

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

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Media release

Chelsea shows its appreciation for architect and designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh

The Mayoress of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Daria Coleridge, will honour renowned Scottish architect, designer and artist Charles Rennie Mackintosh with the erecting of a plaque at 2 Hans Studios, 43 Glebe Place, Chelsea at 2.15pm on Thursday 10th December to commemorate the time he spent working there from 1915-1923.

To be erected, with the support of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Chelsea Society and the Church Commissions for England, this plaque is the only one in London that recognises the time he spent in the capital. For eight years both Mackintosh and his wife Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh had studios in Glebe Place and during his time there, Mackintosh worked on designs for a number of projects, most of which were not realised. Other than alterations for a house at 49 Glebe Place and a terrace house in Northampton for W.J. Bassett-Lowke and while prolific in this work, the majority of this designs for schools, offices, churches, tearooms and homes, are in Glasgow.

The erecting of this plaque coincides with the centenary of arguably Mackintosh's most celebrated design, the Mackintosh Building at The Glasgow School of Art, which was recently voted the best British-designed building of the last 175 years in a national survey commissioned by the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Daria Coleridge, Mayoress of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea said:

"The fact that Charles Rennie Mackintosh spent a substantial period of his life working at Hans Studios is significant to the history of Chelsea. I am delighted that his great contribution to art, design and architecture and connection to Chelsea is being recognised with this plaque."

Peter Trowles, Mackintosh curator at The Glasgow School of Art said: *“It’s all too easy to forget that Mackintosh’s career did not end with his departure from Glasgow in 1914. But all one can do now is speculate how his architectural career may have continued and developed in London had not the First World War had such a devastating effect on Society as a whole. Had circumstances been different, who knows how Mackintosh, regarded as a key figure in the art nouveau movement, would have responded to the challenge of art deco?”*

To attend the erecting of the plaque and for more information and images, please contact Alison Hunter, Media Relations Officer, The Glasgow School of Art 0141 566 1442 / 07939 954 836 / a.hunter@gsa.ac.uk

Note to editors:

- **Charles Rennie Mackintosh** (1868 - 1928) was a Scottish architect, designer, watercolourist who was a designer in the Arts and Crafts Movement and also the main exponent of Art Nouveau in Scotland.

Born in Glasgow, he was apprenticed to an architect, but also attended evening classes in art. It was at that time he first met Margaret MacDonald (whom he later married), her sister Frances MacDonald, and Herbert McNair. The group of artists, known as "The Four," exhibited in Glasgow, London and Vienna, and these exhibitions helped establish Mackintosh's reputation. The so-called "Glasgow" style was exhibited in Europe and influenced the Viennese Art Nouveau movement known as Sezessionstil (in English, The Secession) around 1900.

He joined a firm of architects in 1889 and developed his own style: a contrast between strong right angles and floral-inspired decorative motifs with subtle curves, e.g. the Mackintosh Rose motif, along with some references to traditional Scottish architecture. The project that helped make his international reputation was the Glasgow School of Art (1897-1909)

Amongst his other architectural works are:

North elevation of GSA's Mackintosh building
Hill House, Helensburgh (National Trust for Scotland)
House for an Art Lover, Glasgow
The Mackintosh House (Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow)
Queen's Cross Church, Glasgow
Ruchill Church Hall, Glasgow
Holy Trinity Church, Bridge of Allan, Stirling
Scotland Street School, Glasgow
The Willow Rooms, also known as Miss Cranston's Tea Rooms
Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow
Craigie Hall, Glasgow
Martyrs' Public School
The Royal Highland Fusiliers Museum, Glasgow
Former Daily Record offices, Glasgow
Former The Herald offices in Mitchell Street
78 Derngate, Northampton (for Wenman Joseph Bassett-Lowke)
5 The Drive, Northampton (for Basset-Lowke's brother-in-law)

Mackintosh also worked in interior design, furniture, textiles and, metalwork. Much of this work combines Mackintosh's own designs with those of his wife, whose flowing, floral style complimented his more formal, rectilinear work. Like his contemporary Frank Lloyd Wright, Mackintosh's architectural designs often included extensive specifications for the detailing, decoration, and furnishing of his buildings. His work was shown at the Vienna Secession Exhibition

in 1900.

His designs of various buildings for the 1901 Glasgow International Exhibition were not constructed, as was his Haus für einen Kunstfreundes (House for an Art Lover) in the same year. He competed in the 1903 design competition for Liverpool Cathedral, but lost the commission to Giles Gilbert Scott. Later in life, disillusioned with architecture, Mackintosh worked largely as a watercolourist, painting numerous landscapes and flower studies (often in collaboration with Margaret, with whose style Mackintosh's own gradually converged) in the Suffolk village of Walberswick (to which the pair moved in 1914).

Mackintosh's designs gained in popularity in the decades following his death. His House for an Art Lover was finally built in Glasgow's Bellahouston Park in 1996, and the University of Glasgow (which owns the majority of his watercolour work) rebuilt a terrace house Mackintosh had designed, and furnished it with his and Margaret's work. The Glasgow School of Art building (now renamed "The Mackintosh Building") is regularly cited by architectural critics as among the very finest buildings in the UK. The Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society tries to encourage a greater awareness of the work of Mackintosh as an important architect, artist and designer.