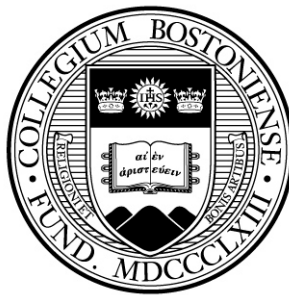


Eva McKee Art Works

1920s-1950s

MS.2005.006

<http://hdl.handle.net/2345/1130>



Archives and Manuscripts Department

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Summary Information

Creator:	McKee, Eva
Title:	Eva McKee art works
Collection Identifier:	MS.2005.006
Date [inclusive]:	1920s-1950s
Physical Description	2.5 Linear Feet (3 boxes)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	This collection documents the work of the early 20th century Belfast artist Eva McKee through examples of her Celtic Revival-influenced Irish Arts and Crafts designs. Materials include her printmaking and jewelry designs, as well as a few samples of her works on ceramic, leather, metal, and wood.

Preferred Citation

Identification of item, Box number, Folder number, Eva McKee art works, MS.2005.006, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Processed by Dana Lawton, 2005; David Tennant, 2006; AnneMarie Anderson, 2010; and Lynn Moulton in 2018. This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace.

Restrictions on Access

Collection is open for research.

Restrictions on Use

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Provenance

These art works were retrieved from McKee's studio in Belfast after her death, by her sister N. B. McKee. She in turn sold them in 1998 while moving from her home to assisted living. John J. Burns Library purchased them from Emerald Isle Books in 2005.

Processing Information

Provenance of these materials certifies that they came from Eva McKee's studio and are all original works; it is presumed that they are all works by McKee.

Biographical Note

Eva McKee was born in Belfast, Ireland, in 1890. She studied design at the School of Art in Belfast from 1911-1912 and again in 1918-1920. During these years McKee joined the Irish Decorative Art Association and moved into their permanent studio space in Belfast at 35 Wellington Place, along with fellow member Eveline McCloy. McKee worked with a wide range of materials, including painted wood, ceramics, embroidery, jewelry, leatherwork, repoussé metalwork, and block-prints. Her work predominantly used Celtic-inspired original designs, as well as Irish landscape motifs. Her prints incorporated images with hand-lettered adages and poems in English and Irish.

McKee began exhibiting extensively at Arts and Crafts events in the 1920s, showing her work at the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland in 1921 and 1925; the Barbazanges Gallery, Paris in 1922; and the Tailteann Exhibit in 1922 and 1924. She also became a member of the Guild of Irish Art-Workers in the 1920s.

McKee and McCloy stopped using the Irish Decorative Art Association name after 1933, but they continued their partnership and their use of the 35 Wellington Place Studio into the 1950s. Eva McKee died in 1955.

Sources:

Larmour, Paul. *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Ireland*. Belfast: Friar's Bush Press, 1992.

Larmour, Paul. "The Arts and Crafts Movement in Northern Ireland." In *The Arts and Crafts Movement: Making It Irish*, edited by Vera Kreilkamp, 57-72. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Scope and Contents

The Eva McKee art works consist of block-printed cards and sketches of jewelry designs, as well as examples of her craftwork on leather, wood, ceramics, and metal. Items include a wallet, a purse, two small dishes, a pin, a letter opener, and a deck of playing cards. All the materials demonstrate McKee's use of Celtic Revival motifs in a distinctly Irish Arts and Crafts style. In addition to McKee's design work, there are a few photographs of her, including one with her business partner and fellow craftswoman Eveline McCloy.

Arrangement

Organized in two series: I. Art works, and II. Photographs of McKee and her work. Series I is arranged in three subseries: A. Prints, B. Jewelry designs, and C. Art objects.

Collection Inventory

Series I: Art works, 1950, undated

Subseries A: Prints, undated

Scope and Contents

Single-sided cards, as well as one book plate, most with quotations in English and Irish. For some prints preparatory sketches and proof prints are included with the final work. Designs are printed in black, and about half have been hand-colored in watercolor. None of the works are autographed, but McKee worked her name or initials into the design of some of her prints. Title information indicates where she used her given name or Aoife Nic Aoda (commonly spelled Nic Aodha in modern orthogoraphy), a gaelicized version of her name, on the print. Where the quotation has an attribution on her print, that information is also noted. One print known not to be by McKee is included here.

Arrangement

Alphabetical by quotation; one work that does not include any text and one that is a proof page for multiple works are filed after the alphabetical run. A single work by another artist is filed at the end.

