This brief guide gives an introduction to the Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture's (MoDA) opening exhibition. **Archibald Knox at the Silver Studio** is the first authoritative presentation of Knox's work in England. It is a fitting choice for MoDA's first exhibition since it brings together the museum's important Silver Studio collection and the work of one of Britain's most talented, yet least recognized, designers of the 1890s and early 1900s.

Archibald Knox (1864-1913) grew up on the Isle of Man where he absorbed the language and motifs of a long tradition of Celtic art. His father and brothers were engineers, but Archibald decided that this life was not for him. Instead, he attended Douglas Grammar School and subsequently gained a place at Douglas School of Art. He quickly proved to be an able pupil, and after a short while became a pupil teacher, meaning that his fees were paid in return for some teaching duties. As a young man he developed a passion for the Celtic art of the island, incising sacred stones with the tools used since medieval times. He felt that only then coming to be recognised as a rich part of Manx heritage.

Knox's early life forms something of a contrast to the fashionable world of London, where he arrived in 1897. The capital's increasingly affluent, and ever-expanding, middle classes generated a growing appetite for consumer goods. A number of publications, such as Mrs Panton's *From Kitchen to Family* (1889), encouraged a greater interest in home furnishing. Increasing prosperity meant that the middle classes could afford domestic help, which in turn meant that middle-class ladies had leisure time in which to visit the new department stores and study magazines about the latest home furnishing trends. Magazines and household manuals such as these encouraged the idea that it was imperative to have the right furnishings in order to reflect - and maintain - one's social status.

Archibald Knox began his association with the Silver Studio in 1897. Arthur Silver had seen the potential of the expanding home furnishing market, and had established the "Silver Studio of Design" in Hammersmith in 1880. It rapidly became one of Britain's most successful studios producing designs for wallpapers, textiles, metalwork and other decorative items for the home. Designers were employed on both a salaried and freelance basis, and the Studio sold their work to leading manufacturers and retailers. Firms such as Liberty & Co marketed these designs under their own name, which meant that the names of the Silver Studio and its designers were obscured. The Silver Studio continued to operate successfully until 1963, but the period between 1890 and 1910 was undoubtedly its most prolific.

Knox first came to London to teach at the Redhill School of Art, and it is not clear how he developed a connection with the Silver Studio. It is possible that he was introduced by his friend Christopher Dresser, who had been a close associate of Arthur Silver before Silver's death in 1896. By whatever means it came about, Knox quickly established himself as a talented designer of 'flat patterns', as the large pastels shown here ably demonstrate.

These large-scale designs for wallpapers and textiles are among the first work he produced for the Studio. Examples such as 12 and 14 demonstrate his keen understanding of the challenge involved in designing a repeating pattern, while retaining a charming simplicity and subtlety. Designs like these were sold to Wylie and Lochhead, leading Glasgow furnishing firm and wallpaper manufacturer and one of the Silver Studio's best customers.

Despite the undoubted charm of his flat patterns, Knox is better known now for his designs for metalwork for Liberty & Co. Like Arthur Silver, Arthur Lasenby Liberty had recognised the potential of the market for luxury goods and home furnishings. His firm, Liberty & Co. opened in 1875 and the Regent Street store quickly established itself as a leader in fashionable taste. It specialised in exotic imported oriental goods, catering for those who wished to decorate their homes in the fashionable Arts & Crafts style.

Realising the need for his firm to keep up with ever-changing tastes, Arthur Liberty commissioned a range of silverware inspired by the 'Celtic Revival' which enjoyed enormous popularity at the turn of the century. The Cyrric range of silverware was launched in 1899, and Knox's metalwork designs were central to Liberty & Co's enormous success during this period. Knox's designs became integral to what we now think of as 'Liberty Style'. Knox was not the only designer responsible for these ranges, (others included Bernard Cuzner, Oliver Baker and Jessie M King), but he was certainly the central figure.
Cymric silver included numerous 'special occasion' items such as cups and bowls that might be given as a prize, or to commemorate a special anniversary. It also included smaller items such as 'ornaments for personal wear: rings, brooches and clips...' [and] such, charmingly ornate necessaries of the toilet table as the slender and graceful vase, the elegant, divided yet exquisite jewel tray or essence holder, which help to complete the luxurious equipment of the boudoir'.

