

Committee on the Jean F Watson Bequest

10am, Friday 30 November 2018

Purchase of three photographs by Kevin McCollum

Item number	5.5
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	
Council Commitments	46

Executive Summary

Committee is asked to approve the purchase of three photographs by Kevin McCollum (b.1975) – *Basement Series I, II and IV* from 2018

Purchase of three photographs by Kevin McCollum

1. Recommendations

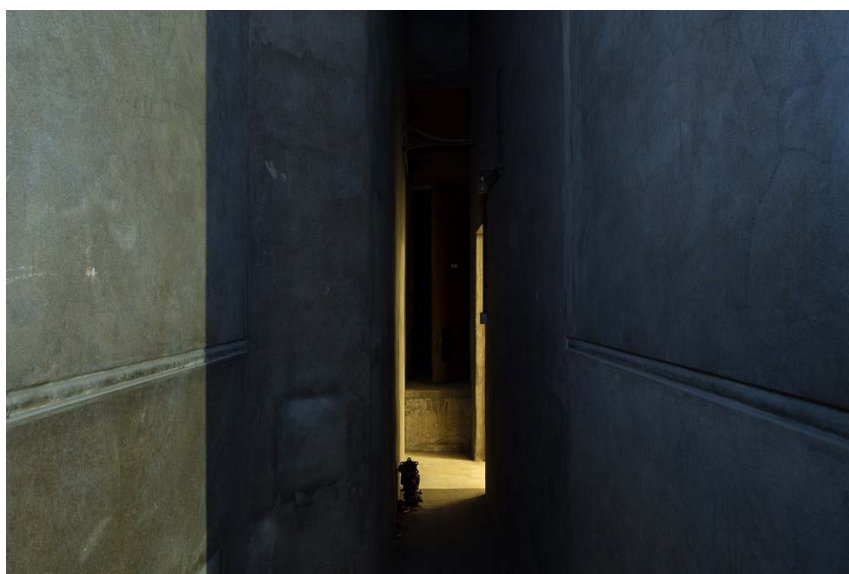
- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves purchase of three photographs by Kevin McCollum (b.1975) – *Basement Series I, II and IV* from 2018.

2. Background

- 2.1 The City Art Centre's fine art collection traces the development of Scottish art from the 17th century until present day. Acquisitions of new work by emerging contemporary artists are an important part of ensuring that the collection continues to provide a comprehensive overview of Scottish art for future generations.
- 2.2 Earlier this year the City Art Centre mounted the exhibition *In Focus: Scottish Photography* (7 July 2018 – 12 May 2019), as a means of showcasing the photographic highlights of the fine art collection. In order to consolidate the long-term impact of this exhibition, and create a tangible legacy, it is proposed that new photographic works by contemporary photographers should be considered for acquisition.

3 Main report

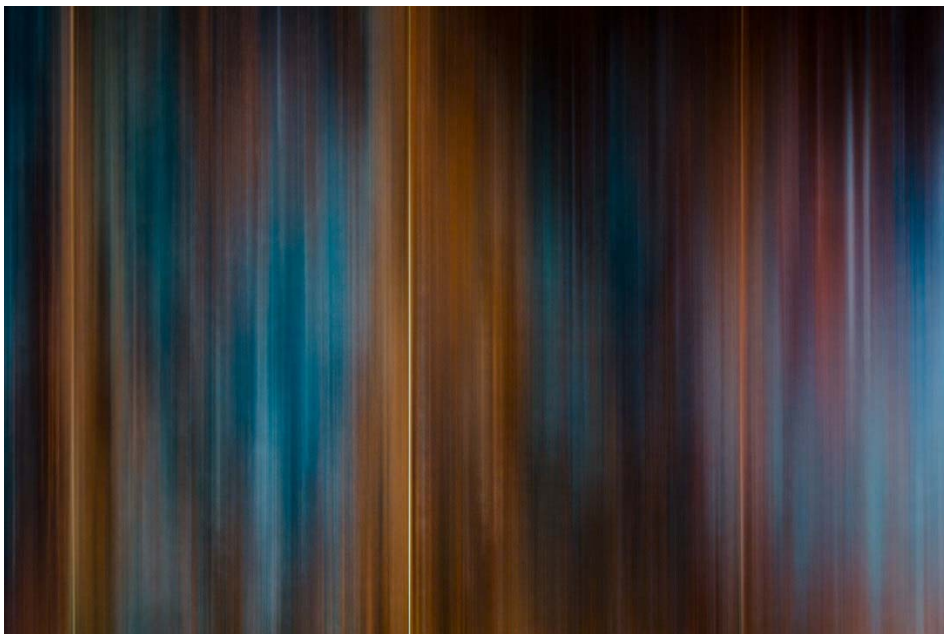
- 3.1 The following photographs by Kevin McCollum are presented to the Committee for consideration:



