building, so that it is not immediately evident from any of the reports on its formation, precisely how it differed from its parent body. (44) It may be that it was a convenient way of admitting to club membership those individuals who were not actually of American nationality.

One interesting group activity which took place each year at the Association was known as their 'monotype evening,' an occasion on which the artist members came together to produce monotypes which they printed there and then using a press which was available to them in the building. When the prints were made they were then auctioned off among the members present as a means of raising funds for the club. (45) The writer has already speculated that the sole monotype (REF.PRTS.NO.042) which has been identified as having been produced by O'Conor, may have been made on just such an occasion. (46)

It is hardly likely that O'Conor would have felt that he had much to gain through exhibiting at the Club's premises, but he did nevertheless exhibit with the American Art Association, although the scarcity of archival information about the group's activities has revealed only one such confirmed exhibition in which he was a participant. This exhibition opened at the rue Joseph Bara on 21 April 1923, and in this particular show, O'Conor was represented by one painting, although its title, 'Etude', gives no clue as to its subject matter. (47)
The paintings from the late years (1918-1940)

After the war had ended and things began to return to normal in Paris, the Salon d'Automne resumed its activities with its annual exhibitions, the first of which was held in 1919. O'Conor was represented by nine works and it is probable that 'Etude de Femme' (REF.PTGS.NO.152) was among those exhibited. (48) This is almost certainly an early painting of Renée Honta and although it was not shown until 1919, it was probably painted earlier than this date. Its technique relates it more closely to the series of still-life paintings which O'Conor made in and around 1911, such as 'Blue et rose' (REF.PTGS.NO.111) although there is no evidence to confirm that O'Conor had met Renée Honta as early as this. Other paintings with similar technical characteristics include 'Reclining nude' (REF.PTGS.NO.150) which has been painted with very thin washes of colour which have given a very translucent quality to the skin of the nude figure in this painting.

The painting 'Still-life with three jugs' (REF.PTGS.NO.151) which includes ceramic vessels associated with the town of Quimper in Brittany, also employs a similar colour range and brush work to these two preceding pictures. Although carrying rather more paint in some of its details, another painting 'Still-life' (REF.PTGS.NO.157) is also in the same colour range and because the way of painting the fruit in this painting is so close to that of 'Still-life with apples and bowl' (REF.PTGS.NO.158) it is probable that this work too dates from the same period. Still-life subjects tended to become more and more prevalent in O'Conor's work, confirming that he was keeping close to the studio, although from the evidence of those traced there is little indication of any experimentation either with technique, composition, or colour. His intention seems to have been to depict the
groups of objects as faithfully as possible, while continuing to re-introduce some rather more expressive and textural qualities into his painting. These textural qualities came from a gradual build up of brush strokes of thick colour as in 'Nature morte aux poires' (REF.PTGS.N0.162) and at other times from the introduction of palette knife techniques as in 'Nature morte au bouquet de fleurs' (REF.PTGS.N0.165)

The heavier application of paint and the use of the palette knife is also a characteristic of some of the nudes and of the portraits which O'Conor painted during this period in his career. A work such as 'Rouge et vert' (REF.PTGS.N0.170) for example, which in spite of its title is actually a portrait, is very explicitly painted and thorough and convincing in its draughtsmanship, yet it uses an exceedingly thick build up of paint in the most critical area - that of the sitter's face and head. The folds of drapery behind the sitter have also been very convincingly painted with much overpainting in evidence. This work, which is actually dated 1917, was not shown until two years later when it appeared alongside the previously discussed painting 'Étude de femme' (REF.PTGS.N0.152) in the Salon d'Automne of 1919. In the case of the latter work a completely different technique is in evidence which relies almost completely on thin washes of colour, but as we have previously noted it was not uncommon for O'Conor to exhibit paintings together which could be quite different stylistically.

The painting 'Un bouquet' (REF.PTGS.N0.166) is in all probability the work of the same name which O'Conor exhibited in the Salon d'Automne of 1920 (49) and this work confirms his on going pre-occupation with a high contrast colour range. The yellow flowers which have been painted with great economy and qualities of near abstraction in their feeling for the paint are
positively glowing against the dark red background, and the whole arrangement is enlivened by the use of a bright turquoise area alongside the warm orange of the foreground drapery.

The evidence from these paintings is that O'Connor was not committed to any one stylistic approach in his work at this time, and the lack of continuity and progression from one painting to the next rather confirms that he was not painting regularly. It is very difficult for this reason, and because of the lack of reliably dated paintings, to be certain about the true sequence in an analysis of these works, but there does seem to be a leaning towards the directness of brush work rather than towards a development of heavier impasto techniques, which were to follow a little later.

Three inter-related paintings, the first of which is little more than a study and a not very convincingly drawn one at that, rather support this view and because of their emphasis on brush technique they stand as effective links between the paintings just discussed and others which are dated 1920. The three works appear to have been painted at the same sitting as the pose is more or less consistent throughout. 'The reclining girl' (REF.PTGS.NO.171) is the least resolved of the three and is therefore thought to represent the first attempt at capturing the pose of a woman lounging on a bed. 'Reclining girl' (REF.PTGS.NO.172) is rather more thoroughly painted although it is still very much a sketch in which much more has been made of the sense of space and the immediate environment in which the girl is posed. The final work in this group 'Girl reposing'(REF.PTGS.NO.173) also remains an unresolved painting but in comparison with the other two works just referred to, it employs a slightly more ambitious colour range. One might also suppose that a painting such as this, because of its subject matter and its
treatment, would have been of particular interest to Matthew Smith who spoke in generous praise of O'Conor whom he first met in Paris in 1919. (50)

Similar brush strokes occur in the spontaneous and lively painting 'Girl mending' (REF.PTGS.NO.174) very possibly a study of Renée, which is a comparatively small work executed with great speed and dash. The brush marks in this work and the control of light are its distinguishing features, and there are echoes here in the parallel brush strokes of O'Conor's earlier Pont-Aven style. In common with other studies made in the studio, this work gives the impression of not having been specially posed, rather it seems to have arisen directly from O'Conor's observation of this wholly natural and rather private activity.

'Girl reading' (REF.PTGS.NO.175) is a further example of a painting which is so naturally observed and recorded that we may easily accept that it too was not artificially posed. The sense of interior environment and the concept of space are both extremely well captured through a very direct painting method which is similar to that of some of the 1911 still life pictures such as 'Nature morte azalées' (REF.PTGS.NO.117) and which may also be seen in much earlier works such as 'Paysanne Bretonne' (REF.PTGS.NO.61). O'Conor has begun by establishing the main lights and darks through the use of broadly stated tonal areas, thinly stained into the canvas, and on these areas he has then superimposed brush marks which are energetic and lively in their description of the details observed within the interior. This method of painting and the choice of subject matter is rather reminiscent of Lautrec's brushwork, particularly with reference to the vertical emphasis which is present in the background area of this painting.
The same technical approach is in evidence in the painting known as 'Le compotier' (REF.PTGS.NO.176) a work which was among those exhibited in the 1920 Salon d'Automne. Here the use of near primary colours in the painting of the fruit, and their close spatial relationship in the composition, gives the painting an almost iridescent glow and a quality of internal light which is also to be seen in other still life pictures from this period such as 'Still life - flowers, vase, fruit' (REF.PTGS.NO.177).

'Le vase blue' (REF.PTGS.NO.180) which was also exhibited in the 1920 Salon d'Automne, is much more heavily painted in comparison with these two works. The entire painting, in common with others from this period, appears to have been achieved at one sitting, and no real attempt has been made to achieve any detail in describing the flowers which have been excessively simplified and interpreted more for their colour sensation than for any other reason. The details of petals, leaves and flowers have thus been reduced to a series of marks, pressures, and emphases from the palette knife. There is a similar approach in his 'Self portrait' (REF.PTGS.NO.183) although in this painting the knife has been used more explicitly to help define the features of a really well drawn head. The same approach appears in two other splendid still-life pictures with identical titles, 'Chou-fleur'(REF.PTGS.NO.181) and 'Chou-fleur' (REF.PTGS.NO.182). The second of these was bought by Somerset Maugham directly from O'Connor as a result of a visit to his studio, an event which was recorded by Maugham in his autobiography.(51) Both of these paintings have been similarly constructed with a shallow table surface given over to an accumulation of fruit and vegetables, and both make similar use of a visual transition in which the incident light coming from the right is allowed to illuminate the objects from right to left, a process which is then reversed in the background.
The distribution of light in this way has already been noted in other still-life pictures by O'Conor, occurring as early as 1892 in a work such as 'Flowers, bottles, and two jugs' (REF.PTGS.NO.010) and in a different form in the 1894 still life 'Flower piece' (REF.PTGS.NO.025). It was a method which allowed him full scope for extreme subtlety and variation in the modulation of colour, contrast, and tonal changes throughout similarly composed paintings.

In analysing the almost excessive use of palette knife techniques in works circa 1920, two paintings in particular have presented specific problems in their placing within the theoretical sequence of his work. Some of the heavy impasto techniques of a work such as 'Baigneuse à la mer' (REF.PTGS.NO.187) for example, could only have been achieved over an extended period of time. Close examination of the paint surface reveals that some of the heavier underlying impasto paint must have been completely dry to permit an excess of scumbling to be applied to achieve the effect that is present in this work. It is not impossible therefore that this work may have passed through several substantial changes and it may very well have originated with those other heavily textured works which have been tentatively placed to the years immediately prior to 1900.(52) This pose is reminiscent of a work by Renoir entitled 'Baigneuse' (Blonde bather I) which was painted in 1881 and in which a seated nude has been placed in a similar environment in front of a rocky coastline. O'Conor's work may even represent a painting which initially began as a studio nude, and which was then altered over a period of time and adapted into a setting 'au bord de la mer' perhaps in a tribute to Renoir.
The second painting which is also in this category 'Nude bathing' (REF.PTGS.NO.188) is equally heavily painted, and like the work just discussed it is likely that this painting also went through more than one transition over an extended period of time. The image bears a very close relationship to Munch's 'Madonna' of 1893-94, and this work, which was widely seen after that date when Munch released it in its lithographic form, was in all likelihood the inspiration for O'Connor in achieving this work. Comparison may also be made with the composition and content of Maillol's 'Femme nue', which is a painting of a woman with her head in profile, holding her left breast. O'Connor's bather is also in the act of cupping her breast in a symbolic gesture which stresses her sexuality and which emphasises her sensuality, rather more than her maternal instincts. The expression on her face and the stylised smile seem to be inviting us to share with her in this frankly sexual communication. Like the previous painting, this work too may have originated circa 1900 and may have been added to in subsequent years.

The more reliably dated work, 'La blouse verte' (REF.PTGS.NO.191) another of the 1920 Salon d'Automne pictures, also uses a similar painting technique in its build up of heavy impasto from an energetic palette knife. In this portrait O'Connor has managed to find the appropriate means to link the heavily applied paint to the forms which are characteristic of his subject matter, through the use of a generalised treatment in the blouse which borders on the schematic, and by using a simplified colour range in the face of the sitter who is undoubtedly Renée Honta.

O'Connor's painting 'Self portrait' (REF.PTGS.NO.194) which was exhibited in the 1921 Salon d'Automne (53), shares some similar characteristics with the
previous work in the textured details of its palette knife work, but in
comparison it is a much less lively painting in which O'Conor has depicted
himself as a rather dejected figure in the dimly lit interior of his studio.
The self-portrait makes little impact either in terms of its colour or its
composition, and while it may be an interesting and indeed revealing self-
study of an artist who was becoming increasingly isolated in his life-style
as this painting tends to confirm, it is not a particularly inspired or
inspiring work.

'Femme au corsage mauve, assise sur fauteuil rouge' (REF.PTGS.NO.193) is a
further example of O'Conor's unpredictability in bringing into existence a
painting which stands out quite separately from the mainstream of his work,
in this case due to the meticulous way in which he has worked the heavy
impasto and scumbled areas. More than that however, major differences also
exist with the overall concept of this painting, with its relatively stark
lighting and with its tendency towards stylisation which is most evident in
the features. Some comparison is possible with 'Seated nude'
(REF.PTGS.NO.202) in an analysis of the painting technique, particularly as
applied to the breasts of the model and to her arms. There is also a hint
of a possible shift towards stylisation in the model's features but this is
not followed through to the same extent as in the previously discussed
painting. The only other work to which further comparison may be made
because of loose similarities in the composition and its internal lighting,
is 'La jeune fille' (REF.PTGS.NO.201) although in comparison, this work, which
is also quite unusual in the total span of O'Conor's oeuvre, has been given a
more generalised treatment with much less refinement in its details.
'Portrait' (REF.PTGS.NO.196) has been variously thought to be a self-portrait, or one of Guillaume Apollinaire, but neither is thought likely. The positioning of the hands and the general composition scarcely suggest a self-portrait, and the resemblance either to O'Connor himself, or to Apollinaire is far from convincing. As with the paintings just discussed, this work too is rather separate from O'Connor's dominant painterly concerns and the rather more detailed working and level of finish which has been given to this picture does rather suggests a commissioned portrait, or one which O'Connor made of a member of his own circle of friends. Other paintings of nudes thought to have been made around the same date, have, like the still lifes, been painted extensively with the palette knife as for example in 'Nude Girl' (REF.PTGS.NO.199) which has similar technical details to those in 'La blouse verte' (REF.PTGS.NO.191) and to details of textured passages in 'Baigneuse à la mer' (REF.PTGS.NO.187)

A further portrait also of Renée, 'Le Châle bleu' (REF.PTGS.NO.195) which was exhibited in the 1921 Salon d'Automne, is an excellent example of O'Connor's continuing pre-occupation with palette knife techniques and a thick and sensuous application of colour. In comparison with 'La blouse verte' (Ref.PTGS. No.191) there is much more fluency in the paint quality, leading to a more thorough and convincing analysis of colour which has been rendered with greater detail in the work. The only weakness in this particular painting is with the anatomy of the nose which has presented O'Connor with some difficulty, perhaps due to the excessive accumulation of paint in this important detail.

