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JAMES MASKREY HISTORIES





JAMES MASKREY HISTORIES

7-31 October 2015

THE SCOTTISH GALLERY

CONTEMPORARY ART SINCE 1842

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www.scottish-gallery.co.uk

Left: *At the Pole*, 2013; Free-blown cup and saucer, printed and cased inclusion, printed details

H8 x D14 cms (Cat. 8)

Photo: David Williams

Cover: *Cook's Collection*, 2010-2014; Free-blown glass jars and tops, solid formed and blown glass inclusions, printed and distressed paper labels, bottles free-blown with printed paper labels and cork stoppers

Group dimensions H40 x W100 x D15 cms (Cat. 3)

Photo: Paul Adair, courtesy of Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Perth & Kinross Council



CONTE
GLASS
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GLASSTO

INTRODUCTION

The Scottish Gallery is delighted to present *Histories*, James Maskrey's first solo exhibition at The Gallery. Maskrey has specialised in hot glass making over the course of 20 years and currently teaches at the National Glass Centre in Sunderland. At the heart of Maskrey's work is technical skill combined with the art of story telling. The main focus of *Histories* is Captain Scott's polar expedition and Shackleton's Voyage in *Endurance*. These Antarctic journeys are investigated in individual pieces or collections of curiosities and the narrative is both real and imagined to create a visual history revealed through James Maskrey's powerful field of vision. These sensitive, beautifully crafted stories in glass, both playful and profound and technically brilliant, make beautiful objects which speak to us of our fragile world.

Christina Jansen

HISTORIES

There is something of a storyteller about James Maskrey; his beautiful and often humorous narrative works are the platform through which he spins his tales. Through exquisitely crafted vessels and specimens of the forgotten past, the viewer are drawn into the world of explorers such as Cook, Scott and Shackleton, of British daring and resolve, of the macabre and the mysterious. From the humorous *Cook's Dietary Curiosities* to his sensitively documented *Antarctic Episodes*, you are introduced to James' love of untold and forgotten events in British history.

When you speak to Maskrey his enthusiasm for his subject is infectious. You become beguiled by the tales of British derring-do, the mysterious and the surreal and, frankly, how eccentric we Brits were and still are. For instance learning about the large quantity of alcohol and the tea service that Scott took on his Polar expedition inspired James to create *The Shore Party*. This work is an expertly executed free-blown cup and saucer encased with a portrait of Scott and his men (part of the series of which is held by the V&A). Maskrey's retelling of the story creates a vision of the expedition party all sat around drinking their quarter out of the china cups as if they were having high tea whilst in sub-zero temperatures.

Maskrey then talks about the time he spent immersed in Cook's archives, and how when mapping the coast line of South Georgia, Cook gave up further exploration for his proposed great southern continent in favour of the warmth and natural richness of the South Seas. This was part of the story which inspired the artist to create *Cook's Collection*, a wonderful grouping of free-blown and

hot sculptured curiosities resembling specimen jars containing the weird and the wonderful food and drink which Cook potted. Again, these works provoke images of Cook at his desk, charts splayed out in front of him wrapped in layers against the freezing conditions, looking over at his depleted rations of preserved breadfruit longingly whilst chewing on a bit of pickled sauerkraut.

Many of these tales of adventure relate to extreme acts of heroism, some of which have subsequently been painted by history as acts of recklessness. However, James Maskrey looks to readdress this through his work which seeks to highlight that these were in fact scientific missions of exploration, not just acts of fancy. And it is the artist's very clever use of traditional forms and vessels that allows this to happen. By using a symbol of normality, of home and routine, the viewer instantly is engaged and feels a connection with them.

Maskrey's skill not only as story teller but as a master glass blower is evident in the way he manipulates his medium to visualise these tales. Having worked in glass for over 20 years, the hot glass sculpting he executes within his curious collections is outstanding. You scratch your head in wonder as to how those pickled kiwi eggs managed to get inside such an exquisitely blown jar. Whilst his use of traditional Venetian techniques of filigrana, retticello and incalmo give a rhythm and vibrancy to his classical urns, and although he primarily uses traditional hot glass skills within his work, he is keen to embrace new technologies. In particular, he has explored the possibilities of printing on glass, and in doing so he has delicately captured the handwriting of Scott and the naïve engravings of Shackleton's scrimshaws.

