

Podcast Transcript: Reflecting on George Wallace's Life

Introduction 0:01

You're listening to the National Gallery of Ireland podcast. This special podcast was recorded to mark our exhibition *George Wallace: Reflections on Life*. This is an exhibition of graphic work by the Irish Canadian artist George Wallace.

In this recording Kit Wallace the artist's son, in conversation with Anne Hodge, Curator of Prints and Drawings at the National Gallery of Ireland, gives a fascinating insight into his father's life, and how certain themes are manifested in his work. Anne and Kit also discuss the Wallace family's gift of over 250 prints and drawings presented to the Gallery in 2016.

Anne Hodge 0:43

The genesis of this exhibition is rooted in the wonderful gift of over 250 prints and drawings, plus archival material, which the Wallace family presented to the National Gallery of Ireland in 2016.

Kit I wonder, can you explain briefly why the family decided to give this large body of work, which spans the whole of your father's career to Ireland's national collection?

Kit Wallace 1:08

Yes, well, going back a little bit, my father died in 2009. And about a year after that I received a shipment of all of his works on paper that had been left in the estate. And that amounted to probably over 1000 prints of various kinds of drawings, as well as some paintings, and various miscellaneous things that came out of his studio. So that left, my siblings, my sister and brother and I, with a bit of a dilemma about what to do with all this art.

My brother was taking care of several of the sculptures that my father had left behind; these would be life size welded steel pieces, as well as some bronze sculpture. Anne, my sister, was taking care of his own personal print collection. So we had various discussions about this and wondered whether a gallery, a public gallery, might be interested in a donation of some of the work.

And again, just going back, he wasn't very well known in Canada, and certainly not at all in Europe, to my knowledge. He didn't exhibit a great deal during his lifetime because he worked as a teacher and a professor of art. So he hadn't had to rely on the commercialization of his art to make a living.

Anyway, my brother and I had wondered about whether Tate St Ives would be interested in looking at some of the early work that he did in Falmouth, specifically about the St Austell claypit etchings.

Anne Hodge 3:28

Yes, we might talk a little bit in more detail later about those works.

Kit Wallace 3:32

Yes. So anyway, I was invited to go to a sailing event on Lough Derg in 2015. And at the last minute, I decided to bring along a small portfolio of some of his prints and made contact with the National Gallery in Ireland and I was able to meet with Niamh MacNally, and then yourself, and I think the work was very well received at that point.

Anne Hodge 4:13

It certainly was; I remember the day very well, when you opened up this folder and these treasures appeared, amazing prints, that were really exciting. Immediately, I could see the quality and just the imagination; it was all there.

Kit Wallace 4:30

Well, it was so wonderful to get that reception and a little unexpected too. But I had had this feeling - I visited the National Gallery of Ireland a couple of years before that - and thought that this might actually be a very good place for some fist work.

Anne Hodge 4:54

Great, because of course, George was Irish. He was born in Sandycove, isn't that correct?

Kit Wallace 5:01

He was.

Anne Hodge 5:01

Yeah. Did he, I mean, was being Irish important to him? Or did he talk much about his early years?

Kit Wallace 5:10

It certainly was important to him. And I think his character was largely influenced by his growing up in Ireland.

He left Ireland, just after the war, after finishing a degree at Trinity College. And he never lived there after that period, but my grandparents lived near Killiney, and we always visited them every summer for summer holidays. So there was a very strong connection with Ireland.

Anne Hodge 5:54

And he went to school in St Columbus College, I think, in the Dublin foothills.

Kit Wallace 5:59

He did, yes.

Anne Hodge 6:01

I think that would that have had an important influence on the route he took later in life?

Kit Wallace 6:09

I imagine it did, I mean, he told us stories about his school days. And the tyrannical sergeant in arms. I don't know if that was in Arvon, or ...?

Anne Hodge 6:30

Yeah, I think I remember reading that was the earlier, when he was younger. Yeah. I think he quite liked St Columbus. I think he had a good art teacher who was very encouraging.

