

# Collection Significance Report: Scottish Decorative Arts & Design: Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Glasgow Style

Alison Brown, March 2008



## About this Document

This document is extracted from a report by Glasgow Museums submitted to the Scottish Executive's Recognition Committee as part of its recognition scheme for non-national collections.

## Overview

Glasgow Style is the title given to the distinctive works of decorative art and design made in Glasgow between 1890 and 1920. It was centered around the Glasgow School of Art and Charles Rennie Mackintosh and was Great Britain's contribution to Art Nouveau, and Scotland's significant contribution to the Arts and Crafts Movement.

## Collection Size

Approx. 4,500 items (over 3,500 from the Ingram Street Tearooms).

## The Collection

This collection focuses on work produced by Glasgow artists and designers between c.1890 and c.1920 working in the Glasgow Style. This includes work by individuals who studied or taught at Glasgow School of Art and those who designed or manufactured decorative arts in Glasgow at the time. The collection also includes later work from the 1920s -1940s by a number of the style's key proponents. The collection spans the decorative, fine and graphic arts.

The Charles Rennie Mackintosh collection comprises tearoom interiors, furnishings and fittings but also includes early graphic work, late watercolours and collaborative pieces by 'The Four': Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Margaret and Frances Macdonald and Herbert MacNair. The largest part of the collection relates to a number of interiors salvaged from the Ingram Street Tearooms designed by Mackintosh between 1900 and 1912. Material includes wood panelling, gesso panels, furniture and light fittings.

The Glasgow Style collection covers metalwork, enamelwork, furniture, interiors and furnishings, textiles, glass and stained glass, ceramics, gesso, works on paper and paintings. Key designers, in addition to 'The Four' include Jessie Marion King, Talwin Morris, George Walton and cabinetmakers Wylie and Lochhead.

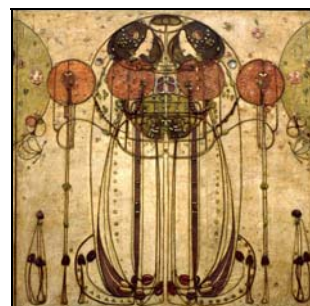
## Collection Significance

The breadth and quality of this collection makes it one of international significance. The majority of this collection is rare or unique and makes a major contribution towards Charles Rennie Mackintosh studies internationally.

The collection includes furniture and objects from documented Glasgow Style interiors and showrooms such as those for Wylie and Lochhead and George Walton & Co, and a number of individual items of furniture, furnishings, clocks, stained glass and fittings by key designers and manufacturers. Metalwork and jewellery is well represented and includes silver, enamelwork and an excellent collection of repoussé work. Ceramics and glass of the era include hand-painted studio pieces and transfer printed designs provided by Glasgow designers for the larger English potteries. Textiles, clothing and embroidery are also well represented and include work by key Glasgow Style designers which extend beyond the main period of the Style. A small number of important paintings also relate to this collection. The works on paper are a particularly rich collection, incorporating printed posters, drawings, designs, prints, manuscripts, books, sketchbooks, photographs and watercolours. There is also an extensive archive on the individual artists and designers, which helps chart the evolution of the Glasgow Style phenomenon right up to the present day.

The centrepiece of the collection, by its very scale, is the original panelling, furniture, fittings and ephemera relating to Miss Cranston's tearooms in Glasgow. The most important collection comes from a series of tearoom interiors from Miss Cranston's Ingram Street Tearooms, which Mackintosh designed between 1900 and 1912. They provide a unique record of his development as a designer over one of his most creative periods. These tearooms were the subject of a major research project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund to quantify and assess all the salvaged pieces, with a view ultimately to conserve and display them. There are also objects from the Willow, Argyle Street and Buchanan Street Tearooms. These include items designed by George Walton, Margaret Macdonald and Jessie Marion King as well as Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

An important part of this collection came from Alice Talwin Morris, widow of Talwin Morris who had been artistic director for the Glasgow publisher Blackie & Son. Her gifts included early works by 'The Four' as well as drawings, sketchbooks, textiles and metalwork by her late husband.



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Glasgow Museums Resource Centre | 200 Woodhead Road | Glasgow G53 7NN | Phone 0141 276 9300 | Fax 0141 276 9375 | [www.glasgowmuseums.com](http://www.glasgowmuseums.com) |