

Purchase of a watercolour by T M Richardson

Committee on the Jean F Watson Bequest

30 November 2007

Purpose of report

- 1 To consider the purchase of a watercolour by Thomas Miles Richardson, Junior (1813-1890).

Main report

2. The following watercolour by Thomas Miles Richardson, Junior (1813-1890) is presented to the Committee for consideration:

Old Edinburgh

Watercolour, heightened with white gouache,

Signed and dated 1840

25.5 x 37.5cm

Price: £6,500

3. Thomas Miles Richardson, Junior was born in Newcastle in 1813, the son of M T Richardson, Senior. He was a watercolourist and lithographer, and travelled in France, Switzerland, Italy and Germany, producing many lithographs based on his travels. In 1843 he was elected an Associate of the Old Watercolour Society, becoming a full Member in 1851. He was also a Member of the Royal Scottish Academy. He was known for his bright colours and good designs.
4. The main interest of this watercolour is that it depicts the west end of what is now Waverley Station, just before it was developed. The viewpoint is from the top of where Waverley Market now is, with what is now Waverley Bridge to the right of the image, bounded by the trees at the edge of East Princes Street Gardens. In the foreground is the almost rural image of washerwomen hanging laundry out to dry on the greens while being observed by a dallying couple. Others go about their daily business, walking up and down the street to the left, where there is what appears to be a timber yard.

5. In the background is the distinctive mass of the City Chambers, before it was extended, with the crown of St Giles on the skyline. This was painted before Cockburn Street was created, and all the buildings in the foreground and middle distance, including those in Market Street, have been demolished and replaced. The site of the City Art Centre is just to the left of the image. In this way, the watercolour is a good record of an area of the city that changed totally shortly after it was painted. It is also a very competent and pleasing work of art, well balanced and composed in the best traditions of Victorian watercolour painting.
6. The work is in good condition, although it looks as though some of the blues and greens have faded due to exposure to light over the years. This is most obvious in the trees on the right of the image.
7. The work was exhibited at the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne Festival of Britain exhibition in 1951. It was formerly in the Drambuie Collection.
8. The watercolour is being sold by Bourne Fine Art in Edinburgh. If approved, an application for grant aid would be submitted to the National Fund for Acquisitions.

Recommendations

9. Approve the purchase of a watercolour by Thomas Miles Richardson, Junior.



22/11/07

JIM INCH
Director, Corporate Services

Appendices	None
Contact/tel	Ian O'Riordan, Manager, City Art Centre, 529 3955 ian.oriordan@edinburgh.gov.uk
Wards affected	City Wide
Background Papers	The Jean F Watson Bequest files are held at the City Art Centre