

Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh

What Did Margaret Create?

Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh was a Scottish artist who made magical, dream-like art. She was an artist of whimsy, pattern & dreams.



- Beautiful **paintings** with flowing shapes and mysterious faces.
- **Panels** and **murals** using metal, fabric, and paint.
- Delicate **gesso reliefs** (a kind of raised decoration on panels).
- Art for buildings and **interior designs**, often working with her husband, architect **Charles Rennie Mackintosh**.

Childhood

- Born in **Tipton, England** in 1864.
- Moved to **Glasgow, Scotland**, when she was a child.
- Her father worked as a mining engineer, and the family valued education and creativity.
- Margaret and her younger sister Frances were very close and often made art together.
- She loved fairy tales and legends, which influenced her later artwork.
- She showed artistic talent from a young age, often sketching imaginative scenes.
- Her early years were filled with books, storytelling, and the Scottish countryside.
- She had a quiet and thoughtful personality, often drawn to dreams and symbolism.

Education

- Margaret went to the **Glasgow School of Art** in the 1890s.
- She studied **design and decorative arts**, like metalwork and textiles.
- She formed a strong artistic partnership with her sister Frances during their studies.
- She and Frances were known as “**The Macdonald Sisters**” at the art school.

- Together they formed a group with two other students called “**The Four.**” The group they formed included Margaret’s husband Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and Frances’ husband Herbert MacNair
- Margaret was especially skilled in working with gesso panels for interior decoration.
- Her teachers encouraged her creative independence and unusual style.

Career

- Became one of the leading artists in the **Glasgow Style**, part of the Art Nouveau movement.
- Worked with her sister and later with her husband, **Charles Rennie Mackintosh**.
- Together, Margaret and Charles designed **interiors for buildings**, including tea rooms and homes.
- Created famous gesso panels like “**The May Queen**” and “**The Opera of the Winds**”.
- Exhibited her work in major art exhibitions across Europe, including Vienna.
- Her panels decorated many of Charles’s architectural spaces, especially **Miss Cranston’s tea rooms**.
- She influenced modern design with her imaginative female figures and symbolic forms.
- Despite retiring early due to illness, her work remained influential and admired.

Quotes from Margaret

“Art is the flower — life is the green leaf.”

“A design must come from within.”

Art

'Homage to the Seven Princesses' – detail #4 of a gesso panel from a series commissioned for the Waerndorfer villa in Vienna



'Spring' part of a series of 4 created for the home of H. H. Blackie

The Mysterious Garden – a watercolour



'O ye, all ye that walk in Willow Wood'



'The May Queen' - a three-panel oil painting on gesso

