



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Merrion mosaics find new home at Leeds College of Art



Images: Mosaics installed at Leeds College of Art, Blenheim Walk, photographer Rob Searle

The magnificent Merrion Centre mosaics created by Eric Taylor, artist and former Principal of Leeds College of Art (1956-1970), have been installed at Leeds College of Art's Blenheim Walk building.

The mosaics have held a central position in Leeds for almost sixty years; fronting the junction of Merrion Way with Wade Lane, just behind the Merrion Centre.

The refurbishment of the Merrion Centre in Leeds meant that Taylor's mosaics needed a new home. They are a significant part of the College's heritage and so it was delighted to save the mosaics and be part of the restoration and relocation of these beautiful works of art.

Simone Wonnacott, Principal of Leeds College of Art, said: "The Eric Taylor mosaics are significant pieces of Leeds' public art which represent a very important period in Leeds College of Art's history. When we found out they needed a new home, after many years at the Merrion Centre, we were happy to work with Town Centre Securities to provide it. Investing in their restoration not only gave the students who worked on the project a unique experience but will also mean the people of Leeds get to enjoy them for many years to come."

Four of the College's degree students have been involved in the project, working with [The Mosaic Restoration Company](#), restoring and documenting key moments of the restoration process over the past four months.

Lissie Cowley, BA (Hons) Fine Art, said: "I helped to repair and restore the mosaics with The Mosaic Restoration Company at their workshop in Daventry, once the mosaic had been transported there for restoring. I really enjoyed being involved in this project and it was a great way to finish the first year of my fine art degree. The experience I have gained is unique and I've seen how a creative subject can lead to an art form with mosaic."

The three mosaics, which have been erected onto the side of the building, measure an impressive 14 metres wide by 2 metres high, and are visible for the public to enjoy.

Editor's Notes

For more information, photographs or to arrange interviews with students or staff, please contact: Emma Morris, PR & Communications Officer, on 0113 202 8044 or emma.morris@leeds-art.ac.uk

Link to download photographs from the restoration process and installation [here](#)

BA (Hons) Photography students Rob Searle, Hamish Irvine and David Taylor have documented the process and BA (Hons) Fine Art student Lissie Cowley assisted with the restoration of the mosaics.

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The mosaics have been made available to the College on a long-term lease from [Town Centre Securities PLC](#).

The Mosaic Restoration Company's website [here](#)

Photographs of the mosaics being removed from the Merrion Centre can be seen here ([see images](#)). The mosaics were located at the College and then moved to The Mosaic Restoration Company in Daventry.



Eric Taylor circa 1950s

Biography: Eric Taylor (1909 - 1999) Artist.

He trained under William Rothenstein in London at the Royal College of Art. He joined the Army (Royal Artillery & Royal Engineers) during WW2 and witnessed the Normandy landings and the liberation of Belsen concentration camp.

Teacher at Leeds College of Art from 1949 and became Head of Design, then Principal from 1956-1970.

Eric Taylor's work is currently in The Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery and The Leeds Art Gallery's collections. 2003 - Prints exhibition at The Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery, see [here](#)

His work was extremely varied, in his own words, his "*work has been a lifelong effort to unify all media in the expression of ideas. To subdue technique and anything relevant to the 'how to do it' pundits and to rethink the meaning and purpose of drawing*".

