In June 1896, a competition was announced for the building of a new Glasgow School of Art. The successful architect was a young Charles Rennie Mackintosh, working for the established Glasgow practice of Honeyman and Keppie. However, a lack of available money prevented Mackintosh’s design from being completed at the first attempt. Instead, his design was divided into two and after much delay work began on a central and eastern section of the building early in 1898. By the end of the following year, the first half of the building was complete, although it had cost considerably more than had been budgeted for. Finally, on 20 December 1899 a formal ceremony took place to announce the official opening of this part of building. It was to take the governors of the Glasgow School of Art a further 8 years to raise sufficient funds to bring Mackintosh back to reconfigure his original designs to complete the building, more or less as originally planned. Work on the second half of the building began in 1907 and took a further two years to complete – only on this occasion it was on time and on budget. Stylistically, the substantial delay in the building’s completion offered Mackintosh the opportunity to amend and fully integrate his original design of 1896, which owed much to Scotland’s earlier baronial tradition in architecture, with a second half of the building that looked forward to the 20th century through its use of modern materials and new technology.

On 15 December 1909 the finished building was formally opened and the event was marked by a series of exhibitions and celebrations including a symbolic masque or pageant entitled The Birth and Growth of Art, written by Francis Newbery, headmaster of the School and performed by the students themselves. There was universal approval for the building and in the School’s Annual Report for 1909-10 the Governors reported that they were ‘not aware of any city that possesses a more complete edifice devoted to Art Education, nor one better adapted to its purpose’.
El 15 de desembre de 1909 va tenir lloc la inauguració formal de l'edifici ja acabat amb un seguit d'exposicions i celebracions, inclòs una representació simbòlica titulada The Birth and Growth of Art ("El naixement i el creixement de l'art"), escrita per Francis Newbery, director de l'escola, i representada pels mateixos alumnes. L'edifici va rebre l'aprovació general i en l'Informe Anual de l'escola de 1909-1910 els directors li van fer constar que no sabien "de cap ciutat que disposés d'un edifici dedicat a l'educació artística tan complet, ni cap que s'adaptés tan bé a la seva finalitat".

Al llarg de 1910 l'empresa londinenca Bedford Lemere & Co. va fer una important sèrie de fotografies de l'edifici. En elles es destacava la modernitat arquitectònica de l'edifici, mentre que en altres fotografies de l'època, que es troben en l'extens arxiu d'Escòcia, hi podem veure els estudiants treballant en els nous estudis i tallers.

Un cap finalitzat l'edifici dissenyat per Mackintosh, la Glasgow School of Art es trobava equipada per afrontar les necessitats d'una institució educativa de primera línia que es dirigia cap al segle XX.

Ara, m'acostant un any després, el verdader rèt de la Glasgow School of Art de Mackintosh és que continua sent una escola d'art de fama mundial, on es segueix treballant a ple rendiment, cosa de la qual Mackintosh s'hauria sentit sense dubte orgullós. Els darrers 100 anys han vist com l'edifici ha servit d'inspiració a generacions de professors i estudiants i, en senyal de reconeixement i per celebrar-ne el centenari, estan preparant un seguit d'esdeveniments i activitats (inclòs una gran exposició).

Tot i això, aquesta celebració de l'edifici de Mackintosh marca també un pas important en el desenvolupament futur de l'escola. De la mateixa manera que l'edifici de Mackintosh anunciava l'arribada del segle XX, actualment...
During 1910, an important series of photographs of the building were taken by the London based firm of Bedford Lemere & Co. These highlighted the architectural modernity of the building whilst other photographs of the period, held in the School’s extensive archive, show students at work in their new studios and workshops.

The completion of the Mackintosh designed building saw the Glasgow School of Art well equipped to meet the demands of an important educational institution heading into the 20th century.

Now, exactly a century later the true merit of Mackintosh’s Glasgow School of Art is that it remains a hardworking, fully-functioning school of art with a truly international reputation – something that Mackintosh would surely have been proud of. The past 100 years has seen the building deliver inspiration to successive generations of staff and students and in recognition of the building’s centenary a series of events and activities (including a major exhibition) are planned to coincide with this anniversary.

However, this celebration of the Mackintosh Building also marks an important step in the School’s wider, future development. As Mackintosh’s building announced the arrival of the 20th century, plans are well advanced for the design and construction of a new school building for the 21st century directly across from Mackintosh’s masterpiece. Early in 2009, an international competition was announced for the design of this new building, which will replace a number of other campus buildings that were added during the later 20th century – buildings that, in general, have failed to withstand the test of time and are now regarded as unsuitable for today’s educational demands.

In September 2009, the winner of the competition was announced as Steven Holl Architects, a New York based practice. Their winning design will need to respond to Mackintosh’s masterpiece and be itself a significant architectural masterpiece of the 21st century. It will not be an easy task.

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