Kit Wallace 6:41

Yes. Yeah. So the art. He took art, because that's one of the few subjects that he was really good at. He described himself as being a complete duffer school, though that's a little hard to imagine.

Anne Hodge 6:58

I don't think so, I don't, I think he was being a bit disingenuous there from what I know of him anyway.

Kit Wallace 7:05

So, he took art as an optional subject at St Columbus, and his parents paid an extra fee for him to do that which he described as making him distinct from all the other boys who played sports. And so I think he really enjoyed that.

He was taken to visit a Miss May Guinness, who had a wonderful collection of modern art, the likes of which he had never seen or been exposed to before.

Anne Hodge 7:54

And she was an important modernist artist herself. So I guess that really made an impression on him as a, I suppose, he was about 15 or so maybe when they visited.

Kit Wallace 8:06

So from there, he went to Trinity College, and he had intended to go into the Anglican clergy. But after a year of studying theology at Trinity, he decided that wasn't going to be a good move for him. So he did a degree in philosophy and then got a teaching diploma after that at Trinity.

On graduating, he went to, this would have been just after the war, he went to teach at Bradley College in Britain.

Anne Hodge 8:48

And I think, even at an early point, he was very interested in modern and contemporary art, because I know he made some wooden sculptures that seemed to hark towards the work of Barbara Hepworth.

Kit Wallace 9:01

Yes, they're rather beautiful, little pieces. Although I still have three of them. I think he must have made maybe a dozen. There's a photograph dating from about 1946 or '47 showing quite a few of these pieces. And I used to play with those when I was a small child.

Anne Hodge 9:26

Playing with art? That's dreadful! [both laugh]

Kit Wallace 9:31

But they're lovely objects. Interestingly enough, his mother used to carve wood, and I still have some of her carving chisels. Though I have no idea what kind of work she did. There's nothing left of that.

Anne Hodge 9:53

That's amazing. I had no idea. Do you think he might have used her tools?

Kit Wallace 9:58

I would think so. Yes, yes.

Anne Hodge 10:00

That's amazing.

I mean, certainly abstraction, he was very interested in what was happening in the world of art at that time, the 40s and 50s. And, in fact, the first room of the exhibition focuses on his early abstract work and most were created in the early 1950s when he was working and living in the UK.

And there's quite a number of the prints which are directly inspired by the clay pits of Saint Austell, which you mentioned earlier, and which were close to his home in Falmouth.

But what struck me is, there are only a few observational drawings related to this period, and we only have one in the exhibition. Can you remember George making sketches or taking photographs when he was, you know, visiting St Austell or going around that area?

Kit Wallace 10:54

You know, I'm not sure that he did. I'm pretty sure that he never used sketchbooks. Our mutual friend who was a student, Malcolm Ross MacDonald, claimed that he had never seen my father sketch on the spot.

But the interesting thing about the Saint Austell series of etchings is that they were all done from memory. And a large number of them were done after we had moved to Canada, in 1957.

But the early ones I find very interesting as well, they are, I think, quite clearly influenced by the St Ives school and the artists that were working at the time. Some of the shapes are a bit like Barbara Hepworth

Anne Hodge 12:01

And, also, perhaps, a bit of influence from his tutor at art college at the West of England College of Art, Paul Feiler, who was one of the St Ives artists, so yes, certainly that does seem to come through quite strongly. They're very powerful prints, very pared back, you can only barely make out maybe workings, you know, within the clay pits.

Kit Wallace 12:29

Yes. And that series becomes increasingly abstract throughout his life so that they're more representational in the 50s than they are in the 70s and 80s. He was still referring back to that period.

Anne Hodge 12:50

Yeah. And that was one of the very interesting things about was, I think, in terms of printmaking is that he often went back, he revisited the same plate and would rework it and create a new, a completely new print. And he did that quite a lot, I think.

