

# **Summers Place Auctions to Celebrate Two Military Heroes**

## **Lots relating to Shaka Zulu and Nelson come up for auction in March**

Shaka Zulu, the upmarket restaurant that opened at Camden Market, London in 2010, has closed and all its elaborate decorations are coming up for sale at Summers Place Auctions on Tuesday, 28th March 2023 and in the sealed bid auction on Wednesday, 29th March 2023. The restaurant was themed around the famous Zulu king Shaka and had been designed and furnished for £5.5 million.

The interior décor showcased 19th century Zulu culture and the Zulu art which adorned the walls were made possible with the help of South African museums, allowing copies of their artefacts to be made specifically for the 2,400 square metre restaurant. The hand-made furniture, the wooden murals and indeed the bronzes, all made in South Africa & Asia had to be transported to the UK in 40 lorries. The smaller items like the chairs and tables were carried into the building by hand. The large statues, including the bronze Lion which weighs 1000 kg and sat at the bottom of the escalator, were lifted through the then non-existent roof by crane. The 6,000 ceiling tiles were again, all hand made and it took 2 years for the carvings to be made.

Enormous intricately hand-carved wooden panels with majestic scenes from Africa, some 20m high and 10m wide, will be auctioned off as well as impressive monumental statues of Zulu heroes, like a 15m bronze statue of the feared ruler himself. The designers consulted both museums in South Africa and the British Museum and the developers held extensive consultation with members of the Zulu nation in South Africa, including the then reigning Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini (1948-2021).

Shaka Zulu (1787-1828), was the king of the Zulu Kingdom from 1816 to 1828 and one of the most influential monarchs of the Zulu. He ordered wide-reaching reforms

that reorganised the military into a leading force and by 1828 he ruled 250,000 people and could put 40,000 warriors into the field.

The auction will also include a white marble relief frieze panel, made in Europe at about the same time as Shaka Zulu's reign came to an end. The frieze by Edward Hodges Baily (British, 1788-1867) shows another military hero, Nelson, receiving the Spanish surrender after the Battle of St Vincent. It was made in circa 1826 and was made in two sections with an overall length of almost 4 metres and 146cm high. It is estimated at £20,000-£40,000.

The scene depicts the Spanish Admiral Don Francisco Xavier Winthuysen, who lies dying on a gun carriage of the deck of the San Josef. He weakly hands his sword to Nelson while supported by Oyo sailors, watched by other sailors and British officers.

The Battle of Saint Vincent took place on 14 February 1797 and established Nelson as a hero, both for his independence of command and his personal bravery. It was also a turning point for the British Navy who had previously been driven out of the Mediterranean following French successes in Italy.

The English fleet under Admiral Sir John Jervis, with only fifteen ships, drove a line through the larger and superior Spanish navy which was lying off Cape St. Vincent, Portugal. Before Jervis could turn to attack the larger group, Nelson broke line in the Captain, anticipating his commander's signal, and accompanied by other British frigates, took four Spanish 'prizes' from the rear, himself personally boarding the San Nicolas and San Josef. The British victory demonstrated the ineptitude of the Spanish navy, and Nelson was made a Knight of the Bath for his exploits, while Jervis was created Earl St Vincent.

Edward Hodges Baily RA FRS was a prolific English sculptor responsible for numerous public monuments, portrait busts, statues and exhibition pieces as well as works in silver. He carved friezes for both the Marble Arch and Buckingham Palace in London. His numerous statues of public figures include that of Horatio Nelson on top of Nelson's Column and Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey on Grey's Monument in Newcastle upon Tyne. Throughout his career Baily was responsible for creating a

number of monuments and memorials for British churches and cathedrals, including several in St Paul's Cathedral.

#### Further information:

Shaka:

The Royal warrior, Shaka, was born around 1787 near KwaDukuza in KwaZulu-Natal. Both his parents were of noble birth, but as they were unmarried, he and his mother settled with one of her aunt's among the Mthetwa tribe, whose leader Chief Dingiswayo saw Shaka's leadership potential and took him as his protégée, giving him the opportunity to rise through the ranks. Shaka was a ruthless commander, but his strict discipline and sharp military mind were an advantage for the army.

When his father died, Dingiswayo supported the young man in a bid to claim control of his people. This Shaka did, and immediately began to assimilate neighbouring clans into his domain, although he remained loyal to Dingiswayo. When he died in 1818, Shaka assumed the late Dingiswayo's position and immediately began to expand the boundaries of his kingdom and finally conquering his only real rival Zwide of the Ndwandwe tribe, whom he finally conquered in 1826.

Shaka introduced a number of new military and social concepts during his reign. These included the short stabbing spear that was born of the long-handled *assegai* used for throwing and he also perfected the crescent-shaped military formation, the main part of which would fight the enemy while those on the outer wings moved to surround the foe. The Zulu army under Shaka fought many bloodthirsty wars and left thousands of people as refugees. He was, however, on good terms with the occupying British colonial forces, traded with them, and allowed them to build a settlement at Port Natal, now the provincial capital Durban. During his rule there was harmony between the Zulus and the settlers.

When his mother Nandi died in 1827, Shaka went berserk, putting large numbers of people to death simply because they did not appear to be suitably grief-stricken. His bodyguard and half-brothers eventually killed him in 1828.

Nelson:

A similar scene was recorded in a more dramatic and romantic manner in a painting of 1806 by Richard Westall but on the San Nicolas (National Maritime Museum, Greenwich). Interestingly, in the Nash/Flaxman model in the Victoria and Albert Museum (south side, not shown) Flaxman's composition is the other way round with Nelson standing on the left to receive the sword with his right hand. It must be assumed that because his right arm was amputated later in 1797 (at the battle of Santa Cruz de Tenerife) Baily reversed the action, to disguise the missing limb. Thus the hero receives the sword with his left hand which disjoins the action of the full scheme of the frieze. (Westall had to find a similar solution in his painting).

Baily's composition makes an interesting comparison with Westmacott's *melée* in the Napoleon frieze. Here we have classical purity, the figures starkly arranged in a Grecian style frieze and in noble profile. Then to focus attention on the action of surrender, Baily breaks up the powerful verticals of sailors and officers by tilting up the gun carriage, on which the dying Spanish commander lies, and using the device of a coil of rope to support one kneeling sailor. The action is thus cleverly foreshortened and succeeds in instilling a certain pathos into the scene of a row of almost emotionless faces. This is accentuated by the austerity of composition and refreshing use of empty space in the background.