James Maskrey is not only an artist but a teacher and collaborator. Based at The National Glass Centre in Sunderland, he supports the creative programme of artist residencies as well as gaffering for internationally acclaimed artists such as Magdalene Odundo, Richard Slee, Bruce McClean, William Tillyer and Emma Woffenden. He also helps to facilitate the glass courses at The University of Sunderland. The summer of 2015 will find James in residence up in the village of Lybster in Caithness on the North East coast of Scotland where North Lands Creative Glass is situated. For the last 10 years he has helped support the master classes of visiting teaching artists, fellow glass makers and more recently has led skills courses for students. This year he leads his own masterclass. His latest body of work is inspired directly from his time there, and by the dramatic landscape found on this remote stretch of coastline and the decline of the fishing trades.

I have known James Maskrey for a number of years and have been lucky enough to work with him on various projects at the National Glass Centre. From Rose English's *Flagrant Wisdom* (2011) where he gaffered in a wonderful vignette involving acrobats from the Shanghai Acrobatic Troupe; to collaborating with Magadelene Odundo on her installation *Transition* for the exhibition *Kith & Kin 2* (2012). His skills and passion for his craft have always been a great inspiration for the students he teaches, the artists he collaborates with, and the audiences to whom he presents. The Scottish Gallery exhibition is a wonderful showcase of his captivating work.

Sarah Rothwell, National Museums Scotland



- 1 *Cook's Dietary Curiosities, 2010-2014*
Free-blown glass jars and tops, solid formed and blown glass inclusions, printed and distressed paper labels, bottles free-blown with printed paper labels and cork stoppers
Group dimensions H40 x W100 x D15 cms
Photo: David Williams





PORTABLE BROTH

Antiscurbic made from
thinuous reduction of
veal broth

Original invention by
Mrs Dubois.

Manufactured by
Mrs Dubois and
James Cookworthy
of the Royal Navy.

