



The Classical Ideal

English Silver, 1760 1840

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- The first book to be devoted to English neo-classical silver for over forty years
- Provides fascinating insights into the history of design of the period
- Published in conjunction with the exhibition *Classical Ideal: English Silver, 1760 1840* held at Koopman Rare Art, London, 3 25 June 2010

The second half of the eighteenth century saw an enthusiastic revival of the use of shapes and decoration from classical architecture in the design of furniture, ceramics and silver. A reaction against the curving outlines and elaborate decoration of the rococo, neo-classicism was promoted as a return to the ideal proportions and balance of the ancient world. The style's chief proponents were members of the emerging profession of architecture such as James Wyatt and Robert Adam, who also designed silver, and their contribution to the elegant forms and simple decoration of domestic silver of the period is assessed in this book. The part played by industrialization in the development of the style is also examined, as is the increasingly important role of retailers such as Rundell, Bridge & Rundell. In the early nineteenth century, Rundell's were at the forefront of the adoption of a new imperial style based no longer on classical architecture but on classical sculpture.

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Foreword by Tim Knox, Director of Sir John Soane's Museum

I – The Architectural foundations

II – “Le goût grec” and the influence of France

III – Robert Adam and the “ancient manner”

IV – James Wyatt and the manufacturers

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VII – Unearthing design: the emergence of archaeology

VIII – The imperial style

Exhibition checklist

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