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# Koopman Rare Art

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## Director's Choice – Timo Koopman The Earl of Fife's Tea & Coffee Service



### **An Exceptional George III Five-Piece Tea and Coffee Set**

Maker's Mark of Paul Storr

London 1815

*The coffee urn 17in (43.2cm.) high; Weight: 335ozs. (10,432gr.)*

In the build up to this year's 38th [TEFAF Maastricht](#) which runs from the [14th-19th March](#) we are delighted to present this magnificent tea and coffee service created for the James, 4th Earl of Fife (1776-1857) K.T, G C. H Knight of the order of St Ferdinand of Spain, and of the Sword of Sweden, and Mary Caroline, second daughter of John Manners, and Louisa, Countess of Dysart, whom he married in 1799. With this year being the bicentenary year of John Flaxman RA (6 July 1755 – 7 December 1826), it is wonderful to

celebrate this glorious design of his whilst working for the great royal retail firm Rundell, Bridge & Rundell under the guidance of the greatest and most famous of the Regency goldsmiths, Paul Storr. It is with this in mind that it is an easy Director's Choice this week.

With patriotic English oakleaves and acorns adorning its handles and finials the service maintains the grand-tour influence of Roman lamps and at the same time extolling Britain's naval might with its sweeping grotesque dolphins and shell spigot. This service illustrates perfectly the quality of Rundell's design studio.

The service circular and fluted, comprising of a tea urn, coffee jug, stand and warmer, a teapot, a two-handled sugar bowl and a cream jug. This extraordinary design of a tea urn rising on grotesque dolphins must have been considered the height of fashion, for we find the Prince Regent ordering a tea urn of identical design in 1816 weighing 228 oz at a cost of £206 10s. 7d.



Detail of the tea urn

The tea urn on square base with cut-corners and detachable laurel wreath rests on four shell, scroll and vine feet, the vase-shaped body supported on four scaly dolphins, the similar spigot with an anthemion tap, the coffee jug and stand on shaped-triangular base, the frame with three leaf-capped lion's paw monopodiae and drop ring handles above. The detachable vase-shaped lamp with hinged cover, the vase-shaped jug with curved lip and anthemion decoration. The teapot with similarly decorated spout, the jug and teapot each with hinged domed cover and detachable oak leaf and acorn finials. All with similar oak branch handles, with oak leaf and acorn finials. The service with a band of laurel leaf and

reed-and-tie borders is renowned. It is incredible to imagine that this service weighs an incredible 335 oz.



Provenance:

E & C.T Koopman & Son Ltd

The Al Tajir Collection.

Christie's, London, Magnificent Silver and Silver-Gilt, 17 March 1999.

A Private Collection

Koopman Rare Art 2026



Literature:

M. Clayton, *The Collector's Dictionary of the Silver and Gold of Great Britain and North America*, Woodbridge, 1971, p. 420, pl. 68, illustrated.

Bibliography:

Jones, EA., *The Gold & Silver of Windsor Castle*.

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*James Duff (1776–1857), 4th Earl of Fife c.1815*

*Henry Raeburn (1756–1823)*

*University of Dundee Fine Art Collections*

The Earl of Fife distinguished himself during the Peninsula wars fighting for the Spanish patriotic army. He rose to the rank of Major-General and was awarded the order of St. Ferdinand. He was wounded twice, firstly at the battle of Talavera and secondly at the storming of Fort Matagorda, near Cadiz. In 1827 he was created Baron Fife in the barony of the United Kingdom and succeeded to the estates of Skene and Cariston. He formed a fine picture collection and in retirement lived at his Scottish seat, Duff House.



Duff House is a Georgian estate house in Banff, Aberdeenshire, Scotland. Now in the care of Historic Environment Scotland, it is part of the National Galleries Scotland. Duff House was designed by William Adam and built between 1735 and 1740 for William Duff of Braco. David Bryce Jr was later commissioned to provide a three-storey pavilion and corridor block, but this was damaged by a bomb in 1940 and subsequently demolished.

The Earls of Fife moved out of Duff House in 1903, gifting the property to Banff Burgh in 1906. In 1956 it passed into care by the State and a period of refurbishment began across the property. In 1995, the house became part of the National Galleries of Scotland. The house still sits in much of its original designed landscape, albeit with the addition of a golf course.

National Galleries Scotland has numerous works of fine art on display at Duff House, including works by El Greco, Thomas Gainsborough and Henry Raeburn. Duff House is also home to the Dunimarle Library, a collection of rare books, which can be viewed by appointment.

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For more information on the availability and price of any treasures we mention, please visit our website, email or call us.

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