O'Connor was an exhibitor in the inaugural Salon des Tuileries exhibition of 1923, in which he was represented by four works. (55) 'Roses thé'
which was among O'Conor's exhibits at the Tuileries that year, is a charming study of a group of flowers in a grey jug set against a dark background. Like almost all of the other paintings from this period the method of execution continues to rely on palette knife techniques, and therefore by implication, a tendency towards a more simplified and generalised treatment of the internal details. It is also possible that the work known as 'Woman seated, reading on a green divan' (REF.PTGS.NO.203) was also among those exhibited in the same exhibition under the title 'Femme au bonnet', for not only does its subject matter relate well to this as an exhibition title, but aspects of its technical methods and its colour range compare favourably with those of the previous painting, leading to the conclusion that they may have been painted around the same period. These pictures also inter-relate through their use of a more subtle colour range with some reduction in the level of colour contrasts which were prevalent in works immediately prior to 1920. Both works also have a relationship to 'Flowers and books' (REF.PTGS.NO.204) a painting which through its choice of subject matter helps to reinforce our knowledge of O'Conor's love for literature, coupled with a realisation that he was then probably giving as much time to reading as he was to the activity of painting.(56)

Two paintings from this period were acquired from O'Conor by Roger Fry in 1924,(57) 'Femme à la Chemise' (REF.PTGS.NO.205) and 'Still life' (REF.PTGS.NO.208) The former painting provides further evidence of O'Conor's versatility with the palette knife, a characteristic which is also in evidence in the still life where the subtlety of the colour range recalls that of 'Flowers and books' (REF.PTGS.NO.204)
From the same period is 'Still life with flowers in a jug' (REF.PTGS.NO.209) which could be one of the flower paintings which O'Conor exhibited in the 1925 Salon d'Automne, or the Salon des Tuileries of the same year. This is the painting to which Somerset Maugham was referring when he mentioned in his memoirs the purchase of an O'Conor painting from a Salon exhibition. This painting, and that known as 'Flowers' (REF.PTGS.NO.210) form part of a group of flower studies which include 'Still life with geraniums' (REF.PTGS.NO.214), and 'Fleurs' (REF.PTGS.NO.215) and taken collectively they provide further evidence that palette knife techniques were his preferred painting methods. This characteristic is also present in nude studies such as 'Seated nude on couch' (REF.PTGS.NO.213) in which there is a more closely related tonal range, and in portraits such as 'Portrait de femme' (REF.PTGS.NO.212) which is also a relatively dark and subdued painting.

In the late 1920's O'Conor appears to once again have resumed his interest in more comprehensive colour changes and in two relatively small paintings which were possibly studies for larger works, there is evidence of his former energy with an active brush. It was a technique however which by this date he had largely set aside, so that when colour again became an important aspect of his paintings as in 'Flowers in a white jug' (REF.PTGS.NO.228) the palette knife remained as his preferred painting tool. This painting stands as an excellent example of O'Conor's ability to translate an experience which was primarily visual into the plastic medium of paint, and in this work the simplification and the near abstract rendering of the flowers has been exceptionally well handled using thick creamy paint, without any loss of control. These are also characteristics of yet another still life, 'Bowl of fruit' (REF.PTGS.NO.229) which uses near identical techniques, and a very similar colour range which links it closely.
to that of 'Flowers in a white mug' (REF.PTGS.NO.228), leading to the conclusion that these two works were also made at roughly the same time. The dating on the painting of the bowl of fruit to 1926 is therefore particularly helpful in determining the character of O'Connor's work at this point in his career.

O'Connor's 'Self portrait' (REF.PTGS.NO.227) depicts the artist as a rather stern and somewhat aloof character, whose visual appearance is characterised by a shock of light coloured hair and a moustache. This palette knife painting has used the warm natural light to establish a rich colour key which has in turn allowed O'Connor to use an otherwise unlikely range of warm yellows for the painting of the hair, with a similar enrichment of colour given to the flesh tones. The portrait therefore stands as a rather more ambitious work, because of its colour range, than does for example another painting 'Self portrait' (Ref.PTGS. No.220), in which the colour is more restrained and has been related more specifically to the artist's direct observation.

The interest in manipulating and controlling the incident light as an important pictorial element, which is so evident in 'Self portrait' (REF.PTGS.NO.227), is also seen in several ambitious still life paintings which O'Connor painted circa 1927. The quality of light in a work such as 'Still life with fruit and jug' (REF.PTGS.NO.232), for example, has been kept relatively soft so that the secondary forms of the painting are rather imprecisely stated and our attention is drawn more specifically to the warm colour contrasts of the fruit in the bowl and the centrally located objects. 'Still life with bread' (REF.PTGS.NO.233) is an even more complex composition and in its manipulation of light it represents one of the more ambitious
still lifes which O'Conor ever attempted. The work has been cleverly contrived on an underlying triangular compositional structure, as a result of which our attention is directed upwards towards the large vase of flowers which dominates the composition. The use of a white tablecloth in this painting, on which the forms have been arranged, has added significantly to the range of lighting contrasts which O'Conor has been able to achieve throughout this work. The sense of space between the still life objects, and their three dimensionality, is very convincing indeed. Much the same may be said about 'Still life with carnations' (REF.PTGS.NO.234) and although the lighting in this work is equally well controlled and is its most striking feature, it is in comparison with 'Still life with bread' (REF.PTGS.NO.233) a much less ambitious composition.

There are minor variations in technique between these still-lives, but they are essentially palette knife works in which there is more evidence of working and re-working and of perserverance with the medium in order to achieve as much detail as possible through the palette knife technique. They are in that sense rather less direct in their methods in comparison with a work such as 'Bowl of fruit' (REF.PTGS.NO.229) or with 'Flowers in a white mug' (REF.PTGS.NO.228).

In contrast with the meticulous painting which is such a strong characteristic of 'Still life with bread' (REF.PTGS.NO.233), and of 'Still life with carnations' (REF.PTGS.NO.234), a painting such as 'Symphonie en vert - le bocal' (REF.PTGS.NO.236) dated to the following year (1928), is of such a different order that it represents an extremely radical shift, both in terms of style and technique. It is altogether a much more clumsy painting, with much less precision or exactitude in the drawing, and it is therefore a work
which does not develop logically out of any of the concerns which are
evident in the still life pictures from 1927. The confusion introduced by
this work, and indeed by those other paintings with which it may be
associated, 'Fish' (REF.PTGS.NO.235) and 'Landscape' (REF.PTGS.NO.240) begins
to throw doubts on their true authorship and the accuracy of their dating.
Another possible explanation for their existence in this form may be that
there had been a sudden deterioration in O'Conor's health (59) - he was
after all then 67 years of age - and that with his advancing years that
there may have been a significant loss in control.

Some loss of enthusiasm for painting at this time in his career is also
rather suggested by the level of his exhibition activity in 1928 and 1929.
In each of these years, for example, he was represented by only one work in
each of the three salons in which he exhibited.(60) Conversely we may also
assume some renewed enthusiasm for painting circa 1929-30, for he exhibited
five works in the Salon des Tuileries of 1930, in this case each of his
exhibits being rather anonymously titled 'Peinture'. There are unfortunately
no further indications of what their subject matter might have been. So
few reliably dated paintings exist for years later than 1930, that we may
reasonably conclude that O'Conor was by then painting less and less.(61)

Although 'Mulatto Girl' (REF.PTGS.NO.242) is signed and dated to 1930, and
has similar qualities in its details to 'Seated woman in frilled dress'
(REF.PTGS.NO.241), both works are really more typical of O'Conor's paintings
from 20 years earlier, leading to reservations about their acceptance to this
period in his career. The more reliably dated landscape, 'l'Abbaye'
(REF.PTGS.NO.243),(62) which O'Conor painted at the small village of Chailly-
en-Bière close to Barbizon, is a work which has been painted with oil paint

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to which a great deal of medium has been added, and this work shows a
return to the use of a subtle range of colour and tones which O'Conor
obtained from a mix of viridian green and alizarin crimson. The more
heavily painted 'Landscape' (REF.PTGS.NO.246) develops a similar colour range
in a more finished work, in which more emphasis has been given to the
texture of the paint through a combined brush and palette knife approach.

No paintings at all were exhibited in the year 1933, the year of his
marriage to Renée Honta which took place on 24 October at the Mairie for the
6e District of Paris. Earlier in that year a house had been purchased at
Nueil-sur-Layon in the Maine-et-Loire district of France (63), and after
their marriage O'Conor and Renée spent some time in Spain in 1934 and
1935,(64) with their transfer to a warmer climate likely to have been made
for health reasons. The landscape painting 'Torremolinos' (REF.PTGS.NO.249)
which is dated by O'Conor on the verso to 1935, provides us with firm
evidence of his painting style at this late stage in his life. The technique
in this painting rather recalls the work done at Cassis in 1913, largely
because of the use of the dry brush in contrast with more heavily painted
areas, with some bare areas of canvas left to show through without any paint
at all. It is a work which shows a return to techniques which are largely
associated with the brush, with the palette knife being used only to give
points of textural interest to specific areas. 'The orchard'
(REF.PTGS.NO.250) has such similar characteristics that it too is likely to
have been painted at Torremolinos.

Another painting which is dated 1935, 'Landscape with trees and pond'
(REF.PTGS.NO.253),(65) is a further example of a Bonnard like treatment given
to a landscape subject, in this case the river to the rear of the house in
Nueil-sur-Layon which was by then the O'Conor home. When he exhibited in the 1935 Salon d'Automne it was from Renée's address at 10 rue Jean Bart in Paris, which rather suggests that they were then maintaining her apartment for extended visits which they made to the city from time to time. If we assume that the inscriptions on these paintings are accurate, we may draw the conclusion that in 1935 the O'Conors divided their time between Torremolinos in Spain, Nueil-sur-Layon in the west of France, and Paris. This pattern of movement between Nueil-sur-Layon, Spain, and Paris, continued into 1936 when there was yet another visit to Torremolinos. (66)

It has been thought up to this point that O'Conor held a one-man exhibition of his work at the Galerie Bonaparte in Paris in 1937, although this research has established that the exhibitor was in fact Roderic O'Connor, the third youngest son of Andrew O'Connor, born in 1874, a sculptor who had developed a successful career for himself in the United States and Europe before settling in Dublin where he died in 1941. (67) It therefore now appears that Roderic O'Conor, the subject of this study, did not in fact ever hold a one-man exhibition of his work at a commercial gallery during his lifetime.

Almost nothing is known about paintings from the last five years in Roderic O'Conor's life for no further works were exhibited publicly after 1935. Early in 1938 he is known to have been staying at Cagnes-sur-Mer (68) and it is likely that he was taking the winter in the south of France for health reasons. Confirmation about O'Conor's ill health is contained in an undated letter sent by a close friend of his, W.T. Cranfield, to J. W. Dunlanty, the London based High Commissioner for Ireland. (69) Cranfield referred to 'a time of life when his (O'Conor's) days are manifestly numbered' and later to
'the fact that he has lately passed through a critical illness', in a letter which drew attention to O'Conor's merit as an artist, suggesting that if he was to be afforded any recognition by the country of his birth then it should be afforded to him while he was still alive, rather than after his death. The evidence is that O'Conor was still painting the landscape in 1940 (REF.PTGS.NO.254), but the recognition which Cranfield sought for him was not then forthcoming, and Roderic O'Conor died peacefully at his home in Nueil-sur-Layon, at 3.30 on the morning of 18th March 1940.
FOOTNOTES

1. Sutton, Denys, (1960), op.cit., see p.196
3. ibid. p.52

4. Fry's plans eventually came to fruition in the important exhibition, 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists,' which opened at the Grafton galleries in London, in November 1910. Fry is given the credit for introducing the ill defined term,' post-impressionism,' into the vocabulary of art history, as a direct result of the naming which he gave to this exhibition, when all other possible titles to adequately describe the show had eluded him.


6. Roger Fry would not have been totally uninformed about the newer tendencies present in French painting - in his capacity as Curator of Paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, he had made previous visits to Paris to buy for the Museum's collection, and for the wealthy private collector, John Pierpont Morgan.


8. Spalding (1980) op.cit., p.149


10. ibid. Sutton's footnotes to this letter suggest that the painting which Fry then bought may have been the 'Still Life' in the collection of the Courtauld Institute Galleries. This still life painting however is dated 1924, and so it is clearly not the painting in question.

11. The Cassis paintings are discussed in more detail in Chapter XI

12. Sutton (1972) op.cit. letter 396 to Rose Vildrac, 4 April 1917

13. ibid. letter 472, Roger Fry to Pamela Fry, 20 April, 1920

14. ibid. letter 485, Roger Fry to Vanessa Bell, 28 September, 1920


16. ibid. letter 486, Roger Fry to Pamela Fry, October 1920

17. Bell (1956) op.cit., p.165

19. *ibid.* Letter 543, Roger Fry to Vanessa Bell, 6 March 1924.

20. *ibid.* Letter 572, Roger Fry to Helen Anrep, 11 November 1925.


22. The exhibition was shown under the title 'Aristas Britanicos' in the Museo Nationale, Buenos Aires in 1928. O'Conor's exhibits were: catalogue nos. 183, 'La Bandera' (£100) and 184, 'Jardin en Cassis' (£100).


28. See for example 'Yellow landscape, Pont-Aven' 1892, (REF.PTGS.NO.017); 'Field of Corn, Pont-Aven,' 1892, (REF.PTGS.NO.015), and from a year later 'Breton Peasant Woman Knitting,' 1893 (REF.PTGS.NO.019), and the discussion on the van Gogh influence in O'Conor's work in Chapter V, this work.


30. See previous section in this Chapter and footnote (18).


32. Vente Hôtel Drouot, Collection et Ateliers de M. et Mme. O'Conor, 6/7 février 1956. This information was communicated to the writer in an interview with Dr. H. Roland, on 4 November 1983.

33. *ibid.* Roland interview.

34. In a letter to Alden Brooks dated 27 March 1956, Smith described how he had been invited to see the items from the Paris auction in the upstairs room at an unidentified gallery, which we know to have been the former Roland, Browse, and Delbanco Gallery. Private collection, London.

35. The accuracy of this account is impossible to verify, and most writers (Sutton <1960>, Campbell <1980>, Benington, <1982>) who have accepted it as fact have tended to assume that the studio in question was that which O'Conor maintained at 102 rue du Cherche Midi. All attempts to determine when O'Conor first acquired this studio in Paris, and to compare that date with Gauguin's now well documented activities, have proved fruitless. In.
the writer's opinion, it is most unlikely that O'Conor had acquired the rue
du Cherche-Midi studio before Gauguin's final departure from France in 1895,
as it was not until the Salon d'Automne exhibition of 1904 that 102 rue du
Cherche-Midi was listed as his exhibiting address. Between 1894 and 1904,
O'Conor's known addresses included Pont-Aven, Rochefort-en-Terre, and Grez-
sur-Loing. Also casting doubt on the lending of the rue du Cherche-Midi
studio specifically, is the knowledge that at the time that Gauguin and
O'Conor are believed to have first come into contact with one another in
1894-'95, Gauguin then had a studio of his own in Paris at rue Vercingetorix.
If O'Conor did in fact allow Gauguin the use of his studio, it is more likely
to have been the one which he was using in Pont-Aven between 1894-'95, for
at that time, having just arrived in Brittany from Paris, one of Gauguin's
primary needs would have been to find a place in which to work.
See also Chapter VII this work.