Kit Wallace 13:08

Yes. And that's, that's quite interesting, because he obviously was a very skilled printmaker, I think, probably considered an expert in etching. I think, another reason for having his work in a public collection, I think that it'll be very good for students of printmaking, to look at the work and to look at various states of the prints that he made.

So that we donated several series of prints with multiple states, and we can see how they dramatically change. It's one of the great advantages of etching, I think it's a bit sculptural in that respect

Anne Hodge 14:07

True, and also you're carving into the metal plate as well, albeit on a 2d surface yet, it's quite certainly printmakers who have seen the show have been fascinated with the technique and how he revisits plates again, and changes things and also often uses, you know, different coloured paper or different inks to create very different effects. And we have some of those examples in the exhibition.

And, in fact, one of the interesting things that fascinated me was the stock book or the record book of all his prints. It's an invaluable record. And I know you have it in the family collection still, but it's a large book, meticulously handwritten, and it lists all of George's prints from I think 1947 until the the early 1990s. With details of paper use

printing technique, the number of impressions pulled even in the various states of the print. And when he printed each impression, you know, the different years.

And do you think this stock book, as he called it, encapsulates how he worked as an artist, I mean, that meticulous way of working? Or do you think he created it because he wanted to leave a good record for posterity?

Kit Wallace 15:32

I think it's probably the latter. And I'm pretty sure that he didn't start the stock book until after he retired in 1985. He may have kept records, but I don't think they were as complete and categorized in detail like this.

So - and the interesting thing is that, as far as I know, I've never seen any documentation of his sculptural work, or paintings, for example. So I think it does relate specifically to his print legacy. I mean, it's fantastic that we have that because quite often he didn't make editions of prints. So this is really a document listing everything that he did make himself.

He was quite opposed to canceling printing plates, so that they couldn't be used in the future. Or faked, I suppose. So again, this document that we have in the record book is a pretty definitive statement of what he did make during his life.

Anne Hodge 17:03

And I guess there's something didactic about it, as well. I mean, certainly for me, as a researcher, it's incredibly useful. But maybe he almost even later on he wanted to explain how he created certain prints, you know, the inks that were used and so on, because of course, he was a teacher for over 30 years teaching at third level, first at Falmouth, of course in the UK, and later at McMaster University. And so he had a great influence as a teacher, I think.

Kit Wallace 17:35

Yes, I'm sure he did. And I think from what I gather, from some of his students that I know, you know, they were greatly influenced by him, greatly admired him. They took him very seriously.

Anne Hodge 17:58

And he also had a great interest in collecting prints himself, so prints by well known significant artists, people like Dürer, Goya, and the German expressionists. And I think he used some of that collection during his teaching or while he was a teacher. And I guess this is something people wouldn't know much about. Could you briefly describe the collection? And its importance?

Kit Wallace 18:25

Well, it's interesting that you mentioned that because, just recently, I've come across a document that he left to us to my brother and sister and me about his collection.

And the amount of work that he had was a great source of anxiety to my mother, because the house was cluttered up with steel sculptures that sort of kicked around in the basement. And all this work on paper.

But, so I think he did start to collect prints quite early, probably, even in Dublin. But he didn't seriously start collecting work until he started teaching at McMaster University in Hamilton. That was around 1960. And he had persuaded the university to build up a collection of German-Expressionist prints. And I think that amounted to about 300 prints by the time, you know, over the years, they collected that much.

So he started purchasing prints at auction for himself during that period of time in the 60s and 70s. And as he said, the prints were quite inexpensive, you know? He was buying prints for 25 or \$50 apiece, which would be worth hundreds now. And he did use them as teaching aids at McMaster.

So he had German-Expressionists prints, he had Beckman, Currans, Dicks, quite a Rouault Liebl, Kollowitz, and then he had a very esoteric collection of other stuff. You know, some humorous work by Gillray and Rowlandson. But there were quite a few, sort of, picturesque prints from the 18th and 19th century.

And he, after he retired, he put together two exhibitions from his own collection, one was on the picturesque. And the other was on title pages. And he was very fond of title pages, because they were not only inexpensive, but they were quite often very beautifully engraved introductions to the book. So there were like a bit of advertising for the book.

