

New artwork celebrates women in surgery

A new artwork has been unveiled on Friday evening to celebrate the role of women in surgery.

The painting by artist Kirstin Mackinnon commemorates the work of female surgeons and is only the fourth painting depicting women in the collection at The Royal College of Surgeons.

The painting, titled '*Eleven Surgeons*', by Scotland-based artist Kirstin Mackinnon, represents the namesakes and recipients of the [Hunter-Doig medal](#). The prestigious award is named after pioneering female surgeons Alice Hunter (1880s-1973) and Caroline Doig (1938-2019), and has been awarded to nine exceptional female surgeons to date – all of whom are still practicing – for excellence within the surgical profession. The large-scale work features Alice Hunter and Caroline Doig and all nine Hunter-Doig medal recipients, and is funded by grants from Art Fund and The National Fund for Acquisitions, with support from The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh membership and community. The wider project is supported by Museums Galleries Scotland.

Surgeons' Hall Museums, part of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, commissioned the painting as part of a wider initiative celebrating women's contributions to surgery. This includes a temporary exhibition, a permanent museum display, a programme of oral history collecting to secure the histories of living female surgeons, and an extensive programme of learning and engagement activities running throughout 2025–2026.

Louise Wilkie, Curator of Surgeons' Hall Museums, said: "Currently only three out of the 144 portraits in the collections here feature women, and we're dedicated to addressing this imbalance.

"We feel it is incredibly important to showcase the contributions of female surgeons throughout the years and hope this newest addition to the collection will demonstrate how the surgical profession has evolved. We hope by telling this story, to inspire the next generation of surgeons by paying tribute to those who have paved the way."

Clare McNaught, Vice President of RCSEd, said: "Honouring and educating others about the women who have played a significant role in shaping the College as we know it today, and in championing the rights of women in the medical field, is something we feel very strongly about."

The artist focusses on gender equality in contemporary Scottish art. Kirstin said: "'I am humbled to have been selected to paint such a historically significant commission. 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 painting is on display from 5 April to March 2026 in a temporary exhibition A Fair Field and No Favour at Surgeons' Hall Museum. It will then be moved into the public reception atrium in the building.



L-R Louise Fahrat Clare Chanté with Kirstin in front



L-R Chanté Kirstin Louise



L-R Chanté St Clair Inglis, Kirstin Mackinnon, Louise Wilkie



Kirstin Mackinnon



Eleven Surgeons artwork