

Purchase of prints by Victoria Crowe and John McLean

Committee on the Jean F Watson Bequest

12 October 2006

Purpose of report

- 1 To consider the purchase of prints by Victoria Crowe (b.1945) and John McLean (b.1938).

Main report

2. The following prints by Victoria Crowe and John McLean are presented to the Committee for consideration:
3. **Victoria Crowe**
The Healing Herb, Viola
Screenprint
Edition of 75 impressions.
Signed, numbered and dated by the artist.
Printed by hand in 14 colours from 9 screens by master printer Gillian Murray at Edinburgh Printmakers.
On Somerset Velvet Antique 280gsm paper.
Image size: 77 x 56 cm printed to deckle edge.
Price: £295.00
4. Victoria Crowe studied at Kingston School of Art, and the Royal College of Art, before being invited to teach drawing and painting at the Edinburgh College of Art in 1968. She has been described as "one of the most vital and original figurative painters at work in Scotland". Her work is represented in a large number of public and private collections and in 2004 she was awarded the OBE for services to art.
5. The print is concerned with healing, care and treatment. The herb Viola is shown as a key feature. Healing properties are cherished over the ages, expressed by pairing the image of the contemporary woman on the right with an early saint holding a chalice (quoted from a painting by Sebastiano del Piombo, 1509, now in the Academia, Venice).

6. The collection currently contains two paintings by Victoria Crowe, which are a portrait of Winifred Rushforth of 1981-82 and the portrait the Council commissioned of former Lord Provost Tom Morgan of 1988, as well as an early print. The acquisition of a more recent major work is currently under consideration.
7. **John McLean**
South Bridge
Screenprint
Edition of 75 impressions.
Signed, numbered and dated by the artist.
Printed by hand in 16 colours from 12 screens by master printer Kip Gresham at the Print Studio, Cambridge.
On Somerset UK Textured 300gsm paper.
Sheet size: 75.5 x 85.5 cm, image size: 55.5 x 66 cm.
Price: £295.00
8. John McLean was born in Liverpool and brought up in Scotland, studying at St Andrews University and the Countauld Institute of Art in London. He is one of Britain's leading abstract artists and has been producing striking and original work that explores the relationship between colour and shape for the last 40 years. His work is represented in a number of public collections, including the Tate, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Arts Council of England, and the British Council.
9. This work is a good example of his mature style, achieving the same dynamic vibrancy through the medium of screenprinting as he does with his oil painting. Pleasure is a word that is often used when describing his work and there is a genuine relish in the effect of colour apparent in this print.
10. The collection contains one painting by John McLean, a large oil entitled *Whaup* dating from the mid 1990s.
11. Both prints were commissioned by Art in Healthcare, who are offering them for sale.

Recommendations

12. Approve the purchase of the prints by Victoria Crowe and John McLean.

Herbert Coutts

Herbert Coutts
Director of Culture and Leisure

Appendices N/A

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Wards affected City Wide

Background Papers The Jean F Watson Bequest files are held by the Museums and Arts Division