



Searching for the New Jerusalem

The Art of William Burges

Lewis Glucksman Gallery, Gallery 2
until 23 March 2014

Curated by Richard Wood

Searching for the New Jerusalem presents the original preparatory drawings designed by the Victorian architect William Burges (1827-1881) for Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral in Cork. Commissioned to rebuild the Cathedral in 1863, Burges would go on to design the architecture, stained glass, statuary, mosaics and furniture of the building.

The exhibition captures Burges's vivid depictions of biblical stories, from the Days of Creation to the story of Cain and Abel to the betrayal and resurrection of Christ. Following the layout that Burges devised for the Cathedral, and culminating in a spectacular group of large-scale figures including St. John the Baptist, the Virgin Mary and Our Lord as King, **Searching for the New Jerusalem** reveals a unique artistic and architectural vision.

Several significant drawings by William Burges have been conserved for the exhibition, including the *Days of Creation* circulating around *Christ in Glory*, a sequence of images designed for the upper west nave of the Cathedral. Another series of works portray stories such as the *Judgement of Solomon* and the *Vision of Zechariah*, while the exhibition culminates in a spectacular display of Burges' large-scale triptych of *St. John the Evangelist*, *Blessed Virgin Mary* and *Our Lord as King*.

The exhibition also features a selection of the original plaster maquettes designed for the statuary on the façade of the Cathedral. Like his drawings, they reveal the processes that Burges undertook in delivering the commission. The traces of the artist's hand – in shaping sculptural materials, tracing out lines in pencil and making alterations to the images – is evident throughout the exhibition.

Searching for the New Jerusalem has been supported by Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral and by private philanthropy through the Cork University Foundation. The cartoons of William Burges have been conserved and stored with the support of Special Collections, Boole Library, University College Cork.

Notes on William Burges and the artworks

One of Cork's most distinctive landmarks, St Fin Barre's Cathedral is the diocesan cathedral of the Church of Ireland and is located in one of the oldest areas of the city.

William Burges's layout for the stained glass windows at Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral follows the structure of the Old and New Testaments, with different books represented in the nave, transept and ambulatory sections of the building.

The Cathedral's ground plan is the shape of a cross, with its head at the eastern end. Thus the congregation faces towards the rising sun, a symbol of renewed life brought by Christ's entry to the world.

Though the designs of the cartoons and sculptures are by William Burges himself, the execution of them is by Horatio Lonsdale, except for three by Frederick Weekes and Thomas Nicholls respectively.

Such 'cartoons' are normally drawn in charcoal and are destroyed following their use, so the preservation of Burges' preparatory works is particularly unusual.

William Burges died in 1881 knowing that his commission would not be finished in every respect during his lifetime. However, he left a book of designs for furniture, fittings and paintwork, so that 'future piety' could carry the work to completion.

Images of all the cartoons in the exhibition are available. It is possible to arrange press interviews with the curator.

For further discussion of the exhibition, press images or more detailed information, please contact:

**Chris Clarke, Senior Curator, c.clarke@ucc.ie or +353 21 4901821
Lewis Glucksman Gallery, University College Cork, Ireland.**

Notes on events in the exhibition

The Lewis Glucksman Gallery makes great art available to everyone. A wide range of events and activities are programmed for all abilities throughout the exhibition run.

You can view the entire season in our seasonal brochure at <http://glucksman.org/CurrentBrochure.pdf>

For an expert audience:

In Detail: Talk by Dr. Damian Bracken, School of History, UCC

1pm – 2pm, Thursday 6 March 2014

<http://www.glucksman.org/indetail.html>

To discover William Burges' stained glass:

Art Pilgrimage: Guided tour of exhibition and Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral

1pm – 3pm, Friday 7 March 2014

To introduce young people to art:

Family Sundays: making art together

3pm – 4pm, Sundays throughout exhibition run <http://www.glucksman.org/familysundays.html>