

Stained glass panel from the *House of an Art Lover*, 1901

- Today I am talking about the Scottish architect and artist **Charles Rennie Macintosh**.
- This is a panel from a house he designed called the House of an Art Lover and it shows the roses known as **Mackintosh Roses** or Glasgow Roses. You might think it is art deco but it was designed in 1901, a decade before art deco first appeared in France. Some say the Mackintosh rose design was the work of his wife Margaret Macdonald and I will talk more about her role later.
- Let's look at his early life...

#### TIMELINE

- 1864-1890 Macdonald at school
- 1868-1883 Mackintosh at school
- 1883 Mackintosh joins Honeyman & Keppie and starts evening classes at the Glasgow School of Art
- 1890 Margaret and Frances Macdonald enrolled at Glasgow School of Art as day students
- 1892 Macdonald and Mackintosh introduced by the headmaster
- 1893 Mackintosh gave a public lecture explaining his philosophy
- 1894 Macdonald and Mackintosh exhibiting together as students to mixed reviews, their linear forms were seen as influenced by Beardsley and were called 'ghoulish' and they were called 'The Spook School'.
- 1895 Mackintosh designs the Herald building & Martyr's Public School
- 1895? Macdonald illustrates William Morris' *Defence of Guenevere*
- 1895 poster for Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts
- 1895-1924 the Macdonald sisters were widely recognised as leading artists had 40 European and American exhibitions
- 1896 Macdonald Sisters Studio—book illustrations, embroidery, gesso panels, leaded glass and repoussé metalwork
- 1896 started Glasgow School of Art commission
- 1896 Mackintosh met Kate Cranston (Tea Rooms)
- 1897-9 Glasgow School of Art started
- 1898 Argyll Tea Room
- 1899 Frances married Herbert McNair
- 1900 Margaret married Mackintosh
- 1900 Macdonald *May Queen*
- 1900 Vienna followed by Turin, Berlin
- 1901 House for an Art Lover
- 1902 Klimt, Beethoven Frieze
- 1902 Hill House
- 1903 Cranston Sauchiehall Willow Tea Room
- 1907-09 Glasgow School of Art phase 2 built
- 1914 Macdonald *The Little Hills*
- 1914-1923 Mackintosh flower painting and textile design
- 1916 Mackintosh considered old-fashioned
- 1921 Macdonald produce no more work

- 1923-4 Mackintosh landscape painting in the south of France
- 1929 Mackintosh died of cancer aged 60
- 1933 Macdonald died

**BIO: CHARLES RENNIE MACKINTOSH**

- Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928, born McIntosh) was born in Glasgow the fourth of eleven children. His father a superintendent and chief clerk of the City of Glasgow Police. He attended Reid's Public School and the Allan Glen's Institution from 1880 to 1883. He walked with a limp caused by a contracted sinew in one foot and his right eye drooped. He also had trouble reading and writing and always had a problem with spelling. All of which meant he found it difficult to fit in at school.
- He worked at Honeyman and Keppie and architectural practice where he started his first major project to design the Glasgow Herald Building (now known as the Lighthouse) in 1899. He was engaged to marry his employer's sister Jessie Keppie. His friend and fellow apprentice at the partnership was Herbert MacNair and the two attended the Glasgow School of Art in the evening.
- At the School in 1892 they were introduced to Margaret Macdonald and her sister Frances by the head of the School as he saw similarities in their work. MacNair and Frances married in 1899 and Margaret and Charles married on 22 August 1900. Margaret and Charles had no children. The four became known as 'The Four' and they were prominent figures in the Glasgow Style of art and design.
- In 1904 he became a partner in the firm which was renamed Honeyman, Keppie & Macintosh. The partnership suffered economic hardships in 1913 and he resigned to form his own practice.
- His designs were influenced by Japanese art and he admired its restraint and economy of means rather than the ostentatious decoration of Victorian design. At the same time modernist architectural ideas were emerging across Europe associated with creating functional and practical designs. Mackintosh was known as a pioneer in the modernist movement but his design were never bleak but were designed around the needs of people. He combined the style of Art Nouveau with the restraint of Japanese design.
- The project that made his name was the Glasgow School of Art and the Queen's Cross Church project. Like Frank Lloyd Wright he would specify all the details of decoration and furnishing which were designed by his wife Margaret Macdonald.
- During the early stages of the Glasgow School of Art Mackintosh also completed the Queen's Cross Church project in Maryhill, Glasgow. This is considered to be one of Charles Rennie Mackintosh most mysterious projects. It is the only church by the Glasgow born artist to be built and is now the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society headquarters.
- His architectural output was small but he did influence European design. He was popular in Austria and Germany and was praised when it was exhibited at the Vienna Succession Exhibition in 1900. His work was

shown at the Vienna Secession Exhibition in 1900. Mackintosh's architectural career was a relatively short one, but of significant quality and impact. All his major commissions were between 1896 and 1906, where he designed private homes, commercial buildings, interior renovations and churches.

- In later life Mackintosh became disillusioned with architecture and worked largely as a water-colourist painting landscapes and still-lives. Over the years his style gradually converged with that of his wife. In 1914 they moved to Walberswick in Suffolk where he was suspected of being a German spy and arrested in 1915.
- From 1915 to 1923 they lived in London where he worked at the Hans Studio. He could often be found in a cafe called The Blue Cockatoo frequented by Augustus John and other Chelsea artists. He received few commissions during the war with the exception of a redesign of 78 Derngate, a Northamptonshire terrace house, for W.J. Bassett-Lowke.
- In 1923 they moved to Port Vendres in southern France because of its warmer climate and cheaper cost of living. Many of his paintings depict Port Vendres and the surrounding area. He concentrated on watercolour landscapes but illness forced them to return to London in 1927. He was diagnosed with throat and tongue cancer and following a brief recovery he died in 1928, aged 60.
- His fame and popularity grew and continued to grow after his death. The Glasgow School of Art Building (now called the Mackintosh Building) has been described as one of the finest buildings in the UK. It was seriously damaged by fire 23 May 2014. In 2018 about a year before completion it was fatally ravaged by fire and the inside completely gutted and the external walls made structurally unsound. There is a public commitment to rebuild the whole building.
- The rediscovery of Mackintosh as a significant figure in design has been attributed to the designation of Glasgow as European City of Culture in 1990. He is now seen as the main representative of Art Nouveau in the UK. Many of his designs were never built and disillusioned with architecture he turned to watercolour painting of landscapes and flowers.

#### **BIO: MARGARET MACDONALD MACKINTOSH**

- Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1864-1933) was born in Staffordshire. Her father was a colliery manager and she attended the local girls' school. When she was 26 the family moved to Glasgow and she and her sister Frances enrolled at the Glasgow School of Art. In 1896 they opened the Macdonald Sisters Studio where they produced book illustrations, gesso panels, embroidery and leaded glasswork inspired by Celtic art.
- She first met Charles Rennie Mackintosh and his friend Herbert MacNair at Glasgow School of Art in about 1892 and within two years they were exhibiting their work together. In 1900 they married and she collaborated in most of her husband's projects but he has received the accolades and she has been marginalised. He once said, "Margaret has genius, I have only talent". Their style was regarded as similar to

that of Aubrey Beardsley and was described as 'ghoulish' and they became known as 'The Four'.

- Between 1895 and 1924 she contributed to over 40 international exhibitions. She created several important interior schemes with her husband. Many of these were executed at the early part of the twentieth century; and include the Rose Boudoir at the International Exhibition at Turin in 1903, the designs for House for an Art Lover in 1900, and the Willow Tea Rooms in 1902. She exhibited with Mackintosh at the 1900 Vienna Secession, where she was an influence on the Secessionists Gustav Klimt and Josef Hoffmann. They continued to be popular in the Viennese art scene, both exhibiting at the Viennese International Art Exhibit in 1909.
- In 1902 they designed and furnished the music room in a new villa outside Vienna. That room was decorated with panels of Margaret's art: the Opera of the Winds, the Opera of the Seas, and the Seven Princesses, a new wall-sized triptych considered by some to be her finest work. A contemporary critic described it as "perhaps their greatest work, for they were allowed perfectly free scope".
- Her most popular works include the gesso panels The May Queen, which was made to partner Charles Rennie Mackintosh's panel The Wassail for Miss Cranston's Ingram Street Tearooms, and Oh ye, all ye that walk in Willowwood, which formed part of the decorative scheme for the Room de Luxe in the Willow Tearooms.
- What distinguishes her art is the innovation. She was inspired by many sources but her work came out of her own imagination in a novel form.
- Poor health meant that she produced no more work after 1921 and she died in 1933.

#### **BIO:MCNAIR**

- James Herbert MacNair (23 December 1868 – 22 April 1955), was a Scottish artist, designer and teacher whose work contributed to the development of the Modern Style (British Art Nouveau style) during the 1890s. He trained as an architect with Renee Mackintosh at Honeyman and Keppie from 1888 to 1895. He married Frances Macdonald in 1899.
- He became part of The Four and is perhaps the least well-known. He was a designer rather than an architect and his style was similar to that of his wife Francis and her sister Margaret Macdonald. The Four were influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement and by European Symbolism and Art Nouveau. They combined these influences to create the Glasgow Style.
- MacNair set up his own studio in Glasgow in 1895, where he designed furniture, book illustrations, water colours and posters. He had significant influence as a teacher following his move to Liverpool in 1898 and appointment as Instructor in Design at the School of Architecture and Applied Art.
- In 1899 Frances Macdonald joined MacNair in Liverpool and the two married. The couple painted watercolours and designed interiors, exhibiting a Writing Room at the International Exhibition of Modern

Art in Turin. They also exhibited in Liverpool, London, Vienna and Dresden in the early 1900s. Following closure of the School in 1905, and the loss of the MacNair family wealth through business failure, the couple returned to Glasgow in 1909. MacNair's career went into decline from this period, and no works of his are known beyond 1911.

