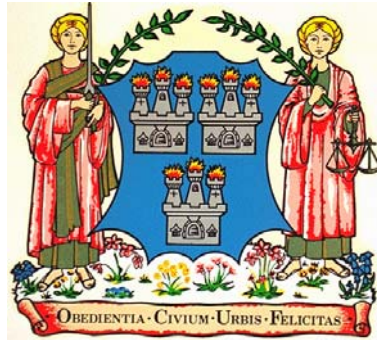


## COMHAIRLE CATHRACH BHAILE ÁTHA CLIATH



Miontuairiscí Chruinniú Speisialta a tionóladh ar an 24ú Bealtaine 2007, I Halla na Cathrach Cnoc Chorcaigh, Baile Átha Cliath.

### I Láthair

An tArdmheara, An Comhairleoir Vincent Jackson.

#### Comhairleoir:

Paddy Bourke  
Eibhlin Byrne  
Mary Freehill

#### Comhairleoir :

John Gallagher  
Naoise O'Muirí  
Bronwen Maher

#### Comhairleoir

Mick Rafferty

#### Oifigigh

John Tierney  
Vincent Norton  
Terence O'Keefe

Alan Breen  
Ailish Smyth  
Angela Walsh

Siobhan Maher  
Hugh Fitzpatrick

### Freedom of the City Conferral Ceremony

1. At 8.00 p.m. approximately the Lord Mayor, accompanied by his Aide de Camp, with Mr. Louis le Brocqy (accompanied by his son Alexis) with Mr. Thomas Kinsella (accompanied by his son John) and with Mr. John Tierney, Dublin City Manager who was preceded by two firefighters carrying the Great Sword and Mace, entered the Rotunda of City Hall and took up prepared positions on the podium. Members of the Dublin City Council were already seated and invited guests assembled. Mr. Vincent Norton, Meetings Administrator called on Mr. John Tierney, Dublin City Manager to read the following resolution adopted unanimously by the Dublin City Council at its meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2007: "That Dublin City Council hereby resolves that the Honorary Freedom of the City of Dublin be conferred on Mr. Louis le Brocqy and Mr. Thomas Kinsella and that their names be inscribed on the roll of Honorary Freedom of Dublin, pursuant to the provisions of Section 74 of the Local Government Act, 2001 in recognition of their enormous contribution to the City in relation to art and literature respectively"

The Dublin City Manager having read the resolution, Mr. Norton then called on the Lord Mayor to speak. The Lord Mayor addressed the meeting as follows:

24/05/2007

*“Fellow Members of the City Council, City Manager, Special Guests, your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I extend a very warm welcome to you all here to City Hall on this very auspicious occasion. We are gathered here, of course, to pay homage to the vast contribution made by two of the city’s greatest artisans, Louis le Brocquy and Thomas Kinsella, to their respective spheres of Art and Literature.*

*The Freedom of the City of Dublin is the highest award in the city’s gift and conferred very rarely. The ancient Freedom of Dublin dates back to the Norman Invasion in the late twelfth century, where beneficiaries were referred to as ‘free citizens’, entitled to receive significant trading privileges and the right to vote in municipal and parliamentary elections.*

*One of the few avenues of admission to the ancient freedom was by means of what was known as Grace Especial (or Special Grace), which equates with the modern freedom, where craftsmen that were not in the trade guild were honoured. Although no financial or other benefits attend the award today, the prestige it carries is immense and a fitting tribute to two such worthy recipients, each one a craftsman in his own right in modern times.*

*I recall with much affection the blissful days of my youth when I first became acquainted with the poetry of Thomas Kinsella. Poems like ‘Mirror in February’ and ‘Another September’ that featured in the Leaving Cert ‘Soundings’ anthology, giving thousands of school-leavers, like myself, much pleasure and a glimpse of his literary prowess for many years.*

*Thomas was born in Dublin and his family lived at Tyrconnell Street, Inchicore, later moving to Phoenix Street in an area also in Inchicore known as ‘The Ranch’. Thomas’s grandparents lived in Bow Lane beside what was then known as Swifts Hospital, now St. Patricks Hospital. Thomas was a shoemaker and it was here in his formative years, that he was influenced by the sounds and the people of the neighbourhood, in a place steeped in the history of Ireland and Dublin.*

*He was educated at the famous Model School in Inchicore and O’Connell’s Christian Brothers School, and later at University College, Dublin. Entering the Civil Service he joined the Land Commission and later spent some years in the Department of Finance. In 1965 he left the Civil Service and took up*

24/05/2007

*Professorships of English at the Universities of Southern Illinois and Philadelphia.*

