

THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY OF ART, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

cordially invite you to an evening Guest Lecture by:

BRIONY LLEWELLYN

AN ORIENTALIST CASE STUDY: *Cross-cultural threads in the images of JOHN FREDERICK LEWIS (1804-1876)*

Thursday, 7th April 2016 at 6:30pm

Brookfield Health Science Complex, G10 Lecture Theatre, UCC (see map attached)



Detail: *The Arab Scribe, Cairo*, 1852. John F. Lewis. Watercolour & bodycolour, 47x61cm. Private collection. ©Christie's Images Ltd.

John Frederick Lewis's vivid and colourful scenes of oriental life were celebrated in his lifetime for the virtuosity of their execution and the perceived authenticity of their portrayal of Islamic society. Modern criticism, in the light of Saidian and post-Saidian discourse, has been less willing to accept his images at face value and his Orientalist subject matter has provoked extensive discussion. At the same time, more carefully considered critical analysis has recognised the multi-faceted complexities of his compositions and he has been acknowledged as one of the most intriguing of all Orientalist artists. In fashioning his images, Lewis referenced a wealth of sources, both visual and textual. They drew on more than a decade of direct experience, first in Istanbul and then Cairo, where he had lived a part Eastern, part Western existence, but they were painted for a British audience imbued with the expectations and preconceptions of their time. This paper will unravel some of the cross-cultural threads that Lewis has skilfully woven together to create his images, noting the strategies he devised to underpin his authority as an interpreter of Eastern culture. Among the works to be discussed are three of his most successful watercolours: *The Hhareem* (1850, Cairo), *The Arab Scribe - Cairo* (1852) and *Hhareem Life, Constantinople* (1857). An amalgam of many different elements, both Oriental and Occidental, these can be seen as paradigms of the cultural interchange that characterises his work.

Briony Llewellyn is an independent scholar specialising in British artists' depictions of the Near and Middle East, and has written and lectured extensively on the subject. In 1985-88, she was co-author of the catalogue of the Searight Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum. She has contributed to numerous catalogues and publications including the exhibitions of *Edward Lear*, 1985, *Amadeo Preziosi*, 1985, *David Roberts*, 1986 and *Black Victorians*, 2005. In 2008 she was loans consultant for Tate Britain's exhibition, *Lure of the East*, and co-curator of an exhibition in the Tennant Room of the Royal Academy dealing with John Frederick Lewis's early work. She has contributed to volumes of essays including *The Poetics and Politics of Place: Ottoman Istanbul and British Orientalism*, Istanbul, 2011 and *Émile Prisse d'Avennes: Un artiste-antiquaire en Égypte au XIXe siècle*, Cairo, 2013, as well as two articles for *The Burlington Magazine*, 2003 and 2014. She regularly contributes advice and catalogue essays on John Frederick Lewis, David Roberts and others to Christie's, Sotheby's and Bonhams. She has researched, lectured and published extensively on Roberts and Lewis and is currently co-compiling *catalogue raisonnés* of their work. She is also engaged in research on a large private collection of European views of Istanbul for a forthcoming publication.

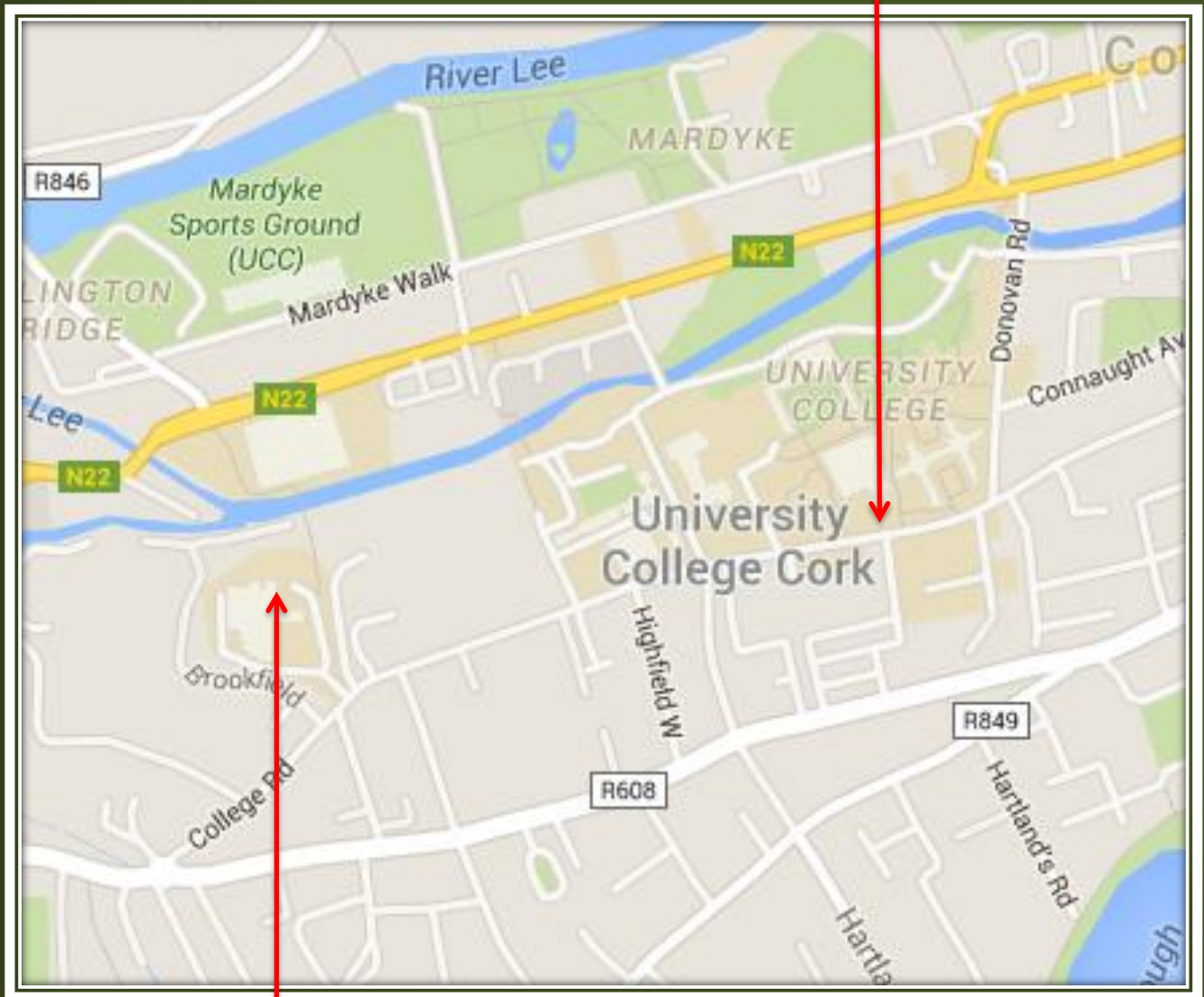
Admission is Free and all are Welcome

For further information please contact

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College Road Gates UCC



Brookfield Health Science Complex, G10 Lecture Theatre, UCC

- At the College Road entrance to Brookfield HS Complex, follow the sign for 'Main Entrance'.
- Once inside the main entrance, turn left.
- G10 Lecture Theatre is on the left side of the hall, after the reception desk.