- In 1913 McNair was working in Canada, in a chocolate factory and later a railway company. He returned to Glasgow where he worked as a postman and as a manager in a garage. After the death of his wife in 1921, MacNair destroyed all of their works that he had in his possession. He then moved to an old people's home, where he lived until his death in 1955.

### **ART NOUVEAU**

- Art Nouveau flourished from 1890 to 1910 and is characterised by long, sinuous, organic lines. Art Nouveau was coined, in Belgium by L'Art Moderne to describe the artist group Les Vingt and in Paris by S. Bing, who named his gallery L'Art Nouveau. The style was called Jugendstil in Germany, Sezessionstil in Austria, Stile Floreale (or Stile Liberty) in Italy, and Modernismo (or Modernista) in Spain.
- In England the style's immediate precursors were the Aestheticism of the illustrator Aubrey Beardsley and the Arts and Crafts movement of William Morris. One of the leaders of Art Nouveau in Britain was Mackintosh. The style was called the Glasgow Style or the Modern Style or British Art Nouveau. In Europe it was influenced by Paul Gauguin and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. The movement was partly inspired by a vogue for the linear patterns of Japanese prints (ukiyo-e).

### **GLASGOW STYLE**

- To identify the Glasgow Style first look for an association with the Glasgow School of Art and/or with The Four. There was a hierarchy of around 70 designers:
  - Charles Rennie Mackintosh
  - The Four (Mackintosh, Herbert McNair, Frances and Margaret Macdonald)
  - Around 15 principal designers made up of the above plus: Jessie M. King, Talwin Morris, George Walton, E.A. Taylor, George Logan, John Ednie, Peter Wylie Davidson, Ann Macbeth, Margaret Gilmour, Margaret De Courcy Lewthwaite Dewar, Jessie Newbery
- Motifs to look for include:
  - Glasgow or Mackintosh rose(s)/cabbage(s)
  - Distinctive shapes include hearts, squares, lines, sinuous curves, strong taut verticals.
  - Celtic knots and designs
  - Stylised forms based on nature: flowers, seed shapes, tulips, pendant flowers, almond / bulb or teardrop shapes.
  - Birds/birds in flight, peacocks, dragonflies, butterflies, owls, moths.
  - Female figures / willowy human forms
  - Distinct lettering

- Colours include subtle tones of pink, purple, green with black and white as contrasts.

#### **PRINCIPAL WORKS OF RENNIE MACKINTOSH**

1. Glasgow School of Art, 1897-1909
2. Queen's Cross Church project
3. The Willow Tearooms in Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, 1903
4. Scotland Street school in Glasgow
5. Hill House, Helensburgh, 1902-1904
6. Daily Record office
7. Glasgow Herald office, now The Lighthouse
8. 78 Derngate, Northampton
9. 5 The Drive, Northampton
10. Liverpool Cathedral, design, not built
11. Art Lover's House, design, not built
12. The House for an Art Lover, 1901, built 1989-96
13. An Artist's Cottage and Studio, 1901, completed 1992
14. Gate Lodge, Auchinbothie, 1901, sketch, completed 1995-7

#### **PRINCIPAL WORKS OF MARGARET MACDONALD**

15. *Winter*, 1898
16. *The May Queen*, 1900, from the Ladies' Luncheon Room Ingram Street Tea Rooms, Kelvingrove Art Gallery
17. Embroidered panels, 1902, silk appliqué and bead decoration on linen, 41 × 177, Hill House, National Trust for Scotland
18. *White Rose And Red Rose*, 1902, painted gesso on hessian on glass, 100 × 98
19. *Oh ye, all ye that walk in Willowwood*, 1903, gesso panel created for the Salon de Luxe, at Miss Cranston's Willow Tea Rooms, 164.5 × 58.5, Glasgow Museum
20. *Opera of the Winds*, 1903, gesso on panel, 20 × 20 cm, created for the front of the piano for Fritz Waerndorfer's Music Room in his Vienna town house.
21. *Seven Princesses*, 1907, triptych of gesso, mother of pearl and glass paste, 152 × 594 cm, they display a scene from the fairy tale play by Maurice Maeterlinck, created as the centrepiece of the Viennese music room of Fritz Waerndorfer, in 1907. As of 2000, it is on permanent display at the Austrian MAK in Vienna
22. *Ophelia*, 1908, watercolour.
23. *The Mysterious Garden*, 1911, watercolour and ink over pencil on vellum mounted on board, 45.1 × 47.7 cm, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art
24. *The Opera of the Seas*, 1915, watercolour
25. *La mort parfumée*, 1921, watercolour gouache gold paint on paper
26. Menu card design, c. 1911, menu card design for Miss Cranston's Cafes at the 1911 Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry
27. The Room de Luxe at the Willow Tea Rooms, 1903, recreated, photograph by Dave Souza 2006.

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Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 'Toshie' (1868-1928)

Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1864-1933)

Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1864-1933)

Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), 1893, aged 25

- This is Mackintosh known as 'Toshie' wearing his best jacket and the sort of bow tie artists wore at the time, not the sort he would have worn to work. Mackintosh was described by a friend as "**the straightest, sincerest, and simplest person I have ever known (like his work) and a tremendous lover of beauty in all its forms ... A quiet and rather shy man generally, he was a keen and untiring talker when his interest was roused.**"
- Although I will be concentrating on Mackintosh in today's talk but (CLICK) **Margaret Macdonald** was one

of the **most gifted and successful women artists in Scotland** at the beginning of the 20th century, her output was wide-ranging and included watercolours, graphics, metalwork, and textiles. Her greatest achievements were in gesso, a plaster-based medium that she used to make decorative panels. She married Mackintosh in 1900 and he acknowledged her genius as an artist and pattern maker.

- The **highpoint of their careers** was when they were **invited to Vienna** to show their work at the **8th Secession exhibition in 1900**. The whole of Vienna was entranced by their work and it is said they were **taken through the streets on a rose-covered carriage and had flowers strewn at their feet**. **Gustav Klimt**



Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1864-1933)  
Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), 1893, aged 25

- He was born in Glasgow the fourth of eleven children and his father was chief clerk of the City of Glasgow Police. As I said, by 1900 they were **both recognised across Europe as leading artists** and by 1910 (aged 42) he was an established architect but he received few new commissions and **in 1914 he became so disillusioned he decided to give up architecture for watercolour painting**. Margaret became ill and after her mother died in 1912 her output declined. They moved to **southern France** where he continued to paint but he failed to establish himself as a watercolour artists and they both died little known.
- Margaret Macdonald (1864-1933) was born in Wolverhampton and her father was a wealthy colliery manager. In 1890, **when she was 26 they moved to Glasgow** and she and her **sister Frances** enrolled at the **Glasgow School of Art** as day students. In 1896 they opened the **Macdonald Sisters Studio** together and produced book illustrations, gesso panels, embroidery and leaded glasswork inspired by Celtic art.
- She first met Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928) and **his friend Herbert MacNair at Glasgow School of Art two years after they started** (1892) and within another two years they were exhibiting their work together. It was the the year after they met (1893) that he had this portrait photograph taken.
- **Fifty years after his death two polls of British architects voted him the most important British architect of the previous 150 years** and the Glasgow School of Art, which he designed, was voted the **most important example of modern British architecture** although, sadly, it was gutted by fire in 2018. It is alleged he said **"I had talent, Margaret had genius"** and in a letter to his wife he wrote, **"Remember, you are half if not three-quarters in all my architectural work."**





Back Row: Frances Macdonald. Middle row (L-R): Margaret Macdonald, Katherine Cameron, Janet Aitken, Agnes Raeburn, Jessie Keppie, John Keppie. Front row (L-R): Herbert McNair, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, photograph taken 1890-95

- This is photograph of the two of them when they were students at the Glasgow School of Art (1865-1933). The group was known as '**The Immortals**'.
- (CLICK) Although I am talking about Margaret Macdonald (1865-1933) and Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928) there were four of them, known as **The Glasgow Four or simply The Four**, and they worked together. The other two were Mackintosh's best friend **Herbert McNair** (1868-1955), known as Bertie, at the front and **Margaret's sister Frances Macdonald** (1873-1921) seen here in the back row with her arms out.
- They were part of a larger group that included the **Glasgow Boys and the Glasgow Girls** and they created what is called the **Glasgow Style, a form of the Modern Style sometimes called British Art Nouveau**.
- They were all interested in producing work with a meaning, a symbolic meaning. They took ideas from nature but with Celtic, that is, **pagan overtones**, like nature everything they did was **inspired by the organic and the sexual**, based on the seed, the root and stem, the leaf, the bud and the flower. Mackintosh wrote "Art is the flower, life is the green leaf". Although uncontroversial today **at the time their work was seen to be provocative** and the more intimate work was produced by Margaret and Frances.
- (CLICK) One other person to mention is **Jessie Keppie** (1868-1951). She was a leading artist in the group and was **alleged to be engaged to Mackintosh**. It is said he broke off the engagement to marry Margaret in 1900 but it is likely they simply had an informal understanding as no formal engagement was ever announced in the press.