Acquired for Captain Cook
for his voyage to the New World
1768-1771

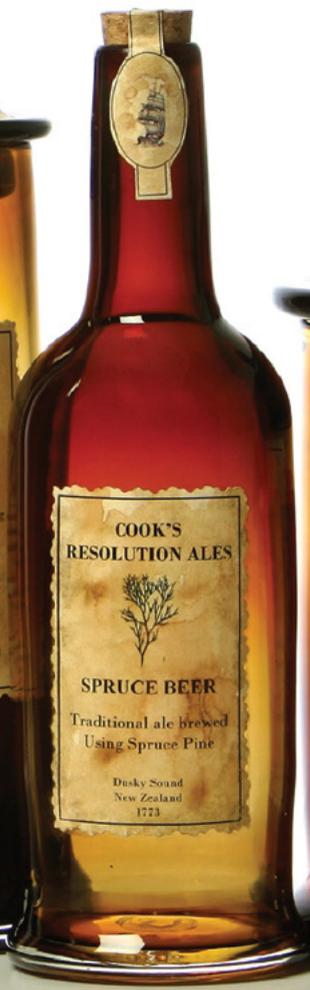


SALOOP

A fine antiscorbutic made using
the ground tubers of the
Orchis Masculis plant

Produced in England from an
original Turkish recipe

Acquired for Captain Cook
for his voyage to the New World
1768-1771



**COOK'S
RESOLUTION ALES**

SPRUCE BEER

Traditional ale brewed
Using Spruce Pine

Dusky Sound
New Zealand
1773

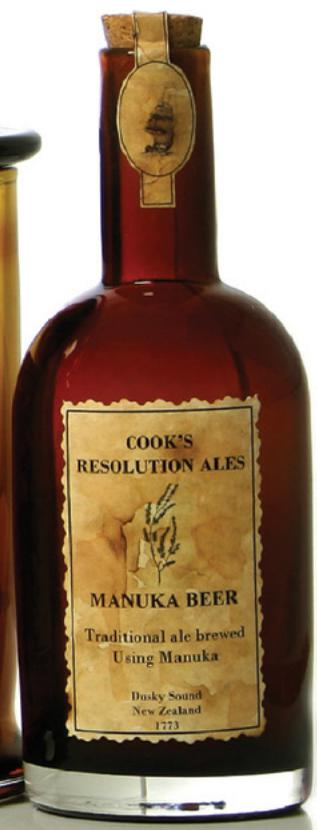


**MARMALADE
OF
CARROTS**

A fine Antiscorbutic made using
thickened concentrate of carrots

From an original recipe by
Baron Anton Von Stoerk, Austria

Acquired for Captain Cook
for his voyage to the New World
1768-1771



**COOK'S
RESOLUTION ALES**

MANUKA BEER

Traditional ale brewed
Using Manuka

Dusky Sound
New Zealand
1773

“I use predominantly hot glass to create factual and imagined objects that often take the form of individual pieces or collections of curiosities. Inspiration comes from many sources. Personal experiences, peculiar facts, elaborate hoaxes and more recently, voyages of discovery, endeavour and exploration, all help to inform whilst a passion for both traditional craft skills and innovative new technologies plays an important part in the execution of the work.

The works aim to provide a narrative and certain ‘Englishness’ through this traditional craft approach that invites the viewer to interpret them through combinations of snippets of information, title or the objects themselves.”

James Maskrey, 2014

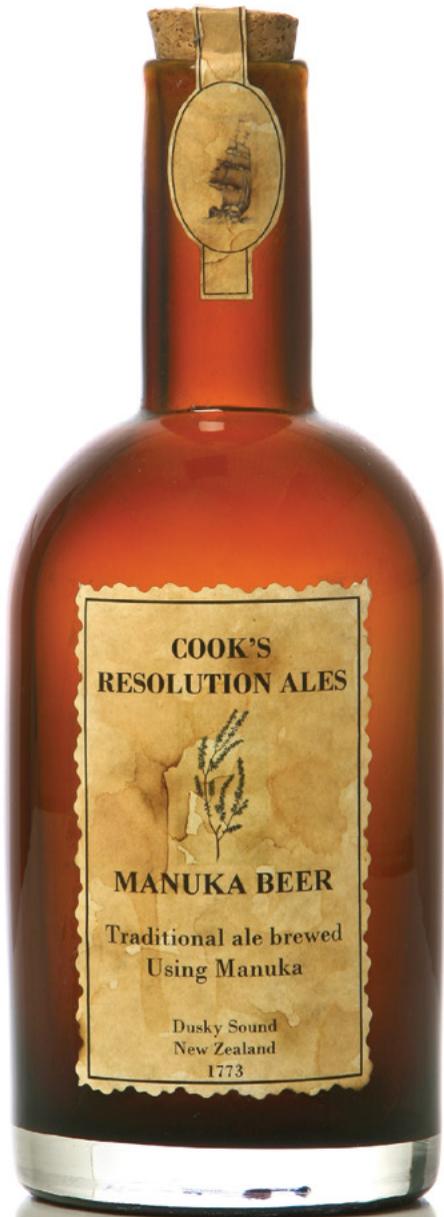
Cook's Dietary Curios is an assortment of factual and imagined dietary curiosities acquired for, and during Captain James Cook's three voyages to the New World between 1768 and 1779. Cook developed quite an original approach to diet and as a result his crew rarely suffered from the effects of malnutrition, namely scurvy, the debilitating disease that was the curse of seafarers. He utilised locally sourced and seasonal foodstuffs as well as vitamin rich ‘anti-scorbutic’ concoctions he brought from home and was the first known person to brew beer in New Zealand.

2 *Spruce Beer and Manuka Beer, 2010-2014*

Free-blown glass jars and tops, solid formed and blown glass inclusions, printed and distressed paper labels, bottles free-blown with printed paper labels and cork stoppers