36. Letter from Matthew Smith to Alden Brooks, 10 December, 1956. Private
collection, London.


38. The letter is in a private collection in France.

39. Information from Sister Theophane, Roderic O'Conor's grand-niece.

40. A membership card for the year 1916 was found among O'Conor's papers.
Private collection (L) France.
It is not known whether or not his membership began earlier than this, but
there may be some significance in the fact that during the war years from
1914-1918, O'Conor felt the need to identify more closely with this group of
American ex-patriates.

Art Societies, 'American Art Association of Paris', pp.329-30

42. American Art Annual (1907), p.220

43. American Art Annual (1915), p.223

44. Boucher, Frances, and Huard Francis Wilson, American Footprints in
Paris, New York, (1921), pp.66-67

45. Frantz, Henri, 'Une Colonie d'Artistes Americains à Paris', Revue Illustre
1904

46. See Chapter VI where this print is discussed more fully, and footnote
78 to the same chapter, where the monotype, or monoprint technique is fully
described.

47. American Art Association, Exposition d'été, 21 avril 1923, O'Conor,
Roderic, No. 36 ' étude.' Catalogue for the exhibition, Library of American
Art, Washington, D.C.

48. There is an inscription on the verso, with title and signature which are
both in O'Conor's handwriting. The full catalogue entry is as follows: Salon
d'Automne (1919). O'Conor, Roderic. Catalogue numbers 1414 La glace; 1415
Femme au drap rouge; 1416 Le jardin; 1417 Rouge et Vert; 1418 La Rousse;
1419 Fruits; 1920(sic) étude de Femme; 1422 Chrysanthèmes.
49. Salon d'Automne (1920), O'Connor, Roderic. Catalogue numbers 1657 Le comptoir; 1658 La blouse verte; 1659 Fleurs sur une chaise; 1660 Bouquet; 1661 Le vase bleu.

50. Matthew Smith, (1983) op.cit.p.22 See also the section earlier in this Chapter on Roderic O'Connor and Matthew Smith, for more information on the meeting between them.

51. Maugham, Somerset, Purely for my pleasure, London (1962) p.8 Details of the relationship between Maugham and O'Connor are discussed in Chapter IX of this work.

52. See for example 'Marine au claire de lune' (REF.PTGS.NO.081), 'Paysage aux moutons' (REF.PTGS.NO.082) and 'Sunset at Pont-Aven' (REF.PTGS.NO.084)


54. The painting is known as 'Self-portrait' in the collection of the Ulster Museum, Belfast.


56. See Bell, Clive, (1956) op.cit., Chapter IX pp.138-69, and this work Chapter IX for Bell's description of O'Connor's life style in Paris.

57. Fry mentioned both of these works in a letter to Vanessa Bell which he sent from Paris on 6 March 1924. See Sutton, Denys, ed. (1972) op.cit.,letter no. 543. Fry wrote that he had purchased the nude (now in the collection of the City of Derby Museums and Art gallery) for the Contemporary Art Society, and the still-life (now in the collection of the Courtauld Institute) for himself. For a full analysis of O'Connor's contact with Roger Fry, see the relevant section earlier in this chapter.

58. Maugham, Somerset, (1962) op.cit., p.8

59. There is no specific evidence available on the subject of O'Connor's health in the year 1928 but a letter sent to him by J. Milner Kite in November 1926, included this brief reference: 'Sorry to hear you have been under the weather.' Private collection (L), France.


61. A series of entries in Alden Brooks' diary for the year 1931 reveals that on those occasions when he called to see O'Connor, they often met up with J. Milner Kite or Ortiz de Zarate, with whom O'Connor was particularly friendly, but in none of the entries is there any mention of O'Connor's painting. Collection Brooks family, USA

62. The work is signed and dated on the middle bar of the stretcher, 'Roderic O'Connor 1932 Chailly-en-Bière.'
63. The house was purchased on 23 June 1933 in the name of Mademoiselle Henrietta Maria Honta, then living at 10 rue Jean Bart, Paris 6e. Information extracted from O'Connor papers. Private collection (U) France.

64. Confirmation of his visit to Spain is from his exhibiting address in the 1934 Salon d'Automne, although from the evidence of a letter which he received the O'Conors must have been in residence there as early as April of that year. The envelope in which the letter was sent is in a private collection in France. (L)

65. The inscription on the middle bar of the stretcher is in his hand and reads 'Roderic O'Conor, Nueil-sur-Layon, 1935.'

66. O'Conor received a letter at his Torremolinos address in May of 1936. Private collection (B) France.

67. Denys Sutton incorrectly concluded that the Roderic O'Connor who exhibited at the Galerie Bonaparte was the same person as the Roderic O'Connor who is the subject of this research. (See Sutton, Denys, (1960) op.cit., p.196) The writer has traced a catalogue from the Paul Reinhardt Galleries in New York city, listing eighteen works which were exhibited in their galleries between February 7-31, 1939. The preface to the catalogue identifies this exhibitor as Roderic O'Connor, son of Andrew O'Connor, and among the works listed in the exhibition, six titles are synonymous with those included in the Galerie Bonaparte exhibition of 1937 which was comprised of fifteen works and several drawings. Although drawing the distinction between the two artists, and correctly identifying the New York exhibitor as the 'other' O'Con(n)or, Sutton incorrectly gave Roderic O'Conor, the subject of this study, the credit for the exhibition at the Galerie Bonaparte in Paris.

68. He received a letter there dated 16 February. Private collection (B) France.

69. From the date on a letter (15 April 1939) which was subsequently exchanged between the then Director of the National Gallery in Dublin, Dr. Furlong, and Dunlanty, it is likely that Cranfield's letter was written early in 1939. Both letters are in the Archives of the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.
CHAPTER XII

POSTSCRIPT

Estate of Roderic O'Conor

Within the space of seven months, between June and December in the year 1933, Roderic O'Conor took three major decisions with thoughts of his advancing years and deteriorating health uppermost in his mind. First of all the house in Nueil-sur-Layon in Maine-et-Loire in which he was to spend the greater part of his remaining years, was bought in Henrietta Honta's name on 23 June. Then on the 24 October, Roderic Anthony O'Conor and Henrietta Honta were married at the Marie for the Paris 6e district, at 78 rue Bonaparte. O'Conor gave his address as 10 rue Jean Bart, where Renée had a new apartment in a building close to les Jardins du Luxembourg,(1) confirming that he and Renée were already living together. Finally, Roderic O'Conor made his last will and testament in front of three witnesses on 8 December 1933.(2)

The recorded visits to Spain and to Torremolinos in 1934,'35, and '36, rather suggest that there was a need to spend some time in a warmer climate as O'Conor's health began to deteriorate. There is also the evidence of a visit to the south of France to stay at a rented villa in Cagnes-sur-mer in 1938, and then early in 1940 a property in Cagnes-sur-mer known as 'les Glycines' was bought in Madame O'Conor's name.(3) Presumably it was the O'Conors' intention to move there for health reasons, but before any such
plans could be followed through, Roderic O'Conor died in his Nueil-sur-Layon house on 18 March 1940.

Following his death, O'Conor's will was admitted to probate by the Surrogate's Court of the County of New York on 2 May, 1941. Under the terms of his will O'Conor left all his tangible property, including furniture, rugs, books, pictures, paintings, engravings, objets d'art, bibelots, jewellery, linen, silver and personal effects to his widow, the former Renée Honta. O'Conor also transferred to her all of his capital investments, with the provision that Renée would not be permitted to dispose of any of the principal, but would be entitled to receive only the income from the investments which he had made during his lifetime. He also stipulated that on Renée's death it was his wish that if his two sisters Mary and Elizabeth were then still alive, that the division of his assets should be made in equal shares between them both. There was also a qualifying clause to cover the eventuality that his sisters might not be alive at the time of his widow's death, which provided for the distribution of his estate among their descendants.

O'Conor's widow Renée therefore became the chief beneficiary in the will, and she inherited all those paintings which were in O'Conor's studio together with those works by other artists which had been in her late husband's collection. She arranged to have an expensive gravestone made in Belgium, on which was carved the O'Conor coat of arms, and which she had placed on the grave of her late husband in the little cemetery outside Nueil-sur-Layon. She also made arrangements with the local priest to have a special Mass said annually for ten years, for the repose of her late husband's soul.
Posthumous events

Few details are available about the remaining years in Madame O'Conor's life after the death of her husband, but it has been suggested by one witness (6) that the studio was left virtually undisturbed for the next fifteen years, until Madame O'Conor's death on 22 January 1955, in Paris. A second witness, (7) has supplied the information that Madame O'Conor had to sell off some of the paintings to supplement her income, as problems began to arise concerning the transfer to France of the accumulated interest from the investments in America. Further information from a third witness has revealed that it was known to a few people in the village of Nueil-sur-Layon, that in the years after O'Conor's death, Madame O'Conor had signed some of her late husband's paintings with her own signature, and that she had also added a 'signature' purporting to be that of her deceased husband, to some of his pictures which were left in the studio.(8)

The writer has had the opportunity to see a number of paintings which were formerly in O'Conor's collection, on which there is clear evidence of the 'signatures' having been added - in more than one instance a clumsily added signature has been partially wiped off, leaving obvious and visible traces on the canvas of the original pigment used to make the first attempted signature.(9) In such cases a second attempt has often been made to add a more convincing signature. The same group of paintings also includes more than one work on which the added signature is a clumsy attempt at that of Paul Gauguin's. A further characteristic of these added 'O'Conor signatures' is that they have, almost without exception, been executed in the same colour, the choice being a bright vermilion red. In several cases the
signature through its colour alone, but also through its scale, is incompatible with the scale of the painting to which it has been added. One particularly glaring addition has introduced the same vermilion red monogram into a painting, which although it is without any other marks of identification, is almost certainly a nineteenth century romantic landscape by a painter other than O'Conor. The obvious incompatibility between the dark greens of the landscape and the awkwardness of the added vermilion monogram is all too apparent at first glance.

The discovery of these 'amended' paintings has implications for many of the confirmed O'Conor paintings which have been traced. In some cases, although the works are without doubt the works of Roderic O'Conor, the signatures and the dating frequently is not. Compare for example the discrepancy between the signature on two of the 1892 Paintings, 'Still life with bottles' (REF.PTGS.NO.011) believed to be by the artist, and the signature on the landscape from the same year 'Yellow Landscape, Pont-Aven,' (REF.PTGS.NO.017) which has quite different characteristics. The most noticeable difference between the two signatures is in the contrasting use of lower-case letters in the accepted signature, and of capital letters in the signature in doubt. As further evidence, consider the insensitive monogram signature on the otherwise meticulously painted 'Self Portrait' of '03,(1903), (REF.PTGS.NO.060) which is almost certainly an addition, and the more refined signature on another delicate portrait, 'Une Jeune Bretonne,' also dated '03,(REF.PTGS.NO.075) which would have been put there by O'Conor himself prior to the inclusion of this painting in the Exhibition of Work by Irish Painters at the Guildhall in London, in 1904.
There remains the possibility of course that O'Conor may have changed his signature style almost as frequently as he appears to have changed his painting style. This is not thought likely to have been the case however, for signatures on well documented paintings which he is known to have exhibited during his lifetime, in different painting styles, are remarkably consistent with reference to the way in which they have been signed. (11) The only minor change which is apparent is that at some point later than 1892, he dropped the letter 'R' as his first initial, and thereafter signed his work simply 'D'Conor,' sometimes adding the date and sometimes not. It is also highly probable of course, that just as the market value of O'Conor's work has increased significantly in recent years making authentically signed and dated paintings that much more valuable, that some 'signatures' have been added to paintings long after they passed out of Madame O'Conor's custody.

If O'Conor did not himself use the monogram 'ROC' for his paintings, from which source might it then have come? The most likely answer is to be found in an examination of the print of the child's head which was published in the review L'Ymagier in 1894, and which does have the monogram 'ROC' as a signature, (REF.PRTS.NO.014) The awkwardness of this monogram on the print is of course due to its having been signed in reverse in the plate, prior to printing, but it does seem likely that in the first instance it was used as the model for the monogram 'signatures' where they appear on the paintings. There is also the very real consideration that in comparison with O'Conor's genuine signature, it was a relatively easy monogram to execute in paint.

If we take it as an accepted fact that Madame O'Conor did add some signatures and dates in this way, she would have had three principal sources
to which she would have been able to refer to give her guidance with reference to dates. First of all there would have been the existing evidence of authentically signed and dated paintings by O'Conor to which she could have been able to make a stylistic comparison. Second, there were the private papers and documents left by her deceased husband, in particular O'Conor's Registre d'Immatriculation which made specific reference to his having arrived in Pont-Aven on 1 May 1892, a fact which may very well account for the significant number of Brittany paintings which bear this date. For example, in comparison with other years, there are no paintings among the traced works dated '1891,' and few, apart that is from 'Breton Peasant Woman Knitting' 1893, (REF.PTGS.NO.019) from the year 1893. There are also remarkably few paintings carrying dates from the years between 1894 and 1896. The Brittany period and the association with Gauguin was the period of most importance historically in the development of O'Conor's work, and therefore the most likely period to be singled out for date and signature addition.

Madame O'Conor's third source was the letter which she obtained from J. Milner Kite, previously referred to, and from its contents it is clear that Kite was replying to questions put to him about important events and dates in O'Conor's life. (12) This letter may originally have been requested from Kite for good and authentic reasons, as there was also the possibility, according to Ortiz de Zarate who had written in the previous year to Madame O'Conor on the matter, that the writer and critic A. Basler wanted to prepare an article on Roderic O'Conor to be published in the Journal des Beaux-Arts. (13)
Because of the escalation of the Second World War and the invasion of France by the Germans, very little information is available which would help to clarify events and details in the years immediately following O'Conor's death. Given all the circumstances surrounding the war and the occupation, it is remarkable that so many of O'Conor's own paintings and those which formed his collection, managed to survive at all. This is all the more astonishing as it is known that the Germans seized the Nueil-sur-Layon house, which was the most impressive house in the village, and billeted some of their officers there. Whether or not Madame O'Conor had managed to remove and conceal the paintings in a safe place is impossible to determine, and if the works remained in the house throughout the period of occupation it is even more remarkable that they survived as they did. We can also only speculate on the possibility, although it is a very real one, that some pictures may have been taken by the Germans when they were temporarily resident in the house.

During the war, and in the years immediately following, Madame O'Conor found it increasingly difficult to transfer monies due to her in the form of interest from investments which her late husband had made in the United States of America. As a result, acting on the advice of her Paris lawyers she sought to take out a resident's permit in Switzerland so that she might claim residency there. With her advancing years Madame O'Conor's own health slowly began to deteriorate and she developed a particularly painful form of cancer of the eye. As a result of the illness she had to receive treatment in Switzerland, living for a period of time in Geneva at Avenue Dumas, where she stayed in the Pension Ré. She did manage however, in spite of her affliction, to do some painting while she was there. Each summer she
went to Morat for two to three months, and when she was able to she made occasional visits to Nueil-sur-Layon to check on her property.