#### NOTES

- "**Buildings should celebrate joy in nature, grace of form, gladness of colour, the functional and the lyrical**" Mackintosh.
- **The Glasgow School** is a broad term that covers the leading artists in the city from about 1890 to 1910 and it includes The Four, the Glasgow Boys and the Glasgow Girls. It created the Glasgow Style a form of the Modern Style also called British Art Nouveau. It was followed by the four Scottish Colourists that worked from about 1915 to the start of World War Two.
- **The Four** were Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1865-1933), Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), Herbert McNair (1868-1955) and Frances Macdonald McNair (1873-1921).
- **The Glasgow Boys** were a large group influenced by Japanese prints, French Realism including Jules Bastien-Lepage, and James Abbott McNeill Whistler. The first wave were James Paterson (1854-1932) and William York Macgregor (1855-1923), the second wave was represented in Joseph Crawhall (1861-1913),

Thomas Millie Dow (1848-1919), James Guthrie (1859–1930), George Henry (1858–1943), E. A. Hornel (1864–1933), James Whitelaw Hamilton (1860-1932) and E. A. Walton (1860–1922). The third wave of artists were David Gauld (1865–1936), William Kennedy (1859–1918), John Lavery (1856–1941), Harrington Mann (1864-1937), Stuart Park (1862–1933), William Wells (1872–1923), David Young Cameron (1865–1945), Alexander Ignatius Roche (1861–1923), Arthur Melville (1855–1904), Thomas Corsan Morton (1859-1928), James Nairn (1859–1904), George Pirie (1863-1946) and John Quinton Pringle (1864–1925).

- **The Glasgow Girls** included Margaret and Frances MacDonald, both of whom were members of The Four, Jessie M. King (1875-1949), Annie French (1872-1965), Helen Paxton Brown (1876-1956), Jessie Wylie Newbery (1864-1948), Ann Macbeth (1875-1948), Bessie MacNicol (1869-1904), Norah Neilson Gray (1882-1931), Stansmore Dean (1866-1944), Dorothy Carleton Smyth (1880-1933), Eleanor Allen Moore (1885-1955), De Courcy Lewthwaite Dewar (1878-1959), the silversmith Agnes Banks Harvey and Christian Jane Fergusson (1876-1957).
- **The Scottish Colourists** were Samuel Peploe (1871-1935), Francis Cadell (1883-1937), John Duncan Fergusson (1874-1961) and Leslie Hunter (1877-1931).
- Mackintosh worked at Honeyman and Keppie an architectural practice where he started his first major project to design the Glasgow Herald Building (now known as the Lighthouse) in 1899. He was engaged to marry his employer's sister Jessie Keppie, seen here second from the right. His friend and fellow apprentice at the partnership was Herbert MacNair and the two attended the Glasgow School of Art in the evening between 1888 and 1894.
- "Buildings should celebrate joy in nature, grace of form, gladness of colour, the functional and the lyrical" Mackintosh.
- He had no honeymoon as he had already been invited to Vienna. It was their high point of their life. Josef Hoffman was his spiritual brother. It was the happiest time of his life, he was feted, taken through the streets.
- The gesemskunstwerk, the total work of art, they saw that in Mackintoshes work, it was a revelation. The toast was to our master, you who has show us the way. When he went back he produced his most innovative and creative work.
- He was asked to design a music room when he was in Vienna. Hoffman was inspired by Morris' Arts and Crafts. They wanted Mackintosh to be their spiritual leader to take them into the twentieth century. He wrote them a letter which inspired them to go forward.
- **Cathryn (Kate) Clanston** was his staunchest supporter in Glasgow. The tea room was important to provide an alternative to pubs and a venue for women. Clanston was the leader of the movement. 21 years of tea room work his greatest was the Willow tea Rooms in Sauchiehall Street. The Salon Deluxe was for women. He had mirrors all round and silk on the walls. He designed everything the uniforms
- He had three great patrons Newbery, Clanston and

Walter Blackie for the Hill House as not many would give themselves up to the architects ideas. He designed carpets, furniture, bathroom showers, grates even the fire irons.

- Symbolism quickly became a thing of the past. The school was called decadent, he went in to a depression, became ill, in 1914 they couple went to Walberswick, a haven to begin with. They held small tea parties for other artists. He used a stick because of a limp, he smoked a pipe. He wore a deerstalker. He took up botanical sketching there was talk of a commission from Austria but then Britain went to war. He was thought to be a German spy, the army arrived and searched his house and found letters in German he was asked to leave the eastern counties and they went to London. They had a studio in Chelsea but almost no work coming in. He started painting elaborate paintings of flowers. Only one patron during the war Basset-loake to convert an existing house, the Durngate house. It is very different, black, dark, diagonals, all predicting Art Deco ten years before. The days of white had long gone. It was his last job. In the early 1920s his glory days were long gone. He wanted to design buildings but all his possible commissions came to nothing so the couple went to southern France to save money. They were 55 and 59 years old. They started as a long holiday but they stayed there moving around Pont-Van trying to speak French, he painted 41 watercolours, he shifted rocks and buildings to create the composition he wanted. He had to go back to London to see doctors and in his letters he sounds lost. He was earning less than a navvy. The paintings are placid, an abstract harmony, his sadness turned to love of Margaret, his surrounding, his art. He had an absolute belief in beauty. Beauty improves the quality of life. A lump had appeared on his tongue, it was cancer of the tongue, and his tongue was removed and he wore a radium collar. He couldn't speak. He died December 1928. Margaret lived on for another four years. She returned to their hotel in France and she never talked about 'Toshie' again.
- If he came back he would be astonished at his reputation today. He is held by many to be the greatest architect of the twentieth century.

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Margaret Macdonald (1865-1933), 1895, sketch for *The Birth and Death of the Winds screen*



Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), c. 1893, Design for the Diploma of Honour, Glasgow School of Art

Margaret Macdonald (1865-1933), 1893 Invitation for the Glasgow School of Art Club 'At Home'  
Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), c. 1893, Diploma of Honour, Glasgow School of Art

- These are works by Macdonald and Mackintosh when they were students at the **Glasgow School of Art**. She was a **day student** and Mackintosh was an **evening student as he worked for a firm of architects called Honeyman and Keppie**. And, yes, Jessie Keppie was the younger sister of one of the partners of the firm he worked for (John Keppie 1862-1945).
- The **headmaster** of the school, **Francis Newbery** saw **Macdonald and Mackintosh were working in a similar style and introduced them** to each other. We can see the similarity in these two works. The style was influenced by Celtic art merged with Arts and Crafts and the linear style of artists like **Aubrey Beardsley**.
- Mackintosh fellow student and best friend was **Herbert McNair** and he met Margaret's sister **Frances** and they **married in 1899**. Macdonald and Mackintosh **married in 1900**. The four of them worked closely together and worked in very similar style and, as I said, became known as **The Four** and they established what is called the **Glasgow Style** of art and design. Their designs were seen as influenced by Beardsley and **were called 'ghoulish' and they referred to as 'The Spook School'**.

#### NOTES

- **The Four or the Spook School**, Margaret and Frances Macdonald, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and James Herbert McNair 1890-1914, including the Celtic Revival, the Arts and Crafts Movement, and Japonisme, which found favour throughout the modern art world of continental Europe and helped define the Art Nouveau style.
- **Arts and Crafts and the Celtic Revival**, Glasgow-born designer and theorist **Christopher Dresser** (1834–1904) was one of the first and most important, independent designers, a pivotal figure in the Aesthetic Movement and a major contributor to the allied Anglo-Japanese movement. He began attending the Government School of Design in London when he was 13.
- Edinburgh Social Union in 1885, which included a number of significant figures in the Arts and Craft and Aesthetic movements, became part of an attempt to facilitate a Celtic Revival
- Early 1890s - **Glasgow School** including the **Glasgow Boys** — James Guthrie (1859–1930), Joseph Crawhall (1861–1913), George Henry (1858–1943) and E. A. Walton (1860–1922), Lavery continued to 1930s
- **Scottish Colourists** — (forerunner William McTaggart), John Duncan Fergusson (1874–1961), Francis Cadell (1883–1937), Samuel Peploe (1871–1935) and Leslie Hunter (1877–1931, active 1915-1930s, the first Scottish modern artists.



Glasgow Herald Building, 1895

Glasgow Herald Building, 10 Mitchell Lane, Glasgow

- Mackintosh had joined Honeyman and Keppie when he was 21 (in 1889) and **became a partner in 1904** and it was **renamed Honeyman, Keppie & Macintosh**. Later, **in 1913, the partnership suffered economic hardships** and he **resigned to form his own practice** but without much success. But that is in the future. Let us start with this, his first assignment.
- It was the **Herald Building** and was a warehouse at the back of the printing office of the **Glasgow Herald**. Mackintosh designed the building with its prominent **tower which contained an 8,000-gallon water tank** to protect the building in case of fire.
- Mackintosh described **Scottish medieval castles** as 'close to his heart' and he thought it was the only style wholly indigenous to Scotland. This building is inspired by **Scottish baronial castles with Arts and Crafts elements and Art Nouveau ornamentation**.
- It is now home to the Lighthouse, Scotland's Centre for Design and Architecture (closed as at January 2023).

#### REFERENCES

<https://www.crmsociety.com/venue/the-lighthouse/>

<https://gillonj.tripod.com/MacKintosh/>



Martyrs' School, commissioned in 1895

- This is **Martyrs' School** designed by Mackintosh **the same year, 1895**. It was built on the street where Mackintosh was born.
- (CLICK) It combines elements of **Arts and Crafts with Art Nouveau**. **British Art Nouveau also called the Modern Style was an evolution of Arts and Crafts**. There are **Art Nouveau details round the doorways**, which indicate separate entrances for Boys, Girls and Infants. The Martyrs' School is built in solid red sandstone and topped by three ventilators with decorated finials.
- The most important person creating the **Modern Style in Glasgow at this time was Mackintosh** and it featured in *The Studio* and other magazines and was later **made popular by the Liberty department store**.
- (CLICK) Despite a restricted brief he was able to introduce these **imposing central roof trusses** and lime-wash plaster walls.
- Over the years it has served as various schools until it became an arts centre and it is now part of Glasgow City Council's care services.