H28 x W25 x D9 cms

Photo: David Williams



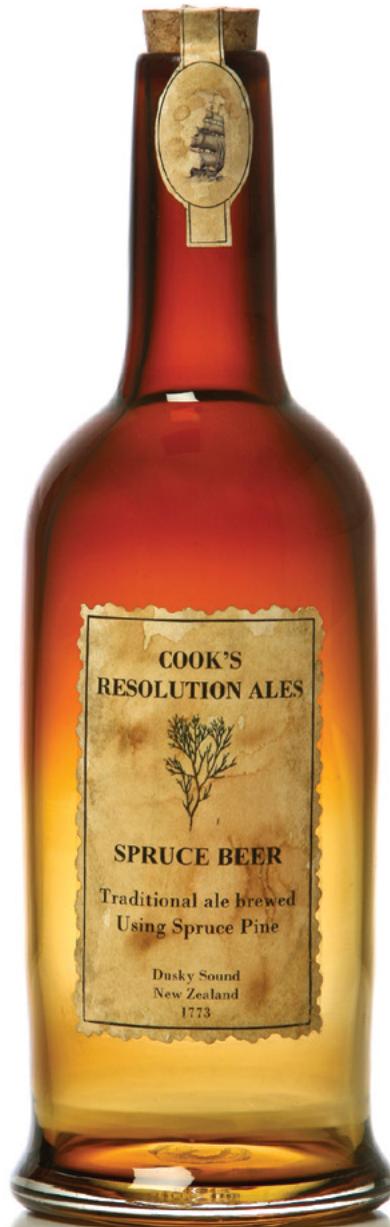
COOK'S
RESOLUTION ALES



MANUKA BEER

Traditional ale brewed
Using Manuka

Dusky Sound
New Zealand
1773



COOK'S
RESOLUTION ALES



SPRUCE BEER

Traditional ale brewed
Using Spruce Pine

Dusky Sound
New Zealand
1773



MARMALADE
OF
CARROTS

A fine Antiscorbutic made using
thickened concentrate of carrots

From an original recipe by
Baron Anton Von Stoerk, Austria

Acquired for Captain Cook
for his voyage to the New World
1768-1771



MADEIRA
WINE

Fermented from Bastardo Grapes
on the Portuguese Island
of Madeira

Acquired for Captain Cook in Madeira
on his voyage to the New World
1768-1771



PRESERVED
BREADFRUIT

Traded on the island of Tahiti
Preserved in a solution
originally formulated
by John Thompson,
Ship's cook HMS Endeavour
Captain Cook's 1st Voyage
1768-1771

3 *Cook's Collection, 2010-2014*

Free-blown glass jars and tops, solid formed and blown glass inclusions, printed and distressed paper labels, bottles free-blown with printed paper labels and cork stoppers

Group dimensions H40 x W100 x D15 cms

Photo: Paul Adair, courtesy of Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Perth & Kinross Council



“The Drayton Egg was discovered on an ice flow by the French Antarctic Expedition of Dumont D’Urville in 1837. The origin of the egg was an unsolved mystery until the collection of the Emperor penguin eggs by Dr Edward Wilson and his team, during Scott’s expedition to the Antarctic in 1911.

The Worst Journey in the World, first published in 1922, was a book written by Apsley Cherry-Garrard chronicling his experiences during Scott’s fateful expedition of 1911. The title refers to the ‘winter journey’ of 130 miles carried out in temperatures of -60°C and 24hr darkness, with companions Dr Edward Wilson and Birdie Bowers, to collect Emperor penguin eggs from the rookery at Cape Crozier, of which only three survived.”

James Maskrey, 2015

- 4 *The Worst Journey in the World*, 2011
Free-blown jar and lid, blown eggs, hot sculpted finial
H46 x D11 cms
Photo: David Williams





S. J. Macdonald
F. H. Morley
1881
1882
1883



- 5 *Shackleton's Scrimshaw*, 2014
Titles left to right: *Proposed Route*, *Weddell Sea Drift*,
The Leopard Seal Incident, *Aligned Misfortunes*,
Across South Georgia
Free-blown bottles, blown and printed scrimshaw,
solid formed tops and bases
Group dimensions H59 x W65 x D14 cms
Photo: Colin Davison

7 *The Plan, Endurance, 2014*

Bottle: free-blown bottle top, solid hot formed base with printed glass inclusions