Madame O’Conor finally died in Paris on 22 January 1955, and under the terms of her will the property at Nueil-sur-Layon was left to the local commune. The property in the south of France at Cagnes-sur-Mer and the apartment at rue Jean Bart in Paris were left to two of her friends. Almost all of her possessions, including the paintings which had belonged to her late husband, including his works and paintings in his collection, together with paintings which she herself had done, were left to the relatives of Roderic O’Conor. Because of logistical problems about a fair and equable means of dividing more than nine hundred works between the beneficiaries, the decision was taken to offer the paintings for sale at auction, and to divide the proceeds from the sale among those entitled to a share in her estate.

By 21 October 1955, the paintings to go forward to the auction had been transported from Nueil-sur-Layon to Paris, where they were put into storage. Then in order to classify, identify, and appraise the paintings found in the Nueil-sur-Layon house and to make the preparations for the auction, Jean Cailac, a Parisian expert, was appointed on the recommendation of Maitre Alphonse Bellier, the auctioneer who was to be responsible for conducting the sale. It was decided to conduct the sale on two successive days, and to select several of O’Conor’s best pictures for inclusion on the first day, along with the work of artists who were rather better known. Through this tactic the auctioneer hoped to raise some interest in the second day of the sale, which it was intended should be devoted to O’Conor’s paintings and to those of Renée Honta. The identification and the classification of these

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pictures presented specific problems for the expert, who found in many cases that it was difficult to differentiate between O'Conor's works and those which might have been by Renée. He reported that among the works there were many which were unfinished, some which were of poor quality, and numerous paintings having neither date nor signature. The decision was therefore taken to stamp works in this category with an 'atelier O'Conor' stamp, which was frequently placed with little consideration to the image, on drawings, prints, and paintings. It was inevitable in these circumstances that the atelier stamp would be placed, without discrimination, on Renée Honta's paintings as well as those of Roderic O'Conor. (18) In the estimation of the auctioneer, the only possible way to deal with those paintings in this category was to offer them for sale in lots, and they were therefore randomly grouped together and not listed separately in the catalogue.

It was through such a sale procedure that the then London gallery of Roland, Browse, and Delbanco of Cork Street, on the initiative of Dr. H. Roland who attended the sale, acquired a substantial number of these unidentified lots. When the works arrived in London the gallery then made a selection of the best of these paintings, destroyed the remainder, and began the process of introducing O'Conor's work to the public. The first such exhibition in a series of exhibitions was in held in 1956 when O'Conor's paintings were shown alongside those of Matthew Smith under the title 'Two Masters of Colour, Matthew Smith and Roderic O'Conor.' (19) While the Roland, Browse, and Delbanco Gallery was the principal outlet for O'Conor's paintings after the Hôtel Drouot sale of 1956, other paintings which had been acquired by buyers at the same sale gradually made their way on to the International market in subsequent years. A number of O'Conor pictures, those which the
artist sold during his lifetime, or those which he had given or exchanged with friends, have also slowly appeared on the market through sales of private collections and estates mainly in France.
1. Renée Honta had been living at 10 rue Jean Bart since at least the previous year, when she gave this as her address in the catalogue for the Salon d'Automne exhibition. Prior to this, her last known and confirmed place of residence was 1 Passage d'Enfer, which is listed as her address in the catalogue for the Salon d'Automne exhibition of 1929.

2. Two of these witnesses, G. Betourne and L. Brigad were probably French lawyers, or possibly law clerks in the firm which had helped to draw up the will, and the third, Charles McClumpha, was an American and a partner in the New York company appointed by O’Conor to act as executors of his will.

3. This information was included in the papers which were drawn up by Madame O’Conor’s legal representatives. Private collection, France.

4. A copy of the will was found among the papers left by Roderic O’Conor. Private collection, France.

5. Information from an interview with Renée Honta’s notary in Nueil-sur-Layon.


9. Private collection, France. The paintings in question were not part of those transferred to Paris in preparation for the Hôtel Drouot sale of 1956, after the death of Madame O’Conor, but were acquired directly from the former O’Conor residence in Nueil-sur-Layon. Their ‘amendment’ may therefore with certainty be fixed to that period of time between O’Conor’s death in 1940, and that of his widow in 1955, when they were in the custody of Madame O’Conor.

10. This information about the addition of some signatures to Roderic O’Conor’s paintings by his widow, was first given by the writer in his publication ‘Roderic O’Conor in Brittany,’ Irish Arts Review, 1 No. 1, 1984 at p. 15. Benington, (1985) op. cit., although referring to this information, chose to ignore it in his attempt to draw up a limited chronology for O’Conor’s paintings, and he therefore accepted all signatures and dates as inscribed on O’Conor’s paintings as being genuine and correct.

11. For example, ‘Still Life with Bottles,’ 1892, (REF.PTGS.NO.011); ‘La ferme de Lezaven,’ 1894, (REF.PTGS.NO.023); ‘La Vague,’ 1898, (REF.PTGS.NO.059); ‘Une Jeune Bretonne,’ 1903, (REF.PTGS.NO.029); ‘Bleu et Rose,’ 1911, (REF.PTGS.NO.111); ‘Le Vase Bleu,’ 1919, (REF.PTGS.NO.180); ‘Still life with Flowers in a jug,’ 1925, (REF.PTGS.NO.209)

12. Letter from J. Milner Kite to Madame O’Conor dated 8 April (no year is given but from the contents it is clear that the letter was written soon after O’Conor’s death.) Probably therefore written at some point in 1940.

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13. Letter dated 2 April, 1940, from Ortiz de Zarate to Madame O'Conor, private collection (L) France. No evidence of any published article has been found.


15. Witness account, Monsieur. 'R', Switzerland. Information which follows is from the same witness.

16. Copy of Madame O'Conor's will, private collection, France.

17. Information on the preparations for the sale are from legal archives in Paris.

18. Because of this procedure, we may be certain that any O'Conor paintings which do not carry the atelier stamp, and which have been traced, were either sold during his lifetime, or after his death by his widow. Conversely, any works which do bear the stamp, may be identified as being among those sold at the auction.

19. See Appendix IV for a list of the principal exhibitions which included the works of Roderic O'Conor.
"Laissez donc les critiques, ne les écoutes pas et va ton chemin comme tu l'entends."

(Roderic O'Conor in an undated letter to Renée Honta)

Education, environment, and experience are critical factors which come together in infinitely subtle ways in the process of forming an artist's personality, and in giving purpose to the content of his work. In Roderic O'Conor's case, his unique heritage and family background as one of the O'Conors from Connaught, may have endowed him with that initial measure of self-assurance and motivation which was essential to his later success as an artist. O'Conor's formal education helped to shape his personality, and his academic art training prepared him technically for the more experimental work which he began as soon as he moved from his native Ireland as a young man to pursue his chosen career in France.

The pattern for O'Conor's education was initially established at Ampleforth College in Yorkshire where under the strict guidance of Benedictine monks and lay teachers, he followed a traditional curriculum which was based on a study of the classics. To this early educational experience at Ampleforth can be traced his love of literature, of poetry, and of music, and through the inspiration of his art teacher, W.J. Boddy, who was originally trained as an architect, he discovered a talent for drawing and painting. When he left Ampleforth his achievements there had already been recognised through the award of numerous prizes for his academic study, and it may have seemed at
that time that a career in one of the professions, or perhaps in military
service, might have been the most likely path for him to have followed.

O'Connor chose as an alternative to other more secure professions to study
art, initially at the Metropolitan School of Art and at the Royal Hibernian
Academy in Dublin. Both of these institutions provided a sound grounding
in the academic traditions of drawing and painting, and in order to further
his artistic training he then went to the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts
d'Anvers where he studied with Karel Verlat for one year only, which rather
suggests that their curriculum and way of life were not entirely to his
liking. He returned to Dublin where he began to paint in the romantic
landscape tradition and he exhibited his work at the annual exhibitions of
the Royal Hibernian Academy.

O'Connor's decision to leave Ireland and to go to Paris at the time that he
did, it is believed in 1886, was crucial to his commitment as an artist and
critical to the introduction of an experimental attitude to painting which
immediately altered his painting style. French Impressionism initially
influenced him and he then developed a very early appreciation of van Gogh's
work, and his influence, at a time when that artist was virtually unknown.
O'Connor's early contact with a group of artists based in Pont-Aven in
Brittany, who themselves had been inspired by Paul Gauguin's new theories
about painting, was perhaps only rivalled in significance for him by his own
personal friendship with Gauguin which was at its peak in 1894-1895, just
before Gauguin's final voyage to the South Seas. If one were to look for
influences and attitudes which were of the greatest importance to his
painting, and which then placed Roderic O'Connor alongside the most advanced
work of the period, it would be to those early years of his in Brittany

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between 1891 and 1895 when he was associated with Gauguin's circle which was known as the School of Pont-Aven.

O'Conor's early Brittany landscapes are exceptional paintings which in stylistic terms are far in advance of the work of any other Irish artist, or indeed for that matter of any British artist who was then responsive to the new directions in painting which were being pursued in France in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Paradoxically these high achievements may also have had an inhibiting influence on the paintings which he made thereafter. His most ambitious works from that period have qualities of near abstraction and of expressive colour contrasts which had they been developed further could have taken O'Conor's work into the most radical of forms. For some reason, perhaps conscious of the weight of responsibility which fell on his shoulders after the death of his father in Ireland in 1893, his paintings seemed to lose their edge and instead of more risk taking he chose to resume a more conservative attitude to painting and his work regressed. It may be that without the support of a character as strong as Gauguin's, that to some extent he lacked the courage to push his art any further, when that was what was most needed.

The evidence from Roderic O'Conor's earliest work is that he began as an artist who was responsive to things which he could observe in the visual world around him, and indeed this traditional relationship between the artist and his subject matter remained at the core of almost every painting which he made during his lifetime. The problem for O'Conor was that throughout his mature years as a painter it was this very concept of the artist's function which came under radical revision. Apart from his association with Gauguin's synthetist and symbolist ideas, in his own art he was perhaps
closest to the tenets of Fauvism but never really committed to the fauvists use of pure colour for its own sake. O'Conor left no theoretical writing about his art, and although his opinions were well formed and based on his extensive knowledge of painting in particular, there is good reason to believe that he was in effect opposed to all artistic theories, preferring a more intuitive approach in which expression and emotion were the most highly valued qualities. In assuming this position he at once distanced himself from each of the successive waves of new styles and tendencies to which art was subject in the early years of the twentieth century, and with this degree of detachment from the major movements of Fauvism, Surrealism, and Cubism, there was no other avenue open to him other than to continue to paint in his own way, as he understood it to be. He once wrote to Clive Bell; 'I am tired of the modern critics and their new fangled jargon - their learned brushwork, their sustained values, their scholarly realisations. I'd as soon listen to the old blokes with mouths full of chiaroscuro morbidezza, corregiosity (sic) and gusto.' Even in the case of Gauguin's art, O'Conor while respecting his greatness, never gave himself fully over to his theories and in later years was even critical of what he termed 'an artificial literary quality' in Gauguin's work which in his opinion should not have been there. Holding to such a view we can more easily understand why symbolism was not a large component in his own work even though he admired the work of Odilon Redon and Munch, and had examples of their paintings and prints in his extensive collection.

In comparison with his fellow Irish artists and English speaking contemporaries who went to France before the end of the nineteenth century, Roderic O'Conor stands as the most experimental of them all. His early adoption of the Impressionist style, and his association with Gauguin and
his group produced a number of paintings of superb quality which are wholly in tune with their time. In many respects the simplification of his subject matter and the directness of his painting technique was in advance of that of his own immediate circle of friends. It was for this reason, as well as for his knowledge and aesthetic judgement, that he commanded the respect of so many who came in contact with him and who knew him intimately. Alden Brooks wrote of him:

'He led the comparatively uneventful life of a painter whose whole being was devoted to painting, and when he was not actually painting he was looking at the painting of others, reading about painting, talking about painting. I have sometimes thought this was bad for him; but one thing is certain, in the end he came to know about painting more than any one I have ever met.'

Perhaps as Brooks states, this excess of looking was 'bad' for him, and it may have contributed at least in part to some of his eclecticism. Into the bargain he was not fastidiously productive, and so did not bring an actual sense of continuity to his work, making it difficult to achieve that degree of independence of vision associated with the truly great artists. With a lack of continuity, there is evidence from O'Conor himself of a loss of confidence at critical points in his career. Early in this century he wrote to his then mistress, Renée Honta: 'Pour la peinture, par exemple, je ne suis pas fort. Il y a longtemps que je n'ai pas touché un pinceau.'