Glasgow School of Art, the central facade was completed in 1899, with the first phase of the building's development

- **This is his masterwork—the Glasgow School of Art where he was a student a few years before.** It was **started in 1896** and built in two phases and the second phase was not **completed until 1909**.
- In the 1890s **Glasgow was the sixth largest city in Europe**, a fifth of all ships in the world were made on the River Clyde in Glasgow, and it was a centre for artistic innovation.
- Mackintosh was given the freedom he needed. At a public lecture in 1893, he argued that architects and designers must be given artistic freedom and independence. He began to produce **designs for furniture, metalwork and graphic art** often in partnership with the other three of the Four.
- **The Glasgow School of Art has been destroyed by fire** but I will now show you several views of the building **taken before the fire** so that you can get an insight into its innovative features...

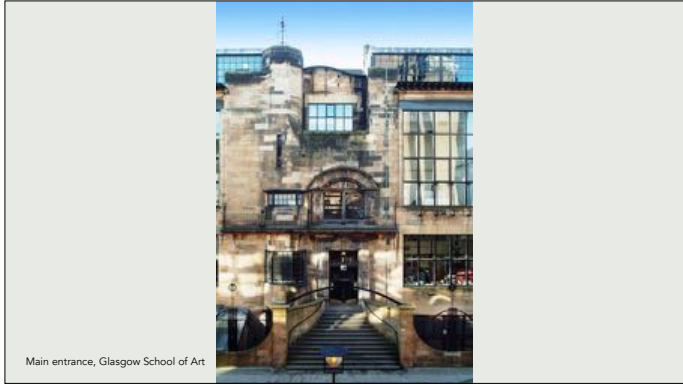
#### NOTES

- "Back in Glasgow, Mackintosh's projects for Honeyman and Keppie during the early 1890s displayed an increased maturity. His design for the Glasgow Herald Building (1894) incorporated some cutting-edge technology including a hydro-pneumatic lift and fire-resistant diatomite concrete flooring. Later at Martyr's Public School he introduced the central roof trusses.
- In 1896 Mackintosh gained his most substantial commission, to design a new building for the Glasgow School of Art. This was to be his masterwork. The building was constructed in two distinct phases, 1897-99 and 1907-09, due to a lack of money and this enabled him to amend and fully integrate his original design (of 1896) which owed much to Scotland's earlier baronial tradition with a second half to the building that looked very much to the 20th century through its use of materials and technology. Most dramatic of all the interiors was the new Library (completed in 1909), which was a complex space of timber posts and beams. Its construction owed much to traditional Japanese domestic interiors but ultimately the building was an eclectic mix of styles and influences." (www.crmsociety website)

#### REFERENCES

<https://www.dezeen.com/2018/06/05/glasgow-school-of-art-charles-rennie-mackintosh-masterwork-150-anniversary/>

<https://www.crmsociety.com/about-mackintosh/charles-rennie-mackintosh/>

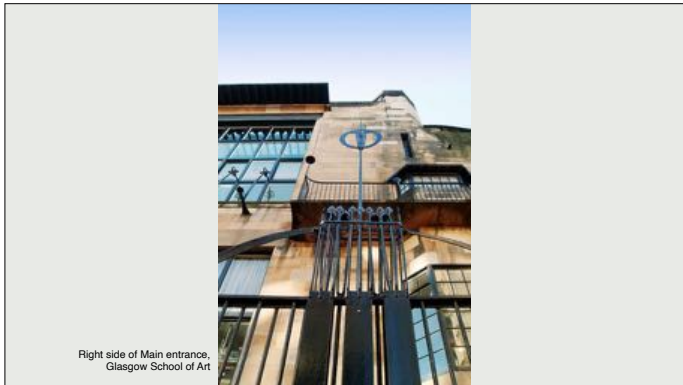


Main entrance, Glasgow School of Art

- This is the main entrance. **The headmaster's office and studio** are stacked above the entrance on the building's northern facade. The headmaster's room is positioned above the entrance, with a balcony crossing the window. Above that is his studio, which is accessed by a **stair tower** that extends beyond the roofline like a **castle's turret**.
- His concern was to build around the needs of individual people with the flourish of Art Nouveau and **the simplicity of Japanese forms**. This was the building that **helped make his international reputation** and it is affectionately known as 'The Mac'.

#### REFERENCES

<https://www.dezeen.com/2018/06/05/glasgow-school-of-art-charles-rennie-mackintosh-masterwork-150-anniversary/>



Right side of Main entrance, Glasgow School of Art

- This is looking up to the right of the main entrance. We can see the **oriel windows on the right**, the art nouveau elements, the leaf-like balustrade consisting of a sequence of Japanese-influenced symbols on stalks
- The building is top of most critics' list of the most innovative structures ever built in the UK, it was once described (by Sir Christopher Frayling, Rector of London's Royal College of Art) as "**the only art school in the world where the building is worthy of the subject...this is a work of art in which to make works of art.**" [1]

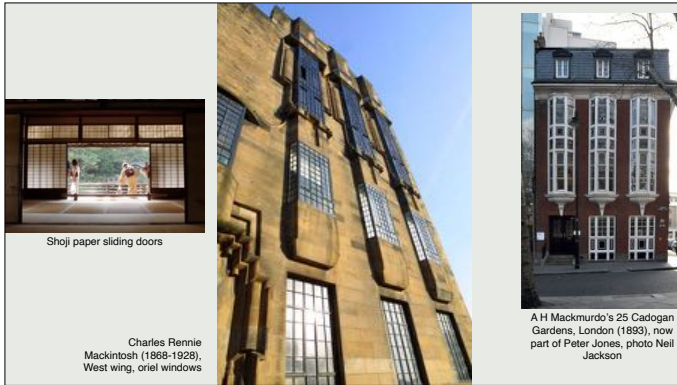
#### NOTES

- Situated on a steep hill leading down to Sauchiehall Street, The Mac's main north-facing façade fronts Renfrew Street, at the top of Garnethill, in the Glasgow city centre.

#### REFERENCES

[1] <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/united-kingdom/scotland/articles/a-creative-masterpiece-mackintosh-and-the-glasgow-school-of-art/>  
<https://www.dezeen.com/2018/06/05/glasgow-school-of-art-charles-rennie-mackintosh-masterwork-150-anniversary/>  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-44506140>





Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), West wing, oriel windows

Shoji paper sliding doors in the Rinshunkaku at Sankei-en (Important Cultural Property)

A H Mackmurdo (1851-1942), 25 Cadogan Gardens, London (1893), photo Neil Jackson

- The south and east sections are more austere but the **west wing, built during the second phase of work**, features a far livelier design, with dramatic oriel windows projecting out from the sandstone surface.
- (CLICK) It has been likened to a Japanese Shogun's palace but there is nothing really Japanese about them except perhaps for **their similarity to a Japanese room or window divider (a shoji)**. (CLICK) It is more likely they were influenced by a building at 25 Cadogan Gardens (built in 1893, pronounced 'ku-DUG-an') that Mackintosh saw on his visits to Hammersmith to visit friends (the German promoter of English Arts and Crafts Hermann and Anna Muthesius) at The Priory, Hammersmith. The Cadogan Gardens building was later fitted out in a Japanese style.

#### NOTES

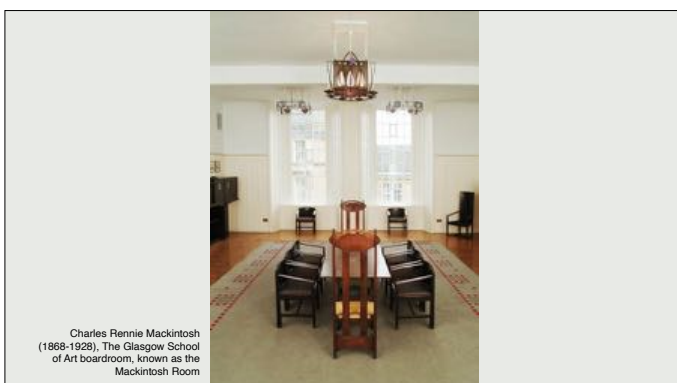
- Cadogan Gardens was built for Japanophile and follower of Whistler, Mortimer Menpes (pronounced, 'mem-pes' or 'mempes', 1855-1938).
- Hermann Muthesius (pronounced 'moo-tay-ze-oos', 1861-1927) was an architect who wrote a book called *The English House* in 1904-5. The couple were Anglophiles and lived in The Priory, Hammersmith from 1896 to 1903. He was interested in the Arts and Crafts movement and visited Glasgow and became a good friend of the Mackintoshes. In 1905 he wrote about the Willow Tearooms in Glasgow. He wrote about Mackintosh's unrewarded struggle to **"hold up the banner of Beauty in this dense jungle of ugliness."**

#### REFERENCES

<https://www.dezeen.com/2018/06/05/glasgow-school-of-art-charles-rennie-mackintosh-masterwork-150-anniversary/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-44506140>

<https://www.78derngate.org.uk/archive/found-in-translation-mackintosh-muthesius-and-japan>



The Glasgow School of Art boardroom, known as the Mackintosh Room.

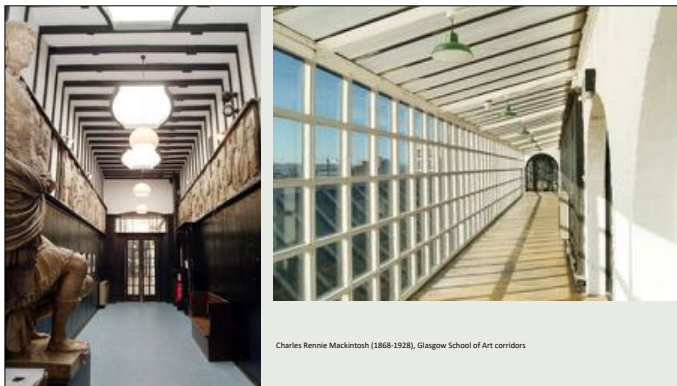
- This was designed as the School's boardroom and is now known as the Mackintosh room.
- Like his contemporary Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959), Mackintosh's architectural designs often included extensive specifications for the detailing, decoration, and furnishing of his buildings. The chairs, table, light fittings, everything in fact. This total design is what in German is called a **gesamtkunstwerk**, literally a 'total work of art'. The term was first used in 1827 but is usually associated with Richard Wagner (1813-1883) who first used it in two essays in 1849. Architectural



writers typically use the term to indicate that the architect was responsible for the **total design of the structure, fittings and furnishings**.

