

## Purchase of a painting by Louise Hopkins

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### Committee on the Jean F Watson Bequest

12 October 2006

#### Purpose of report

- 1 To consider the purchase of a painting by Louise Hopkins (b.1965).

#### Main report

2. The following two works by Louise Hopkins are presented to the Committee for consideration:

**Black white white black, 2005**

Acrylic ink on comic pages on wood panel

74 x 80cms

Price: £5,570

**Relief (739), 2005**

Oil paint on patterned furnishing fabric

153 x 290cm, 2 panels, each 153 x 145cm

Price: £20,000

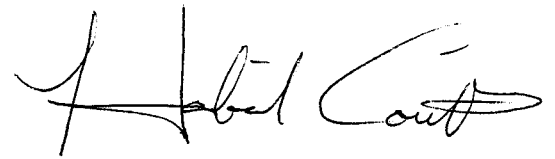
- 3 Louise Hopkins was born in England, but studied for an MFA at Glasgow School of Art from 1992-1994, and continues to live and work in the city. Although she had exhibited in Canberra, Australia and in Aberdeen in the early 1990s, it was a group of works exhibited at the Tramway, Glasgow and in London in 1996 which first brought her to national and international attention. These paintings made on furnishing fabric seemed at first to be beautiful depictions of a profusion of flowers in full bloom.
4. What was not immediately apparent was that the paintings had been made on the back of printed furnishing fabric, and that the flowers came not from the artist's imagination or a still life study, but from the printed design of the fabric itself. The artist had meticulously re-painted over parts of the printed design, while at the same time leaving other sections untouched, allowing the original printed pattern to show through.
5. These works heralded many of the lines of inquiry that have remained continual within Hopkin's work ever since. A particular constant has been her

use of pre-printed surfaces. She herself has spoken of her interest in working on supports which already contain information, often an image, and in turning that image into a painting by repainting and hence remaking it. From printed fabric, the artist began in the late 1990s to work on maps, repainting them, altering place names, joining land masses, resulting in total disorientation.

6. The two works under consideration are both from 2005. In *Black white white black* the artist has used pages from comic books as elements in the underlying structure of the painting. But we are frustrated if we look for bold colour, for Hopkins has overpainted the brightly coloured images with black and white, emptying the bubbles of speech and the cartoons of story. In doing so, she creates an underlying tension. She speaks of freedom in relation to these comic book works, the freedom to remake, to do anything she wants. Yet this is counterbalanced by the structure of the comics underneath that impose a limit on the artist's intrusion.
7. *Relief (729)* marks the artist's return to working on furnishing fabric, yet the result is very different to the earlier paintings. Here she has taken a vividly coloured printed design of the leaves, branches and berries of a cherry tree and transformed it into a rampant jungle vine, replacing its summer cheeriness into a dark, gothic romance. The key once again is the nature of the marks from which it is made, in this instance echoing the print, but overlaying it with her own. This major new work was completed specially for her recent exhibition at the Fruitmarket Gallery.
8. Louise Hopkins has an established international reputation. She has exhibited throughout the UK, Europe and the USA, and her works are in many prestigious public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Museum of Contemporary Art, Canberra, and the Arts Council of England. In 2002 she was the recipient of a Creative Scotland Award, and last year she exhibited at the City Art Centre as part of the *Showcase* exhibition. She is not currently represented in the City's fine art collection, and as such she represents a significant omission.
9. The two works are being sold on behalf of the artist by Doggerfisher Gallery in Edinburgh. The prices quoted include a gallery discount. If approved, an application for grant aid would be submitted to the National Fund for Acquisitions in due course.

## **Recommendations**

10. Approve the purchase of one of the two works by Louise Hopkins.



**Herbert Coutts**  
Director of Culture and Leisure

5.10.06

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<b>Appendices</b>	N/A
<b>Contact/tel</b>	Ian O’Riordan    0131 529 3955 David Patterson    0131 529 3575
<b>Wards affected</b>	City Wide
<b>Background Papers</b>	The Jean F Watson Bequest files are held by the Museums and Arts Division