"An aoide big atá mór ..." ["The small youth is great, A young child is old, Although more were not placed in the manger, A place in heaven is received"], signed A. Nic Aoda (6" x 8 ½"), undated	box 1	folder 1
"Atas ar do teac" ["Joy on your home"], signed A. Nic Aoda (5 ½" x 6 ½"), undated	box 1	folder 1
"A cabin on the mountain..." by A.E. (George Russell), two studies (4 ¼" x 6 ½" and 4 1/8" x 3 5/8"), a proof (4 ½" x 8 ¾"), and two final final prints with hand coloring (both 3 ½" x 5 ¾"). Studies and proof signed E. K. Mckee, undated	box 1	folder 1
"Dear Heart! Stop planning for thyself tonight...", with hand coloring (4 7/8" x 8 1/8"), undated	box 1	folder 1
"Gé gur fada..." ["Although the night is long, it is bearing the arrival of the coming day"], with hand coloring, signed E.K. McKee (4 ½" x 6 ¾"), undated	box 1	folder 2
"Go dtugaid Dia..." ["May God grant you your heart's desire"], signed A. Nic Aoda, two copies (5 ¾" x 8"), undated	box 1	folder 2
"Go often to the house of thy friend...", with hand coloring, signed E.K. McK. (2 ¾" x 6 ½"), undated	box 1	folder 2
"Go Winter now unto your own abode..." by J. Stephens, proof and final (5 ½" x 9 ¾"), undated	box 1	folder 2
"I heard a piper piping ..." by S. MacCatmaoil, black-and-white proof and final with hand coloring, signed E.K.M. (both 5" x 9 ¼"), undated	box 1	folder 3

"I like to know you hear the call..." by W.M. Letts, with hand-coloring (5 1/2" x 7 3/4"), undated	box 1	folder 3
"Maireann croide éadtrom ..." ["A light heart endures for a long time"], with hand coloring, signed A. NicA (4" x 8"), undated	box 1	folder 4
"My fídal is singing..." by S. Mac Catmeoil, signed A. Nic Aoda (2 1/2" x 5 1/8"), undated	box 1	folder 4
"On the hill the south wind laughs..." by William Sharp, with hand coloring, signed A. Nic Aoda (7" x 9 1/2"), undated	box 1	folder 4
"O who will walk a mile with me..." by H. Van Dyke, with hand coloring (5 1/2" x 6 1/2"), undated	box 1	folder 4
"St. Patrick's Breastplate: Christ be with me...", two copies, one with hand coloring in gold (8" x 10"), undated	box 1	folder 5
"St. Patrick's Breastplate: I bind unto myself today...", signed E.K. McKee, three copies (all 5 5/8" x 7 1/2"), undated	box 1	folder 5
"This book belongs to..." book plate with Celtic bird design, signed E.K. McKee, five copies (all 3 1/4" x 5 1/4"), undated	box 1	folder 5
"When stars look out..." by S. Mac Catmaoil, proof, signed A. Nic Aoda (5 5/8" x 3 5/8"), undated	box 1	folder 6
"Who marks the joyous hours forgets the sad ones," signed E.K. McKee (3 1/2" x 9 1/2"), undated	box 1	folder 6
"The Wings of Thought are astir..." proof, signed E.K. McKee (2 3/4" x 6 #"), undated	box 1	folder 6
"Without a friend...", signed E.K. McKee (6 1/4" x 11"), undated	box 1	folder 6
Proof page with three different designs: "The beauty of the earth..."; "Who dwells in the heart of a friend..."; and design of a ship without text (8 1/2" x 11"), undated	box 1	folder 6
Untitled circular design, with hand coloring (6 3/8" diameter), undated	box 1	folder 6
Print by "P.M" of "The Man in the Moon" by H. Richard Hayward (6 3/8" x 10 5/8"), undated	box 1	folder 7

Subseries B: Jewelry designs, 1950, undated

Scope and Contents

McKee's preliminary pencil drawings for jewelry, all unsigned.

Arrangement

Alphabetical by type of jewelry.

Abstract Celtic "enamel" design, undated	box 1	folder 8
Abstract Celtic trinity knot design, undated	box 1	folder 8

Abstract circular designs, undated	box 1	folder 8
Correspondence from Maude Williams regarding a pin, with added sketches by McKee, 1950 October 21	box 1	folder 9
Pendant, Celtic design, undated	box 1	folder 10
Pendants, undated	box 1	folder 10
Pendants, "Blister pearl necklace in silver", undated	box 1	folder 10
Pendants, "Old" and "New", undated	box 1	folder 10
Pins, Tara design "A", undated	box 1	folder 11
Pins, Tara design "B", undated	box 1	folder 11
Pins, Tara design "C", undated	box 1	folder 11
Pins, "Topaz designs", undated	box 1	folder 11
Ring design with "side view", undated	box 1	folder 12
Rings and pendants, undated	box 1	folder 12
Rings, "Designs for Moonstone Rings", undated	box 1	folder 12

Subseries C: Art objects, undated

Arrangement

Alphabetical by material.

Ceramic dish, Royal Doulton factory blank with hand painted additions (3.5" diameter), undated	box 2	
Copper dish (3 1/4" diameter), undated	box 2	
Leather purse (7 1/2" x 6 1/2"), undated	box 3	
Leather wallet (6 5/8" x 4 1/4"), undated	box 3	
Playing cards with Irish "Heroic Period" kings and queens, undated	box 2	
Silver pin with blue enamel cabochon (1/2" x 4"), undated	box 2	
Wooden hat pins (1 1/2" diameter x 5"), two items, undated	box 2	
Wooden object, possibly letter-opener (1 1/2" x 11"), undated	box 3	

Series II: Photographs of McKee and her work, circa 1920s-1930s

Image of a leather binding with Celtic bird design, undated	box 1	folder 13
Eva McKee with a dog in her lap, circa 1920s-1930s	box 1	folder 13
Eveline McCloy and Eva McKee with a customer at an exhibition, circa 1920s-1930s	box 1	folder 13