Perhaps the lasting impression of O'Conor is of a rugged individual with a formidable personality, particularly in debate and discussion where he was open and direct in his criticisms of work which he considered to be inferior. This view should be tempered with the knowledge that he also had a compassionate side and that he materially assisted artists less well off than himself. Roderic O'Conor's directness of approach to painting produced some memorable work, particularly in Pont-Aven, and although in comparison
his later work does not have the same edge or sense of the avant-garde, he adhered steadfastly to his own artistic principles and never stopped painting throughout his lifetime.
APPENDIX I

DRAWINGS

Roderic O'Conor

List of drawings accompanying the text
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<td>022</td>
<td>Petite Bretonne Assise</td>
<td>390 x 285</td>
<td>Charcoal on paper</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>b.r.f.</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>023</td>
<td>Old Man, seated</td>
<td>273 x 216 mm</td>
<td>Charcoal</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>024</td>
<td>Tete d'Homme Barbu</td>
<td>240 x 320 mm</td>
<td>Fusain</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>b.r.f.</td>
<td>Musee de Rennes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>025</td>
<td>Breton Girl, seated</td>
<td>286 x 232 mm</td>
<td>Conte</td>
<td>b.r.f. R O'Conor</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Paul Prouté SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>026</td>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>210 x 303 mm</td>
<td>Sepia pencil</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>027</td>
<td>Paysage du Pouldu</td>
<td>350 x 260 mm</td>
<td>Charcoal on paper</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>b.r.f.</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<tr>
<td>028</td>
<td>Arbres au Pouldu</td>
<td>430 x 290 mm</td>
<td>Charcoal</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>b.r.f.</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<tr>
<td>029</td>
<td>Tree in a field</td>
<td>516 x 683 mm</td>
<td>Brush &amp; indian ink</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>b.r.f.</td>
<td>Bristol City Art Gallery</td>
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<tr>
<td>030</td>
<td>Brittany Coast</td>
<td>295 x 464 mm</td>
<td>Ink &amp; wash</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>b.r.f.</td>
<td>Higgins Gallery, Bedford</td>
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<td>REF. DRG. NO: 031</td>
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<tr>
<td>TITLE: Breton Women</td>
<td>TITLE: Bretonne</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIZE: 241 x 311 mm</td>
<td>SIZE: 320 x 250 mm</td>
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<td>TITLE: Paysanne et sa Vache</td>
<td>TITLE: Buste de Bretonne</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIZE: 229 x 311 mm</td>
<td>SIZE: 360 x 310 mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEDIA: Wash drawing on paper</td>
<td>MEDIA: Charcoal on blue paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIGNED: b.l.f. R O’Conor</td>
<td>SIGNED: No</td>
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<td>DATED: No</td>
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<tr>
<td>TITLE: Landscape with Breton Peasant</td>
<td>TITLE: Nude lying down</td>
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<td>SIZE: 265 x 350 mm</td>
<td>SIZE: 265 x 335 mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>TITLE: Two Women seated at table</td>
<td>TITLE: House in trees</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIZE: 255 x 205 mm</td>
<td>SIZE: 310 x 230 mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEDIA: Brush &amp; ink</td>
<td>MEDIA: Charcoal</td>
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<th>REF. DRG. NO: 039</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE: Man in profile</td>
<td>TITLE: Nude, back view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIZE: 142 x 190 mm</td>
<td>SIZE: 360 x 265 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIA: Brush &amp; ink</td>
<td>MEDIA: Conte on paper</td>
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REF. DRG. NO: 041
TITLE: Portrait of a woman
SIZE: 337 x 222 mm
MEDIA: Crayon
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. DRG. NO: 042
TITLE: Nude seated
SIZE: 286 x 210 mm
MEDIA: Conte
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. DRG. NO: 043
TITLE: Paysan et Paysanne Bretons
SIZE: 200 x 240 mm
MEDIA: Pen & ink & wash
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: b.r.f.
COLLECTION: Private

REF. DRG. NO: 044
TITLE: Seated Nude
SIZE: 310 x 240 mm
MEDIA: Conté
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: b.r. centre
COLLECTION: Private

REF. DRG. NO: 045
TITLE: Girl (3/4 view)
SIZE: 267 x 210 mm
MEDIA: Charcoal
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. DRG. NO: 046
TITLE: Woman in profile view
SIZE: 155 x 222 mm
MEDIA: Charcoal
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. DRG. NO: 047
TITLE: Road with trees (Distant spire)
SIZE: 540 x 432 mm
MEDIA: Black ink on paper
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: b.r.f.
COLLECTION: Private

REF. DRG. NO: 048
TITLE: Tête de femme
SIZE: 125 x 205 mm
MEDIA: Crayon, ink, wash on paper
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: On mount, not drawing
COLLECTION: Private

REF. DRG. NO: 049
TITLE: Bretonne en repos
SIZE: 33.5 x 47 mm
MEDIA: Charcoal on paper
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: b.r.f.
COLLECTION: Private

REF. DRG. NO: 050
TITLE: Breton Peasant
SIZE: 290 x 190 mm
MEDIA: Ink on paper
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private
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<th>REF. DRG. NO: 051</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE: Self portrait (?)</td>
<td>TITLE: Eva Mathilda Aström</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIZE: 206 x 186 mm</td>
<td>SIZE: 301 x 216 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIA: Pencil on paper</td>
<td>MEDIA: Brush/ink on paper</td>
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<td>SIGNED: No</td>
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<td>ATELIER: No</td>
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<tr>
<td>COLLECTION: Nationalmuseum Stockholm</td>
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APPENDIX II

PRINTS
Roderic O'Conor

List of prints accompanying the text
REF. PRTS. NO: 01
TITLE: Paysage à la Chaumière Bretonne
SIZE: 130 x 270 mm
MEDIA: Etching
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PRTS. NO: 02
TITLE: Buste de Bretonne
SIZE: 133 x 118 mm
MEDIA: Etching
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION Private

REF. PRTS. NO: 03
TITLE: Landscape with River
SIZE: 192 x 275 mm
MEDIA: Etching
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PRTS. NO: 04
TITLE: Landscape
SIZE: 210 x 298 mm
MEDIA: Etching
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp b.r.f.
COLLECTION Private

REF. PRTS. NO: 05
TITLE: Dune et Maison au Pouldu
SIZE: 197 x 178 mm
MEDIA: Etching
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PRTS. NO: 06
TITLE: Untitled
SIZE: 273 x 197 mm
MEDIA: Etching
SIGNED: b.r. in plate R O'Conor
DATED: 1893
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION Private

REF. PRTS. NO: 07
TITLE: Pleine lune sur la Côte
SIZE: 142 x 184 mm
MEDIA: Etching
SIGNED: b.l.f. in plate R O'Conor
DATED: b.l.f. 1893
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PRTS. NO: 08
TITLE: Untitled Landscape
SIZE: 143 x 282 mm
MEDIA: Dry point in brown ink
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION Museum Fine Arts, Boston

REF. PRTS. NO: 09
TITLE: Le Verger
SIZE: 257 x 333 mm
MEDIA: Etching
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PRTS. NO: 010
TITLE: La Prairie aux Grands Arbres
SIZE: 197 x 184 mm
MEDIA: Etching
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION Private
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<th>REF. PRTS. NO: 011</th>
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<tr>
<td>TITLE: Le Bois d'Amour</td>
<td>TITLE: Sentier à Travers les Arbres</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIZE: 219 x 324 mm</td>
<td>SIZE: 333 x 308 mm</td>
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<td>MEDIA: Etching</td>
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<tr>
<td>TITLE: Paysage</td>
<td>TITLE: L'enfant</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIZE: 217 x 180 mm</td>
<td>SIZE: 217 x 180 mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEDIA: Etching</td>
<td>MEDIA: Lithograph</td>
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<td>SIGNED: No</td>
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<td>ATELIER: No</td>
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<td>PUBLISHED: L'Imagier Vol 1 1894-95</td>
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<td>TITLE: Landscape</td>
<td>TITLE: Paysage avec des Arbres</td>
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<td>SIZE: 155 x 235 mm</td>
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<th>REF. PRTS. NO: 017</th>
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<tr>
<td>TITLE: Trees near an Estuary</td>
<td>TITLE: Trees in a landscape</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIZE: 192 x 273 mm</td>
<td>landscape</td>
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<td>SIZE: 197 x 184 mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>TITLE: Paysage sur la Côte</td>
<td>TITLE: House Under Restless Skies</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIZE: 203 x 286 mm</td>
<td>SIZE: 231 x 284 mm</td>
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<td>MEDIA: Etching</td>
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<td>SIGNED: b.l. O'Conor</td>
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<tr>
<td>DATED: No</td>
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Ref. Prts. No: 021
Title: Effet de Soleil dans un Nuage
Size: 260 x 330 mm
Media: Dry point & aquatint
Signed: On plate R O'Conor
Date: 1893
Atelier: Stamp b.l.f.
Collection: Private

Ref. Prts. No: 022
Title: Maison et Arbres
Size: 186 x 182 mm
Media: Etching
Signed: b.l. plate R O'Conor
Date: 1893
Atelier: Stamp b.l.f.
Collection: Private

Ref. Prts. No: 023
Title: Maison et des Arbres
Size: 159 x 242 mm
Media: Etching
Signed: No
Date: No
Atelier: No
Collection: Private

Ref. Prts. No: 25
Title: Maison sur la falaise
Size: 143 x 207 mm
Media: Etching
Signed: No
Date: No
Atelier: Stamp b.r.f.
Collection: Private

Ref. Prts. No: 027
Title: Mer et Nuages
Size: 238 x 330 mm
Media: Etching
Signed: b.l. in plate R O'Conor
Date: 1893
Atelier: Stamp b.r.f.
Collection: Private

Ref. Prts. No: 028
Title: Jeune paysanne Bretonne
Size: 195 x 144 mm
Media: Etching
Signed: No
Date: No
Atelier: Stamp b.r.f.
Collection: Private

Ref. Prts. No: 029
Title: Paysanne Bretonne
Size: 200 x 140 mm
Media: Etching
Signed: No
Date: No
Atelier: Stamp
Collection: Private

Ref. Prts. No: 030
Title: La Falaise
Size: 240 x 390 mm
Media: Dry point & aquatint
Signed: In plate R O'Conor
Date: No
Atelier: No
Collection: Private
REF. PRTS. NO: 031
TITLE: La Maison Auprès du Bois
SIZE: 213 x 279 mm
MEDIA: Etching
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Bowdoin College, Maine

REF. PRTS. NO: 032
TITLE: Sans titre
SIZE: 146 x 247 mm
MEDIA: Etching
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PRTS. NO: 033
TITLE: La Laita
SIZE: 145 x 256 mm
MEDIA: Etching
SIGNED: b.l. in plate R O'Conor
DATED: b.l. 1893
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PRTS. NO: 035
TITLE: Deux Femmes de profil dans un Paysage
SIZE: 190 x 162 mm
MEDIA: Lithograph
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Quimper Museum

REF. PRTS. NO: 036
TITLE: Portrait de Seguin
SIZE: 257 x 155 mm
MEDIA: Etching
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PRTS. NO: 037
TITLE: Portrait de Séraphin
SIZE: 273 x 210 mm
MEDIA: Etching
SIGNED: t.l. R O'Conor
DATED: 1895
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PRTS. NO: 038
TITLE: Paul Gauguin (?)
SIZE: 138 x 99 mm
MEDIA: Etching
SIGNED: l.f. in plate R O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: MOMA, New York

REF. PRTS. NO: 039
TITLE: Paysage avec des Arbres
SIZE: 140 x 197 mm
MEDIA: Etching
SIGNED: b.r. in plate R O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private
REF. PRTS. NO: 041
TITLE: Maison au-delà des Arbres
SIZE: 159 x 118 mm
MEDIA: Etching
SIGNED: b.r. in plate R O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PRTS. NO: 042
TITLE: Nu debout
SIZE: 325 x 186 mm
MEDIA: Monoprint
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private
APPENDIX III

PAINTINGS

Roderic O'Connor

List of paintings accompanying the text
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<th>REF. PTGS.NO: 001</th>
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<tr>
<td>TITLE: Sunny Day in June</td>
<td>TITLE: Between the Cliffs, Aberystwyth</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIZE: 248 x 323 mm</td>
<td>SIZE: 241 x 324 mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEDIA: Oil on wood panel</td>
<td>MEDIA: Oil on wood panel</td>
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<td>SIGNED: Verso R A O’Conor</td>
<td>SIGNED: No</td>
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<th>REF. PTGS.NO: 003</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE: On the Shore, Aberystwyth</td>
<td>TITLE: Groupe de Peupliers - Effet de Soleil</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIZE: 241 x 324 mm</td>
<td>SIZE: 641 x 540 mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEDIA: Oil on wood panel</td>
<td>MEDIA: Oil on canvas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGNED: On back R A O’Conor</td>
<td>SIGNED: b.l.f. R O’Conor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATED: No</td>
<td>DATED: b.l.f. 1886</td>
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<td>ATELIER: No</td>
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<th>REF. PTGS.NO: 004A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE: Groupe de Peupliers - DETAIL</td>
<td>TITLE: Head of a Breton Girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIZE:</td>
<td>SIZE: 648 x 540 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIA:</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIGNED:</td>
<td>SIGNED: Back on stretcher</td>
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<tr>
<td>DATED:</td>
<td>DATED: No</td>
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<td>TITLE: Head of a Breton Girl - DETAIL</td>
<td>TITLE: Old Fisherman</td>
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<td>SIZE:</td>
<td>SIZE: 810 x 590 mm</td>
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<td>DATED:</td>
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<td>ATELIER:</td>
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<th>REF. PTGS.NO: 007</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE: Portrait de Marin</td>
<td>TITLE: Snow Scene (Paysage de Neige)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIZE: 552 x 457 mm</td>
<td>SIZE: 460 x 613 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIA: Oil on canvas</td>
<td>MEDIA: Oil on canvas</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIGNED: t.r. R O’C</td>
<td>SIGNED: No</td>
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<td>DATED: No</td>
<td>DATED: No</td>
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<td>ATELIER: No</td>
<td>ATELIER: No</td>
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<tr>
<td>COLLECTION: Private</td>
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TITLE: Landscape with road, farm buildings
SIZE: 546 x 647 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.r. R O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

TITLE: Flowers, bottle and two jugs
SIZE: 533 x 715 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.r.f. O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Gisbourne Gallery, NZ

TITLE: Still life with bottles
SIZE: 553 x 464 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: t.l. R O'Conor
DATED: t.l. '92
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Tate Gallery

TITLE: Pâturages Bretons
SIZE: 464 x 553 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

TITLE: Raging Torrent
SIZE: 490 x 600 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

TITLE: Field of Corn, Pont-Aven
SIZE: 382 x 380 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.r.f. O'Conor
DATED: b.r.f. '92
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Ulster Museum

TITLE: Field of Corn, Pont-Aven
SIZE: 
MEDIA:
SIGNED:
DATED:
ATELIER:
COLLECTION:
REF. PTGS.NO: 016
TITLE: La Ferme

SIZE: 489 x 609 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Auckland City Gallery

REF. PTGS.NO: 017
TITLE: Yellow Landscape, Pont-Aven

SIZE: 677 x 917 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.l.f. O'Conor
DATED: b.l.f. '92
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Tate Gallery

REF. PTGS.NO: 018
TITLE: The Glade

SIZE: 915 x 597 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.r.f. O'Conor
DATED: b.r.f. '92
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Museum of Mod.Art, NYC

REF. PTGS.NO: 019
TITLE: Breton Peasant Woman Knitting

SIZE: 812 x 670 mm
MEDIA: Oil on board
SIGNED: t.l.f. O'Conor
DATED: t.l.f. 1893
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 020
TITLE: Breton Peasant Girl

SIZE: 803 x 648 mm
MEDIA: Oil on card
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 021A
TITLE: Nature Morte Aux Pommes - DETAIL

SIZE:
MEDIA:
SIGNED:
DATED:
ATELIER:
COLLECTION:

REF. PTGS.NO: 022
TITLE: Landscape - Brittany

SIZE: 651 x 813 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: Verso Roderic O'Conor
DATED: Verso 1894
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private
REF. PTGS.NO: 022A
TITLE: Landscape - Brittany
- DETAIL
SIZE: 
MEDIA: 
SIGNED: 
DATED: 
ATELIER: 
COLLECTION: 

REF. PTGS.NO: 024
TITLE: Jeune Paysanne Bretonne
SIZE: 380 x 290 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 028
TITLE: L'Approche de Lezaven
SIZE: 813 x 648 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: Verso R O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 029
TITLE: La Jeune Bretonne
SIZE: 650 x 495 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: R O'Conor
DATED: '90? '93? '95?
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Nat. Gallery of Ireland

