

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

BACKGROUND REPORT

<u>Name of Committee</u>	Education, Culture and Sport
<u>Date of Meeting</u>	16 September 2010
<u>Title of Report</u>	Potential external funding sources available to acquire an original Jack Vettriano painting
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BACKGROUND REPORT

This report is provided as background information to the motion proposed by Councillor Jennifer Stewart:

"Instruct Council officers to explore all potential sources of external funding, including the McDonald Trust, which would allow Aberdeen City Council to acquire an original Jack Vettriano painting to be hung in Aberdeen Art Gallery"

1. Information about Jack Vettriano

Jack Vettriano was born in Methil, Fife in 1951. He left school at sixteen to become a mining engineer, however after he received a set of watercolour paints for his twenty-first birthday he taught himself to paint.

His earliest paintings, under the name "*Jack Hoggan*", were copies or pastiches of impressionist paintings – his first painting was a copy of Monet's *Poppy Fields*. Much of his early influence came from studying paintings at the Kirkcaldy Museum and Art Gallery.

In 1989 he submitted two paintings to the Royal Scottish Academy's annual exhibition, both of which were sold on the first day of the exhibition. The following year three paintings were accepted for the prestigious Summer Exhibition at the Royal Academy in London and from then on his career as a painter took off.

His recent paintings are reminiscent of the film noir genre, often with romantic or nude themes.

In 2004 he was awarded an OBE for Services to the Visual Arts and was the subject of a South Bank Show documentary *Jack Vettriano: the People's Painter*. In the same year his best known painting *The Singing Butler* was sold at Sotheby's for close to £750,000. More recently prices have levelled. The highest seller at a Sotheby's auction sale of Scottish Art in April 2010 was a 15 inch by 12 inch painting entitled *Game On*, which fetched £49,250.

Images of his paintings can be seen on Jack Vettriano's official website:
www.jackvettriano.com/pages/exhibitions.html.

His distinctive paintings, including *The Singing Butler*, are among the most widely sold artworks on prints, postcards and posters in Britain. According to *The Guardian*, he earns £500,000 a year in print royalties. Each year a new set of limited edition prints are published, and his most popular work, *The Singing Butler*, sells more posters and postcards than any other artist in the UK.

Jack Vettriano's work can evoke strong views and has divided art critics and public opinion alike. Currently he is not represented in any of Scotland's national collections. Kirkcaldy Museum and Art Gallery owns two paintings and is the only local authority funded public collection to include his work. One painting was donated in 1997 and the other, a self portrait, was a gift of the artist in 2002.

Vettriano's known collectors range from lyricist Sir Tim Rice and businessman Sir Tom Farmer to the former motor-racing champion Sir Jackie Stewart, who commissioned a triptych of himself and his wife.

Jack Vettriano appeared at the Music Hall in Aberdeen on 26th November 2009 as part of the *Look Who's Talking* series of talks. He was interviewed by journalist, Anne Mackenzie, followed by a book signing in the main foyer. 685 tickets were sold for the event.

Record numbers of people visited Kirkcaldy Museum and Art Gallery in 2010 to see Vettriano's latest exhibition of work *Days of Wine and Roses*. 46,000 visitors were recorded during its 5 weeks run and it is believed to be the most successful exhibition in 85 years of the Museum's history.

2. Potential external funding sources

Purchase prices for Jack Vettriano's work have fluctuated over the years, ranging from the record price reached at auction for *The Singing Butler* (£744,500 in 2004) to an auction sale at Sotheby's in 2010 where seven out of ten paintings failed to find a buyer. The highest seller was *Game On* which sold for £49,250. A selection of images and their purchase prices is attached for information.

The Museums and Galleries purchase budget is £26,376 to cover works of art and artefacts from all disciplines, dating from earliest times to contemporary work. The budget for the year 2010-11 is already committed. If the acquisition of a Jack Vettriano painting was considered in future years external match-funding would be required. Many grant-giving organisations require a percentage of local funding to match the grant given.

Potential sources include:

A. National Fund for Acquisitions

This fund supports Scottish public museums and galleries, with Accreditation status, to purchase works of art and objects for their permanent collections. Proposed acquisitions must conform to the applicant's collecting policy.