*From the odyssey of his long poem *Nightwalker* in 1968, to his city centre perambulation in *The Pen Shop* in 1997, he has pondered his city, recreated it, transforming it with the power of his great imagination.*

*Thomas, I believe, could indeed be adorned with the well-deserved title as laureate of Dublin. Peter Sirr, the critic, refers to Thomas's 'intense and multi-faceted relationship with several Dublins : the city of his childhood with its narrow streets and dark yards; and the Georgian city of his young adulthood.' In many respects, Thomas's portrayal of Dublin, its districts and its citizens, stands proudly with Joyce's arousing memoirs of his native city.*

*It is entirely fitting that two great Irish symbols of the art and literature world would collaborate on what is regarded to be one of the greatest feats of Irish literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and that each be present here tonight to be conferred with the honorary Freedom of the City. The work I speak of, is of course, Thomas's acclaimed 1969 translation from Irish of the prose epic *Tain Bo Cualinge*, appearing with *Brush Drawings* by Louis le Brocqy. I know that it is Thomas's great joy that Louis is here to share the podium with him.*

*Thomas has received Guggenheim Fellowships in 1968/1969 and 1971/1972, the Dennis Devlin Memorial Awards in 1966, 1969, 1992 and 1994, and more recently honorary PhDs from the National University of Ireland and the University of Turin. He is included in *The Great Modern Poets*, a recent anthology of the best poets and poetry since 1900.*

*The Freedom of the City enables the citizens of Dublin to express their gratitude and formally celebrate Thomas Kinsella's contribution to literature. Thomas's wife Eleanor, his daughters Sarah and Mary and his son John, I know will also share in this great honour this evening."*

The Lord Mayor then called on Thomas Kinsella to sign the Roll of Honour, following which the Lord Mayor presented him with the illuminated Scroll of Freedom of the City (which had already been signed by the Lord Mayor and City Manager) and the Lord Mayor also presented him with a specially commissioned Waterford crystal piece depicting a book. The Lord Mayor then invited him to address the City Council and assembled guests.

Mr. Kinsella spoke as follows

*“A very brief thanks. Hoping I can make it clear how highly I value this recognition from Dublin city. Writing, for most of my life, has been a solitary matter – trying to respond as precisely as I could to mostly very private impulses. But these efforts - also for most of my life – have had a Dublin setting. And it has always seemed important to be just as clear about the setting as about those private matters.*

*Dublin gave many important things their first shape and content for me. I learned to look at the world through the rich reality of the inner city – a living history, with shades of Swift and Robert Emmett in my neighbourhood as I grew up; with the stories of my own two families to be learned: coming and settling in inner Dublin from Wicklow and Westmeath; and the stories of a number of close friends, some with ancient Irish names – one from the far West, a native speaker of Irish; others descended from Norman and post Cromwellian invaders. All reasonably contented together; happy to be where they were.*

*I have tried over the years to get my findings in these areas recorded distinctly, as I remembered them: so that anyone who might be interested would know exactly what I meant; and even share some of the same experiences. – I believe that this is one of the things that art is for.*

*This honour today by the city of Dublin – through the good agency, I know, of certain well-disposed persons who are equally lovers of the city – I will take as a sign that maybe my efforts have succeeded: that I wasn't talking only to myself. It is certainly a recognition that I will value uniquely coming towards the close of a life's work.*

*That the day is being shared with Louis le Brocquy makes it even more welcome. I have admired his work over a lifetime. One of my few attempts at journalism was an appreciation of an early exhibition of his paintings. It was a great event when we combined our efforts once – over 40 years ago now – under the creative guidance of Liam Miller of the Dolmen Press, in the joint undertaking of The Tain.*

*To the dignitaries here, representatives of Dublin, and all who thought to give me this recognition: my sincere thanks.”*

The Lord Mayor then spoke in relation to Mr. Louis le Brocquy as follows:

*“To me painting is not a means of communication or even self-expression, but rather a process of discovery, or uncovering. I think of the painter as a kind of Archaeologist, an Archaeologist of the spirit, patiently disturbing the surface of things until he makes a discovery which will enable him to take his search further.*

*This wonderful metaphor constructed by Louis le Brocquy himself, depicts the artist's life-long commitment to, and his love of, the voyage of exploration through art.*

*Louis was born in Dublin in 1916. His zeal for “discovery” initially came to the fore when he attended Trinity College in 1934 to study chemistry, pursuing his interest in science. During his third level years Louis became more aware of Art, frequenting the National and Municipal Galleries.*

24/05/2007

*Encouraged and supported by his mother and with no formal training, he left Ireland in 1938 to study the European Art Collections of London, Paris and Geneva. Here the works of great Masters such as Titan, Velazquez, Manet and Goya consumed him and the impact and influence they had on him are reflected right throughout his lifetime's works.*

