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William Crozier HRHA (1930-2011)

MIDNIGHT IN SUMMER, 1989

oil on canvas

signed lower left; signed again, titled and dated on reverse

42 by 45in. (106.68 by 114.30cm)

Provenance:

West Cork Arts Centre, Cork;

Private collection

Midnight in Summer is one of a group of powerful works executed by the artist in 1989 that were notable for a bravura drawing style and visceral juxtapositions of colour, anchored in a rigid, formal structure. With these formal means William Crozier created a new and wholly distinctive approach to the painting of the Irish landscape in the 1980s.

At this period the artist divided his time between studios in West Cork and in Hampshire. Two years before, Crozier had given up his teaching responsibilities as Professor at Winchester School of Art to devote himself exclusively to his painting, and this, together with the recent purchase of a house and studio in West Cork, and a settled domestic life, led to a reinvigorated, concentrated period of art making. These were the circumstances that gave Crozier's painting of the late 1980s and 1990s a new freedom and assurance and the results were some of the most iconic Crozier landscape images, of which *Midnight in Summer* is one.

This painting, like *The Ripe Field* (1989) in the Crawford Art Gallery permanent collection, though the result of a dynamic relationship with the landscape is, paradoxically, no naturalistic image. As the artist wrote of his work at this time, 'The thing seen must be the detonator which explodes the imagination and creates the energy to sustain a singular passion.'¹ A further influence on the artist discernible in this painting, came from his assimilation of icon painting. Earlier in the 1980s, in 1982 and in 1985, Crozier had visited Moscow and St Petersburg, where he had been overwhelmed by the transcendental power of Russian icon painting. "Icons changed my view of everything" he wrote, "It's like looking through an emotional mirror, like the mirror in Cocteau's film of *Orphee*."²

We are grateful for the assistance of Professor Katharine Crouan in cataloguing this work.

¹ Stet. No 8 Winter 1991

² 'Bebop and the Bullfight' William Crozier in conversation with Emily Mark Fitzgerald, in *Collaborations and Conversations* Stoney Road Press, Dublin, 2007. P 31-32

€12,000-€15,000 (£10,080-£12,610 approx.)