Applications are assessed by a relevant expert adviser from the staff of National Museums Scotland, the National Galleries of Scotland or the National Library of Scotland. Advisers will base their recommendations on evidence given in the application under the following headings:

- significance of the proposed acquisition
- relevance of the acquisition to the applicant's collecting policy
- whether the price quoted for the acquisition is a fair one
- evidence of public benefit demonstrated by proposals for display, learning/public programmes, study or research, or loan to other organisations

The expert advisers' reports form the basis of decisions on funding. Other factors taken into consideration are:

- the level of funding currently available
- how much funding may already have been awarded to the applicant in the current financial year

Awards are usually given for no more than 50% of the purchase price.

B. The Art Fund

The Art Fund offers financial assistance to UK public museums and galleries, with Accreditation status, to help with the purchase of works of art and objects for their permanent collections.

The Art Fund's broad conditions of grant are:

We will support the acquisition of extant works of art and a wide range of other objects of aesthetic interest, dating from antiquity to the present day.

Within this broad category our criteria include:

- objects of national and international importance, including high value items subject to temporary export licence deferral or being offered with tax remission
- objects of great local interest judged to be of good museum quality
- objects which will aesthetically enrich collections and support the expansion and development of new areas of collecting

Applications are assessed by a panel of experts with independent advice on the valuation.

Awards are usually given for 25% -75% of the purchase price; in exceptional cases the Art Fund may award a 100% grant.

C. The Friends of Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums

Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums Friends organisation regularly makes financial contributions towards the purchase of acquisitions for the collections. Contributions are generally less than £10,000 and frequently match other grants received.

Recent examples of purchases supported by the Friends include: £4,750 towards the purchase of an archive of material relating to Hall Russell (total purchase price £9,500), £4,250 towards the cost of a silver and amethyst Arts and Crafts necklace by Ann MacBeth (total purchase price

£8,500), £5,000 towards the purchase of a silver communion beaker by Alexander Galloway of Aberdeen dating to 1670-80 (total purchase price £20,000) and £6,000 towards the purchase of *For You* by Tracey Emin (total purchase price £40,000). In each of these instances the balance was met by a combination of funds from other sources.

An exceptional purchase was made in 2010 when the Friends purchased outright an oil painting by Aberdeen-born artist William Dyce to commemorate the Art Gallery's 125th anniversary.

D. The Macdonald Bequest

When the granite merchant Alexander Macdonald died in 1884 he bequeathed a legacy to complete the building of Aberdeen Art Gallery and his personal collection of paintings. This collection came to the Art Gallery in 1901 along with a monetary bequest exclusively for the purchase of works of art. The formation of a committee to oversee expenditure was stipulated in Macdonald's Trust Disposition and Deed of Settlement. The terms of the bequest further stipulate that "no pictures painted more than twenty-five years before the date of purchase shall be eligible; that no direct commission shall be given to any artist, but that all pictures shall be finished before being considered eligible; that the Art Committee may, if they think necessary take professional advice, at the expense of the funds, for their guidance, but that they are to consider only the intrinsic merits of the work, and are not to be influenced by any other considerations, such as a preference for local talent, although by no means excluding it ...".

Funds from the Macdonald bequest have been used to acquire examples of contemporary art from leading artists such as Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore, Stanley Spencer, Lucien Freud and more recently Andy Goldsworthy and Christine Borland.

The Macdonald Art Committee is made up of representatives from Aberdeen City Council, the University of Aberdeen and the Robert Gordon University. The committee meets on an occasional basis to consider potential acquisitions when an appropriate sum has accrued as interest on the capital invested. As of 31 March 2010 the Capital Fund stands at £32,545 and the Accumulated Income available to spend at £7,505. The committee last met in 2001 and prior to that in 1992.

Although prices for Vetriciano's paintings have fluctuated recently at auction, it is likely that a combination of some or all of the above funding sources would be necessary to acquire an example of his work for the collections. An example of joint funding is the acquisition in 2001 of *Rivière* by Scottish artist Alison Watt. This painting was acquired with grants from both the National Fund for Acquisitions and the Art Fund.

E. Direct approach

An alternative option might be to identify an individual or commercial business organisation which would be interested in purchasing a work by Vetriciano on behalf of the Art Gallery and consequently gifted to the collections.

Councillors may also wish to note that the Art Gallery has recently been offered the loan of a work by Vettriano for a 5 year period. Acceptance of a loan for an agreed period could be considered as another option. Offers of loan are relatively rare and usually are accepted for a specific exhibition or display for a fixed period of time. A current example is Nathan Coley's light piece *There Will Be No Miracles Here*, which hangs in the central court of the Art Gallery.