Tudric pewter was less expensive, and the range included a number of more 'everyday' items such as the tea service (38) and biscuit barrels (46, 47) shown here.

The Cymric and Tudric ranges were intended as an alternative to the more expensive metalwork then being produced by Arts and Crafts designers such as C.J. Ashbee. Ashbee and others produced hand-crafted items on a small scale. However, workshops such as theirs were not able to produce the volume of goods necessary for a successful London firm such as Liberty & Co, which therefore looked to produce metal items by largescale production methods.

Knox’s designs were put into production for Liberty & Co by WH Haseler of Birmingham, a long-established goldsmith and jeweller. This firm ensured that items were produced to the high standards that Liberty & Co’s reputation for quality required. Knox proved very able to produce designs which were compatible with the demands of large-scale production. They exploit the sort of finish that machines do best, including the smooth cylindrical exteriors of vases such as 38 and 40.

But arguably he also followed in the best traditions of the Arts and Crafts movement, in that pattern is never simply applied to an object, but is integral to it. The legs and handles of his vases and bowls always form part of the overall shape, as in, for example, 39 and 42. Knox's metalwork designs are characterised by a lack of unnecessary decoration, a sense of proportion and balance, and appear extremely modern at the same time as drawing their inspiration from the past.

The Celtic style which Knox developed through his metalwork designs for Liberty & Co is characterised by the use of interlacing linear patterns and the use of decorative enamel. His designs for textiles and wallpapers also employ these Celtic motifs, such as the knot-work used in 41. It is clear that Knox drew much of his inspiration from the forms and decorative devices of Manx art. Yet he also drew on the ideas of other Silver Studio designers, such as Harry Napper, to develop his own particular Art Nouveau style.

Knox’s authorship of many of the designs for Liberty & Co, sold through the Silver Studio, has long been the subject of debate. Arthur Liberty did not attribute designs to individual artists, preferring to market them simply under the name of Liberty & Co. Similarly, the Silver Studio obscured the names of its designers so that after Arthur Silver’s death, designs were often credited to Row Silver, his son, who took over as head of the studio in 1900.

It is unfortunate that the meticulous day book records kept by Silver Studio employees for almost the entire history of the Studio (1880 - 1963) have not survived for the period that Knox was employed. However, Mark Turner has argued that that Rex Silver was in fact responsible for only very few of the designs attributed to him during the period 1911 to 1963, and that it was much more likely that the majority were the work of other designers working in or for the Studio during this period and earlier.

Surviving records for November 1898 show that a number of metalwork designs were sold to Liberty & Co, and it is unlikely that anyone else associated with the Silver Studio at the time would have been able to produce this kind of work. Furthermore, some of Knox’s designs for textiles and wallpapers, produced for the Silver Studio, show clear stylistic links to his metalwork. For example, the squared-leaf motif is a feature of both textile designs such as 10, 13 and 17 and of budges and slaps such as 64 and 51.

Knox returned to the Isle of Man in 1900, and continued to supply metalwork designs to Liberty & Co for a number of years. His silver and pewter of this period is seen by some as among his best work, moving from the Celtic ornament of the earlier work to the uncluttered 'Modernist' lines of items such as the Cymric tea service (49).

As an intensely shy, even reclusive person, Knox would doubtless have hated the attention which his work currently attracts. His metalwork items - now extremely collectable - and his pastel designs, have a strange beauty which is unlike the work of almost any other designer. It is fitting that MoDA’s first temporary exhibition in the new building should focus on the work of this talented but surprisingly little recognised man.

Zoë Hendon
Assistant Curator, MoDA
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2 Mrs E. Penrose, from Kitchen to Garnet, 1889.
4 Anonymous, "Silver and Jewellery", in Archibald Knox, Dr SA Martin (ed.), op. cit.
6 Anonymous, "Silver and Jewellery", in Archibald Knox, Dr SA Martin (ed.), op. cit.
8 See Silver Studio Desks, November, 1898, in the Silver Studio Collection, MoDA.
9 James, A., The "Victoriana Modernism", in Archibald Knox, Dr SA Martin (ed.), op. cit.
1. Floral textile design
attrib. Archibald Knox, ca. 1900
Pencil and pastel on detail paper, 95x79cm
Detailed textile design featuring intricate abstract Celtic knotwork pattern.
SD 236074 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