Anne Hodge 21:33

And I think he probably appreciated just the skill in creating them as well, even though they weren't sort of art prints, per se.

Kit Wallace 21:42

Well, some of them, certainly were, I mean, there were Piranesi-s that he bought, Piranesi - the title pages, which I think sparked off the interest in collecting title pages. So he collected, I think he said, about 200 title pages, and they've been donated to the University of Guelph in Ontario.

Anne Hodge 22:06

Brilliant. So print obviously was hugely important, both his own his own printmaking, and also looking at the work of others, but in fact, sculpture really took priority for much of his working life.

Can you maybe describe maybe one particular piece of his that was very important, or how you see his sculpture in general?

Kit Wallace 22:36

Yes, so he started welding as a result of getting interested in Reg Butler just before we left Falmouth, and he made one sculpture which he brought over with him to Canada

when we immigrated, and on selling that he was able to buy welding equipment to continue welding in Canada.

So he made two or three sculptures quite early on in about 1960, one of which was the first Lazarus figure that he made, which was very powerful sculpture still. But they became increasingly, I would say, lifelike, so his technique of welding steel wire produced a skin.

Anne Hodge 23:49

Yeah, that very first Lazarus sculpture, there is kind of an interesting story how that came about. I think he just found a piece of metal strapping on a railway line close to home. Was that the case?

Kit Wallace 24:01

That's right. Yeah. So, he used to walk along the local railway line and trains would bring scrap metal to Hamilton, which is a steel city. And he discovered this coil of strapping, which evoked the grave cloths of the Lazarus figure.

Anne Hodge 24:28

Amazing to connect the two, really, isn't it?

But I've seen photographs of that sculpture. It's incredibly powerful. I mean, Lazarus is completely bound up. And it has an abstract sense to it too, but it's very powerful, and of course, religious or well, biblical imagery, really appears in his work over and over and certainly in the exhibition in the second room. It's devoted, certainly one side is devoted, to images of figures from the Bible and what strikes me about his interest in these biblical figures, I suppose he had a very good knowledge from his early training in Trinity College and so on.

But much of his work is really rooted in his deep concern for humanity. And it's the same with the biblical imagery because he focused on their humanity and frailty. And I'm just remembering, you know, the powerful prints and sculptures, like the raising of Lazarus, as we've spoken about, the denial of Peter and the Passion of Christ. And it's really just sorrow, pain, confusion, all those human feelings and emotions, loneliness, that are brought through in his art, both the sculpture and the prints too.

But do you think, I mean, with all of that biblical imagery, which comes through very strongly in his work, you know, was he Christian? Or did he have faith? Or how would you see that part of his life?

Kit Wallace 26:00

It's an interesting question, because he wasn't a churchgoer, by any means. He wasn't conventionally religious. But, he was obviously very moved by Christian imagery. But, you know, it's not a conventional interpretation, artistic interpretation of the Bible stories. So I think he's kind of translated them into much more modern look at -

Anne Hodge 26:42

Yeah. I feel like almost comparing them in the sense with Caravaggio, who, you know, used models, people who were around him, he showed them warts and all. And Wallace, similarly, his biblical figures, you know, you could sort of meet them on the streets. It's just say, with Peter, it's, it's this awful feeling of guilt and anxiety. We all, it's etched into, literally, etched into the plate into that image of Peter. And, you know, I think he just gets to the humanity of each of these characters.

Kit Wallace 27:22

Yes, I think that's true.

Anne Hodge 27:28

It seems to me that a lot or, I mean, I obviously never met George Wallace. He died in 2009, as you said, but it seems to me that a lot of his characteristics and personality come across in his art. And obviously, there's a darkness in many of the prints, and a sense that much is wrong with the world. And yet, often then there's this wry sense of humor that comes through, and particularly maybe in the summer shadows series of etchings.

As his son, how would you describe George Wallace, what was he like?

