

REVIEW

Elizabeth Cumming, *Hand, Heart and Soul, The Arts and Crafts Movement in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006. Pp. 240. ISBN: 9781841586106. £16.99.

Elizabeth Cumming adds to her already significant scholarship on the Arts and Crafts movement in Scotland with this impressive text. The title of the book was gleaned from the encouraging words of Ayr architect James A. Morris, a key figure in the Arts and Crafts movement. Not only do they keenly reflect the mission of the many artists, architects and craftsmen discussed here, but given the scope of the book and its lavish illustrations, these words undoubtedly reflect Cumming's own investment in bringing to light the products of their labour.

Cumming opens her discussion in chapter one by establishing the origins of the Scottish Arts and Crafts movement, beginning with the formation of the Glasgow Kyrle Society in 1883. The Society's purpose, 'to bring the influences of natural and artistic beauty home to the people,' (p. 1) quickly spread throughout Scotland with each city adding its own unique contributions. Subsequent chapters detail the various aspects of the movement. For example, chapter three, 'Sister Studios,' discusses the role of women artists and the importance of women's home crafts, and chapter four, 'Houses for Art Lovers,' investigates rural domestic architecture, interior design, and furnishing. Cumming ends her text with a brief chapter on the movement's legacy, noting that its 'glimmering light' (p. 224) faded significantly in the 1950s with a few brief reappearances in the 1970s.

The scope of the book is extensive. Cumming does not just neatly trace the development and progress of the Arts and Crafts movement in Scotland but also places it within the wider context of the movement throughout Great Britain and links it to other contemporary movements such as Pre-Raphaelitism and Modernism. It seems no key medium is left

unrepresented: embroidery, stained glass, metalwork, wood-working, book making, painting, and architecture are all discussed. Although familiar names abound: William Morris, Phoebe Anna Traquair, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and Fra Newberry, Cumming also introduces less well-known artists such as Elizabeth MacColl and Marion Henderson Wilson to name just a few. In clear and engaging prose, Cumming reveals an extensive web of artistic creation, training, exhibition, support, patronage and above all, a heartfelt belief by the people involved that their efforts were a 'commitment to art as the expression of self and as a service to community' (p. 24). This rich and detailed history is complimented by numerous stunning colour reproductions, some of which punctuate the large blocks of text offering brief moments of beauty within the flat expanse of the black and white page. Undoubtedly these illustrations will be a boon to scholars who might have had difficulty finding clear reproductions of these beautiful but often little-known objects.

The book's very scope, however, is a minor drawback; the comprehensive quality of the text offers an almost overwhelming amount of information. While issues of class, gender, and identity, for example, are seamlessly interwoven throughout the overall discussion, they are not always investigated in depth. That being said, Cumming does not leave the reader adrift; the numerous endnotes to every chapter and the substantial bibliography offer a foundation for further research.

Clearly written and organized, exhaustively researched with lavish colour reproductions, Elizabeth Cumming's text will undoubtedly become the standard for the history of the Arts and Crafts movement in Scotland.

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