2. Floral textile design
attrib. Archibald Knox, ca. 1900
Pencil and pastel on detail paper, 70x59cm
Pastel design for textile/wallpaper. Design of stylized tulips and straggling aconite leaves in yellow, green, and terracotta on a mid-blue ground. Originally published by Harry Napper and later shown in his own work.
SD 13513 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

3. Floral textile design
attrib. Archibald Knox, ca. 1897
Pencil and pastel on detail paper, 60x73cm
Stylized flowers in yellow, orange, and green.
SD 256949 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

4. Floral textile design
attrib. Archibald Knox, ca. 1897
Pencil and pastel on detail paper, 97x74cm
Pastel design for textile/wallpaper. Design of stylized tulips and straggling aconite leaves in yellow, green, and terracotta on a mid-blue ground. Possibly inspired by Harry Napper and later shown in his own work.
SD 134977 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

5. Floral textile design
attrib. Archibald Knox, ca. 1900
Pastel on detail paper, 71x60cm
Pastel design of stylized flowers and leaves on a dark green ground.
SD 236072 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

6. Floral textile design
attrib. Archibald Knox, ca. 1897
Pencil and pastel on detail paper, 85x80cm
The square, stylized blue flowers are similar to those in 7. This motif is also used by Knox in some of his other textile designs, particularly tablemats.
SD 256962 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

7. Floral textile design
attrib. Archibald Knox, ca. 1897
Pencil and pastel on detail paper, 45x56cm
Stylized flowers and single leaf in brown, on a mid-blue ground.
SD 256967 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

8. Design for wallpaper or carpet
attrib. Archibald Knox, ca. 1897
Pencil and pastel on detail paper, 77x57cm
Stylized blue flowers and green leaves on a dark brown ground.
SD 256967 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

9. Floral textile design
attrib. Archibald Knox, ca. 1900
Pastel on detail paper, 70x59cm
Pastel design of stylized flowers and leaves on a dark green ground.
SD 236072 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

10. Floral textile design
attrib. Archibald Knox, ca. 1900
Pastel on detail paper, 58x45cm
Pastel design of stylized flowers and leaves on a dark green ground.
SD 256952 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

11. Floral textile design
attrib. Archibald Knox, ca. 1897
Pastel and pastel on detail paper, 60x46cm
Stylized flowers and leaves on a dark green ground, suggesting elements of Celtic knotwork.
SD 256949 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

12. Floral textile design
attrib. Archibald Knox, ca. 1897
Pastel on detail paper, 99x75cm
Pastel design of stylized flowers and leaves on a dark green ground.
SD 11859 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

13. Floral textile design
attrib. Archibald Knox, ca. 1897
Pastel on detail paper, 70x59cm
Pastel design of stylized flowers and leaves on a dark green ground.
SD 256999 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

14. Floral textile design
attrib. Archibald Knox, ca. 1897
Pastel on detail paper, 99x75cm
Pastel design of stylized flowers and leaves on a dark blue ground.
SD 256967 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

15. Floral textile design
attrib. Archibald Knox, ca. 1897
Pastel on detail paper, 95x78cm
Pastel design of stylized flowers and leaves on a dark green ground.
SD 256967 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

16. Floral textile design
attrib. Archibald Knox, ca. 1897
Pastel on detail paper, 90x68cm
Pastel design of stylized flowers and leaves on a dark blue ground.
SD 256967 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

17. Woven textile sample
attrib. Archibald Knox, ca. 1900
Machine-woven tapestry, 33cm x 30cm
The sample is of interest as it shows how the designs were woven, and how the colors were used.
SD 256967 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

18. Design for a silver photograph frame, "The Rhos"
Archibald Knox, ca. 1904
Pencil and pastel on detail paper, 39x52cm
The design features a silver frame with a pattern of interlaced leaves and berries.
SD 256967 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

19. Design for a clock, "The Magna"
Archibald Knox, ca. 1897
Pastel and pastel on detail paper, 24x32cm
The design features a clock face with interlaced leaves and berries.
SD 256967 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

20. Sheet of trial designs for a case
Archibald Knox, ca. 1897
Charcoal and pastel on detail paper, 46x60cm
The designs feature a range of interlaced leaves and berries.
SD 16338 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