REF. PTGS.NO: 023
TITLE: La Ferme de Lezaven, Finistere
SIZE: 724 x 927 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.l.f.
DATED: b.l.f. 1894
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Nat. Gallery of Ireland

REF. PTGS.NO: 025
TITLE: Flower Piece
SIZE: 724 x 590 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.l.f. R O'Conor
DATED: b.l.f. 1894
ATELIER: Verso (twice)
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 026
TITLE: Portrait of a Breton Woman
SIZE: 172 x 140 mm
MEDIA: Oil on wood panel
SIGNED: t.r.f. R O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 027
TITLE: La Jeune Bretonne, Pont-Aven
SIZE: 302 x 194 mm
MEDIA: Oil on board
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 028A
TITLE: L'Approche de Lezaven - DETAIL
SIZE: 
MEDIA: 
SIGNED: 
DATED: 
ATELIER: 
COLLECTION: 

REF. PTGS.NO: 030
TITLE: Jeune Bretonne au Bonnet
SIZE: 550 x 460 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: t.r.f. O'Conor
DATED: t.r.f. '95
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

-405-
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<td>031</td>
<td>Still Life</td>
<td>457 x 550 mm</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>b.r.f. R O'Conor</td>
<td>b.r.f. '96</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<tr>
<td>032</td>
<td>Femme Bretonne</td>
<td>1250 x 915 mm</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<tr>
<td>033</td>
<td>La Ronde des Korrigans</td>
<td>705 x 832 mm</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Stamp verso</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<tr>
<td>034</td>
<td>Charging Bull by Moonlight</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Stamp verso</td>
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<td>035</td>
<td>Study of a Young Girl</td>
<td>648 x 540 mm</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>t.l.f. '96</td>
<td>Stamp verso</td>
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<tr>
<td>036</td>
<td>Breton Girl</td>
<td>578 x 463 mm</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>t.l.f. ROC</td>
<td>t.l.f. '96</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<tr>
<td>037</td>
<td>Seated Girl</td>
<td>648 x 540 mm</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Stamp verso</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<tr>
<td>038</td>
<td>Seascape</td>
<td>290 x 360 mm</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>b.r.f. O'Conor</td>
<td>b.r.f. '93</td>
<td>Stamp verso</td>
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<tr>
<td>039</td>
<td>Seascape with Pink Foam</td>
<td>238 x 273 mm</td>
<td>Oil on wood</td>
<td>b.l.f. O'Conor</td>
<td>'92</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<tr>
<td>040</td>
<td>Seascape, yellow sky</td>
<td>238 x 273 mm</td>
<td>Oil on wood panel</td>
<td>b.r.f. O'Conor</td>
<td>b.r.f. 1892</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
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</table>
**Rocks and Sea**

*Title: Blue Sea and Brittany*

- **Size:** 286 x 387 mm
- **Medium:** Oil on board
- **Signed:** No
- **Dated:** No
- **Atelier:** No
- **Collection:** Private

**Turbulent Sea**

*Title: Stormy Sea*

- **Size:** 254 x 337 mm
- **Medium:** Oil on card
- **Signed:** No
- **Dated:** No
- **Atelier:** Stamp b.r.f.
- **Collection:** Private

**Red Rocks and Sea, Brittany**

*Title: Blue Sea and Rocks, Brittany*

- **Size:** 216 x 337 mm
- **Medium:** Oil on board
- **Signed:** No
- **Dated:** No
- **Atelier:** Stamp verso
- **Collection:** Private

**Marée Montante**

*Title: Red Rocks and Sea*

- **Size:** 648 x 540 mm
- **Medium:** Oil on canvas
- **Signed:** No
- **Dated:** No
- **Atelier:** Stamp verso
- **Collection:** Private
REF. PTGS. NO: 051
TITLE: Brittany Coast
SIZE: 248 x 350 x mm
MEDIA: Oil on board
SIGNED: b.r.f. R O'Conor
DATED: b.r.f. 1898
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 052
TITLE: Rocks and Sea
SIZE: 730 x 920 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 053
TITLE: Promontory, Brittany
SIZE: 543 x 648 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 054
TITLE: Seascape, Brittany
SIZE: 460 x 615 mm
MEDIA: Oil on paper on board
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 055
TITLE: Remous
SIZE: 502 x 610 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.l.f. O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 056
TITLE: Les Rochers Rouge
SIZE: 540 x 648 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.r.f. R O'Conor
DATED: b.r.f. 1898
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 057
TITLE: Sur la Côte, Finistère
SIZE: 724 x 921 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.l.f. O'Conor
DATED: 1898
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 058
TITLE: Seascape
SIZE: 463 x 610 mm
MEDIA: Oil on paper
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 059
TITLE: La Vague
SIZE: 724 x 915 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.l.f. O'Conor
DATED: b.l.f. 1898
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: York City Art Gallery

REF. PTGS. NO: 060
TITLE: Self Portrait
SIZE: 550 x 460 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: ROC
DATED: 1903
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Hugh Lane Gallery

-408-
REF. PTGS. NO: 061
TITLE: Paysanne Bretonne
SIZE: 625 x 521 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 062
TITLE: Landscape
SIZE: 384 x 463 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas board
SIGNED: Inscribed verso
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 064
TITLE: Landscape
SIZE: 597 x 730 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: Stretcher R O’Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 066
TITLE: Chrysanthèmes et Roses de Noël
SIZE: 500 x 610 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.l.f. ROC
DATED: b.l.f. '97
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 068
TITLE: Village en Bretagne
SIZE: 650 x 920 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: Verso on canvas O'C
DATED: Verso 1897
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 061A
TITLE: Paysanne Bretonne
- DETAIL
SIZE: 
MEDIA: 
SIGNED: 
DATED: 
ATELIER: 
COLLECTION: 

REF. PTGS. NO: 063
TITLE: Figures in Pool
SIZE: 311 x 406 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 065
TITLE: Les Toits Rouges
- DETAIL
SIZE: 317 x 400 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.l.f. R O’Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Tate Gallery, London

REF. PTGS. NO: 067
TITLE: Roof Tops, A Village
SIZE: 730 x 603 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 069
TITLE: Paysage
SIZE: 376 x 548 mm
MEDIA: Oil on card
SIGNED: Initials verso ROC
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private
REF. PTGS. NO: 070
TITLE: Le Port de Doelan
SIZE: 600 x 735 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 071
TITLE: Landscape with a River
SIZE: 680 x 924 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: None visible
COLLECTION: Tate Gallery, London

REF. PTGS. NO: 072
TITLE: Vue de Pont-Aven
SIZE: 545 x 650 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.r.f. R O’Conor
DATED: b.r.f. ‘99
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Ulster Museum

REF. PTGS. NO: 073
TITLE: La Fille Qui Rit
SIZE: 650 x 500 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: t.l.f. ROC
DATED: ‘02
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Coyle Fine Art, Dublin

REF. PTGS. NO: 074
TITLE: Breton Girl
SIZE: 647 x 540 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 075
TITLE: Une jeune Bretonne
SIZE: 921 x 730 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.l.f. O’Conor
DATED: b.l.f. ‘03
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin

REF. PTGS. NO: 076
TITLE: Nature morte aux pommes et pots Bretons
SIZE: 500 x 660 mm
MEDIA: Oil on cardboard
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 077
TITLE: Bretonne
SIZE: 546 x 445 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas (relined)
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 078
TITLE: Faience
SIZE: 648 x 546 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: t.r.f.
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 079
TITLE: Landscape with Trees
SIZE: 324 x 413 mm
MEDIA: Pencil, water colour
SIGNED: b.l.f. R O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private
REF. PTGS. NO: 080
TITLE: Romeo and Juliet
SIZE: 648 x 540 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 081
TITLE: Marine au Clair de Lune
SIZE: 737 x 923 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 081A
TITLE: Marine au Clair de Lune - DETAIL

REF. PTGS. NO: 082
TITLE: Paysage aux Moutons
SIZE: 730 x 921 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b. r. f.
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 083
TITLE: Personnage avec un Cheval
SIZE: 730 x 921 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b. r. f. O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 083A
TITLE: Personnage avec un Cheval - DETAIL

REF. PTGS. NO: 084
TITLE: Sunset at Pont-Aven
SIZE: 720 x 870 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 085
TITLE: Le Barrage
SIZE: 464 x 552 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b. r. f. O'Conor
DATED: 1902
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 086
TITLE: Portrait d'homme barbu
SIZE: 545 x 455 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 087
TITLE: Portrait
SIZE: 457 x 381 mm
MEDIA: Oil on wood panel
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private
REF. PTGS. NO: 088
TITLE: Repos
SIZE: 370 x 620 mm
MEDIA: Oil
SIGNED: No
DATED: 1905
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Hermitage, Leningrad

REF. PTGS. NO: 089
TITLE: Boulevard Raspail
SIZE: 543 x 655 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.l.f. R O'Conor
DATED: 1907
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: The Hugh Lane G. Dublin

REF. PTGS. NO: 090
TITLE: Le Loing à Montigny
SIZE: 921 x 730 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 091
TITLE: Soleil en Forêt
SIZE: 614 x 505 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 092
TITLE: Standing Nude
SIZE: 597 x 292 mm
MEDIA: Oil on board
SIGNED: b.r. O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 093
TITLE: Sitting Nude
SIZE: 648 x 483 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 094
TITLE: Lady in Summer Hat
SIZE: 653 x 543 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 095
TITLE: Self Portrait
SIZE: 705 x 546 mm
MEDIA: Oil on wood panel
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 096
TITLE: Femme à contre-jour
SIZE: 610 x 502 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: t.l.f. R O'Conor
DATED: '07?
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 097
TITLE: Reclining Female Nude
SIZE: 648 x 813 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.r.f. R O'Conor
DATED: b.r.f. '07 (?)
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private
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<td>TITLE: Nude</td>
<td>TITLE: Nude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIZE: 540 x 648 mm</td>
<td>SIZE: 455 x 645 mm</td>
</tr>
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<td>MEDIA: Oil on canvas</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIGNED: t.r.f. O'Conor</td>
<td>SIGNED: No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATED: t.r.f. 1910</td>
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<td>TITLE: Nude, back view</td>
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<td>SIZE: 464 x 578 mm</td>
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<td>TITLE: Sitting Nude</td>
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<td>SIZE: 545 x 445 mm</td>
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<td>TITLE: Nude Lying on Red Couch</td>
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<td>TITLE: Reclining Girl</td>
<td>TITLE: Nude</td>
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<td>SIZE: 502 x 610 mm</td>
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REF. PTGS. NO: 108
TITLE: Nude before Mirror
SIZE: 535 x 740 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: National G. of Ireland

REF. PTGS. NO: 109
TITLE: Nude
SIZE: 527 x 746 mm
MEDIA: Oil on board
SIGNED: b.r.f. R O'Conor
DATED: b.r.f. 1909
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 110
TITLE: A Quiet Read
SIZE: 464 x 546 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 110A
TITLE: A Quiet Read (DETAIL)
SIZE: 
MEDIA: 
SIGNED: 
DATED: 
ATELIER: 
COLLECTION: 

REF. PTGS. NO: 111
TITLE: Blue et Rose
SIZE: 610 x 502 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: t.r.f. & verso O'Conor
DATED: t.r.f. 1911
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 112
TITLE: Nude on a Couch
SIZE: 655 x 508 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 113
TITLE: Seated Nude
SIZE: 920 x 732 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 114
TITLE: The Blue Blouse
SIZE: 610 x 499 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso

REF. PTGS. NO: 115
TITLE: Portrait
SIZE: 815 x 655 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: t.l.f. O'Conor
DATED: t.l.f. 1911
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 116
TITLE: Model Reading
SIZE: 368 x 460 mm
MEDIA: Oil on wood
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private
REF. PTGS.NO: 117
TITLE: Nature Morte Azalées
SIZE: 654 x 546 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: t.r.f. & verso O'Conor
DATED: t.r.f. 1911
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 118
TITLE: Flowers
SIZE: 660 x 549 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Charleston Trust

REF. PTGS.NO: 120
TITLE: Still Life, Roses
SIZE: 464 x 654 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Browse & Darby

REF. PTGS.NO: 122
TITLE: Roses in a Vase
SIZE: 394 x 476 mm
MEDIA: Oil on board
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 124
TITLE: Pink and Yellow Flowers
SIZE: 648 x 540 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 117A
TITLE: Nature Morte Azalées (DETAIL)
SIZE:
MEDIA:
SIGNED:
DATED:
ATELIER:
COLLECTION:

REF. PTGS.NO: 119
TITLE: Still Life, flowers in a vase
SIZE: 646 x 540 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 121
TITLE: Dahlias
SIZE: 460 x 550 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.l.f. R O'Conor
DATED: b.l.f. 1908
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Browse & Darby

REF. PTGS.NO: 123
TITLE: Red Roses in a Jug set on a Napkin
SIZE: 533 x 457 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 125
TITLE: Still Life
SIZE: 600 x 730 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

