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SPECIAL ISSUE

Popular Visual Culture in Ireland

Edited by Justin Carville

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Writing in the Irish visual arts journal *Circa*, the literary and cultural theorist Luke Gibbons remarked that "the absence of a visual tradition in Ireland, equal in stature to its powerful literary counterpart, has meant that the dominant images of Ireland have, for the most part, emanated from outside the country, or have been produced at home with an eye on the foreign (or tourist) market". Gibbons' statement, written in response to a photo-journalistic survey of Ireland during the 1980s, demonstrates the significance of Ireland's colonial legacy in its visual representation, its subsequent influence on an emergent visual culture for the foreign gaze of the tourist and, increasingly throughout the twentieth century, the Irish Diaspora.

The articles in this special issue of *Early Popular Visual Culture* engage with many of the questions raised by the current interest in visual culture within the field of Irish studies, finding the questions at stake around colonial and postcolonial identity, modernism and modernity played out not in the canon of Irish art, but in the visual displays, mass spectacles, popular tourist travelogues and commemorative ephemera of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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Justin Carville

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