21. Design for candlestick, "The Norley"
Archibald Knox, ca. 1900
Pastel on detail paper, 24x32cm
The design features a candlestick with interlaced leaves and berries.
SD 256967 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture
22 Design for a silver bowl, 'The Dalglas'
Archibald Knox, ca. 1900
Pencil on tracing paper, 254x356mm
This design for a bowl is believed to be by Knox because of its intricate Celtic interlacing, and its title 'The Dalglas' is possibly a connection with 'Dalglass', the seat of the Kinns of Dunbartonshire. The 'notched' leaf-like patterns represent the sides of the bowl. In Knox's hand, possibly indicating his involvement in the design process as head of the Silver Studio.
SD 1985 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

23 Two designs for silver clocks, 'The Siegell' and 'The Otter'
Archibald Knox, ca. 1900
Pencil on tracing paper, 137x229mm
The upper design is inscribed 'The Siegell' and the lower design 'The Otter'. The design was certainly put into production and is illustrated in Liberty & Co. Catalogue 'Cymric Silver' of ca. 1900.
SD 2993 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

24 Design for a photograph frame, 'Armstrong'
Archibald Knox, ca. 1900
Pencil on paper (or card), 76x229mm
The engraved edge is inscribed 'Armstrong' and is a reminder of the influence of Charles Rennie Mackintosh in this design.
SD 2237 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

25 Design for a silver photograph frame, 'The Rhymney'
Archibald Knox, 1900 - 1901
Pencil and crayon on paper, 254x178mm
The pattern is repeated and features the word 'Rhymney' may be a pun on the very obvious influence of Charles Rennie Mackintosh in this design.
SD 2063 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

26 Design for a cardstock, 'The Thosell'
Archibald Knox, ca. 1900
Pencil on tracing paper, 355x260mm
This design was previously attributed to Ria Silvers but is now believed to be by Knox.
SD 8327 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

27 Design for a vase, 'The Cyprus'
Archibald Knox, 1908
Pencil on tracing paper, 356x229mm
This vase was featured in Liberty & Co.'s 'Cymric Silver' catalogue, ca. 1900, printed (50s), 4d. The inverted cone shape was one used by Knox in many variations for his designs for the vase and jars. See also 30 and 36.
SD 2277 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

28 Design for a silver powder box
Archibald Knox, ca. 1900
Pencil and watercolour on card (or paper), 178x229mm
This elegant design of birds and flowers is reminiscent of Whistler but the birds are clearly characteristic of Archibald Knox. See also 12 and 36.
SD 1997 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

29 Design for a silver powder bowl, 'Iona'
Archibald Knox, ca. 1908
Pencil on tracing paper, 254x229mm
The design of the bowl and its decoration with a Celtic interlaced motif, the idea of a bowl supported on legs which are decorative yet integral to the design was used frequently by Knox. See also 41.
SD 8733 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

30 Design for a photograph frame, 'Araygleon'
Archibald Knox, ca. 1900
Pencil on tracing paper, 254x279mm
The design is inscribed 'Araygleon' hand, "not used but altered".
SD 7815 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

DESIGN FOR A CHRISTMAS CARD

31 Christmas Card
Archibald Knox, ca. 1920
Dye transfer on hand-made paper
The elegant Christmas card is untypically by Knox, since the Manx Museum has a copy of its collection titled A.K.C., which was presented to the museum by a personal friend of Knox.
SE 507 Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture

METALWORK

32 Clock, 'The Magna'
Archibald Knox, 1902
Silver and enamel, 127mm (h)
An elegant clavichord clock. The enamelled dial shows the month and date instead of numbers and is inscribed 'The Magna'.
SD 17 Private Collection

33 Clock
Archibald Knox, ca. 1902 - 1903
Pewter and alabaster, 340mm (h)
This pewter clock, like the following four were part of the Tuchin range of pewter designed for Liberty & Co. It is of the same height and diameter as one of the designs for the studio.
SD 45 Collection of Dr MA Martin