Basement Series IV, Hahnemuhle photorag archival paper, 69 x 102cms, framed, 2018



Basement Series II, Hahnemuhle photorag archival paper, 69 x 102cms, framed, 2018



Basement Series I, Hahnemuhle photorag archival paper, 69 x 102cms, framed, 2018

- 3.2 Kevin McCollum was born in Dunfermline in 1975, and studied photography and film at Napier University in Edinburgh. Since graduating, he has exhibited work in group exhibitions in Edinburgh, Fife, London and New York. He had his first solo exhibition at Stills Gallery in Edinburgh in 2018. Should the Committee chose to purchase these photographs, we would be the first public collection to own works by the artist.
- 3.3 For the past few years he has been involved in documenting large scale building developments in Glasgow and Edinburgh. As well as recording the re-purposing of these buildings, Kevin has been given unhindered access to all areas of the properties during the construction phases.

- 3.4 For the past 18 months or so McCollum has been documenting the transformation of what used to be a Bank building in St Andrew Square into The Edinburgh Grand, a complex of 50 luxury serviced apartments. As well as recording the work as it progressed on the upper floors, his process involved looking for details, moments of chance stumbled upon as he explored the underground depths of the building. Drawn more to these empty, forgotten corners than to the ornately decorated public areas, McCollum's work began to become more abstract as he sought to capture the colours, the silence, the essence of these spaces.
- 3.5 The three photographs presented to the Committee trace this move from representation to abstraction. *Basement Series IV* is a literal depiction of a dark corridor punctuated by a shaft of light from an adjacent room. It is an intriguing image, teasing the viewer as to what may lie beyond. In *Basement Series II* we can detect the corner of a room, but the photograph has become less about reality and more about texture and colour. Finally, in *Basement Series I*, McCollum has added time, a long exposure where the camera is gradually moved produces a completely abstract, painterly image, resonating with shifting colours.
- 3.6 McCollum is not presently represented in the City's art collection. His work complements other photographs and paintings within our collection which explore colour, light and space abstractly. While each image can stand alone, it would be our normal intention to display them together. The photographs are offered for sale by the artist.

4 Measures of success

- 4.1 Completed purchase of three photographs by Kevin McCollum (b.1975) – *Basement Series I, II and IV* from 2018.

5 Financial impact

- 5.1 The costs are as follows: *Basement Series I, II and IV*: £2,000 framed.
- 5.2 Funds for these purchases will come from the Jean F Watson Bequest, and it is intended that an application for grant aid will be submitted to the National Fund for Acquisitions. The price for the three photographs represents a museum discount of £250.
- 5.3 The photographs are presented to the Committee framed in standard picture glass. The artist has offered, as alternatives, to frame the photographs in superior Clear UV glass (total cost for three framed prints £2,957.90), or in specialised, virtually invisible *Optium* museum acrylic (at a total cost of £4,199.00).

6 Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

6.1 Not applicable.

7 Equalities impact

7.1 Not applicable.

8 Sustainability impact

8.1 Not applicable.

9 Consultation and engagement

9.1 Not applicable.

10 Background reading/external references

10.1 Kevin McCollum's website: <https://www.kevinmccollumphotography.com/>

10.2 Stills Gallery exhibition: <http://www.stills.org/exhibition/past/kevin-mccollum-basement-series>

10.3 Photographic essay: <http://www.avocadosweet.com/kevin-mccollum-portraits-fife-photographer/>

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11 Appendices

None.