Glass: blown top, solid formed and cup cased bases with printed inclusions

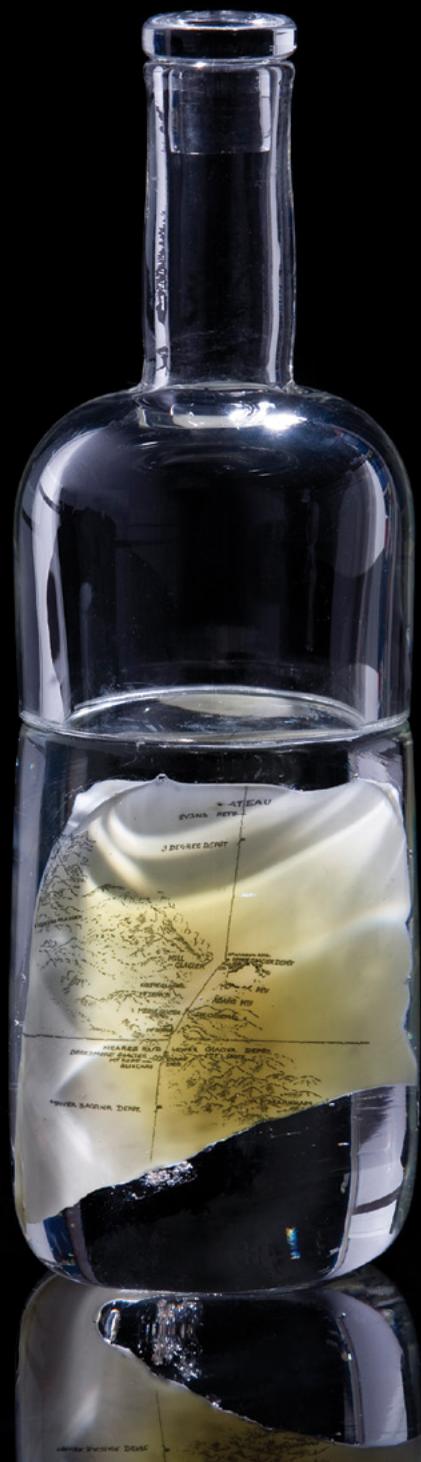
Group dimensions H34 x W20 x D11 cms

Photo: Colin Davison

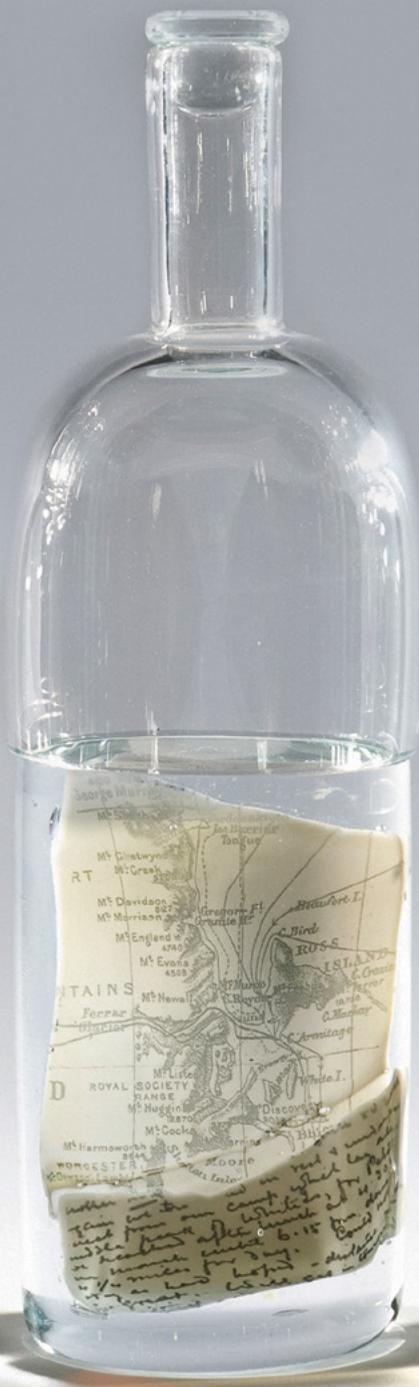




8 *At the Pole, Teacup, 2013*
Free-blown cup and saucer, printed details,
solid formed tops and bases and cased
inclusion, printed details
H8 x D14 cms
Photo: David Williams



9 *The Beardmore Glacier*, 2013
Blown, cut and fire polished bottle, free-blown
lid, printed and cased inclusions
H30 x D10 cms
Photo: David Williams