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<td>Vase de Fleurs</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>127</td>
<td>Geraniums and Pivoines</td>
<td>540 x 555 mm</td>
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<td>b.r.f. O'Connor</td>
<td>b.r.f. 1913</td>
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<td>129</td>
<td>Little Boat in Harbour</td>
<td>381 x 464 mm</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<td>130</td>
<td>Landscape with Rocks</td>
<td>381 x 457 mm</td>
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<td>131</td>
<td>Haystacks</td>
<td>385 x 465 mm</td>
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<td>132</td>
<td>Le Chemin en Soleil</td>
<td>380 x 460 mm</td>
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<td>133</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>610 x 500 mm</td>
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<td>'13</td>
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<td>134</td>
<td>Trees</td>
<td>730 x 921 mm</td>
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<td>Paysage du Midi aux Tolits Rouges</td>
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<td>136</td>
<td>The Balustrade</td>
<td>813 x 997 mm</td>
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<td>b.r.f. 1913</td>
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<td>137</td>
<td>Brittany Coastline</td>
<td>655 x 540 mm</td>
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<td>140</td>
<td>Cote d'Azur, un Village</td>
<td>736 x 921 mm</td>
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<td>141</td>
<td>La Rose du Ciel, Cassis</td>
<td>736 x 921 mm</td>
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<td>b.l.f. O'Conor</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>142</td>
<td>Le Cap Canal, Cassis</td>
<td>730 x 920 mm</td>
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<td>b.l.f. O'Conor</td>
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<td>144</td>
<td>Le Drap Vert</td>
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<td>t.l.f. O'Conor</td>
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REF. PTGS. NO: 145
TITLE: Jeune Femme Assise
SIZE: 650 x 540 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: t.r.f. and verso
DATED: t.r.f. '13
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 146
TITLE: Woman in White
SIZE: 813 x 648 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 147
TITLE: Femme Assise
SIZE: 654 x 502 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.r.f. R O'Conor
DATED: b.r.f. 1908
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 148
TITLE: La Communiante
SIZE: 610 x 495 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.r.f. Roderic O'Conor
DATED: 1890
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 149
TITLE: Young Girl Reclining
SIZE: 286 x 400 mm
MEDIA: Oil on board
SIGNED: b.l.f.
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 150
TITLE: Reclining Nude
SIZE: 533 x 654 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 151
TITLE: Still Life with Three Jugs
SIZE: 470 x 553 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 152
TITLE: étude de Femme
SIZE: 546 x 654 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: t.l.f. O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 153
TITLE: Nu Allongée, endormi
SIZE: 546 x 648 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: t.r.f. O'Conor
DATED: 1919
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 154
TITLE: Nude Torso
SIZE: 553 x 464 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
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<td>TITLE:</td>
<td>Still Life</td>
<td>TITLE:</td>
<td>Still Life with Apples And Bowl</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIZE:</td>
<td>540 x 648 mm</td>
<td>SIZE:</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>TITLE:</td>
<td>Fruit in a Bowl</td>
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<td>TITLE:</td>
<td>Still Life with Bowl and Fruit</td>
<td>TITLE:</td>
<td>Nature Morte aux Poires</td>
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<td>Nature Morte aux Fruits</td>
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<td>b.r.f. O'Conor</td>
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<td><strong>TITLE:</strong></td>
<td>Rouge et Vert - DETAIL</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TITLE:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SIZE:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>TITLE: Girl Mending</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIZE: 445 x 375 mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>TITLE: Still Life - Le Compotier No. 1</td>
<td>TITLE: Still Life - Flowers, Vase, Fruit</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIZE: 654 x 813 mm</td>
<td>SIZE: 660 x 546 mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEDIA: Oil on canvas</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIGNED: b.r.f. O'Conor</td>
<td>SIGNED: b.r. &amp; l.f. O'Conor</td>
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<tr>
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<td>TITLE: Woman Reading</td>
<td>TITLE: Self Portrait</td>
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<td>SIZE: 460 x 550 mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>TITLE: Le Vase Bleu</td>
<td>TITLE: Chou-fleur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIZE: 535 x 380 mm</td>
<td>SIZE: 508 x 622 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIA: Oil on card</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIGNED: b.r.f. O'Conor</td>
<td>SIGNED: Stretcher</td>
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<td>TITLE: Chou-fleur</td>
<td>TITLE: Self Portrait</td>
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<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>TITLE: Self Portrait (DETAIL)</td>
<td>TITLE: Breton Girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIZE:</td>
<td>SIZE: 413 x 292 mm</td>
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<td>TITLE: Dark Eyed Woman</td>
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<td>SIZE: 480 x 315 mm</td>
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<td>TITLE: La Belle Rousse</td>
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<td>SIZE: 807 x 587 mm</td>
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<td>SIZE: 1003 x 812 mm</td>
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<td>TITLE: The Bathers (DETAIL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIZE: 724 x 921 mm</td>
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<td>SIZE: 654 x 540 mm</td>
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<td>TITLE: Seated Nude</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE: La Blouse Verte</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIZE: 655 x 546 mm</td>
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<td>MEDIA: Oil on canvas</td>
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REF. PTGS. NO: 192
TITLE: Nature Morte
SIZE: 558 x 651 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.1.f. O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 193
TITLE: Femme au Corsage Mauve, Assise sur Fauteuil
SIZE: 810 x 654 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: t.r.f. R O'Conor
DATED: t.r.f. '18
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 194
TITLE: Self Portrait
SIZE: 920 x 732 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.1.f. R O'Conor
DATED: b.1.f. '19
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 195
TITLE: Le Châle Bleu
SIZE: 648 x 540 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.1.f. O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 196
TITLE: Self Portrait (?) Apollinaire (?)
SIZE: 920 x 730 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Ulster Museum

REF. PTGS. NO: 197
TITLE: Reclining Nude
SIZE: 724 x 915 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: t.r.f. O'Conor
DATED: 1921
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 198
TITLE: Reclining Nude
SIZE: 457 x 546 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.r.f. O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 199
TITLE: Nude Girl
SIZE: 540 x 654 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 200
TITLE: Reclining Nude
SIZE: 520 x 635 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Ulster Museum

REF. PTGS. NO: 201
TITLE: La Jeune Fille
SIZE: 920 x 730 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: Stretcher
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private
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<tr>
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<td>Seated Nude</td>
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<td>Stretcher</td>
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<td>Private</td>
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<tr>
<td>204</td>
<td>Flowers and Books</td>
<td>604 x 730 mm</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>b.l.f. O'Conor</td>
<td>b.l.f. '23 (?)</td>
<td>Stamp verso</td>
<td>Godolphin Gallery</td>
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<td>206</td>
<td>Roses Thé</td>
<td>457 x 533 mm</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>b.r.f. O'Conor</td>
<td>b.r.f. 1923</td>
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<td>207</td>
<td>Romantic Nude Reclining on Bed</td>
<td>610 x 445 mm</td>
<td>Oil on board</td>
<td>b.r.f. O'Conor</td>
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<tr>
<td>209</td>
<td>Still Life with Flowers in Jug</td>
<td>610 x 502 mm</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>b.r.f. O'Conor</td>
<td>b.r.f. '25</td>
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<td>203</td>
<td>Woman Seated, Reading, on Green Divan</td>
<td>553 x 464 mm</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>t.r. &amp; t.l. O'Conor</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Femme à la Chemise?</td>
<td>660 x 495 mm</td>
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<td>206A</td>
<td>Roses Thé - DETAIL</td>
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<td>208</td>
<td>Still Life</td>
<td>572 x 457 mm</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
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<td>b.l.f. 1924</td>
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REF. PTGS. NO: 211
TITLE: Seated Nude
SIZE: 387 x 260 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: b.r.f.
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 212
TITLE: Portrait de Femme
SIZE: 550 x 462 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: t.r.f. O'Conor
DATED: t.r.f. '26
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 213
TITLE: Seated Nude on Couch
SIZE: 553 x 330 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: Stretcher
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 214
TITLE: Still Life Geraniums
SIZE: 368 x 456 mm
MEDIA: Oil on board
SIGNED: b.l.f. O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Godolphin Gallery

REF. PTGS. NO: 215
TITLE: Fleurs
SIZE: 330 x 225 mm
MEDIA: Oil on panel
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 216
TITLE: Flowers in White Vase
SIZE: 375 x 280 mm
MEDIA: Watercolour
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp b.r.f.
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 217
TITLE: Flowers in Yellow Vase
SIZE: 350 x 241 mm
MEDIA: Watercolour
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp b.r.f.
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 218
TITLE: Flowers in Yellow Vase
SIZE: 273 x 203 mm
MEDIA: Watercolour
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp b.r.f.
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 219
TITLE: Flowers in Vase - (Chrysanthemums)
SIZE: 368 x 533 mm
MEDIA: Watercolour
SIGNED: b.l.f. O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 220
TITLE: Still Life
SIZE: 396 x 475 mm
MEDIA: Oil on board
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private
REF. PTGS.NO: 221
TITLE: Still Life, White Carnations
SIZE: 908 x 730 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 222
TITLE: Margueritas
SIZE: 810 x 540 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: t.r.f. O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 223
TITLE: Flowers in a Vase
SIZE: 406 x 330 mm
MEDIA: Oil on wood panel
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp b.r.f.
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 224
TITLE: Portrait of a Lady
SIZE: 355 x 254 mm
MEDIA: Oil on paper
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 225
TITLE: Flowers in a Vase
SIZE: 406 x 330 mm
MEDIA: Oil on wood panel
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 226
TITLE: Still Life with Flowers
SIZE: 457 x 553 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 227
TITLE: Self Portrait
SIZE: 451 x 381 mm
MEDIA: Oil on board
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 228
TITLE: Flowers in a White Mug
SIZE: 445 x 355 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 229
TITLE: Bowl of Fruit
SIZE: 324 x 413 mm
MEDIA: Oil on wood panel
SIGNED: t.r.f. O'Conor
DATED: t.r.f. 1926
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 230
TITLE: Self Portrait
SIZE: 550 x 381 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: t.l.f. O'Conor
DATED: t.l.f. '27
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Smith College Museum
REF. PTGS. NO: 231
TITLE: Jug of Flowers
(Soucis) Marigolds
SIZE: 457 x 381 mm
MEDIA: Oil on wood panel
SIGNED: t.1.f. O'Conor
DATED: t.1.f. '27
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 232
TITLE: Still Life with Fruit and Jug
SIZE: 934 x 730 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.1.f. O'Conor
DATED: b.1.f. '27
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Pym's Gallery, London

REF. PTGS. NO: 233
TITLE: Still Life with Bread
SIZE: 915 x 730 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.r.f. O'Conor
DATED: b.r.f. '27
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 234
TITLE: Still Life with Carnations
SIZE: 553 x 648 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 235
TITLE: Fish
SIZE: 457 x 553 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.1.f. R O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 236
TITLE: Symphonie en Vert Le Bocal
SIZE: 648 x 540 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: b.1.f. O'Conor
DATED: '28
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 237
TITLE: Seated Woman
SIZE: 457 x 381 mm
MEDIA: Oil on card
SIGNED: t.r.f. R O'Conor (?)
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 238
TITLE: Girl in Red Hat
SIZE: 650 x 540 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 239
TITLE: Agriculteurs et Meule de Foin
SIZE: 327 x 410 mm
MEDIA: Oil on board
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS. NO: 240
TITLE: Landscape
SIZE: 280 x 241 mm
MEDIA: Oil on paper
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private
**REF. PTGS.NO: 241**

**TITLE:** Seated Woman in Frilled Dress  
**SIZE:** 648 x 540 mm  
**MEDIA:** Oil on canvas  
**SIGNED:** No  
**DATED:** No  
**ATELIER:** Stamp verso  
**COLLECTION:** Private

**REF. PTGS.NO: 242**

**TITLE:** The Mulatto Girl  
**SIZE:** 648 x 540 mm  
**MEDIA:** Oil on canvas  
**SIGNED:** b.r.f. O'Conor  
**DATED:** b.r.f. '30  
**ATELIER:** Stamp verso  
**COLLECTION:** Private

**REF. PTGS.NO: 243**

**TITLE:** L'abbaye  
**SIZE:** 381 x 464 mm  
**MEDIA:** Oil on card  
**SIGNED:** Verso Roderic O'Connor  
**DATED:** 1932  
**ATELIER:** No  
**COLLECTION:** Private

**REF. PTGS.NO: 244**

**TITLE:** Church  
**SIZE:** 457 x 381 mm  
**MEDIA:** Oil on card  
**SIGNED:** No  
**DATED:** No  
**ATELIER:** Verso  
**COLLECTION:** Private

**REF. PTGS.NO: 245**

**TITLE:** Landscape with two Haystacks  
**SIZE:** 381 x 457 mm  
**MEDIA:** Oil on board  
**SIGNED:** No  
**DATED:** No  
**ATELIER:** No  
**COLLECTION:** Private

**REF. PTGS.NO: 246**

**TITLE:** Landscape and Sea  
**SIZE:** 380 x 360 mm  
**MEDIA:** Oil on canvas  
**SIGNED:** Stretcher R O'Connor  
**DATED:** No  
**ATELIER:** No  
**COLLECTION:** Private

**REF. PTGS.NO: 247**

**TITLE:** Paysage Rose  
**SIZE:** 380 x 360 mm  
**MEDIA:** Oil on canvas  
**SIGNED:** Stretcher R O'Connor  
**DATED:** No  
**ATELIER:** No  
**COLLECTION:** Private

**REF. PTGS.NO: 248**

**TITLE:** The Orchard  
**SIZE:** 381 x 457 mm  
**MEDIA:** Oil on cardboard  
**SIGNED:** Verso Roderic O'Connor  
**DATED:** Verso 1935  
**ATELIER:** No  
**COLLECTION:** Private

**REF. PTGS.NO: 249**

**TITLE:** Torremolinos  
**SIZE:** 380 x 360 mm  
**MEDIA:** Oil on card  
**SIGNED:** Verso Roderic O'Connor  
**DATED:** Verso 1935  
**ATELIER:** No  
**COLLECTION:** Private
REF. PTGS.NO: 251
TITLE: Landscape
SIZE: 155 x 240 mm
MEDIA: Oil on wood
SIGNED: Verso O'Conor
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 252
TITLE: Paysage au Ruisseau
SIZE: 540 x 464 mm
MEDIA: Oil on canvas
SIGNED: No
DATED: No
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 253
TITLE: Landscape with trees and Pond
SIZE: 381 x 464 mm
MEDIA: Oil on board
SIGNED: Verso Roderic O'Conor
DATED: Verso 1935
ATELIER: Stamp verso
COLLECTION: Private

REF. PTGS.NO: 254
TITLE: Landscape
SIZE: 135 x 195 mm
MEDIA: Oil on wood
SIGNED: No
DATED: Verso 1940
ATELIER: No
COLLECTION: Private
APPENDIX IV

EXHIBITIONS

Roderic O'Conor

(1883 - 1935)

List of Exhibitions in which Roderic O'Conor exhibited during his lifetime
APPENDIX IV

RODERIC O'CONOR

List of Exhibitions (1883-1935)

1883
Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin
R.A. O'Connor
25 Pembroke Road

74. Sylvan Quiet £5.0.0.
271. Wild Rabbit £5.0.0.

1884
Royal Dublin Society
Roderic O'Connor
1 Longueuenue Straat, Anvers

Preparing for the carnival - seated girl
(Awarded Taylor Prize, £15.0.0)

1885
Royal Hibernian Academy,

R.A. O'Connor
(no address listed)

205. Sunny day in June £10.0.0.
331. Wet weather £25.0.0.
349. Breakers £10.0.0.
552. A quiet spot £10.0.0.

1888
Paris Salon

O'Connor, Roderic
4 rue Darcet, Paris

1930. Portrait de M. Paul Vojelius

1889
Paris Salon

O'Connor, Roderic
Hotel Laurent, Grez

2029. Le rouet

1889
Salon des Indépendants

O'Connor, Roderic, Born at Roscommon (Ireland)
Hotel Laurent, Grez, par Nemours (Seine-et-Marne)

187. Le pont de Grez
188. Groupe de peupliers, effet de soleil

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1890 Salon des Indépendants

O’Conor, Roderic, born at Roscommon, Ireland
Hôtel Beauséjour à Grez, par Nemours (Seine-et-Marne)

559. Nature morte
560. La mare gelée
561. La mare, effet de soleil, midi
562. Le matin au bord de Loing
563. Chemin menant à Grez
564. Femme écalant des haricots
565. La lisière du bois
566. Tête de jeune paysan
567. Le pont de Grez
568. Le moulin du Roy

1891 New English Art Club

O’Conor, Roderic
C/o Ernest Parton, 35 Acacia Road, Regent’s Park, London

38. An old French peasant

1892 Salon des Indépendants

O’Conor, Roderic, Born at Roscommon in Ireland
Hotel Gloanec, Pont-Aven

843. En Bretagne No.1
844. En Bretagne No.2
845. En Bretagne No.3
846. En Bretagne No.4
847. En Bretagne No.5
848. Nature morte 1
849. Nature morte 2
850. Nature morte 3

1893 Salon des Indépendants

O’Conor, Roderic, Born at Roscommon (Ireland)
Pont-Aven, Finistere

857. Paysage jaune
958. Ombres
959. La boule verte
960. Bretonne
961. Paysage
962. Gamin

1894 Exposition des peintres Impressionnistes et Symbolistes
Le Barc de Boutteville, 6e Exposition, March

O’Conor, Roderic
(no address listed)
37. La boule verte
38. Paysage jaune
39. Ombres
40. Vieille femme
41. Paysage
42. Jeune paysan

1894 Exposition des peintres Impressionnistes et Symbolistes
Le Barc de Boutteville, 7e Exposition, July

O’Conor, Roderic
(no address listed)
42. Paysage
43. Paysage
44. Paysage
45. Paysage

1894 Exposition des peintres Impressionnistes et Symbolistes
Le Barc de Boutteville, 8e Exposition, November

O’Conor, Roderic
(no address listed)
38. Paysage
39. Paysage

1895 Exposition des peintres Impressionnistes et Symbolistes
Le Barc de Boutteville, 10e Exposition, September

O’Conor, Roderic
(no address listed)
83. Un sentier
84. Un sentier
85. Nature morte

1898 La Libre Esthétique, Brussels

Roderic O’Conor,
Hotel Lecadre, Rochefort-en-Terre (Morbihan)

283. Paysage 1,000 frs.
284. Fleurs 500 frs.
285. Tête de jeune fille 500 frs.
286. A la fenêtre 500 frs.
287. Poires 500 frs.

