

# **Charles Rennie Mackintosh      Product Designer**

**Nationality : British**

**Born :1868. Died - 1928**

**Movement : Art Nouveau.**

## **BACKGROUND INFO:**

Charles Rennie Mackintosh was born in 1868, he was the son of a policeman and attended Allan Glen's School in Glasgow. He started evening classes at Glasgow School of Art and at the same time was apprenticed to an architect's firm. He met his wife Margaret at art school and along with her sister Frances and his friend Herbert McNair he became none of the most important contributors to the International Art Nouveau scene. The four young designers exhibited posters, graphic designs, and furniture in Great Britain and Europe. Along with other artists and designers, they developed the **Glasgow Style**, known for strong lines and graceful, symbolic shapes. It is rather ironic that although Mackintosh is now considered a genius, he was not very successful in his own lifetime, partly the reason for this is that his designs were considered too modern. He lived and worked in and around Glasgow for most of his life and many of his designs can still be seen in this area.

## **SOCIETY & INFLUENCES**

The Art Nouveau design movement was a response to the radical changes caused by the rapid urban growth and technological advances that followed the Industrial Revolution.

Around this time a group of artists and designers led by a man called William Morris began to rebel against much of the mass-produced, characterless designs which were becoming more common. They began working together in a group known as 'The Arts and Crafts' Movement, they used natural forms as their inspiration and emphasised quality and craftsmanship. They did not appreciate the purely functional items being churned out of the factories. In their opinion objects should be fit for their purpose and **also** be beautifully decorated. Designers like Mackintosh were strongly influenced by their use of nature as a source of inspiration but felt their work was too fussy and old fashioned looking— they wanted to produce something new, more elegant and modern .

The Art Nouveau style appeared in the early 1880s and was gone by the eve of the First World War. For a brief, brilliant moment, Art Nouveau was a shimmering presence in urban centres throughout Europe and North America. It was the style of the age--seen on public buildings and advertisements, inside private homes and outside street cafés--adorning the life of the city.

## **STYLE**

Art Nouveau' means 'new art' in French. This was an art movement which began around the turn of the century and lasted until W.W.1. There are two main types - the first is called **curvilinear** - the characteristics of this style include elongated, natural forms, curving lines and flowing organic shapes. Mackintosh started off working in this manner but eventually developed his style further until it became – **rectilinear**.

The rectilinear style is characterised by more abstract, geometric (rectangular or square) lines, shapes and forms, still elongated and graceful but stronger, cleaner lines

## MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES

Mackintosh produced designs for buildings, interiors, furniture, home accessories, lighting and textiles. He used a wide range of materials and techniques such as carved wood, repoussé metalwork, silver-smithing, enamelwork, wrought iron and stained glass. In terms of his product designs he often used painted or stained wood – usually white or black. Designs were often inlaid with decorative panels in fabric, enamel or metal – sometimes produced by his wife. Wooden features were simply and elegantly carved.

The designs were manufactured either by hand as unique pieces sold through his own studio, or by commercial companies for sale through large retail outlets at affordable prices.

## EXAMPLES OF WORK.

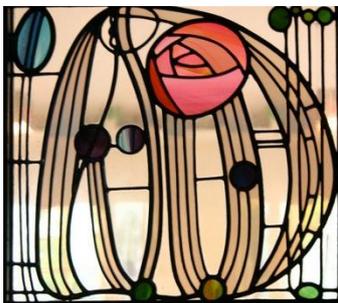
Ladies Luncheon Room.



High backed Chairs



Stained glass window



clock



Glasgow School of Art.

