

Press Release

For Immediate Release
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RARE CAPTAIN JAMES COOK PORCELAIN DISCOVERY!

Christie's \$1 Million Decorative Arts Auction Offers 19th Century Urn & Saucer Dish

Melbourne, Australia,
6.00pm Tuesday 8 April 2003
6.00pm Wednesday 9 April 2003

Melbourne, Australia – A rare 19th century items of Vienna porcelain has been identified as commemorating the exploits of perhaps history's greatest explorer Captain James Cook RN and are a highlight of Christie's auction of Decorative Arts and Furniture on April 8 & 9 in Melbourne.

The two handled cup and saucer dish were produced in 1827 and 1829, and the cup is illustrated with a scene documented from Cook's Antarctic exploration aboard *HMS Resolution*. The saucer depicts a generic Arctic scene.

The cup has an urn-shaped body with two gilt loop handles and is raised on a gilt slender circular stem and foot decorated with a bird and leaves. The upper section is painted with a continuous Antarctic scene reproduced from a drawing by William Hodges, Cook's official artist, of *HMS Resolution* at anchor amongst icebergs and four rowboats, with the crew collecting ice and one figure shooting a rifle.

The scene represents Cook's success at resupplying his flagship with valuable drinking water thus enabling him to continue his search as far south as possible to try and determine the existence of a southern continent.

Cook recorded the incident in '*A Voyage Towards the South Pole and Round the World 1772-1775*' in which William Hodges impressive image also appears.

Captain James Cook wrote: "*Saturday 9. But, at four o'clock in the morning, finding ourselves leeward of this ice, we bore down to an island leeward of us; there being about it some loose ice, part of which we saw break off. There we bought to; hoisted out three boats; and in about five or six hours, took up as much ice as yielded fifteen tons of good fresh water. The pieces we took were hard, and solid as rock; some were so large, that we were obliged to break them with pick-axes, before they could be taken into the boats.*"

The saucer dish features a similarly painted Arctic scene of a sailing ship at anchor and figures dressed in coats and hats at various pursuits, some exploring in snow, some with dogs and a polar bear on a ledge. Both pieces feature the painted mark 'Eisinsein endeckt den 9 Januar 1773'. The pieces are to be sold ensuite and carry a *pre-sale estimate of \$8,000 – 15,000*.

The auction will also disperse a diverse range of furniture, art, silver, jewellery and collectables. Notable items include:

A Pair of 19th Century German Antler Elbow Chairs (*estimate \$15,000-18,000*)

A pair of Louis XV Beechwood Fauteuils En Carbiolet (*estimate \$20,000-25,000*)

A George III Plum Pudding Mahogany Library/Games table (*estimate \$20,000-25,000*)

A George III Mahogany Serpentine Card Table (*estimate \$30,000-40,000*)

An Italian Three-quarter Life Size Marble Stature of The Venus De Medici (*estimate \$15,000 – 20,000*)

A diamond ring, set with a rectangular cut diamond and 18 baguette cut diamonds in 18 carat yellow gold (*estimate \$75,000-100,000*)

Highlights of the sale will be on view in Sydney at Christie's, 180 Jersey Road, Woollahra on Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 March from 12 noon to 5pm daily. The entire sale will be on view at Christie's in Melbourne from Saturday 5th April. The auction will be conducted over two sessions at 6.00pm on Tuesday 8th (Lots 1 – 247), and 6.00pm on Wednesday 9th (Lots 248-438) of April 2003. Catalogues are now available from Christie's offices.

More information about Christie's sale of Decorative Arts on 8 & 9 April can be found on www.christies.com. All lots from the sale can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. www.christies.com provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.