#### REFERENCES

<https://www.dezeen.com/2018/06/05/glasgow-school-of-art-charles-rennie-mackintosh-masterwork-150-anniversary/>



- On the left is a first-floor corridor on the east side of Mackintosh Building between the Mackintosh Room and what was the Mackintosh Museum before it was destroyed by fire.
- On the right is an upstairs connecting corridor with views over Glasgow.

#### REFERENCES

<https://www.dezeen.com/2018/06/05/glasgow-school-of-art-charles-rennie-mackintosh-masterwork-150-anniversary/>  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-44506140>



- The Mackintosh library before the fire with its exciting juxtapositions of space. It was in the west wing and was built in 1907-9 during the second phase of construction.

#### REFERENCES

<https://www.dezeen.com/2018/06/05/glasgow-school-of-art-charles-rennie-mackintosh-masterwork-150-anniversary/>  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-44506140>



Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), Glasgow School of Art Library, 1907

- The library was entirely original, **a jewel in his masterwork**. It was suspended from the room above, the structure was state of the art. **It was like entering a forest**, nature is everywhere. It is calm, serene with a sense of light. Every tiny detail is thought out.
- (CLICK) The majority of this **detailing was designed by Margaret Macdonald**.
- (CLICK) On 23 May 2014 the building was ravaged **by fire** caused by a **canister of expanding foam** placed next to a hot projector. The library was destroyed, but firefighters managed to save the rest of

the building.

- (CLICK) **Then a second fire in June 2018, left only the burnt-out shell.** In January 2022 a three-year enquiry into the fire failed to find any cause.
- The building is currently surrounded by scaffolding to support the damaged walls and £12 million has been spent on clearing the debris. The second stage to complete the building structure should be completed by 2024 and the current plan is to open before 2030.

#### REFERENCES

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-47494058>



**Queen's Cross Church** - The Mackintosh Church, 1896-99

- This is **Queen's Cross Church** One of his **most intact and original** buildings.
- Mackintosh was assigned the commission in 1896 and the church was completed in 1899. The Free Church was evangelical and Calvinist and required **simplicity in design**. It does not have a huge tower and was designed to be squat like a Scottish castle.
- (CLICK) The **stained glass windows are typically Mackintosh in the simplicity** of their design. It has a **barrel-vaulted roof with a forty foot span** and (CLICK) the pulpit is carved with Mackintosh designs.
- (CLICK) The church was decommissioned in the 1970s and is now the home of the the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society.

#### REFERENCES

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen%27s\\_Cross\\_Church,\\_Glasgow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen%27s_Cross_Church,_Glasgow)  
<https://mackintoshchurch.com>



**Scotland Street School, 1903-06**

Rowallan Castle (16th century, between Glasgow and Ayr)

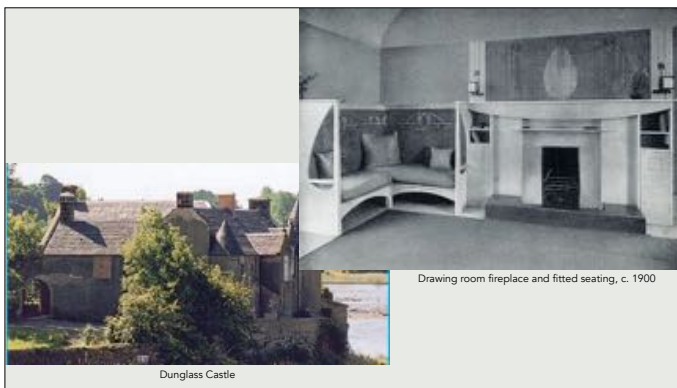
Falkland Palace (13th century, between Edinburgh and Dundee)

- This is the **last Mackintosh building to see in the centre of Glasgow**. Later I will show you the **House for an Art Lover** which is in a park just outside and **The Hill House** which is in Helensburgh about 25 miles away just past the south of Loch Lomond.
- The Scotland Street School, designed **between 1903 and 1906**, now one of Glasgow's **main architectural attractions**. Mackintosh based the design of the school

on (CLICK) **Rowallan Castle in Ayrshire** and (CLICK) **Falkland Palace in Fife**. The building features a pair of windowed Scottish baronial style tower staircases and a tiled Drill Hall. The school is an **important example of the Modern Style (British Art Nouveau style)**. During the building's construction, Mackintosh frequently **battled the school board** about the design and the cost, which went over budget.

- The school board found the **costly details such as thistle forms and seed pods on the door were 'absolutely objectionable'** but Mackintosh went ahead anyway.

#### REFERENCES



Drawing room fireplace and fitted seating, c. 1900, from Thomas Howarth, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2nd edn, 1977, plate 11A, The Hunterian, University of Glasgow, 2014

- In 1900, the year they married, the **MacDonald family moved into the historic Dunglass Castle**, on the banks of the Clyde and the **interiors were remodelled by Mackintosh**. Scandalously, although it is a public right of way, the **Esso oil company ExxonMobil has banned access**.
- (CLICK) Margaret and Mackintosh created their first white room there and it is likely **Margaret made the gesso overmantel for the drawing room**.
- Margaret and Charles married on 22 August 1900 (in St Augustine's Episcopal Church) in nearby Dumbarton. They had no children and set up their first home in Mains Street (on Blythswood Hill, now Blythswood Street), Glasgow.

#### NOTES

- In 1904, after he had completed several successful building designs, Mackintosh became a partner in Honeyman & Keppie, and the company became Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh. When economic hardships were causing many architectural practices to close, in 1913, he resigned from the partnership and attempted to open his own practice.



Drawing room, 120 Mains Street, Glasgow 1900-01.

- This is 120 Mains Street (now Blythswood Street). It had full height windows and let in so much light they had to fit gauze curtains. **Much of the furniture was designed by Mackintosh**. Macdonald made some panels but it looks as a set piece largely by Mackintosh.
- Today it **looks modern with its light, open atmosphere and slender lines** but imagine **just how innovative** it was then. It is a world away from a **conventional Victorian room** with its dark furniture, heavy furnishings and walls covering and velvet curtains. It is light, open and spacious and was a step towards their installation in Vienna.

#### NOTES

- From 1898 McNair was a full-time instructor at University College, Liverpool and the following year he married Frances and they both moved to Liverpool giving birth the following year to their only child (Sylvan).
- **In 1898, before they married, Mackintosh produced an exciting scheme for the 1901 Glasgow International Exhibition but the firm failed to win. If it had succeeded then the firms and Mackintoshes later life might have been very different.**



The Four at the Eighth Exhibition of the Vienna Secession in 1900.

- The work of **The Four** had been **publicised in The Studio in 1897** and had come to the attention of Josef Hoffman of the **Vienna Secession**. As a result, one of its **wealthy backers Fritz Waerndorfer visited** the Mackintoshes in Glasgow in 1900 and they were **invited to exhibit at the Eighth Vienna Secession exhibition** at the end of the year.
- The **Vienna Secession was an art movement, closely related to Art Nouveau**, that was formed in 1897 by a group of Austrian painters, graphic artists, sculptors and architects, including Gustav Klimt.
- The whole of Vienna was entranced by their work and it is said they were carried through the streets in a rose-bedecked wagon and had flowers strewn at their feet. Klimt saw their work and we can see their influence in his famous Beethoven Frieze. As I said at the beginning he went on to become famous and wealthy and they ended up forgotten and penniless.
- **This is one of their rooms at the exhibition.** The clock (far right of the left picture) is by Frances and Margaret. The May Queen on the right is by Margaret Macdonald.

#### NOTES

- **The Vienna Secession** (German: Wiener Secession; also known as the Union of Austrian Artists, or Vereinigung Bildender Künstler Österreichs) is an art movement, closely related to Art Nouveau, that was formed in 1897 by a group of Austrian painters, graphic artists, sculptors and architects, including Josef Hoffman, Koloman Moser, Otto Wagner, and Gustav Klimt. They resigned from the Association of Austrian Artists in protest against its support for more traditional artistic styles. In 1905 the group itself split, when some of the most prominent members, including Klimt, Wagner, and Hoffmann, resigned in a dispute over priorities, but it continued to function, and still functions today.
- **The Studio: An Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art** was an illustrated fine arts and decorative arts magazine published in London from 1893 until 1964. The founder and first editor was Charles Holme. The magazine exerted a major influence on the



development of the Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts movements. It was absorbed into Studio International magazine in 1964.



Gustav Klimt (1862–1918), *Pallas Athena*, 1898, 75 × 75 cm, Historisches Museum der Stadt, Vienna



Gustav Klimt (1862–1918), *Blind Man*, 1896, 66 × 53.2 cm, Leopold Museum, Vienna

Gustav Klimt (1862–1918), *Pallas Athena*, 1898, 75 × 75 cm, Historisches Museum der Stadt, Vienna

Gustav Klimt (1862–1918), *Blind Man*, 1896, 66 × 53.2 cm, Leopold Museum, Vienna

- The artists of the **Vienna Secession** were particularly drawn to the work of Macdonald and Mackintosh who, like their Viennese counterparts, **believed strongly in the artistic ideal that there should be no division between fine art and decorative art and design.**
- In 1903, **Josef Hoffman** and others (Koloman Moser) set up an artists' production company, the famous Vienna Workshops (Wiener Werkstatte) and they cited the work of **Macdonald and Mackintosh as the inspiration** for their designs and architecture.
- The leading Secession artist was **Gustav Klimt** and I am showing you two of his works from before 1900, which is when he met the Mackintoshes.