10 *Antarctic Episodes - Endurance*
Collection of Bottles, 2014

Titles left to right: *The Plan, Reference*
69° 5' S, 51° 30' W, The Ross Sea Party,
Elephant Island, Landing at South Georgia

Free-blown bottle tops, solid hot formed
bases with printed glass inclusions,
coloured bases are cup cased

H38 x D11 cms (largest dimension)

Photo: Colin Davison





“Last of the Silver Darlings is part of a small body of work recognising the herring fishing industry of the North East coast of Scotland. Once a booming trade, the fish stocks became depleted through a mixture of over-fishing and current change; leaving many abandoned stations and harbours that litter the North East coast.

These pieces have been inspired by time spent at North Lands Creative Glass, based in the village of Lybster, Caithness.”

James Maskrey, 2015

- 11 *The Last of the Silver Darlings*, 2014
Free-blown glass jar and lid with canemara and incalmo technique, hot sculpted fish and finial
H49 x D25 cms
Photo: David Williams



12 *The Last of the Silver Darlings*, 2014
Free-blown glass jar and lid with reticello and
incalmo technique, hot sculpted fish and finial
H44 x D24 cms
Photo: David Williams

“The truffle jars are a celebration of the mystery and desire of the wonderful truffle.

Originally these were rooted out by the wild boar. Since, man has used domesticated pigs and ‘truffle hounds’ to locate the underground bounty. Inspiration has come from not only my love of food but also from the want to celebrate the discovery of the world’s largest ‘black perigord’ in 2012.”

James Maskrey, 2015

13 *Black Perigord* (black truffle jar) and *Alba Madonna* (white truffle jar), 2013

Free-blown, cut and fire polished jars, free-blown lids, lamp worked boars, hot sculpted truffles

H46 x D12 cms

Photo: David Williams



JAMES MASKREY

[b.1967]

James Maskrey started working with glass in 1990. He originally trained as an apprentice and subsequently worked for seven years at a hot glass studio in Dorset. In 1997 he embarked on a three dimensional design degree in glass at the University for the Creative Arts, Farnham, Surrey. After graduating in 2000 he was appointed as artist in residence at Farnham. In 2001 James joined the glass and ceramics department at the University of Sunderland and in 2002 he started his masters in glass, graduating in 2004. James continues to work for the University, specialising in hot glass.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS INCLUDE
Victoria & Albert Museum, London
Crafts Council, London
National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh
Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Scotland
Captain Cook Memorial Museum, UK
The North Lands Creative Glass Collection, Scotland
Crystallex Collection, Czech Republic
University of Sunderland, UK
Manchester Metropolitan University, UK
University for the Creative Arts, Farnham

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2015 *The British Glass Biennale*, Stourbridge
Mersey Maritime, Bluecoat Display Centre, Liverpool
Recollected, Sunderland Museum and Wintergardens
- 2014 *COLLECT*, The Saatchi Gallery, London
The Coburg Glass Prize, European Museum of Modern Glass, Coburg, Germany
Spectrum, The Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland
- 2013 *Four Artists*, The National Glass Centre, Sunderland
International Glass and Clay, Edison Place Gallery, Washington DC, USA
New Glass-Ancient Skill, Contemporary Artform, Blackwell House, Bowness-on-Windermere



Antarctic Episodes - Endurance Collection of Bottles, 2014 (detail) (Cat. 10)

Free-blown bottle tops, solid hot formed bases with printed glass inclusions, coloured bases are cup cased
H38 x D11 cms (largest dimension)

Photo: Colin Davison

Published by The Scottish Gallery to coincide with the exhibition
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www.scottish-gallery.co.uk/jamesmaskrey

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National Glass Centre
is part of the University
of Sunderland



**University of
Sunderland**

- Right:
14 *Men Wanted*, 2015
Blown, cut and fire polished glass, printed and cased inclusions
H12 x D9 cms
Photo: Angus Mackay



1914-1915

MEN WANTED

for hazardous journey, small wages,
bitter cold, long months of complete
darkness, constant danger, safe
trip doubtful, honor and reputation
in case of success.

Ernest Shackleton 4 Burlington

THE SCOTTISH GALLERY

CONTEMPORARY ART SINCE 1842

