

## Purchase of work through the National Collecting Scheme for Scotland

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### Committee on the Jean F Watson Bequest

28 June 2005

#### Purpose of report

- 1 To report on the purchase of a work through the National Collecting Scheme for Scotland.

#### Main report

2. At the meeting of 29 August 2003, the Committee agreed to the City Art Centre's participation in the National Collecting Scheme for Scotland. The City Art Centre is one of six museums and galleries in Scotland working in partnership with the Contemporary Art Society to purchase challenging contemporary visual and applied art for Scottish collections.
3. At that meeting, it was agreed that reports on the works purchased would be brought to the Committee at regular intervals. The first work purchased under the scheme is:

Artist: **Graham Fagen** (b. 1966)

Title: **Nothank**

Date: 1999

Medium: Installation and documentary  
consisting of carpet, five chairs, three tables,  
television and DVD player, DVD, waste bin,  
plants, refreshments and research materials  
Unique work.

Dimensions: 585 x 396 x 150cm

3. The central element of Fagen's work is a short (21 mins 45 sec.) video documentary dealing with planning and living on the Nothank housing estate in Irvine, Ayrshire. The edited DVD consists of a series of interviews with the Chief Architect and Head Planner of Nothank who outline ideas and concepts for contemporary living. These are juxtaposed with the views of a young

couple, residents of Nothank, who talk about the reality of living on the modern urban estate as a family with young children.

4. To the DVD, played through a standard non-domestic TV set, Fagen has added carpet, chairs and table to create an installation for use by gallery visitors. The style and arrangement of the furniture gives the work an atmosphere of impersonal officialdom, reminiscent of spaces used for training videos or work presentations.
5. Graham Fagen's work emerges from his own experiences, combined with an awareness that these are shaped by history, myth and literature. Fagen works mainly with photographic or interactive installations, often including printed scripts and videos. His work may at first seem to be fictional but, on closer examination, actually deals with social, political and historical accuracies.
6. Graham Fagen was born in Glasgow in 1966. He studied at the Kent Institute of Art and Design, and Glasgow School of Art. Fagen lectures in Sculpture at the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee. Recent exhibitions include Matt's Gallery, London; Henry Moore Institute, Leeds; Inverleith House, Edinburgh; the Imperial War Museum, London and the Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh. Graham Fagen lives and works in Glasgow.
8. As part of the scheme each NCSS member has identified a theme for developing its contemporary collection. Given Edinburgh's architectural history and reputation, and its status as a World Heritage Site, the City Art Centre is collecting work around the theme of architecture and the built environment. Fagen's work, which looks at the opposition between the aspiration and reality of urban living from the perspective of planning officials and residents, is a particularly relevant acquisition for the City Art Centre.
9. The work was bought through the Edinburgh contemporary art gallery, Doggerfisher, for £13,125 which included a 12.5% discount on the original price of £15,000. The work was paid for from funds available through the National Collecting Scheme for Scotland, as approved by the Committee on 29 August 2003. At that time, £47,000 was available for purchases through this scheme.
10. The work is currently on show as part of **Showstoppers** collection-based exhibition.

## **Recommendations**

12. Note the purchase of the installation *Nothank* by Graham Fagen through the National Collecting Scheme for Scotland.



**Herbert Coutts**  
Director of Culture and Leisure

27:6:05

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<b>Appendices</b>	N/A
<b>Contact/tel</b>	Ian O'Riordan 0131-529 3955
<b>Wards affected</b>	City Wide
<b>Background Papers</b>	The Jean F Watson Bequest files are held by the Museums and Arts Division