Kit Wallace 28:06

You know, he was a very kind person. I'd never heard him swear ever.

And he was very generous, he was generous with his art, he used to give prints away or sell them at very low prices.

But at the same time, he had this incredible kind of intellectual understanding of history and of art in particular, I think he really enjoyed the art of the 17th and 18th centuries.

But again, he was very generous on a day to day level, you know, he would go out of his way to help people and assist people. I think one of the problems with picking up and leaving McMaster and Dundas where we lived, and retiring to the west coast is that he lost a lot of his friends at that time. And so he became much more introspective, I think, after retiring.

Anne Hodge 29:32

And yet, I guess, was it at that time when he started writing letters, because there's some wonderful letters. We have a few in the collection now, thanks to you and the family through that donation, but he seemed to be a wonderful letter writer who really made things come alive on the page?

Kit Wallace 29:52

Yes. Well, I wish he'd written more. I mean, he started several times. With a bit of an autobiography about growing up in Ireland, but it was never finished. And I wish that he had written more.

He wrote a wonderful essay about Lazarus, and about how he, as a student he had a small part time job taking care of this figure, Gore-Booth, who was slightly mentally ill.

Anne Hodge 30:37

Was he affected, was it was around the time of the war? I don't think you've fought in the war, but he had some issue. Yeah, mental health issue.

Kit Wallace 30:47

So I think he had Gore-Booth had this distressing incident after the First World War. And then he was slowly coming awake 15 or 20 years after that in Ireland, but not completely there. And so my father used to take him for walks and look after him.

Anne Hodge 31:24

Gosh, so I suppose that kind of maybe came through in his interest, perhaps, in Lazarus, which he revisited again and again, through his art.

Kit Wallace 31:37

Yes, it's quite possible. Though, that the Lazarus figure is quite interesting, because it appears right from the very beginning of his work in the 50s. And even the monotypes, some of the monotypes he was making, at the end of his life were of the same subject.

Anne Hodge 32:04

I suppose a very positive figure in one sense. I mean, it's all about redemption, and the fact that, perhaps, there's hope, despite the awful things that happen in the world.

I mean, your father, it's interesting, many artists, you know, that we know through history, you know, big names like Picasso, and so on. They're very, they're focused completely on their work. So everyone else kind of loses out in terms of people around them, and relationships and so on. And yet your father seemed to be able to balance the two, his focus as an artist, he was also very much a family man. And you and your siblings are all involved in creative work.

Do you think George Wallace had a great influence in the path you took or not really? How would you see that?

Kit Wallace 32:58

Well, I suppose he did, though. I mean, he, he's certainly never pushed us in any specific direction. He did teach my sister how to etch. But I mean, for example, he never taught me anything about drawing or art.

Anne Hodge 33:21

I suppose the fact that observational drawing wasn't a big part of his, the way he worked. Maybe that was part of it.

Kit Wallace 33:31

Yeah, I'm not sure. I mean, he encouraged me in many other ways. He, you know, I was very interested in building model airplanes. When I was a teenager, and he used to get involved in that and take me to flying competitions and things like that.

And I built a boat when I was 15. And he helped me with that. So he was very skilled at making things with his hands. And I think that certainly influenced me and my brother, who is now a shipwright wooden boat builder.

Alright, my sister, my sister, who was probably the more artistic of all of us is still painting. She does very detailed drawing, some paintings, mostly of birds these days.

Anne Hodge 34:33

And your mother too, Margaret, she met George when they were students in Trinity, I think.

But she was also an artist. Was she a very important influence on George?

Kit Wallace 34:48

I think she was. She actually wasn't at Trinity, but she was doing teacher training. She trained us in early childhood teacher in the Froebel technique.

Anyway they met at puppeteering group during the war, a marionette theatre in Dublin. Yes, I think she was a big influence, a very stabilizing influence in his life. She did a lot of fabric work later in life - applique and printing fabrics - and had a little business selling fabric actually.

Anne Hodge 35:48

And was her work quite abstract or more figurative?

