

AccessionIndex: TCD-SCSS-V.20180312.002

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Accession By: Dr.Brian Coghlan

Object name: Portrait of Prof.John Gabriel Byrne

Vintage: 2005

Synopsis: Trinity College Dublin, portrait by Atsushi Kaga.

Description:

John Gabriel Byrne founded and led the Department of Computer Science, Trinity College Dublin, during its first 40 years of rapid development, and very substantially influenced the people who participated in the evolution of a national industry that experienced dramatic developments over that time.

After Prof.Byrne's retirement, a committee led by Dr.Jeremy Jones, following a recommendation by Prof.Marie Redmond, selected the up-and-coming (but now well-known) Atsushi Kaga to paint Prof.Byrne's portrait. Atsushi is a Japanese artist who currently lives and works in Ireland [2], but was a student at National College of Art and Design at the time.

This portrait of Prof.J.G.Byrne was completed in 2005. Prof.Byrne is shown seated at the western end of the central table in the Senior Common Room in Trinity College Dublin, where he often sat when visiting the Common Room. The artist has made it quite warm overall colour-wise, as opposed to a more conventional dark background, and especially well captured Prof.Byrne's wry smile. The portrait is presently hung in the O'Reilly Institute close by his office there.

In the artist's own words [3]:

It is quite an old painting for me. And I am still a painter, but not a portrait painter. So I feel like I am reviewing someone else's painting. And it is not a bad job at all by a young painter. The painting made me smile.

It was long time ago. So my memory is not certain. But this is how I recall. The location of the portrait is somewhere in Trinity College, because his office was too small, or I found it was not so suitable. So his colleague who commissioned me suggested the location. It is a very nice location. Because it goes with his green jacket, and it also shows subtly he is in academia. And his friend told me that the jacket was sort of his trademark. You would often find him with the jacket and some papers (a newspaper) stuck in the pocket of his jacket. I included this worn out pocket. And a gadget behind his hands was something from his office. I think it is an old calculator or something, which shows the field of his study. It is standard practice to use objects and garments to show the sitter's personality and his place in the society.

There is a very small artistic play in it, which is not really to do with the sitter (painters do this sometimes). I painted the bottom of a quite old fashioned dark portrait on the wall. It is a contrast to the actual rather brighter painting.

I think I made few sketches and took pictures on one or two sittings, then I painted it with oil in my studio.

The 'old calculator' is a FACIT mechanical calculator, see elsewhere in this catalog.

The homepage for this catalog is at: <https://www.scss.tcd.ie/SCSSTreasuresCatalog/>
 Click 'Accession Index' (1st column listed) for related folder, or 'About' for further guidance. Some of the items below may be more properly part of other categories of this catalog, but are listed here for convenience.

Accession Index	Object with Identification
TCD-SCSS-V.20180312.002	Portrait of Prof.John Gabriel Byrne, Trinity College Dublin, portrait by Atsushi Kaga, 2005
TCD-SCSS-V.20180312.001	Memorium and Obituaries for Prof.J.G.Byrne, born: 25-Jul-1933, died: 16-Apr-2016, see: https://scss.tcd.ie/SCSSTreasuresCatalog/Prof-John-Gabriel-Byrne-1933-2016.pdf
TCD-SCSS-V.20160929.001	Nine interviews of Prof.J.G.Byrne, TCD, O'Keefe, Maurice & Jane, 'Irish Life and Lore, Trinity College Dublin, John Byrne', CD no.55, 68:50 mins, MPEG 160kbps, c.2012.
TCD-SCSS-T.yyyymmdd.xx	FACIT mechanical calculator. <i>[catalog entry yet to be added]</i>
TCD-SCSS-V.20180409.001	Prof.Jane Grimson, Memorial Discourse on Prof.J.G.Byrne presented on Trinity Monday, 2018.
TCD-SCSS-V.20171231.001	Ed: Chris Horn, Professor John Byrne: Reminiscences: Father of Computing in Ireland, 2017. ISBN-10: 1520696841, ISBN-13: 978 1520696843.
TCD-SCSS-V.20190831.001	Patricia Baker, Radio Documentary 'The Professor - Professor Byrne'. Audio Documentary by Patricia Baker on the life of Professor John Gabriel Byrne. Electronic audio file in MPEG-3 format on CD and online (Audio: 192kbps, 44kHz).
TCD-SCSS-V.20181005.003	Student video presentation about Professor John Gabriel Byrne, 2018, literature: Video made by one team in the 2018 Junior Freshman class asked to make videos on the history of computing.
TCD-SCSS-X.20180907.002	Prof.J.G.Byrne, Computerisation of the TCD Library 1872 Printed Catalogue.
TCD-SCSS-X.20121208.007	Richardson's Fantastic Forecast Factory. Painting of imaginary prediction factory, based on Ch.11 of Richardson's 'Weather Prediction by Numerical Process', ink and water colour, commissioned and owned by Prof.J.G.Byrne, painted by and Copyright of Stephen Conlin, 1986.
TCD-SCSS-X.20121208.004	History of the Department of Computer Science, Trinity College Dublin. The evolution of computer science as reflected in the long line of machines used by the department since its inception, c.1969

Many thanks to Tom Kearney for the photographs.

References:

1. Trinity College Dublin, *Professor John Gabriel Byrne 1933-2016, MA, BAI, PhD, DIC, CEng. MIEI, FICS, MBCS, SFTCD*, see:
<https://scss.tcd.ie/SCSSTreasuresCatalog/Prof-John-Gabriel-Byrne-1933-2016.pdf>
Last browsed to on 12-Mar-2018.
2. Atsushi Kaga, see:
<http://www.atsushikaga.com/>
Last browsed to on 12-Mar-2018.
3. Atsushi Kaga, *personal communication by email*, 17-Mar-2018.



PROFESSOR JOHN G. BYRNE
HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE
1969 - 2001

Figure 1: Portrait of Professor John Gabriel Byrne by Atsushi Kaga