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Issued by Jill Brown Media on behalf of Lyon & Turnbull

SILVER-PLATED TEAPOT, ONE OF ONLY THREE IN THE WORLD, COULD FETCH UP TO £50,000 AT AUCTION



Lyon & Turnbull's Associate Specialist, Ursula Goldsmith, with rare teapot by Christopher Dresser. Image Stewart Attwood

A silver-plated teapot, believed to be one of three in the world, is to be sold by Lyon & Turnbull on **Wednesday 14 October**.

The [angular teapot](#), designed by Christopher Dresser in the late nineteenth century, will go under the hammer on the first day of the two-day [Design Since 1860](#) auction which celebrates creativity and craftsmanship from the late nineteenth century to the Modern era.

Dresser's creation, valued at between **£30,000 and £50,000**, is one of the highlights of the auction and forms part of a series of radical designs following the Glasgow-born

designer's highly influential trip to Japan in 1876-77. The teapots were produced in very limited numbers in electroplate and, occasionally, in silver.

The teapot in the auction is one of a group of five or six designs for teapots supplied to James Dixon & Sons in Sheffield between 1879 and 1882 upon his return from Japan.

Christopher Dresser, born in Glasgow to English parents in 1834, is considered the first independent 'industrial/commercial designer'.

He worked with more than 50 manufacturers across Britain, France and the US, harnessing the power of mass production to produce thousands of affordable items for household use; from metal teapots and toast racks to ceramic vases and kettles, to glassware, textiles, wallpaper and carpets.

After four months travelling across Japan in 1876-77 (he was the first European designer to go there after it opened to the West in 1854) he embraced the simplicity, form and functionality of the Japanese aesthetic.

Dresser made the teapot designs his own and said he was "developing a style which shall be new in character and yet at the same time an expression of our knowledge of all past ornament!"

A series of costing books, now held in the Sheffield Archives, reveals that Dresser produced approximately 80 designs for Dixon's, not all of which are believed to have entered production. This may have been due partly to the comparative expense of manufacture, but also to the novel nature of his designs proving difficult for contemporary tastes.

Dresser's close understanding of manufacturing processes and material use is clearly reflected in these records. They detail the production costs of each item, explain how they were made, and, in most cases, identify those designed by Dresser.

The teapot is entered in the 1879 book and, in addition to listing costs, identifies some of the craftsmen responsible for specific stages of production. The description in the Dixon calculation book of 1879 (now in Sheffield Archives) reads:

"Teapot. Holds 1 1/2 Gill. Designed by Dr. Dresser. Body first put together in six pieces, 3 3/4-inch square [body], then the top part sawn off for the cover. Flat wire hard soldered inside top part of body and round the cover inside. Spout put together in four pieces; square tube, 1 1/16 inches made and passed through the centre of body and hard soldered in. Cast and turned part with tube socket hard soldered in ends for ebony handle. Cast knob."

John Mackie, Lyon & Turnbull's Head of Design said:

“There can be little doubt that the remarkable originality of Dresser's designs for Dixon's, and this teapot in particular, marks it as one of his seminal works. Two other examples of this model (no. 2274) are known. One is held by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the other is in the collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

“He always varied the degree of surface decoration according to the material used. In silver and plated wares, he tended to emphasise form which made the objects simpler and less expensive to manufacture on a larger scale. He was deeply concerned with the economical use of costly materials and made it his business to understand production techniques thoroughly.

“What these designs ultimately achieved was Dresser's posthumous reputation as a proto-modernist and helped secure his place as one of the greatest talents of nineteenth century design.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

[Design Since 1860](#)

Auction Wednesday 14th and Thursday 15th October 2026 from 10:00 BST

Live from Edinburgh & Online

Two other examples of Dresser's model, no. 2274, are known: one is held by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (accession no. M.4-2006), and the other by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (inv. 2011.35).

ABOUT LYON & TURNBULL

Operating since 1826, Lyon & Turnbull is a premier fine art and antiques auction house, with venues in London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. The company, which this year marks its 200th anniversary, has one of the largest teams of specialists in the UK, offering services nationwide.

Hosting over 50 specialist auctions per year across their locations, there is always something to see at Lyon & Turnbull—from jewellery and watches to fine furniture; traditional British and European art to Modern & Contemporary stars; European decorative arts and design to fine Asian art from China and Japan.