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Tony O'Malley HRHA (1913-2003)

IRISH INSCAPE - STUDIO, PHYSICIANSTOWN, CALLAN, 1984

oil on wood with collage element

signed with initials lower left; dated [November] lower right; signed again, titled and dated on reverse; also with artist's archival number [No. 832] on reverse; with typed Taylor Galleries exhibition label on reverse 48 by 36in. (121.92 by 91.44cm)

Provenance:

Taylor Galleries, Dublin

Exhibited:

'Tony O'Malley', Taylor Galleries, Dublin, October 1986, catalogue no. 18

After many years in Cornwall Tony O'Malley began extensive visits back to Ireland in the late 1970s, establishing a studio at Physicianstown, near to Callan Co. Kilkenny where he was born. This, like his studios in the Bahamas and St. Ives, often formed the subject of his paintings. The work is not a representation of an actual location but an 'inscape'. This word, which recurs in a number of O'Malley's titles, comes from the writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Inscape is a term used to describe 'individually-distinctive beauty' or in visual art terms an interior landscape, a poetic evocation of the artist's thoughts and responses to a place or object rather than a conventional outward view. O'Malley's introspective practice came

from his early isolation as a self-trained artist but it was also informed by his years of working with English modernist artists in Cornwall. Through the St. Ives school he developed a sophisticated understanding and engagement with modern art which is reflected in the distinctive language of forms found in this work.

The pale blue of the painting contained within a darker blue frame suggests space and light. But the seeming simplicity of the blue expanse and its floating birdlike forms is disrupted by its rich, three dimensional surface. As in his other work O'Malley adds material to his paint to create thick lines that project up from the surface. Elsewhere paint is scraped back so that the underlying board is visible. The resulting rhythmic lines compliment the painted floating grid of colourful forms. The simple and direct treatment of the work in conjunction with its exotic elements and colours evoke a primitive space while its marked surface anchors it within the physical world of the artist's studio.

Dr. Róisín Kennedy

April 2012

We are grateful to the Taylor Galleries for their assistance in cataloguing this lot.

€20,000-€30,000 (£16,393-£24,590 approx).