

Committee on the Jean F Watson Bequest

2pm, Friday, 29 April 2016

Acquisition of contemporary ceramics, glass and silver

Item number	5.5
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	All

Executive summary

Committee is asked to approve the use of Jean F Watson funds to begin developing a contemporary applied art collection by purchasing and commissioning contemporary work by makers born or based in Edinburgh or its environs, who work in silver, glass and ceramics.

Links

Coalition pledges	P31
Council outcomes	CO20
Single Outcome Agreement	

Acquisition of contemporary ceramics, glass and silver

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the principle of using funds from the J F Watson bequest for purchasing or commissioning contemporary silver, glass, and ceramics by makers born in Edinburgh or based in Edinburgh and its environs.

Background

- 2.1 The Edinburgh Museums and Galleries (EMG) Applied Art Collection is a Museums and Galleries Scotland 'Recognised' collection, covering three main collecting areas: ceramics, glass and silver. The existing collections are among the best in public hands outside the National Museums of Scotland.
- 2.2 The existing Applied Art Collection focuses on Edinburgh-made objects, in contrast to the wider national and international collections of the National Museums of Scotland, and comprises mainly domestic items.
- 2.3 EMG only collects silver and glass from Edinburgh and its immediate environs. The ceramics collection initially covered Scotland, but since the 1980s has concentrated on East Coast makers.
- 2.4 Until now, EMG has concentrated on filling historic gaps rather than purchasing contemporary pieces. This change of direction has been identified as a strategic objective within the current EMG plan and is consistent with the EMG Collections Development Policy. The purchase or commissioning of contemporary pieces would help to support local talent and the craft scene within the Edinburgh area, in line with the Culture Plan's vision of keeping culture and creativity at the heart of Edinburgh's success.

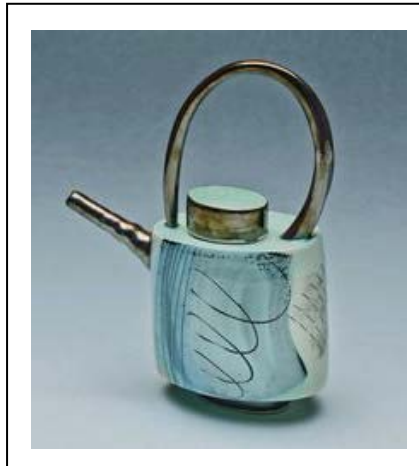
Main report

- 3.1 The minute of the original agreement between Miss Jean F Watson and the City of Edinburgh Corporation dated 13 and 22 December 1961 stated '*The Corporation may apply the trust fund and the income thereof in the purchase of works of art (including paintings, drawings, engravings, sculptures, tapestries, pottery, metal work and stained glass) as they think fit*'. In the past, the

occasional piece of historical silver or glass has been purchased with the aid of Watson funds. This proposal to use the bequest to help develop a contemporary collection of ceramics, glass and silver made in Edinburgh and its environs is very much in keeping with the spirit of the original bequest.

- 3.2 If approved, the new collection would build on and complement the strengths of the existing Applied Art collections of domestic ceramics, silver and glass. The collection would include examples of contemporary design made for public sale and work commissioned from specific makers. EMG would aim to include contemporary pieces which demonstrate innovative design techniques, innovative use of materials and the products of a crossover between different cultures and design influences.
- 3.3 Initially the project would develop a small reserve collection of contemporary pieces, laying the foundations for the future development of the Applied Art collections, allowing existing displays to be updated, and giving a focus for new exhibitions and digital material.
- 3.4 Some examples of work by contemporary makers (including ceramicists, glassmakers and silversmiths) are shown on the following pages. Once suitable pieces are identified for purchase, they will be presented to Committee for its approval.

Contemporary Ceramics: Myer Halliday, Tricia Thom, Jode Pankhurst, Lara Scobie, Geoff Calder, Janet Adam and Gavin Burnett



Contemporary Glass: Choi Keeryong, Clare Wilson, Juli Bolaños Durman



Contemporary Silver: Sarah Cave, Kathryn Hinton, Eileen Gatt and Grant McCaig



Measures of success

- 4.1 Development of contemporary applied art collection.
- 4.2 New acquisitions placed on public display within Edinburgh Museum and Gallery venues.

Financial impact

- 5.1 Funds for the purchase of contemporary pieces for the applied art collection will come from the Jean F Watson Bequest. Applications for grant aid will be made to sources such as the National Fund for Acquisitions and the Art Fund.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 Not applicable

Equalities impact

- 7.1 Not applicable

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 Not applicable

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Not applicable

Background reading/external references

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

Contact: Helen Edwards, Curator (Applied Art)

E-mail: helen.edwards@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 529 4097

Links

Coalition pledges	P31 Maintain our city's reputation as the cultural capital of the world by continuing to support and invest in our cultural infrastructure
Council outcomes	C020 Culture, sport and major events – Edinburgh continues to be a leading cultural city where culture and sport play a central part in the lives and futures of citizens
Single Outcome Agreement	
Appendices	