#### NOTES

- In 1905 the group itself split, when some of the most prominent members, including Klimt, Wagner, and Hoffmann, resigned in a dispute over priorities, but it continued to function, and still functions today.

#### References

<https://www.gustav-klimt.com/images/paintings/Pallas-Athena.jpg>

<https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/stories/art-and-design/mackintosh/chapters/margaret-macdonald-mackintosh/>



Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1864-1933), *The May Queen* (detail), 1900. Made for the Ladies' Luncheon Room, Miss Cranston's Ingram Street Tearooms, Glasgow. Gesso on burlap (hessian), scrim, twine, glass beads, thread, and tin leaf, 158.7 × 456.9 cm overall, Glasgow Museums

Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1864-1933), *The May Queen* (detail), 1900. Made for the Ladies' Luncheon Room, Miss Cranston's Ingram Street Tearooms, Glasgow. Gesso on burlap (hessian), scrim, twine, glass beads, thread, and tin leaf, 158.7 × 456.9 cm overall, Glasgow Museums: Acquired by Glasgow Corporation as part of the Ingram Street Tearooms, 1950. © CSG CIC Glasgow Museums Collection. Courtesy American Federation of Arts

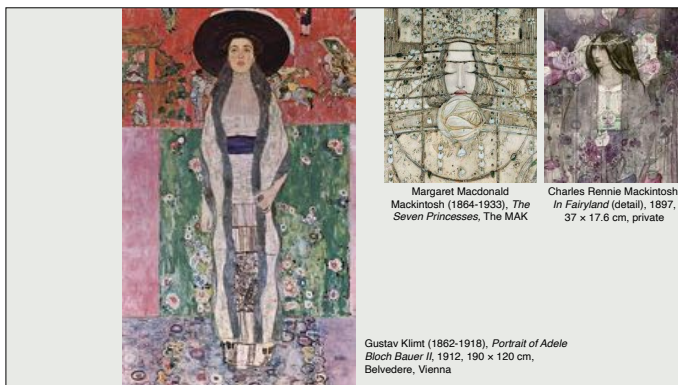
- This is a detail from *The May Queen*. We shall see how the floating figures with their filmy robes and the decorative patterns linking them found their way in to Klimt's work. This had a companion piece by

Mackintosh called *The Wassail* and the two were made for the White Room at **Miss Cranston's Ingram Street tea room, of which more later.**

- These collaborations, and the importance of the work and artistic vision of Margaret herself are now much more recognised by art and design historians. **It is said that when the couple exhibited in 1900, it was mostly Margaret who was feted by the Viennese.**

#### NOTES

- Wassailing is a Twelfth Night tradition of drinking and making a noise. It was based on an ancient tradition of singing to the trees in the orchards in the hope of ensuring a good harvest.
- The raised embossing is twine soaked in gesso and



Gustav Klimt (1862-1918), *Portrait of Adele Bloch Bauer II*, 1912, 190 x 120 cm, Belvedere, Vienna

Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1864-1933), *The Seven Princesses* (detail), The MAK, Vienna

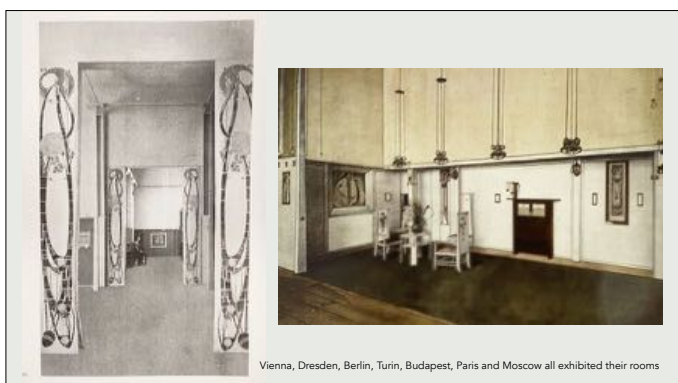
Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *In Fairyland* (detail), 1897, 37 x 17.6 cm, private

- Another example of their influence. On the left is *Portrait of Adele Bloch Bauer* by Klimt and to its right one of the seven sleeping princesses and an example of Mackintosh's work. **It is important to understand that at the time Margaret MacDonald was considered one of the leading European artists working in this style.**

#### REFERENCES

<https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20160920-who-was-the-woman-in-gold>

<https://www.mackintoshprints.co.uk/the-seven-princesses/>



Vienna, Dresden, Berlin, Turin, Budapest, Paris and Moscow all exhibited their rooms.

- Their rooms and artworks and **their exciting new style were exhibited in Vienna, Dresden, Berlin, Turin, Budapest, Paris and Moscow.** Both artists became widely known across Europe Margaret Macdonald as much as Charles Mackintosh. However, this only led to one commission on the Continent.
- **From 1900 to 1905 they gained recognition in Europe as pioneers of modernism** and their work made a great impact on young architects and designers. [1]
- **They had reached the high point of their careers.**

The world was amazed, they were famous but a number of factors led to their **gradual fall from view**.  
**One factor was that the period before World War One was a frantic period of artistic innovation** with:

- Post-Impressionism (c. 1885-1905),
- Fauvism (1905-10),
- Cubism (1907-1915),
- German Expressionism (1905-1925),
- Abstract Art (c. 1907 onwards),
- Futurism (1909-1914) and
- Constructivism (c. 1913-1930).

#### REFERENCES

[1] <http://www.ks-architects.com/en/column/>



Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), House for an Art Lover, 1901

Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), House for an Art Lover, 1901

- In 1901 Mackintosh and Macdonald sent in a **design for House for an Art Lover, a competition set by a German art magazine**. The competition brief was “a grand house in a thoroughly modern style”.
- **Unfortunately, their entry was disqualified because of late submission of some interior drawings**, though the judges praised the design.
- The house was not built in Mackintosh's lifetime. However, in the **late 1980s/1990s, nearly a century after the original design**, a team of architects (led by Graham Roxburgh) turned the plans into reality. They built it in a park on the outskirts of Glasgow.
- It is a building with a big personality, a completely unique venue and concept. **There was no compromise in the design because there was no constraint on cost and no sponsors to change the design**. There was a lot of controversy around the building as some thought it could never be built.
- Let's have a look inside...

#### NOTES

- Mackintosh believed that the supreme art was architecture as it united all the other arts. His work is designed as a complete unit, a gesamtkunstwerk. The individual units combine to create a dynamic tension between opposites—strong versus slender, light versus dark, masculine versus feminine, modern versus traditional and sensual versus spiritual.

#### REFERENCES

<https://www.dezeen.com/2018/06/08/charles-rennie-mackintosh-opinion-richard-murphy/>

<https://www.houseforanartlover.co.uk/about/charles-rennie-mackintosh>



Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), Dining Room, House for an Art Lover, 1901

#### THE DINING ROOM

- This represents a clear contrast with the typically dark and cluttered Victorian homes of the time. Such homes would usually have heavy plastered ceilings with a lot of ornamentation; in this room, Mackintosh uses a light barrel-vaulted ceiling which almost seems to disappear.
- The end wall is decorated with Mackintosh Roses. All the furniture, fixings and artwork was designed by the couple and has been faithfully reproduced for the house.

#### REFERENCES

<https://www.dezeen.com/2018/06/08/charles-rennie-mackintosh-opinion-richard-murphy/>

<https://artsandculture.google.com/story/mackintosh-house-for-an-art-lover/dgWhUX7kv0jBqQ?hl=en>



Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), House for an Art Lover, The Music Room, 1901

#### THE MUSIC ROOM

- This is Macdonald and Mackintosh's original drawing. We do not know which elements were by which artist but during the last year of his life he wrote to her, "You must remember that in all my architectural efforts you have been half if not three-quarters of them". I would not take that too literally but he certainly felt she was the inspiration and an important designer.
- The spectacular music room is the centrepiece of the house. The large bay windows make the most of the south-facing view, letting in a lot of light and connecting the room to the parkland beyond.
- This is the drawing and we can see the way it was built ...

#### REFERENCES

<https://www.dezeen.com/2018/06/08/charles-rennie-mackintosh-opinion-richard-murphy/>





Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), House for an Art Lover, The Music Room, 1901

Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), House for an Art Lover, The Music Room, 1901

- This is the way it looks today.

#### REFERENCES

<https://www.dezeen.com/2018/06/08/charles-rennie-mackintosh-opinion-richard-murphy/>



House for an Art Lover, rose motif, 1901

Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1864-1933), House for an Art Lover, rose motif, 1901

- This is a detail from the house that we saw at the beginning of this talk. It incorporates the Mackintosh Rose and was probably designed by Margaret.
- Let us now look at the famous tea rooms...

#### REFERENCES

<https://www.dezeen.com/2018/06/08/charles-rennie-mackintosh-opinion-richard-murphy/>



Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), Willow Tea Rooms, 1903

Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), Willow Tea Rooms, 1903

- The first tea room for **Kate Cranston was in Buchanan Street for which Mackintosh and Macdonald designed wall murals** consisting of elongated female figures surrounded by roses. In 1898 he worked on the Argyle Street tea room for which they designed the interior and the furniture.
- Then, in 1900 Cranston commissioned him to redesign the **entire tea room for Ingram Street**. This included the mural The May Queen we saw earlier.
- This led in 1903 to the commission to design this, a new tearoom in **Sauchiehall** (pronounced SOC-EE-HAWL) Street. For the first time, they were given responsibility for not only the interior design and furniture, but also for the full detail of the internal layout and exterior architectural treatment. The resultant building came to be known as the **Willow Tearooms**, and is the **best known and most important work** that they undertook for Miss Cranston.
- By the way, the name of the tearoom is linked to that of the street. "Sauchiehall" is derived from the Scottish words for 'willow' and 'meadow' ("saugh", the Scots word for a willow tree, and "haugh", meadow). So the area was once a meadow of willow trees.
- (CLICK) This is what it looks like today following a **£10 million restoration**.