34 Clock
Archibald Knox, ca. 1902 - 1903
Pewter and alabaster, 340mm (h)
SD 46 Collection of Dr MA Martin

35 Clock
Archibald Knox, ca. 1902 - 1905
Pewter and alabaster, 340mm (h)
SD 48 Collection of Dr MA Martin

36 Clock
Archibald Knox, ca. 1902
Pewter with copper dial and hands, 180mm (h)
LO 36 Manchester City Art Galleries

37 Clock
Archibald Knox, 1902 - 1905
Pewter and alabaster, 340mm (h)
LO 47 Collection of Dr MA Martin

38 Flower vase, 'The Cyprus'
Archibald Knox, 1902
Silver and enamel, 220mm (h)
This vase is in the form of a tapering cylinder with a chased rim near the rim and four carved handles. A design for this vase can be seen in 28. The handles, which are plain to the vase to have ornamental feet and an organic part of the design, are typical of Archibald Knox.
LO 33 Private Collection

39 Vase
Archibald Knox, 1903
Silver and enamelled, 145mm (h)
Inverted cone-shaped vase supported on tripod legs, with enamelled lower part. The overall shape of this vase is symmetrical, with smooth rounded edges that are very elegant and modern.
LO 22 Private Collection

40 Vase
Archibald Knox, 1903
Silver and enamelled, 125mm (h)
Tapering cylindrical vase with slightly curved sides. The vase is enamelled with different colors, including green, blue, and red.
LO 24 Private Collection

41 Covered bowl on legs
Archibald Knox, 1899 - 1910
Silver, 200mm (h)
A design for this bowl can be seen at 29.
LO 19 Private Collection
50. Tea service and matching tray
Archibald Knox, 1901
Peeler with square on copper (one-covered handled), 7.6 x 9.5 x 3.5 cm
This tea service was one of the first and most successful designs in Liberty & Co’s Tudric range of pewter wares. Each item of the set is decorated with a stylised Tudric wave pattern on copper, with a red and gold wave pattern on the handle.
LD 50 Private Collection

51. Wastelapse
Archibald Knox, c. 1899
Silver, 7.5 cm
The stylised floral design used here is similar to that of 17. Wastelapses and wastebaskets were popular with Liberty & Co’s customers who featured a radical ‘Art Nouveau’ form of design.
LD 30 Private Collection

52. Pair of coronation spoons
Archibald Knox, 1901
Silver and enamelled, 14 cm
Liberty commissioned Knox to design these silver spoons to commemorate the coronation of King Edward VII in 1902.
LD 28 Private Collection

53. Coronation spoon
Archibald Knox, 1901-1902
Silver and enamelled, 14 cm
Designed in honour of Edward VII’s coronation, the bowl of this spoon is inscribed ‘Arms, Caron, FRAT’, above the interlaced decoration.
LD 29 Manchester City Art Galleries

54. Wastelapse
Archibald Knox, 1901
Silver and enamelled, 7 cm
A delicate silver interlaced motif, comprising the letters ‘TDR’, again for Edward VII’s coronation.
LD 35 Private Collection

55. Necklace
Archibald Knox, 1901-1904
Gold, enamelled, 10mm
A fine gold chain connects two curved pendant gold triangles, each enamelled with a small baroque pearl suspended on a fine chain. The necklace is in a plaited, twisted spiral design with a large pearl suspended below. These sections are connected by fine chains set with a central pearl.
LD 31 Private Collection

56. Wastelapse
Archibald Knox, 1901
Silver and enamelled, 7 cm
Many of Knox’s designs for jewellery were produced with slight variations. Both this and 57 were available with or without enamel details.
LD 32 Private Collection

57. Wastelapse
Archibald Knox, 1901
Silver and enamelled, 10 mm
Symmetrical interlaced design, enamelled parts set in interlaced silver surround.
LD 34 Private Collection

58. Spoon
Archibald Knox, 1901-1902
Silver and enamelled, 13.5 cm
Circular bowl, partly enamelled with long slender stem decorated with Celtic knot motif.
LD 38 Manchester City Art Galleries
60 Buckle
Archibald Knox, 1902
Silver with turquoise
LD 37, Manchester City Art Galleries

61 Cushion charm
Archibald Knox, ca. 1900
Silver, turquoise and enamel, 25x20mm
LD 62, Chesterfield Art Gallery and Museum

62 Hair holder
Archibald Knox, 1903
Silver and enamel, 32x71mm
LD 43, Chesterfield Art Gallery and Museum

63 Six buttons and case
Archibald Knox, 1903
Silver, 9mm (diam.)
LD 11, Chesterfield Art Gallery and Museum

64 Belt buckle
Archibald Knox, 1903
Silver and turquoise, 54x71mm
LD 42, Chesterfield Art Gallery and Museum