Kit Wallace 35:54

I would say, well, a bit of both. But she used a lot of Celtic iconography in the vestments and altar frontals that she made for the church. But yeah, I think she had quite a modernist sensibility as well, so the furniture in the house was sort of Scan-mod and she tend to tended to use more modern textiles and things like that.

Anne Hodge 36:37

And, so you said earlier that George and Margaret, your parents, they moved to British Columbia when he retired from teaching. And, sadly, he, I think you mentioned to me before that, in the last years of his life, George lived with dementia. And I think he was was in a care home towards the end.

But I wonder did drawing remain important to him? Or was that just gone when he when he had dementia?

Kit Wallace 37:14

It's hard to say if it remained important, but it was very important for us, for the family. Because initially, it appeared as if he'd lost all of his ability to draw.

Alzheimers is a very devastating illness. And for a very intelligent person to lose his memory like that is pretty awful. But what happened is that my sister started bringing him drawing materials in the care home and he started drawing again during the late last year of his life. He made some very strange drawings which are very personal and quite moving, because they do actually relate to imagery from his previous life as an artist. And that's kind of remarkable so there was something deeply embedded in his in his mind.

Anne Hodge 38:33

And those images, were they figurative, were they connected with maybe the laser monoprints that he did, those heads of businessmen and people like that?

Kit Wallace 38:48

I think they were, they were mostly figurative. There were some still life drawings, which were the first ones that he did when he started drawing again. But then there were some strange characters, which, you know, when I asked him on one occasion, who are these people? He said he didn't know who they were. They just appeared on the page, almost like an automatic drawing.

Anne Hodge 39:23

And do you think it gave him pleasure to draw?

Kit Wallace 39:27

Oh I think undoubtedly it did. Yes.

Anne Hodge 39:33

It's amazing. Yeah. I'd love to see some of those drawings.

Kit Wallace 39:38

Well, there are some now on the website, which we have put together. There's a sample of some of the drawings that he made during that period of his life.

Anne Hodge 39:51

That is actually an amazing project and you've spent, I know, a lot of time and energy on creating the site as very easy to use - it covers all of his output across media. And it's very helpfully divided into thematic and chronological sections. And it's very easy to find www.georgewallace.ca, for Canada, obviously.

And I wonder if what inspired you to undertake such a big project, which is hugely valuable to researchers and people interested in art.

Kit Wallace 40:27

It was a much bigger project than I had imagined. After he died, again, we weren't quite sure how we were going to, you know, distribute the work or get rid of it. And we thought that a website might be useful for helping to sell some of the prints. In fact, that has never happened. I think maybe a couple of times people have bought work from the site. But we did create a first generation of the present website, which was based on an older technology, it didn't work very well. And I myself couldn't add or modify anything on the side. I had to rely on my daughter to do that.

Anne Hodge 41:25

Very annoying.

Kit Wallace 41:27

So about, I guess, about this time last year, I started reconsidering the website and decided to rebuild it completely, and re-photographed a lot of work. So there are very many images, I think there may be 800 images on the site.

Anne Hodge 41:49

Brilliant. And that covers, obviously, all of his work, not just the graphic work, which we focus on in the exhibition, but also his sculpture work.

Kit Wallace 41:58

That's right. And what I found interesting is that there was a curatorial aspect to doing this, where in order to make the site easy to navigate, I had to divide the work up into various thematic sections. So that was very interesting for as a project.

Anne Hodge 42:25

Yeah. And you know the way you've divided them? I wonder if George Wallace himself, if you asked him, you know, what section, what aspect, he would be most proud of? What do you think he would choose? Hard question. [laughing] Yeah, you're not him.

One of the things that strikes me about his work, and I devoted a full room to it, are his later monoprints, which are really very striking. I know that and he was very inspired by an exhibition of monoprints by Degas, which he saw in 1958 when he was in London, when he was back, visiting, visiting home, I guess, on his way to Ireland.

