

Dreams - A Unique Private Collection—

Couples' Four-Decades Collection Goes Up At Sworders On July 9



A group of letters by the Victorian polymath John Ruskin (1819-1900) is believed to be the largest collection of its kind in private hands. Estimates range from \$540-\$2,700.

STANSTED, UK — A large group of letters and manuscripts by John Ruskin (1819-1900) and works by the celebrated Czech photographer Josef Sudek (1896-1976) are among the highlights of a varied private archive that comes to auction.

The single-owner sale titled *Dreams - A Unique Private Collection*, represents the fruits of more than four decades of collecting and curating for a London couple. Sworders expects the 322 lots will bring in excess of \$270,000 at the Stansted Mountfitchet saleroom on July 9.

With its focus on subjects as diverse as Seventeenth Century Scandinavian silver spoons, Indian drawings from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century and postwar music and fashion, this rich collection is really a series of collections.

The owners, who have chosen to remain anonymous, began buying in the early 1980s.

"The avenues these pieces have opened have helped us understand material culture in a way which would have been impossible without feeling, reading, touching and smelling" they comment. "We now want to share them and sincerely hope the new owners will find their own undiscovered pathways."

The group of letters by the Victorian polymath John Ruskin is believed to be the largest collection of its kind in private hands.

Ruskin's published work covered topics as varied as art, architecture, political economy, education, natural history, literature and myth. The letters,

many of them offered in groups of up to a dozen, cover an equally wide range of subject matter.

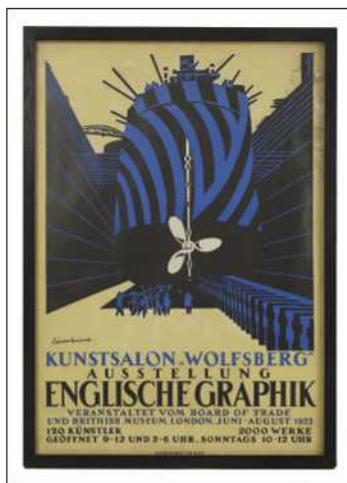
On politics, he writes to Lawrence Hodson (1864-1933), saying: "If not half so strong a Tory as I am: - I would - if I could - gag Mr Gladstone - hang Mr Chamberlain - and sweep the whole liberal party out of Parliament into the Thames to get out as they could."

Hodson, whose home at Compton Hall was furnished by Morris & Company, was a well-known collector of pre-Raphaelite paintings and a patron of the Guild of Handicraft. Three letters written to him are estimated together at \$800-\$1,000.

On religion, he wrote to the Quaker prison reformer William Tallack on November 20, 1860, attacking the Society of Friends for placing "entirely spurious trust in its own wishy-washy hermeneutics, instead of believing God's prophets in their own plain words." It is expected to sell together with additional letters at \$1/1,600.

Among the most personal writings in the collection is a love poem Ruskin likely wrote to his first and most significant infatuation, Adèle-Clotilde Domecq, the daughter of his father's business partner. The match was deemed unacceptable and news of her betrothal to a French nobleman, received while at Oxford, sent Ruskin into a severe physical and emotional collapse. The poem, dated between 1837-38, is estimated at \$1,360-\$2,000.

The collection also includes



A 1923 color lithograph on linen advertises an exhibition titled "Ausstellung Englische Graphik (Exhibition of English Graphics)" at the Kunstsalon Wolfsburg, Zurich (\$10,800-\$16,300).

revealing letters by other Nineteenth and Twentieth Century luminaries, including artists John Sell Cotman (1782-1842) and Henri Matisse (1869-1954) and the potter Bernard Leach (1887-1979).

Nineteenth and Twentieth Century photography forms the core of the *Dreams* sale.

Groups of vintage photographic prints and ephemera on themes as varied as European royalty, the American Civil War, Renaissance architecture and British regimental history will be offered alongside dozens of original works by the so-called "Poet of Prague."

Josef Sudek's story is as memorable as his work. He took up photography after he was invalided out of the Austro-Hungarian army in 1915. To save his life, his right arm had been amputated. Undaunted, he became a familiar sight on the streets of Prague, carrying a heavy large-format view camera and its tripod across his left shoulder.

Various views of the city offered in Sworders' sale include an image of Wenceslas Square taken circa 1929 (\$2,7/4,000) and a collection of seven gelatin silver prints on card, circa 1920s, depicting various carved stone details from St Vitus



An American colonial powder horn, circa 1760 (\$4/6,800).

Cathedral (\$4/6,800).

Several images from the "From the Window of My Atelier, 1940-54" corpus are offered for sale. Two views taken through heavy condensation and another after a snowfall are offered together with an estimate of \$2,700-\$4,000.

A rare Swiss poster featuring the work of the British Vorticist artist Edward Wadsworth (1889-1949) carries the highest estimate of the sale at \$10,800-\$16,300.

The 1923 color lithograph on linen advertises an exhibition titled "Ausstellung Englische Graphik (Exhibition of English Graphics)" at the Kunstsalon Wolfsburg, Zurich. The striking image of a warship references Wadsworth's work in the Great War: he was part of a team involved in the transfer of "dazzle" camouflage designs to ships for the Royal Navy.

An American colonial period powder horn from the French and Indian War (1754-63) has a guide of \$4/6,800. Engraved with a map of Albany, N.Y., it is inscribed "Map of the county of

Albany done by a scale eight mile to a inch [sic] and dated 1760.

Sworders' saleroom and head office is on the Cambridge Road (B1383). For information, www.sworder.co.uk.

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Portsmouth Historical Explores Art, Impact Of Cabot Lyford

PORTSMOUTH, N.H. — The Portsmouth Historical Society has announced their 2025 exhibition, "Cabot Lyford: Winds of Change," a landmark exhibition on view until November 2 that honors the life and artistry of one of New England's most iconic sculptors.

This exhibition features more than 100 works by Cabot Lyford (1925-2016), many of which have not been seen in decades. Locals may recognize Lyford's monumental public sculptures, including "My Mother the Wind" on Four Tree Island and "Fisherman's Luck" in Prescott Park. "We are proud to shed more light on an

artist whose work is familiar to many in Portsmouth and the surrounding area, but whose remarkable story is less well known," said Emma Stratton, executive director.

Lyford had a deep connection to this region — not only through his years teaching at Phillips Exeter Academy and his later life in New Harbor, Maine, but also through his bold artistic experimentation and his lifelong advocacy through art.

In addition to Lyford's pieces, the exhibition includes a companion showcase titled "Contemporary Currents," in collaboration with the New Hampshire Art Association.

This exhibition highlights the work of local artists who engage with the themes of advocacy and experimentation that Lyford passionately championed, bridging the gap between past and present.

"This exhibition serves as both a tribute to his legacy and an exploration of the vibrant dialogue between historical and contemporary artistic expression. We invite everyone to come and experience the impact of his work," added guest curator Rachel Walls.

The Portsmouth Historical Society is at 10 Middle Street. For more information, 603-436-8433 or www.portsmouth-history.org.

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