

RADA fined after fashion designer plunges 24ft down lift shaft and shatters both his legs

Hector Maclean, 25, broke one leg in five places in the horrific accident at a property owned by RADA in central London

BY
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NEWS



Injured: The fashion designer has worked for Vivienne Westwood

A leading drama school has been **fined** after a fashion designer leant against a door and plunged more than 20ft down an empty **lift shaft**. Hector Maclean, 25, shattered both his legs in the horrific accident at a property owned by RADA in central London.

The academy insisted the external metal doors, which formerly gave access from the building's basement onto the street, were locked.

But a lawyer for the drama school apologised for the injury caused and admitted it could have been much more severe, saying: "The risk here was of death."

Describing the incident at Ridgmount Street on 29 March last year, prosecutor James Caren said: "Mr Maclean fell through a set of metal double doors a distance of about six to seven metres, onto the base of a lift shaft, the concrete base.



Hospitalised: Hector Maclean shattered both his femurs in the fall (Image: CENTRAL NEWS)
"He sustained breaks to his right femur and his left femur. The right one was smashed into five pieces."

Mr Maclean worked on the 2012 Spring/Summer collection for Vivienne Westwood and now runs his own label.

According to his online profile he has also designed clothing worn by Kate Middleton.

Mr Caren added: "RADA could have built a permanent structure - they haven't used it [the lift] in seven years so we say they could have built a wall.

"They could have put visible locks on the door. They could have put warning signs on the door to stop this kind of accident happening.

"It is a serious injury to Mr Maclean and someone could have been even more seriously injured in such a fall."

Defence lawyer Nathan Buckley said: "The only appropriate place for me to start in this case is to formally apologise to Mr Maclean for the serious injuries he sustained."

He said RADA had "always been committed to health and safety" and had never been in court over failings before.

"Unfortunately this was a tragic oversight on the part of the defendant and also the managing agents.

"Because this vacant lift shaft was never accessed it was an oversight."

He said the door was "always kept locked" so it was a "mystery" how Mr Maclean had fallen through it.

"The defendant is adamant it has never used the key to the door since 2007."

There had been a motorcycle crash near the building which he said could have shaken the doors, leaving them loose and contributing to the accident.

He concluded: "We accept that the risk here was of death."



Scarred: Mr Maclean is still recovering from his injuries

Fining the school, District Judge Jeremy Coleman said: "The unfortunate Mr Maclean sustained serious injuries from which he seems to be making a slow but hopefully full recovery.

"It is clear that Mr Maclean...in no way contributed to this incident. All that he did was lean against an unmarked door.

"As a result he fell through these doors into an empty lift shaft falling some 24 feet.

"The fact is that the doors didn't work and that is the bottom line here frankly."

RADA admitted one health and safety breach and was fined £12,000 at Westminster Magistrates' Court.

They were also ordered to pay £1,266 costs.

Mr Maclean is now set to sue the academy for civil damages.

Most of the famous names in British film and theatre trained at the Academy including Sir Kenneth Brannagh, Ralph Fiennes, and the late Sir Richard Attenborough.