But he kind of didn't, he really only returned in earnest to monoprints in the, in the 80s. And he created a huge number of these images. And some of them well, the heads of big businessmen. There's a series I think called Big Businessmen. And he used the little passport-sized images on the back of the Globe and Mail, the national newspaper of Canada, and then sort of blew them up into these incredible portraits, if you like, even though they're not they're all anonymous people.

Kit Wallace 43:47

He called them mug shots.

Anne Hodge 43:48

Yes. And to my mind, I mean, it just shows that at that late stage in his career, he was, I think creating some of his most unique work, his best things.

Do you know what he thought about the monoprints? Or did he talk much about them?

Kit Wallace 44:06

I don't remember him, talking about them much to me. He's certainly produced a lot, there are about 400 monotypes that he made. But he did go back. He said that quite often he used monotype as a technique for his students who were inhibited by getting anything down on paper, that it was a very fluid and spontaneous technique.

Anne Hodge 44:40

Of course, because you work directly onto, you sort of paint onto the plate, and then scrape into it and then just put your sheet of paper and roll it through and, bingo, you have a wonderful image.

Kit Wallace 44:53

Yes. So what I'm impressed about is the spontaneity of that work. Unlike, you know, an etching, where you're working over it, constantly working the surface. This is a very rapid technique and very spontaneous and, and I think that in itself allows this kind of witty observation to come through. Yeah.

Anne Hodge 45:22

There's a great sense of humour. He's kind of poking fun at these people who maybe are a little overinflated in terms of ego.

Kit Wallace 45:32

He certainly is.

Anne Hodge 45:34

Yeah, that's one of the things I love about his work, there's a great balance between this very raw moving images of suffering. And yet, then there's other works, which are really quite, quite clever and amusing.

And there's, there's one great one, in terms of the monoprints. It's called Unwelcome Guest. And it has two worried-looking men on either side of a very gentle-looking skeleton in the middle. But obviously, we know who the unwelcome guest is.

And he, your father, wrote quite a lot on prints and printmaking. And one thing that struck me he, I think he put on an exhibition of prints by Hogarth while he was in McMaster University, I think. And then he wrote a really, really beautiful piece on Hogarth and I just thought I might just remind you of something he said, because I think this could refer to his own work. I'll just quote, He thought of his prints and paintings as mirrors in which the people of the time might see themselves reflected in their

sometimes grim, sometimes, humorous surfaces, we may perhaps still find something of ourselves reflected back to us.

And now he was talking about Hogarth, but I don't know if you'd agree, I feel that could be said of his own work.

Kit Wallace 47:03

Yes, I think so. And I think your title of the exhibition that's on now, *Reflections on Life* is, is a wonderful title for his work.

Anne Hodge 47:18

I mean, it does, it really encompasses life in all its aspects, and from landscape to Biblical imagery to just images of human suffering, and then onto, newspaper reports and stuff on its, and yet he distils it all down, you know, into a very unique vision of the world, I think.

Kit Wallace 47:40

I've always been impressed by how he worked, he could work simultaneously. On figurative and completely abstract work. You know, I tend to think of artists that go through periods of one or the other, but he works simultaneously in two very different styles.

Anne Hodge 48:05

Quite amazing. I would certainly, when people can, to come in and see the exhibition, because there's such a wide variety. And as you said, he wasn't very well known in Canada, and, likewise, he is not very well known in Ireland, but we're really hoping to change that with the exhibition and with the various lectures and programming that we have around this exhibition.

And so I think we've given it a really good, you've given us a really good insight into George Wallace, the family man as well as the artist. And I hope that a lot of people will get to see the show. Thanks very much, Kit.

Kit Wallace 48:46

Well, I have to thank you a great deal. I think you've done a tremendous job in selecting and curating and mounting this exhibition. I am personally very grateful.

Anne Hodge 49:01

Well, it's very exciting as a curator to, you know, discover an artist and new artists that you knew nothing about. It was just incredible in terms of the techniques, the skill and the imagination. So yeah, I'll be shouting it from the rooftops, come and see George Wallace.