



Artwork of the Month

Tony O'Malley (Born Co. Kilkenny, 1913-2003)
Van Gogh, Winter (from a Dream), 1961
 Oil on board, 50 x 69 cm
 Bought from the artist, 1991

Campus Art begins the academic year with a series of features on artworks from *The Art of Looking*, an art pack produced by the Glucksman, to stimulate interest in the visual arts and raise awareness of the UCC Art Collection. Following the launch of the art pack in the Glucksman this month by Noel Keeley, Human Resources Manager, Musgrave Group, a complimentary copy of *The Art of Looking* was sent out to every school in Munster. This was made possible by generous support from SuperValu Kids in Action and Bridging the Gap, UCC, and highlights the relevance of the UCC Art Collection as a teaching resource.

This bleak winter landscape was inspired by a dream O'Malley had about the artist Vincent Van Gogh (1853 - 90), in which Van Gogh was trapped by constrictive walls, until the pursuit of painting provided him with the necessary release. O'Malley's landscapes can be interpreted as expressions of his own state of mind. Here, the solitary figure and winter setting speak of desolation and despair. The head of Van Gogh closely resembles self-portraits by O'Malley, demonstrating his identification with the painter.

Both Van Gogh and O'Malley came to painting late in life; O'Malley at the age of forty-five, after ill-health prompted him to take early retirement from the bank.

O'Malley's struggle with tuberculosis meant he spent much of his early adult life in convalescence after a series of lung operations. This time of confinement, spent in a sanatorium and small rural Irish towns, heightened his awareness of the sense of isolation and anguish, which the artist he so revered, Van Gogh, had suffered during his mental illness. By the time O'Malley had made this work his dream of a release had become a reality. *Van Gogh, Winter (from a Dream)* was made after he moved to the artists' colony of St Ives, Cornwall, in 1960, where he lived for 30 years. O'Malley was very affected by the climate in which he worked and his regular winter visits to the Bahamas in the 1970s and 80s are reflected in a considerable brightening of the palette. This period is represented in the UCC Art Collection by a work titled *Junkanoo-Nassau-Bahamas* from 1986.

Nora Hickey