#### NOTES

- "Having already worked on the interiors for Catherine Cranston's tea rooms at Argyle Street, Buchanan Street and Ingram Street, in 1903 Mackintosh was asked to oversee every aspect of the design for a new premises on Sauchiehall Street. Unlike previous projects for Cranston, this time the architect was able to address both the exterior and interior of the building – a terraced house that was largely gutted to allow for its transformation into the tea rooms."
- He removed the exterior mouldings and painted it white.

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<https://www.dezeen.com/2018/06/08/willow-tea->



Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1864-1933) and Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), William Tea Room, 1903, sitting area

- Mackintosh designed high-backed chairs to subdivide the space as he had at previous premises (including the Ingram Street and Argyle Street tea room).
- **The Willow Tea Rooms, along with the rest of Cranston's salons, were a huge success** and were lauded for their innovative interiors.
- Later, in 1917, Mackintosh completed his final commission in Glasgow – a basement extension for the Willow Tea Rooms, named **The Dug Out** in reference to the trenches of the first world war that was being fought at the time.
- Following the death of Cranston's husband in 1917, she sold her businesses including the Willow Tea Rooms. The tea room continued to operate, being incorporated into a department store in 1928 until its closure in the early 1980s.
- It was reopened in 1983 and continued to operate until 2014 when its owners went into receivership and the building was purchased by the The Willow Tea Rooms Trust. Following a £10 million renovation supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund the tea rooms opened in 2018 under the name of 'Mackintosh at the Willow'.

#### NOTES

- **"He was producing art deco designs way before art deco came into being,"** says curator Alison Brown. "He used Yves Klein blue before Yves Klein was born."
- The architect Edwin Lutyens exclaimed after his visit: **"The result is gorgeous! And a wee bit vulgar! ... It is all quite good, all just a little outré."** (unusual and rather shocking) [1]

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[1] <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/jun/07/charles-rennie-mackintosh-architect-of-choice-blade-runner-doctor-who-madonna-glasgow>



Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), Hill House in Helensburgh, 1902, National Trust of Scotland

Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), Hill House in Helensburgh, 1902, National Trust of Scotland, image: Lennox Herald

- Hill House is considered to be another masterpiece. It was **commissioned in 1902 by Walter Blackie**, a Glasgow book publisher. Every item of **furniture, textile and decorative feature was custom made** by Mackintosh and Margaret MacDonald
- When handing it over in 1904 Mackintosh said, "**It is not an Italian Villa, an English Mansion House, a Swiss Chalet, or a Scotch Castle. It is a Dwelling House.**" So let's look inside...

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Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1864-1933) and Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), Hill House in Helensburgh, entrance and hall, National Trust for Scotland

Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1864-1933) and Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), Hill House in Helensburgh, entrance and hall, National Trust for Scotland

- This is the main hallway with its dark pine squares and rectangles. One of the most theatrical aspects of the Hill House interior is the way it **switches between light and dark spaces**. The main hallway is framed by dark wood panelling and sits at a lower level than the striking and bright cream drawing room it leads into.
- The **Arts and Crafts** movement of the Edwardian era **rejected the mass-produced, machine-made goods created in factories**. Instead, it celebrated traditional craftsmanship and ideals. This individualism did not come cheap. The **total cost for the Hill House**, including the dark wood panelling, bespoke furniture, and the garden was **just over £9,500** (around £1.5 million today).



Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1864-1933) and Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), Hill House in Helensburgh, drawing room

Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1864-1933) and Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), Hill House in Helensburgh, drawing room

- Mackintosh carefully designed the building to give the Blackie family the **lifestyle they wanted**.
- As the **main family space**, the drawing room features **recesses designed for different family activities**. There's space for a **piano sing-along** as well as opportunities to **sit reading or painting** in the light of the window, or to **sit and play games or sit and talk**.
- **Most interiors** at the turn of the 20th century were deliberately **stuffy and cluttered with eclectic objects**. The elegant and bright drawing room at the Hill House was a distinctive change from the norm.
- **That brings us to the end of an important period**. In 1909 the Glasgow School of Art was completed and Honeyman, Keppie and Mackintosh attracted little further work as there was a recession in Glasgow. Also, around 1909 Macdonald's output diminished due to her failing health and Mackintosh's career was faltering.
- One job that did come in in 1912 was for a **new school** but Mackintosh seemed to have **little enthusiasm** for it, he missed deadlines and he **did not follow the brief**. His assistant accused Mackintosh of **excessive drinking** and took over the plans in 1916 and finished the project. **Mackintosh resigned in 1913** and the partnership dissolved in 1914.



Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928) and Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1864-1933), *Petunia*, Walberswick, 1914

Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928) and Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1864-1933), *Larkspur*, Walberswick, 1914

Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), *Petunia*, Walberswick, 1914

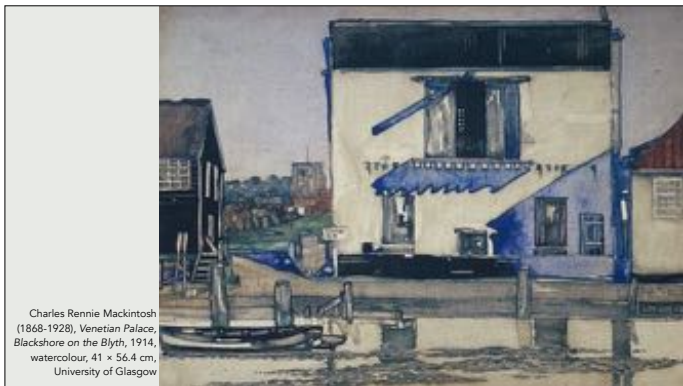
Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), *Larkspur*, Walberswick, 1914

- Mackintosh seems to have had some form of **nervous breakdown** and in July 2014 the Mackintoshes moved to **Walberswick, Suffolk**. The town was known as an artists colony visited by **Philip Wilson Steer and even some of the Glasgow Boys**. The Mackintoshes wanted a place to rest and recuperate and consider the future. The war led to a prohibition on new private building and **Mackintosh turned quickly to painting, mostly flower painting**.
- Over the next ten months he made over **40 watercolour paintings of flowers**, including both cultivated and wild plants. It is likely he worked from **pressed flowers** explaining the lack of depth. The drawings included his initials CRM and some, as shown here, included **Margaret's initials MMM**. It is thought **she accompanied him** rather than helped with the drawing or painting. He may have thought they would be saleable but only **one sale is recorded**. They were dogged by **financial problems until 1916** when he received £250 of fees due to him as a former partner of Honeyman, Keppie and Mackintosh.
- Mackintosh suffered from rheumatic fever as a child and **his vision in one eye was impaired** over a number of years. This resulted in what is called '**lazy eye**' (amblyopia') and observers said that when he was

working and concentrating one eye would almost close. Some think this resulted in a monocular view of the world which explains his **flattened flower paintings and landscapes**.

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Roger Billcliffe, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Art of The Four*, Frances Lincoln, 2017, p. 211-249 (Chapter 10: Solace)



Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), *Venetian Palace, Blackshore on the Blyth*, 1914, watercolour, 41 × 56.4 cm, University of Glasgow

- At Walberswick **Mackintosh started painting in a new style that he would continue later in France**. This is one of three watercolours he painted at Walberswick. He has adopted a **frontal approach** and is recording the architecture with the **colours applied loosely**.

#### NOTES

- Most of his works before this date were sketches of architectural details, Glasgow Cathedral at Sunset (1890) being a rare exception.



Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), *Walberswick*, 1914, watercolour, 28 × 38.2 cm, private collection

- His study of the mouth of the Blyth as it enters the North Sea. He has chosen a **high perspective and a flattened view**. There are some problems with the perspective either side of the river which may be a result of his eyesight problems.
- He wrote to a friend that **'the war nearly finished me off completely'**. **On 24 June 1915 the people of Walberswick found out he had done some work in Austria and Germany and the military searched his house and found some letters written in German. Even though they were years old and related to artistic and social affairs they served him with an order to leave the district** and they immediately travelled to London where, because of the cost, they took small rented accommodation at 43 Paultons Square, Chelsea. Today a house there would cost £4 million but it was then a poor area. They had no contacts and so were **desperately short of money**.
- He must have thought at this stage that cut flowers paintings would not sell so he put the Walberswick work away and **started on larger flower paintings**.





Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), *Anemones*, 1916, pencil and watercolour, 50.5 × 49.5 cm, private collection

Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), *Anemones*, 1916, pencil and watercolour, 50.5 × 49.5 cm, private collection

- **This is the first work Mackintosh painted in this new style and it was exhibited in 1916.** The textile in the background is one of **his new designs**. He would later do work for two textile printing companies.
- **The textile designs made him one of the leading textile designers in Britain at that time and he was written up in various magazines including *The Studio*.** By 1920 he was earning £200 a year from the sale of these textile designs although most of the designs were lost in the Second World War.
- In London they made **many friends including Augustus John** and many other artists and **seemed very happy**.



Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), *Yellow Tulips*, c. 1922-24, 49.5 × 49.5 cm, private collection

Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), *Yellow Tulips*, c. 1922-24, 49.5 × 49.5 cm, private collection

- This is another example of his **later flower paintings**. They often cut off the bottom of the vase to bring it into our space. Some had textile pattern backgrounds designed by Mackintosh and a few, like this one, had a room setting.
- **The tulips at the right are cut off invoking ideas of a Japanese print or a photographic snapshot.** The bookcase in the background interferes with the flowers but altogether the painting works well.



