

BOWMAN SCULPTURE

SIR EDGAR BERTRAM MACKENNAL (Australian, 1863-1931)

Born in Melbourne in 1863, Sir Bertram Mackennal played a pivotal role in the development of the English New Sculpture movement. His works are currently housed in important public collections around the world, including TATE Britain (London), the Royal Academy (London), the Royal Collection (Windsor), the Art Gallery of New South Wales (Australia) and the National Gallery of Victoria (Australia).

Mackennal was taught by his father, John Simpson Mackennal, before enrolling in the School of Design in Melbourne between 1878 and 1882. After meeting the English sculptor Marshall Wood, the artist moved to England in 1883, where he continued his studies at the British Museum and later at the Royal Academy.

It was in his native Australia that Mackennal gained his first major commission, winning the competition to decorate the Government House of Victoria in 1899. He spent the next two years completing the project before returning to Europe and exhibiting *La Tête d'une Sainte* and *Le Baiser d'une Mère* at the Paris Salon in 1892. The following year, in Paris, Mackennal executed the model of *Circe*, the goddess and sorcerer. The piece was highly praised, gaining an honourable mention at the Salon in 1893.

The sculptor was also well known for his design of medals and stamps; he produced the medals for the 1908 London Olympic Games, and in 1910 won the competition to make the Coronation Medal for King George V.

Mackennal was the first Australian artist to be knighted in England. He was created a Commander of the Victorian Order in 1921 by H.M. King George V on the occasion of the unveiling of the London equestrian statue of King Edward VII. He was elected R.A. in 1922.