

Committee on the Jean F Watson Bequest

10.00am, Friday 7 February, 2020

Purchase of two paintings by James Lumsden

Executive/routine

Wards

Council Commitments [46](#)

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the purchase of two paintings by James Lumsden (b.1964) – *Fugue (17/11)* and *Fugue (30/11)*.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

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Report

Purchase of two paintings by James Lumsden

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Committee is asked to approve the purchase of two paintings by James Lumsden (b.1964) – *Fugue (17/11)* and *Fugue (30/11)*.

3. Background

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The two paintings under consideration are part of a current exhibition at the City Art Centre. *Beneath the Surface* features work by nine contemporary artists based in Scotland. Each of them articulates a minimalist aesthetic through abstraction in their work. Eschewing narrative and observed reality, the artworks have an economy of gesture in common – a limited tonal palette or a monochrome colour plane.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The following paintings by James Lumsden are presented to the Committee for consideration:

4.1.1 Fugue (17/11), acrylic on canvas, 2011, 30.5 x 30.5cms:



4.1.2 Fugue (30/11), acrylic on canvas, 2011, 30.5 x 30.5cms



4.2 James Lumsden was born in Inverness and studied Graphic Design in Glasgow. In the early stages of his career, the City Council supported him through several small grants, but since then he has been the recipient of numerous further awards for his work, and taken part in residencies in Ireland, Denmark and most recently in Banff, Canada.

4.3 He has exhibited widely throughout the United Kingdom, and internationally in Denmark (2000), Ireland (2001), Canada (2010, 2012, 2014 and 2015), Switzerland (2016) and USA (2018). His work is in numerous private and public collections,

including The Royal Bank of Scotland and The Gulbenkian Foundation in London. He currently divides his time between Edinburgh and the Isle of Lewis.

- 4.4 Lumsden creates paintings and literal landscapes on the canvas. His work is primarily concerned with process – building translucent glazes of paint until an illusion of light and depth are achieved. The process involves the application of multiple (up to 40 or more) thin glazes of acrylic paint and gloss medium. Each layer is dragged, pulled or manipulated with various implements – this being repeated layer upon layer until the painting begins to emerge.
- 4.5 Arrived at by both chance and deliberation, the final painting reveals varying chromatic strata, which can be seen through the translucence and depth of the work. The aim is to make paintings which are luminous, seductive, sensual and atmospheric.
- 4.6 Lumsden's paintings complement works already in the City's collection that are concerned primarily with colour and surface, most notably paintings by Calum Innes and paintings and constructions by Ken Dingwall. He is not currently represented in the City's art collection. The paintings are being sold by the artist.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 If the Committee approve the purchase of both paintings, it is intended that an application for grant aid will be submitted to the National Fund for Acquisitions, administered on behalf of the Scottish Government by the National Museums of Scotland.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The costs are as follows:
 - 6.1.1 *Fugue (17/11)* and *Fugue (30/11)*: Each painting is priced at £950.00, which includes a museum discount of £150 on each work, the normal selling price being £1,100 each.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Not Applicable

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 James Lumsden is represented by Sarah Myerscough Gallery, London and &Gallery, Edinburgh <https://www.sarahmyerscough.com/james-lumsden> and <http://www.andgallery.co.uk/product-category/visual-artists/james-lumsden-artist/>

- 8.2 A review of his work can be found here:
<https://edinburghfestival.list.co.uk/event/349783-james-lumsden-chromatic-visions/>
- 8.3 [National Funds for Acquisition information](#)

9. Appendices

Not applicable.