

*Dear Mr Mackintosh,*

**Let me introduce myself: my name is Rosa.**

I am 15 years old.

I live in London.

I know I have two parents, I'm just not sure what they're up to every day. I know they can't help being the way they are. I forgive them and love them all the same.

I grew up in various foster homes, and tried out a few different families. They were all okay, I suppose – just not for me (at least that's what I was systematically told).

Too loud. Too demanding. Too impatient. Too “original”.

I saw my parents some of the time.

They always bought me a present.

The schools I attended were always near where I lived.

At school, I belonged. Learning and discovering were my reasons to get up in the morning.

I remember my first art class, in primary school. The teacher got us to cut out chunks of thick coloured paper, all shapes and forms, and create a multi-coloured composition by gluing them back onto a piece of cardboard.

I remember assembling my bright, flashy masterpiece, and I remember what I felt.

It was breathtaking.

Art had sneaked into my life.

**Just like that.**

After that class, I saw everything differently.

People used to look like indistinct forms: now everyone had a glow of uniqueness.

Buildings all seemed grey and dull to me: now I noticed all their tiny details.

Trees used to just be shapes along the sidewalk: now they were majestic rulers of nature.

I felt like the colours of life were suddenly unveiled.

**That new perception has never left me.**

**In secondary school, I adored my art teacher.**

Her name was Mrs MacIntyre. I always enjoyed the musicality of her name.

She was from Glasgow – I had always wondered what Scotland looked like.

Every art project with Mrs MacIntyre was exciting.

There were no limits: anything was good as long as it came “from the bottom of our hearts”, she would say.

I learnt to draw, paint, sculpt in clay, and many facts about famous artists.

One day, Mrs MacIntyre looked very excited.

“We’re all going on a school trip. A school trip to Glasgow!”

The coach was due to leave the following week.

Aboard the coach, Mrs MacIntyre told us everything about Glasgow.

**Its industrial past.**

**Its warm people.**

**Its vibrant art and music scene.**

She was so theatrical, we felt like we were at the movies.

We couldn’t wait to arrive.

On the first day of our trip, we visited the city center.

The buildings seemed darker and greyer than in London, but somehow they had a modern, peculiar beauty through which the city’s past managed to transpire.

The following day, our coach took us to a lake called “Loch Lomond”.

What a beautiful sight! I had never seen anything like it before.

Other pupils were running around and throwing pebbles into the lake. I kept wondering what kind of life there was underneath the surface.

**I was both scared and enchanted. I was fascinated.**

On the morning of our last day, Mrs MacIntyre told us about a famous Glaswegian architect.

“He completely revolutionized the Glasgow style. He was avant-garde. Alongside his wife Margaret, he created and designed many interiors and buildings. The person I am talking about is **the great Charles Rennie Mackintosh**”.

“Mrs MacIntyre”, my friend Lucy asked, “is he part of your family?”

“Not a chance!”, laughed Mrs MacIntyre. “I’m pretty good at teaching art, but I certainly don’t have that genius running through my veins!”

We all giggled.

“Follow me children”, she almost sang, “we’re going to visit one of his famous buildings: the House for an Art Lover!”.

We approached the building with excitement.

It was delightful to discover it was surrounded by a great big park.

Mrs MacIntyre counted us. We could now enter through the gate.

From far away, the house seemed so very white compared to Glasgow city center, as if it was built to feel like a **refreshing, natural glimpse of lightness in this mechanical city**.

I remember.

I remember entering the house.

I remember walking up the stairs.

I remember entering the dark brown dining room: the astonishment I felt.

I remember swivelling round and discovering the music room: it immediately caught my eye. Was this the home I’d always dreamed of? How was it that décor and design seemed to have suddenly replaced my undying need of human love?

You once pronounced these words: *“Life is the leaves which shape and nourish a plant, but art is the flower which embodies its meaning.”*

**I guess I had finally found my meaning.**

Most of my classmates quickly returned to the outdoor fun of the park.

Others stayed on, gazing at the gesso panels, a little while more.

I stayed in that house for over two hours.

I never wanted to leave.

Mrs MacIntyre, who had been debating with the tour guide about Mackintosh’s ancestors, suddenly noticed I was still there.

She smiled and came up to me.

“So, what do you think?”

**“THIS is art”**, I firmly replied.

So I wanted to write to you.

To say thank you, for giving me a home.

I’ve visited your House for an Art Lover many, many times since that first trip to Glasgow.

Nothing has made me feel more alive.

The light, the colour, the wondrous shapes and lifelike forms made me realize that art is endlessly powerful.

I plan on becoming an artist after I graduate, and I hope one day I'll design a home like yours.

I'll be waiting under the Central Station clock this Saturday at 4pm.

**I would love to meet you there.**

Yours truly,

*Rosa*