

# Women in surgery celebrated with new artwork

**The Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh (RCSEd) has commissioned a unique painting to pay tribute to the pivotal role of women in surgery.**

The artwork, set to be unveiled in April 2025, is part of Surgeons' Hall Museums Women in Surgery initiative, which aims to boost the representation of women in its collection. With only three out of 144 portraits in the current collection depicting women, the team is dedicated to addressing this imbalance.

Following a search to find an artist to take on the task, Scotland-based artist Kirstin Mackinnon has been selected for the commission.

Kirstin's acclaimed work in painting and writing has seen her achieve Semi-Finalist status in Sky Arts' Portrait Artist of the Year, and a three-year artist residency with Tighnabruaich Art Gallery. Her work notably focuses on gender equality in contemporary Scottish art.

The artwork will highlight recipients of the Hunter-Doig medal, an award given to exceptional female Fellow and Members of the College for excellence within the surgical profession.

Named after pioneering female surgeons Alice Mabel Headwards Hunter and Caroline Doig, the award has been bestowed upon nine surgeons to date, all of whom will be represented in the

portrait, as well as the namesakes of this unique award.



**Louise Wilkie, Curator of Surgeons' Hall Museums, said: "We recognise the underrepresentation of female surgeons and their**

significant contributions to the profession.

“This commission by Kirstin Mackinnon is an important step in expanding the collections to share these stories. We also hope to inspire the next generation of surgeons by paying tribute to those who have paved the way.”

**Hunter Doig medal recipient, Professor Farhat VN Din, MD, FRCSEd, said:** “I am proud to be part of this historic portrait representing women in surgery. The Women in Surgery Project is a reflection of how surgery has progressed over time to be inclusive, acknowledging the hard work of those before us. It will no doubt encourage and support future surgeons into this challenging but rewarding career.”

**Artist, Kirstin Mackinnon said:** “To be selected to paint such a historically significant commission is a dream come true. I recognise and acknowledge the efforts made by the college to promote equal representation for women. It was an honour to work with such inspirational surgeons, and to play a part in celebrating their success.”

The commission is being funded by generous grants from Art Fund and The National Fund for Acquisitions. In addition, donations are sought from the College’s community and heritage supporters to help bring this historically significant artwork to life and share this important moment in the College’s history.

The Women in Surgery project for 2025-2026 brings to light historical stories from collections, celebrating trailblazers in the field. The project includes a temporary exhibition, a permanent display, a programme dedicated to recording oral history interviews with living female surgeons, and a series of events and activities that reveal stories and achievements that have not been widely shared or celebrated.

The commissioned painting, serves as a focal point, aiming to inspire the next generation of women surgeons.

The painting commission will be displayed in the temporary 'Women in Surgery' exhibition at the Museum from April 2025 – March 2026. The painting will then be placed on display in the public reception atrium of the College.

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