

VOTE OF THANKS - Hugh Elwood

And thanks also to . . .

. . . the members of the Society who help at our meetings.

For this lecture, the volunteer Members include:

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Our lectures and meetings would not be possible without the willing assistance of our many volunteers. If you would like to help, please speak to any of the volunteers working on an activity that you would like to support or feel free to contact Rita Calvert on 01253 735377.

NEXT LECTURE

Wednesday 7 February 2018

Giles Ramsay on Post War British Theatre
to the Present Day

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**THE ARTS
SOCIETY
FYLDE**

**EILEEN GRAY –
AN IRISH REBEL
NICHOLAS MERCHANT**

3 January 2018

St Annes United Reformed Church Hall, FY8 2AE

www.theartsocietyfylde.org.uk

Supporting the Arts in Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre

EILEEN GRAY – AN IRISH REBEL

For our first lecture in 2018, we welcome back Nicholas Merchant, whom we last met in February 2014 when he spoke about Fabergé at the Court of Tsar Nicholas. This time he starts in a very different location—Southern Ireland in the late 19th century where a young girl of “good family” is living in an 18th century mansion, a tranquil rural existence. And, as Mr Merchant points out, this sounds idyllic—the sort of life colour supplements write about with floods of purple prose. It was the life of the subject of today’s lecture, as the 19th century drew to its close.

In 1900 Eileen’s mother took her to the Exposition Universelle in Paris, and as the saying goes “she never looked back”. An imaginative and determined girl, Eileen was sure she did not want to see Enniscorthy again. She enrolled in the Slade School of Art, progressed to learn the true art of lacquer in Paris and after the First World War became one of Paris’s most recherch e and sought-after designers.

Not for her the stuffed Victorian furniture of her home but what we now call “cutting-edge” design. In her studio in the rue Bonaparte she created works which rivalled all the great 20th century furniture makers of Paris. The Art Deco Exhibition of 1925 was the turning point of her life and the world became aware of her.

Ever restless, she built in the late 1920s an extraordinary house at Roquebrunne which became the envy of one of the best-known architects of the period, Le Corbusier.

Nicholas promises us the fascinating story of a girl from Enniscorthy, who became one of the most innovative designers of the 20th century.

Cover: The “Fauteuil Transatlantique” designed by Eileen Gray for the terrace of her house at Roquebrunne (Alpes-Maritime, just east of Monaco) 1925-1927
Following page: Eileen Gray, Lacquer screen

NICHOLAS MERCHANT

Nicholas Merchant’s career has mirrored his abiding interest in antiques. He has worked for some of the major auction houses in London and in the provinces as well as running his own reference book business, devoted to the Decorative and Fine Arts, with which he has exhibited in Europe and America.

His particular interest is English 18th century furniture and country houses. However, his interests are broad and he likes to discuss the art and artefacts in their historical context.

Lecturing has taken Nicholas to the United States, South Africa, Europe and all over the United Kingdom, including the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Since joining the panel of lecturers of The Arts Society in 2004 he has presented over 500 lectures all over the world. Nicholas was recently chosen as the West Yorkshire Representative for the Art Fund, the organisation responsible for ensuring the rescue of works of art that are in danger of leaving the country.



SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

More information about Eileen Gray along with an extensive bibliography is available in *Eileen Gray—Architect/Designer* by Peter Adam, 2000, Abrams of New York