1903 Salon des Indépendants

O’Conor (Roderic)
Hôtel des Voyageurs, Pont-Aven, Finistère

1877. Sur la côte (Finistère)
1878. Le gué, Montigny-sur-Loing
1879. La vague
1880. Lezaven, la ferme de Finistère

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1881. Pleine mer
1882. Remous
1883. Fruits

1903
Salon d'Automne

O'Connor, Roderic, Anglais (sic)
Pont-Aven, Finistère

421. Montigny-sur-Loing paysage
422. Jeune Bretonne
423. Nature morte

1904
Exhibition of Works by Irish Painters, Guildhall, London 1904

23. Une jeune Bretonne

Roderick (sic) O'Conor
Canvas 36 x 29
Lent by the artist

1904
Salon des Indépendants

O'Connor (Roderic) né en irlande
Hotel des Voyageurs, Pont-Aven, Finistère

1781. Les quatres poires
1782. Tête d'homme
1783. Fruits et faience
1784. Moulin de Montigny
1785. Chrysanthèmes et roses de Noël
1786. La fille qui rit

1905
Salon d'Automne

O'Connor,(sic) Roderic, born in Roscommon, Ireland
102 rue du Cherche-Midi

950bis Loing à Montigny

1905
La Libre Esthétique, Brussels

Roderic O'Connor,
102 rue du Cherche-Midi, Paris

79. La vague 120x100, Prix 1500 frs.
80. La ferme de Lezaven, Pont-Aven 120x100, Prix 1500 frs.
81. Fruits 085x075, Prix 600 frs.
82. Faïences 085x075, Prix 600 frs.

1905
Salon des Indépendants

O'Conor, Roderic, Né en irlande
102 rue du Cherche-Midi

3097. Le Loing à Montigny
3098. Repos
3099. étude
3100. Temp couvert
3101. Brise
3102. Marée montante
3103. Coucher de soleil
3104. Ombres mouvantes

1905
Salon d'Automne

O'Connor, Roderic, Born in Ireland
102 rue du Cherche-Midi

1175. Femme nue
1176. étude
1177. Approche de Lezaven, Pont-Aven
1178. Chrysanthèmes
1179. Bouquet

1906
Salon des Indépendants

O'Connor, Roderic, Born in Ireland
102 rue du Cherche-Midi, Paris

3732. Boulevard Raspail
3733. Marée montante
3734. Vue de Pont-Aven
3735. Le barrage, à Montigny
3736. Un gué sur le Loing
3737. Le Loing à Montigny
3738. Le soir à Montigny

1906
Salon d'Automne

O'Connor, Roderic
102 rue du Cherche-Midi, Paris

1274. Roses
1275. Fruits

1907
Salon des Indépendants

O'Connor, Roderic, born in Ireland
102 rue du Cherche-Midi, Paris

3686. Jeune femme
3687. Pommes et oranges
3688. Soir, Bretagne
3689. Fleurs

1908
Salon d'Automne

O'Connor, Roderic, born at Roscommon, Ireland. English (sic)
102 rue du Cherche-Midi, Paris

1547. La toilette
1548. Dahlias
1549. Glacieuls
1908  Salon des Indépendants
O'Connor, Roderic. Born in Ireland  
102 rue du Cherche-Midi

4496. La fenêtre
4497. Toilette
4498. Nature morte
4499. Femme nue

1908  Allied Artists Association, Albert Hall, London
O'Connor, Roderic  
102 rue du Cherche-Midi, Paris

889. Ferme près de Pont-Aven  £50
890. La toilette  £30
891. Fruits  £30
892. Moulin à Montigny  £30
893. Remous  £30

1909  Salon d'Automne
O'Connor, Roderic  
102 rue du Cherche-Midi, Paris

1317. La glace
1318. Le drap blanc
1319. étude
1320. La fenêtre
1321. Nature morte
1322. Le paravent vert

1910  Salon d'Automne
O'Connor, Roderic  
102 rue du Cherche-Midi, Paris

894. Nature morte
895. Nature morte

1911  Salon d'Automne
O'Connor, Roderic  
102 rue du Cherche-Midi, Paris

1157. Femme couchée
1158. Femme au livre vert
1159. Le modèle
1160. Nature morte, azalées
1161. Nature morte, grenades

1912  Salon d'Automne
O'Connor, Roderic  
102 rue du Cherche-Midi

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1282. Dahlias
1283. étude

1913
Salon d'Automne

O'Connor, Roderic
102 rue du Cherche-Midi

1593. Le Cap Canail (Cassis)
1594. La rose du ciel (Cassis)
1595. L'arène (Cassis)
1596. Jeune femme assise
1597. Iris
1598. Le drap vert

1919
Salon d'Automne

O'Connor, Roderic
(no address listed)

1414. La glace
1415. Femme au drap rouge
1416. Le jardin
1417. Rouge et vert
1418. La Rousse
1419. Fruits
1920 (sic) étude de femme
1421. Femme
1422. Chrysanthèmes

1920
Salon d'Automne

O'Connor, Roderic
(no address listed)

1657. Le compotier
1658. La blouse verte
1659. Fleurs sur une chaise
1660. Bouquet
1661. Le vase bleu

1921
Salon d'Automne

O'Connor, Roderic
(no address listed)

1776. Le peintre
1777. Nature morte
1778. Le châle bleu
1779. Nature morte
1780. Nature morte

1922
Salon d'Automne

O'Connor, Roderic
(no address listed)
1822. Fleurs
1823. Fruits

1923
Salon d'Automne

O'Connor, Roderic
1524. Femme nue 3,000frs.
1525. Nature morte (La bouteille) 1,200frs.
1526. Nature morte (Le compotier) 1,200frs.
1527. Tête de femme 750frs.
1528. Roses 750frs.

1923
Salon des Tuileries

O'Connor, Roderic Irlandais
102 rue du Cherche-Midi, Paris

794. Roses thé
795. Femme à la Chemise
796. Le coussin vert
798. Femme au bonnet

1924
Salon d'Automne

O'Connor, Roderic
(no address listed)

1416. Nu
1417. Fruits

1924
Salon des Tuileries

O'Connor, Roderic Irlandais
102 rue du Cherche-Midi

1157. Nu (appartient à M.L.)
1158. Nature morte
1159. Nature morte

1925
Salon d'Automne

O'Connor, Roderic né à Roscommon (Irlande) Irlandais
102 rue du Cherche-Midi

1026. Nu
1027. Fleurs

1925
Salon des Tuileries

O'Connor, Roderic Irlandais
102 rue du Cherche-Midi

117. Nature morte
118. Chrysanthèmes
119. Fleurs
120. Oignons
1926 Salon d'Automne
O'Conor, Roderic
(no address listed)
1713. Dormeuse

1927 Salon d'Automne
O'Conor, Roderic
(no address listed)
1643. Le divan
1644. Le pot chinois

1927 Salon des Tuileries
O'Connor (sic), Roderic
102 rue du Cherche-Midi
1725. Nature morte
1726. Nature morte
1727. Nature morte
1728. Nature morte
1729. Peinture

1927 Exposition d'œuvres d'artistes Britanniques, Galerie Georges Petit


'The artists whose works were shown included Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, John, Rodric (sic) O'Conor, Orpen, W. Roberts, Shannon, Steer, Edward Wolfe and E.H. Kennington'

1928 Salon des Tuileries
O'Conor, Roderic
102 rue du Cherche-Midi
2149. Fille au gilet rouge

1928 'Artistas Britannicos', Museo Nationale, Buenos Aires
183. La Bandera £100
184. Jardin en Cassis £100

1928 Salon d'Automne
O'Conor, Roderic
(no address given)
1508. Jeune fille

1929 Salon d'Automne

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O’Conor, Roderic
102 rue du Cherche-Midi

1125. Dormeuse

1930
Salon des Tuileries
O’Conor, Roderic
102 rue du Cherche-Midi

2107. Peinture
2108. Peinture
2109. Peinture
2110. Peinture
2111. Peinture

1930
Salon d’Automne
O’Conor, Roderic
102 rue du Cherche-Midi

1571. La toilette

1930
Exposition d’Art Irlandais, Musée d’Art Ancien, Brussels
Roderic O’Connor(sic)
102 rue du Cherche-Midi

124. Une jeune Bretonne
(Prête par le <<Municipal Gallery of Modern Art>> Dublin)

1931
Salon d’Automne
O’Conor, Roderic
(no address given)

1497. Femme nue

1932
Salon d’Automne
O’Conor, Roderic
(no address given)

1302. Le drap virdien
1303. Le divan
1304. La jeune Roumaine
1305. Fruits au rideau bleu

1934
Salon d’Automne
O’Conor, Roderic
(no address given)

1026. Fleurs
1027. Fleurs
1935  Salon d'Automne

O'Connor, Roderic
10 rue Jean Bart

1171. Femme nue
The bibliography is divided into primary and secondary sources. The former category is sub-divided into two parts, namely (i) MSS, Private Papers, Letters and Oral Evidence; (ii) Catalogues of Exhibitions in which Roderic O'Conor exhibited during his lifetime. The second category is sub-divided into five parts, namely (i) Catalogues of Exhibitions - general list; (ii) Articles in Periodicals, Journals and Reviews; (iii) Works cited in the text; (iv) General Works; (v) Works of Reference.

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MSS, Private papers, letters and oral evidence
(Unless otherwise stated, all letters were addressed to the author)

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Witness (L), France. Private papers, documents, memorabilia, and miscellaneous letters of Roderic O'Conor and his friends. Interviews of 6 July 1982, 24 July 1983

Witness (R), Genève, Switzerland. Interview of 19 July 1981

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(ii) Catalogues of Exhibitions in which Roderic O'Conor exhibited during his lifetime. See also list of individual works exhibited - Appendix IV

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Exhibition Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1883</td>
<td>Royal Hibernian Academy of Arts, Annual Exhibition, Dublin</td>
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<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>Annual Exhibition, Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Salon Exhibition, Paris</td>
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<tr>
<td>1889-1890</td>
<td>Salon des Indépendants, Annual Exhibitions, Paris</td>
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<tr>
<td>1892-1893</td>
<td>Annual Exhibitions, Paris</td>
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<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>New English Art Club, Annual Exhibition, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Expositions des Peintres Impressionnistes et Symbolistes, Galerie le Barc de Boutteville, Paris 6e, 7e, 8e, Expositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>10e Exposition</td>
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<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>La Libre Esthétique, Brussels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903-08</td>
<td>Annual Exhibitions, Salon des Indépendants, Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903-1932</td>
<td>Salon d'Automne, Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Exhibition of works by Irish painters, The Guildhall, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>La Libre Esthétique, Brussels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Allied Artists Association, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>American Art Association, Exposition d'été, Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923-28</td>
<td>Salon des Tuileries, Paris</td>
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<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Exposition d'Oeuvres d'Artistes Britanniques, Galeries Georges Petit, Paris</td>
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<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Artistas Britanicos, Buenos Aires</td>
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<td>1930</td>
<td>Exposition Art Irlandais, Musée d'Art Ancien, Brussels</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Salon des Tuileries, Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934-35</td>
<td>Salon d'Automne, Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td><em>Gauguin et le Groupe de Pont-Aven</em>, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Quimper</td>
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<td>1956</td>
<td><em>Vente O'Conor</em>, Hôtel Drouot, Paris</td>
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<td>1957</td>
<td><em>Two Masters of Colour, Matthew Smith and Roderic O'Conor</em>, Roland, Browse, and Delbanco Gallery, London</td>
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<td>1958</td>
<td><em>Gauguin og Hans Venner</em>, Winkel and Magnussen, Copenhagen</td>
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<td>1961</td>
<td><em>Hommage à Sérusier et aux Peintres du Groupe de Pont-Aven</em>, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Quimper</td>
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<td>1964</td>
<td><em>La Bretagne</em>, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Saint Denis</td>
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<td>1965</td>
<td><em>Gauguin et ses Amis</em>, Musée de Pont-Aven, Pont-Aven</td>
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<td>1966</td>
<td><em>Roderic O'Conor</em>, Roland, Browse, and Delbanco Gallery, London</td>
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<td>1970</td>
<td><em>Matthew Smith - Roderic O'Conor</em>, Galerie David Jones, Sydney</td>
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<td>1971</td>
<td><em>Sutton, D. Gauguin and the Pont-Aven Group</em>, Tate Gallery, Arts Council Great Britain</td>
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<td>1974</td>
<td><em>Roderic O'Conor, a selection of his best works</em>, Roland, Browse, and Delbanco Gallery, London</td>
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<td>1974</td>
<td><em>Aspects of Irish Art</em>, Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, Toledo Museum of Art, St. Louis Art Museum, USA</td>
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