



History of the collection

In the mid-1950s, Jack B. Yeats donated his painting, *Leaving the Far Point*, to Sligo Corporation. The painting is of the artist, his wife and uncle walking in Rosses Point. This significant work is the beginning of Sligo's Municipal Art Collection. The following year, Sligo County Librarian Nora Niland established the Sligo County Museum and was instrumental in founding the Yeats Summer School in 1960. For the initial Summer School she borrowed five of Jack B. Yeats' paintings and, shortly thereafter, raised the necessary funds to purchase them. These works, *The Funeral of Harry Boland*, *Communicating with Prisoners*, *An Island Funeral*, along with the watercolours, *The Stargazer*, and *Market Day* form the core of the collection.

The collection grew rapidly with significant gifts from James A. Healy of New York. Works by Jack B. Yeats were included in these donations as well as those of his father John B. Yeats. Nora Niland campaigned tirelessly on behalf of the collection throughout her tenure as County Librarian. Through public subscription, private donations, and assistance from the Arts Council, the Friends of the National Galleries of Ireland and the Haverty Trust, works by many significant Irish artists were acquired for the collection. They include Paul Henry, Sean Keating, Estella Solomons, Louis Le Brocquy, Mary Swanzy, as well as additional works by John B. and Jack B. Yeats, and other notable artists. In recent years, works by contemporary Irish artists have been acquired for the collection including those by McSweeney, Miller, Cooke.

The Gallery where the collection had been exhibited was renamed the Niland Gallery on the tenth anniversary of Nora Niland's death (d. 1988), and in 2001 it was transferred to the Model Arts and Niland Gallery.