78 Derngate, Northampton, 1916



- He did get **one architectural commission**. In 1916, W.J. Bassett-Lowke commissioned him to design the **interior of his hall-parlour at 78 Derngate, Northampton**. It is now a museum and gallery open to the public.
- **Notice how dark the interior is compared with his earlier light rooms.** He also designed the furniture and received further commissions for copies of this work but it did not create a practice.
- **From 1916 to 1923 he painted a group of watercolour and oil paintings.** Sadly few sold even though they were exhibited in Britain and internationally probably because they were **not at the cutting edge** of contemporary British art. He produced

only 16 watercolours and three oils over the eight years he lived in London a remarkably small output and not nearly sufficient to create a living as an artist.

#### REFERENCES

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Charles Rennie Mackintosh  
(1868-1928), *Bouleternère*,  
1925, 44 × 44 cm



Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), *Bouleternère*, 1925, 44 × 44 cm

signed with initials in pencil lower right CRM, and inscribed verso (possibly by Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh), watercolour with traces of pencil  
Sold at Lyon & Turnbull in 2012 for £79,250

- Margaret Macdonald produced little after 1921 when her sister died. They visited **Worth Matravers in Dorset** and Mackintosh painted landscapes of the village. Then, in 1923, they left London for south-west France, near Perpignan. It is believed they chose the **south-west of France for its light** and because it was **much cheaper** to live than in London
- They visited villages all around Perpignan including Collioure (pronounced 'COL-EE\_O') , Ille-sur-Têt (pronounced 'EEL\_SUR\_TET') and Port Vendres. It seems likely that this painting of the village of **Bouleternère (pronounced 'BOOL\_TURN\_AIR') was made in 1925.**
- We do not know why he painted these landscapes but it is believed he had an offer of an exhibition in London if he could produce 40 or 50 such landscapes.
- (CLICK) If we compare a photograph it tells us a lot about Mackintosh's method. He did not seek to represent the village **accurately but to combine views in order to create a specific atmosphere. People are rarely in view and the perspective is flattened, houses have been added in order to create a pattern of rooftops. He adjusted the tones and colours and shapes** to create an imposing and intriguing cityscape that leads the eye around and up through an ascending pile of rooftops capped by an imposing church and bell.

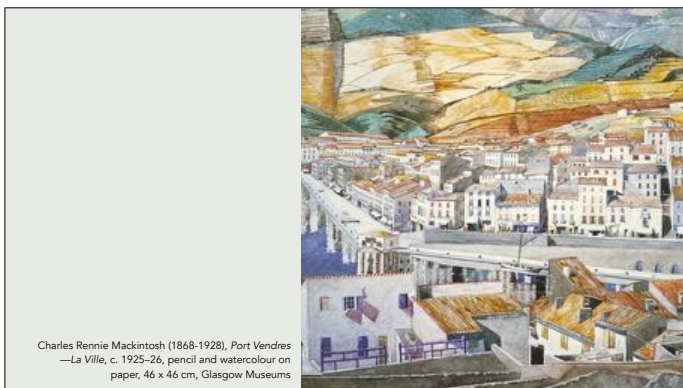
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Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), *Summer in the South*, 1924-1927, watercolour on paper, 28 x 38 cm, private collection, on long term loan to the National Galleries of Scotland

- This picture gives the atmosphere of **bright sunlight, and hard shadows**. It combines an architect's perspectival precision with the freedom of loosely painted trees and grass.
- In 1926 Margaret visited London for medical treatment and Mackintosh wrote a series of love letters to her nearly every day. It is in these that he says that she has genius and he has only talent.

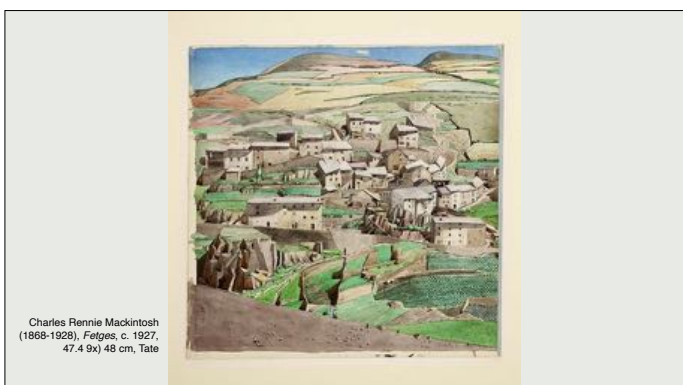


Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), *Port Vendres—La Ville*, c. 1925-26, pencil and watercolour on paper, 46 x 46 cm, Glasgow Museums, bought from the Mackintosh Memorial Exhibition, 1933, Glasgow Museums Collection

- Mackintosh has altered the perspective to hide the sky and create a backdrop of hills. The hills are low behind the houses and have been raised to create a backdrop.
- These are stunning paintings which, if they had been exhibited in London in the 1920s it is likely they would have been successful. Remember, after World War I there was a Return to Order as it was called when artists such as Paul and John Nash, Eric Ravilious and Laura Knight were successfully painting in a new realistic style.

#### NOTES

Port Vendres is south of Perpignan near the Spanish border.



Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), *Fetges*, c. 1927, 47.4 x 48 cm, Tate

- It is one of a group of watercolours executed in and around Port Vendres, most of which are dated 1927. It is Fetges (pronounced 'FEJ'), a hill town in the Pyrenees.

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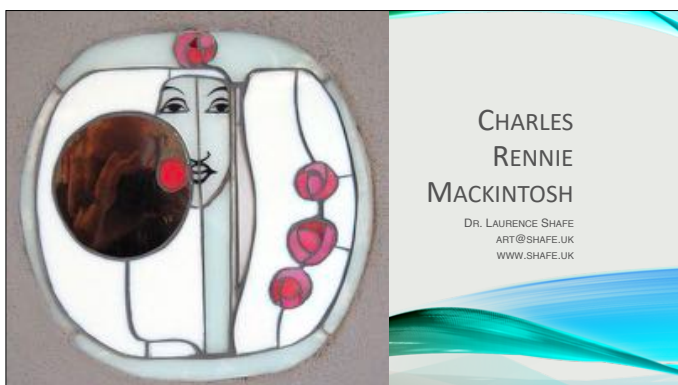


Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), *The Road Through the Rocks, Port Vendres*, 1926-1927, watercolour on paper, 27.5 x 38 cm, Scottish National Gallery Of Modern Art

- This watercolour shows the **Fort Maily (pronounced 'MAY-EE') on the outskirts of Port Vendres**, where the Mackintoshes lived during their stay.
- The couple returned to London in 1927 due to illness and he was diagnosed with **tongue and throat cancer**.
- This work was **produced before they left** for London and there are harbingers of **death**. The road leading to a **small, dark tunnel** into the unknown **takes us away** from the **sinuous and writhing rocks that seem alive**.
- He **briefly recovered and convalesced at home** for a few months before being admitted to a nursing home where he died on 10 December **1928 at the age of 60**.
- Poor health cut short Margaret's career and, as far as is known, **she produced no work after 1921**. **She died in 1933**, aged 68, just over four years after her husband.
- **His work grew in popularity in the decades following his death and a number of posthumous presentations of his designs have been implemented**.

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- **So why did their careers fail and how did he become Britain's most popular architects?**
  1. **His genius was not fully recognised in Glasgow** and in 1914 he despaired of ever achieving success and so he moved to Walberswick where he started flower and landscape. He was stunned to be accused of spying and moved to London and then France. Yet, the person who wrote his obituary remembered a conversation with a **friend from the Continent in 1914** who said "**What strikes me most, is the European reputation of your Glasgow architect, Mackintosh. His name is a**

household word in Vienna and Budapest, in Turin and Munich, in Paris and all over Holland."

2. Yet, in Scotland he found it difficult to find work. Of course, he was incapable of compromise and ignored client's wishes, he went over budget and his designs were regarded as strange and outlandish.
  3. Also, in terms of painting, art and styles were in flux with Post-Modernism, Cubism, Fauvism and so on and Mackintosh's painting did not change with them but as we can see today his architectural work is timeless.
  4. Books on Mackintosh blame the fall in his work on the brief economic downturn between 1908 and 1910 (see [1], p. 239). I have researched this period and by 1913 shipbuilding had returned to full order books. However, between 1903 and 1910 there was an exodus of 80,000 poor from the inner city known as the 'Years of the Great Trek' because inner city houses were being bought by artisans and skilled workers, what we now call gentrification. This led to a huge house building programme outside the city but the architectural work was of a mundane nature.[1] The First World War created a further housing crisis because of the extra workers employed in munitions factories but few new baronial houses were built.
  5. Finally, it is said he drank too much, although probably no more than anyone else in Glasgow at the time and he suffered from depression but that may be a consequence rather than a cause.
- During the last full year of his life, Charles Mackintosh wrote to Margaret this summation of their joint work: "You must remember that in all my architectural efforts you have been half if not three-quarters of them". A friend (Major Desmond Chapman-Huston) claimed he had expressed the opinion that, while he possessed talent, his wife had genius. Margaret Macdonald was largely forgotten but she is now recognised as one of Scotland's leading creative artists at the beginning of the twentieth century.
  - He was a one-off, completely innovative but about fifty years later the world started to catch up with him and he is now regarded as one of our leading British architects of the last 150 years.
  - Thank you for your attention. Are there any questions?

#### NOTES

- Shipbuilding on Clydeside (the river Clyde through Glasgow and other points) reached its peak in the years in the 1900-1918 era, with an output of 370 ships completed in 1913, and even more during the First World War. The total output from some 300 firms

(that is, 30-40 at any one time) exceeded 25,000 ships.

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[2] <https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/bitstream/1893/29546/3/Thesis%20Final%20submission%20dated%20November%202018.pdf> page 239

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