*His search for "discovery" ultimately led to him becoming one of Ireland's most celebrated and respected Artists.*

*In 1956 Louis represented Ireland at the Venice Biennale where he was awarded a major prize for one of his most celebrated paintings, "A Family", a painting which hangs proudly in our National Gallery today. It is conceivably, for both his "Ancestral" and "Portrait" heads however that Louis is best known. In the Celtic Culture he regards the head as "a magic box containing the spirit" and this belief leads him to paint subjects who have greatly inspired him and for whom creativity is to the core of their lives. Among the many collaborations with Irish writers, such as his friends Samuel Beckett and Seamus Heaney, are of course Louis's lithographic brush drawings for The Táin in 1969 as mentioned earlier, held to be the great Irish Livre d'Artiste of the twentieth century.*

*Louis has received numerous accolades and honorary Degrees throughout his life both in Ireland and abroad. He was made Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur In France in 1975, and Officier des Arts et des Lettres in 1996.*

*In Belgium, he was made Officier de l'Ordre de la Couronne Belge in 2001. In Ireland he was elected Saoi of Aosdána conferred by President Mary Robinson in 1992.*

*In 1998 he was the first artist to receive the IMMA/Glen Dimplex lifetime Achievement Award for a "sustained contribution to the arts in Ireland". He holds six honorary doctorates.*

*He is among the few Irish Artists whose work is represented in the collections of some of the worlds most prestigious museums and galleries such as The Guggenheim in New York and the Tate in London. He is also the first living Artist to be included in the permanent Irish Collection of the National Gallery of Ireland.*

*Louis has enjoyed a long friendship with Dublin City Gallery the Hugh Lane and in honour of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in February this year, the gallery organised an in-focus exhibition of his early work, entitled 'Early Heroes (1939 - 1945), Later Hommage (2005 - 2006)' which explores the influences that inspired him to become a painter. The exhibition included works drawn from private and public collections in Ireland and Britain, including 'Southern Window' from the City Gallery's own collection. I took great personal pleasure in Launching the exhibition.*

*Louis's works are an immortal testament to his creativity through art. It is therefore fitting that the City of Dublin formally acknowledges and honours one of its most talented and creative of citizens, Louis le Brocqy, by bestowing on him the Freedom of the City."*

*The Lord Mayor then called on Louis le brocqy to sign the Roll of Honour, following which the Lord Mayor presented him with the illuminated Scroll of Freedom of the City (which had already been signed by the Lord Mayor and City Manager) and the Lord Mayor also presented him with a specially commissioned*

24/05/2007

Waterford crystal piece depicting an artist's palette. The Lord Mayor then invited him to address the City Council and assembled guests.

Mr. le Brocquy replied as follows:

*"When I was young I ironically referred to myself as a "West-Belgian". Non-one in our small family seemed Irish, other than my mother.*

*In 1938, when I left Ireland to become a painter, studying directly in museums, I discovered that my chosen masters – Rembrandt, Velazquez, Goya, Manet and Cézanne – were not only universally significant, but each and every one of them was of distinctly local origin.*

*If only by contrast, I knew myself for the first time to be a Dubliner with my roots in Ireland.*

*And so I appreciate all the more the very exceptional honour conferred on me by the city to which I have returned after the best part of a lifetime.*

*Further to various collaborations with my friends, Samuel Beckett and Seamus Heaney, the most extraordinary experience for me was that with Thomas Kinsella, whose poetry I so deeply admire.*

*To me the Táin itself was a graphic adventure – shadows thrown by the wondrous text of Kinsella's Táin Bó Cuailnge, illustrated by brush drawings commissioned by Liam Miller, that great publisher of Irish literature in his time.*

*I would not be before you now had it not been for my mother, Sybil, who – in defiance of my grandfather's plans for me, bravely set me on my way as a painter.*

*My mother's remarkable life is commemorated on the Rutland memorial, directly opposite our National Gallery.*

*I want to pay tribute to my wife Anne Madden and our sons, Alexis and Pierre, all of whom have sustained and believed in me over the years – to Pierre, in particular, for his devotion to my work during the last 15 years.*

*And again allow me to thank our Lord Mayor and the Dublin City Council for the rare honour I have received"*

Mr. Vincent Norton announced that that was the end of the formal proceedings and asked those seated to stand while the Lord Mayor and the ceremonial party left the stage.

The meeting concluded at 8.35 p.m. following which a reception was held in the Rotunda of City Hall for Mr. Thomas Kinsella and Mr. Louis le Brocquy and their invited guests.

**Correct.**

---

LORD MAYOR

---

MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR