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## SILVER SAUCEBOATS AND STANDS, DOUBLE SALT CELLARS FROM RIGA SERVICE

The foundation “American Friends of the Latvian National Museum Inc.”  
and the Honorary Consul of Latvia in Philadelphia John J. Medveckis  
donations in 2023 and 2024



**Thanks to the support of the foundation *American Friends of the Latvian National Museum Inc.* established in the USA by artist Vija Celmiņa, the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Latvia in Vermont Daris Dēliņš, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Latvia in Philadelphia John Medveckis, and personally John Medveckis, the Latvian National Museum of Art (LNMA) has received two significant bequests four artistically valuable silver objects for its foreign art collection located at the Art Museum RIGA BOURSE.**

The pair of silver sauceboats and stands and the pair of double salt cellars are from the so-called Riga Service. The items which were produced in Augsburg, Germany in the late 18th century are of unique value, as they can be considered to be the most valuable from the European region in the context of the LNMA's Foreign precious metal collection. Since the 16th century, Augsburg has been admired for the items produced by its silversmiths which have been in great demand and highly appreciated in the churches of Europe, as well as among the aristocracy. These articles are credited for not only having outstanding quality, accurate workmanship, and fine proportions but splendour and magnificence as well. The 17th and 18th centuries were a flourishing period for Augsburg's silversmiths, when refined forms, decorated with baroque elements, were dominant. In the late 18th century, Catherine II commissioned a series of dinnerware sets for the needs of regional capitals, which were created in Augsburg, Paris and London. The Riga Service was delivered on 4th April 1784, when Count George von Browne was the Governor-General of Riga.

It is known that the Service was sizeable and was meant for forty people. It consisted of four oval terrines, eight candelabras, twenty-four candlesticks, eight wine cooling vessels, sauceboats, trays, salt cellars, plates, their covers and other smaller items with a total weight of around 482 kilograms.

Documentary evidence reveals that the Riga Service was not used very often, at least initially. In 1784, when it was transported to Riga, Count George von Browne ordered all of its components to be itemised, then packed and stored. It was determined that an application had to be made for the use of the dinnerware set, listing the required items. In this way, a selection of items was requested in honour of a reception for Peter von Biron, the Duke of Courland, in January 1795.

In 1797, the dinnerware set disappeared while being transported to St. Petersburg. Some components appeared at an auction held in Amsterdam by the *Frederic Müller et Cie* company in June 1925. A terrine, candelabra and a cruet were offered for sale. Even now, only individual items from the Service, which are found in museums or private collections are known about.