



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## *News Release*

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### **PHOTO CALL**

**10:30AM, WEDNESDAY 3 DECEMBER 2014  
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH MAIN LIBRARY  
GEORGE SQUARE, EH8 9LJ**

### **Lost artworks resurface as show spotlights siblings' shared vision**

The sister of eminent Scottish painter Sir William Gillies is to be celebrated as an artist in her own right at a new exhibition, thanks to a significant discovery of her work.

Emma Gillies' collection of vibrant ceramics was unearthed in Edinburgh College of Art after the key to a locked cupboard was traced earlier this year.

The collection – dating from the 1920's and 30's – will go on show for the first time at an exhibition in the University of Edinburgh's Main Library. They will be showcased alongside a number of William Gillies' paintings in which many of Emma's lively designs were featured.

Best known as William Gillies' sister and muse for many Scottish artists' work, Emma Gillies was also a student at Edinburgh College of Art and the Royal College of Art in London where she became an accomplished potter.

Gordon Brennan, Director of Undergraduate Studies at Edinburgh College of Art, recognised one of Emma Gillies' ceramics from its presence in one of her brother's still life paintings. He then meticulously indexed all of the cupboard's contents to identify her work and research the collection.

Mr Brennan said: "We knew Emma studied Ceramics at Edinburgh College of Art, but there is very little evidence of her work from her time here, so this discovery is very exciting. We hope the exhibition will help raise her profile as an artist as well as adding colour to the artistic landscape of 20<sup>th</sup> century Scotland.

"We still have a lot to learn about Emma as an artist. There are a number of unidentified markings on the bases of her work and any clues or suggestions from visitors to the exhibition would be warmly received."

The Gillies family were well-known in Scotland's art scene throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As well as a revered artist, William Gillies taught at Edinburgh College of Art for 40 years and was Principal from 1960 until his retirement in 1966. The exhibition also features some decorated pots by Emma's sister Janet Gillies.

Emma's work in ceramics was flourishing until she took ill at the age of 35 in 1936, when she died of a thyroid condition in what is now the Royal Edinburgh Hospital.

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*Emma Gillies: Rediscovered is on show at the University of Edinburgh's Main Library from 5 December – 5 March; Monday to Saturday, 10am-5pm. Entry is free & open to the public.*

**For further information please contact:** Kathryn Dunlop, Press and PR Office:  
[kathryn.dunlop@ed.ac.uk](mailto:kathryn.dunlop@ed.ac.uk); 0131 651 5587; 0787 539 5069

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