

This accessibly written, well referenced and attractively produced book accompanies the Irish Arts and Crafts exhibition held at the McMullan Museum of Art of Boston College earlier this year. It is intended to act as more than a catalogue of the exhibition as the twelve specially commissioned essays it contains seek to chronicle and broadly assess Irish design from the early-mid 1800s through to the 1950s. The first part of the book is divided into four sections each comprising three chapters that consider the wider cultural context, architecture and the total-work-of-art, the movement's greatest achievements in stained glass, and the politics of gender in a roughly chronological format.

“Arts and Crafts” as a term emerged from the design reform movement that sprang up in mid-late nineteenth century Britain in reaction to the perceived shoddiness of mass-production. Conditions in Ireland were of course different than in Britain but, as several of the chapters suggest, historiography has tended to gloss over these. National calamity, immigration, uneven industrial development and rapid de-industrialization created a form of poverty that shocked even William Morris when he came to Ireland in 1877 and again in 1886. As such many of the Arts and Crafts enterprises established post-Famine were motivated by philanthropy. Ireland, however, proved equally fertile ground for the industrialist as well as the charitable aesthete. That factory-made preceded handmade lace in Limerick, that engineering and textile innovation sustained experiments in craft pedagogy in Belfast and the association of Celtic design with a sexualized cultural decadence as much as Nationalist and Unionist semiotics, are just a few of the fascinating subjects touched upon by several of the authors.

Of note are the three exceptional chapters by Andrew Kuhn, Janice Helland and Fintan O'Toole that address the issues of women's rights, craft in the market economy and the organisation of labour and collectively suggest that the subaltern female craftworker was not without agency or affect. The second part of the book is given over to beautiful colour plates of the 169 objects in the exhibition. Since the 1990s Boston College has committed itself to putting on major exhibitions of a wide range of Irish art and design and to producing significant and substantial publications. They are to be congratulated if the fact sadly highlights that there is no comparable institution in Ireland itself.

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VERA KREILKAMP The University of Chicago Press, 2016 pp 250, 150 col & 75 b/w ills p/b \$40.00 ISBN: 9781892850256 Joseph McBrinn. This accessibly written, well-referenced, and attractively produced book accompanies the Irish Arts and Crafts exhibition held at the McMullan Museum of Art of Boston College earlier this year. It is intended to act as more than a catalogue of the exhibition as the twelve specially commissioned essays it contains seek to chronicle and broadly assess Irish design from the early to mid 1800s through to the 1950s. The Arts and Crafts movement was an international trend in the decorative and fine arts that developed earliest and most fully in the British Isles and subsequently spread across the British Empire and to the rest of Europe and America. Initiated in reaction against the perceived impoverishment of the decorative arts and the conditions in which they were produced, the movement flourished in Europe and North America between about 1880 and 1920. It is the root of Modern Style (British Art Nouveau style) The "Making It Irish" exhibition at the McMullen Museum of Art at Boston College shows Irish examples of the Arts & Crafts movement. Vera Kreilkamp spent a couple of months scouring Irish museums and private collections looking for items for this exhibition. She says that the exhibition will teach visitors about "art history, Irish visual culture and objects" "handcrafted materials; metal trays, wooden boxes. Bringing these things together has never been done and it's very important for Ireland that it exists." An example of enamel work by Phoebe Anna Traquair. This piece is called "Love Cup." Like virtually all of the products of the Arts and Crafts movement, the favoring of the handmade over the mass-produced meant inevitably that the authentic crafts produced by poor peasants became expensive luxury goods to be marketed in the imperial metropolis. Unfortunately, Helland conveys the results of her diligent research in dry, unexciting prose. Certain striking details do stand out because of their relative rarity. For example, Countess Cadogan, then vicereine of Ireland, proudly wore dresses decorated with shamrocks, but Irish soldiers serving in the British army were punished for doing so. The Arts & Crafts movement existed under its specific name in the United Kingdom and the United States, and these two strands are often distinguished from each other by their respective attitudes towards industrialization: in Britain, Arts & Crafts artists and designers tended to be either negative or ambivalent towards the role of the machine in the creative process, while Americans tended to embrace it. No detail of interior design was overlooked by the pioneer of the Arts and Crafts movement. Beginnings and Development. Concepts, Trends, & Related Topics.