



The illustration that introduced the Kangaroo to the British public

STUBBS, George.

No. 20. [An animal found on the coast of New Holland called Kangaroo.]

London: Strahan and Cadell, 1773. 230 x 270mm.

£700

The first British illustration of a kangaroo, published in Hawkesworth's 'An Account of the Voyages... For making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere', which contained the official account of Captain Cook's visit to Australia and New Zealand on his first circumnavigation. The plate only has a plate number, so the title, as above, comes from the index. However the original illustration was not drawn in Australia but in London, by Britain's foremost animal painter, George Stubbs (1724-1806). It is believed that it was Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820), the naturalist on Cook's expedition whose diary entry of 12 July 1770 first noted the 'kanguru', who commissioned Stubbs to paint a kangaroo and a dingo. As no live specimen of the kangaroo had been brought to England, Stubbs worked from a preserved skin, which he inflated to get an idea of its body shape. The paintings were exhibited at the Royal Society in early 1773, but only the kangaroo was engraved for Hawkesworth. In 2013 the Stubbs oils of both the kangaroo and dingo were subject to a temporary export ban, as important works of 'Cultural Interest' in Britain. After a fund-raising campaign the National Maritime Museum purchased the paintings for the nation.

See <https://www.rmg.co.uk/work-services/news-press/press-release/stubbss-kangaroo-and->



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