



A PAIR OF CARVED GILTWOOD PLAQUES AFTER
THE DESIGN BY WILLIAM KENT

Dimensions: H: 57 in / 145 cm | W: 25.5 in / 65 cm

10458



A Pair of Carved [Giltwood Plaques](#)

After the design by [William Kent](#)

For the Royal Barge

The pair of wall plaques of carved and gilt wood, after the original design by William Kent for the Royal Barge, each plaque of serpentine outline, the centre carved with the chivalric Star of the Garter below the Prince of Wales Feathers within a scallop shell surround, each side with garlands of berried laurel leaves suspended from scrolls and fronted by mythological dolphins culminating in acanthus carved ornament.

English, circa 1885

The Royal Barge

The Royal Barge, also known as Prince Frederick's Barge, is a British state barge made for the Prince

of Wales in 1732. An open rowing boat accompanied by its 24 oars, the barge was built by John Hall after the designs of William Kent, the drawings of which survive in the Royal Institute of British Architects. Alongside the riotous sea-creatures and distinctive Vitruvian waves, the decorative scheme culminates at the boat's stern with a large plaque bearing the Prince of Wales Feathers as well as the Star of the Garter, the most senior order of knighthood.

The barge remained in use by the Royal family until 1849, when Prince Albert, the Princess Royal and the Prince of Wales used it one final time to open the Coal Exchange. It was exhibited to great fanfare at the International Fisheries Exhibition of 1883 in London, which was personally opened by the Prince of Wales himself. The barge stayed at the South Kensington museum from 1883 onwards, and has been on loan to the National Maritime Museum since 1951, where it can still be admired today.

Literature:

William Kent (c. 1685-1748)

William Kent was an English architect, landscape gardener, and furniture designer who revolutionized Georgian design by introducing the Palladian style to England. Believing in the unity of all "design" aspects to combine together to produce a finished whole, Kent created elaborate carved giltwood furniture featuring classical motifs. He brought Roman-influenced symbolic decoration like the Venus-shell and Jupiter's sacred oak into fashion. Beyond furniture, Kent designed the Royal Barge in 1731-32, a clinker-built open rowing boat carved and gilded with royal coat of arms and sea-creatures. His work established a distinctly English interpretation of Continental grandeur across multiple design disciplines.