



PRESS RELEASE

From the Kindness of Strangers:

A Significant David Hockney Item to be Auctioned in Essex.

A pair of rare early ceramic pieces created by renowned British Artist David Hockney and his friend Norman Stevens will be sold at auction in October by Essex Auctioneers Stacey's. The circumstances around their creation present a fascinating insight into the artists early career and student life.

In 1955, Peter Richards and his wife owned a cottage alongside the A1 in Bedfordshire. One rainy Sunday afternoon they were surprised to see two young men who had unsuccessfully sought shelter under their eaves during a storm. Offering them refuge, Mrs Richards kindly made tea to warm them and dried their clothes. These young men turned out to be David Hockney and Norman Stevens, both then students at Bradford College of Art; and at that time who frequently hitch-hiked to London along the Great North Road to visit exhibitions.

Hockney maintained a friendship with the Richards and later gifted them a ceramic depiction of a black and white cat as a reward for their kindness on that wet Sunday afternoon. This, is one of 6 three dimensional ceramic cats produced by David Hockney in 1955 whilst still at Bradford School of Art and demonstrates the artist's skill with 3 dimensional forms and ceramics. It measures 34.5 x 40 x 15.5cm and comes with other items of interest to Hockney collectors, including drawings and plans for the item, letters and, cards.

Hockney has long had a fascination with cats and they have been a significant motif in some of his major works. This ceramic cat is black and white and has a different colouring compared to the other 5 in existence due to the Richards family owning a black and white cat. Over the years, Hockney also sent Mr. and Mrs. Richards, letters, drawings and screen printed and handmade greetings cards. The seller a Mr. Peter Richards of Thorpe Bay Essex is now in his 90's and has decided to sell the cat to benefit the younger members of his family.

Other ceramic cats that have come to market have fetched £40k at Bonhams in 2011, and another garnered £94k at Christie's in June. We believe that the

Richards family - owned cat could command a higher value as possibly the artist's first ceramic creation.

The cat and other items can be viewed at The Grosvenor Gallery 35 Bury Street, St James's London SW1Y 6AU between the 9th and 13th of October to coincide with Frieze Masters London and on view at Stacey's Auction Room, Great Baddow CM2 7JW on the 21st and 22nd October – the sale will be held on Monday the 23rd

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