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Portrait Of A Lady And Her Child Circa 1760 - British School - Studio Of Sir Allan Ramsay



25 200 EUR

Period : 18th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 95cm

Height : 122cm

Depth : 4cm

Description

18th century English portrait of a beauty and her baby, of particularly fine quality, by an artist in the studio of Sir Allan Ramsay. The attractive, richly dressed sitter is seated three quarter length in an interior, she is nursing a baby on her lap. This evocative depiction of a mother's love is in an excellent state of preservation and is ready to hang and enjoy in its elaborately carved original swept frame with floral cartouches and sanded slip. The sitter is dressed in the sparkling ruffles and soft pastel colors that characterize the Rococo style. The basis of her outfit is a silver dress with a loose pleated back in the French "Saque-back" style. Also called "Watteau's fold" - after the famous Rococo master's work - the wide fold of fabric falling from his shoulders can be glimpsed as he passes the vase-shaped splat of his

Dealer

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Chippendale-style chair. Her dress is similar to that worn by Ann Ford in Gainsborough's famous 1760 portrait - which is embellished (like this one) by narrow strips of fabric that are softly gathered and sewn in sinuous curves across its surface. The gathered robes (strips of fabric) that line her robe can be seen descending in a V-shape from the chest to the waist when the robe is pinned at the stomacher. These are matched by curvilinear shaped horizontal bands that embellish the skirt and can be seen when the light falls on her knees and reveals the intricate shine and texture of the silk fabric. The pearly white of the dress - and of the lady's complexion - is highlighted by the pearl necklace that surrounds her neck. These are paired with large, flat, round style clip-on earrings - known as 'snaps' - which are embellished with beautifully matching beads (surrounded by seed beads) in the shape of a stylized flower. Similar earrings were worn by many female guardians of Gainsborough in the late 1750s to mid-1760s (see her 1759 portrait of Lady Mostyn for comparison). We can see the large pink bow that ties the pearl necklace around our sitter's neck, peeking out from behind her. Likewise, lavish pink bows adorn her stomacher and elbow, providing a fresh, feminine (and fashionable) contrast to the white dress. At its elbow we see a ruffled cuff (typical of the 1750s and 1760s - unlike the stiff 'wing' cuff that preceded it). Layers of lace that fall from the wrist are called "engaging" - and are an expensive and showy status symbol. Like the sacque-back dress, they are a fashion imported from France (see them in Boucher's 1759 portrait of Madame de Pompadour from the Wallace Collection for example). The pretty pink rose pinned to the center of the chest is a typical feature of women's fashion c1760 and was possibly scented. The winged bonnet that adorns this woman's head is also a typical interior accessory. The emphasis on the width of the head and hair, rather than the height, indicates a dating for this portrait of the early to mid-1760s (because after this the hair

began to rise from the crown and would reach absurd highs in the late 1770s). To highlight the pink details adorning her dress, she wears a pink damask garment over her shoulders. It is triangular in shape and usually called a "kerchief". These were often made of delicate lace but this example is sturdier - perhaps warmer - but nonetheless ostentatious. On this date (and at this child's age) it is very difficult to tell the difference between girls and boys, but we do know that the child was tipped in a way to be highlighted - a celebration of her fertility and her success in perpetuating her husband's line. The angle of the sitter's arm not only shows off her pretty lace, but also a miniature portrait on her wrist - which surely must show her husband? The distinctive side curls on either side of her head also indicate an early 1760s date for this portrait. Thanks to Jacqui Ansell (Christies Education Lecturer) for this invaluable insight into period costume. I am also grateful to British art scholar Brian Allen for examining the current work through high resolution photographs and for generously sharing the following thoughts on his authorship: 'Although the drapery painting is close to Ramsay's work of the mid-1750s and early 1760s, it is rather tighter and more polished than Ramsay's work became after the death in 1749 of his most prolific draper painter, Joseph Van Aken . The models' faces perhaps lack a bit of the subtlety one would see in Ramsay's works of this date. That said, whoever painted this must have been very familiar with Ramsay and wonders who painted him? His most talented pupil was David Martin (1737-1797) but although Martin traveled to Italy with Ramsay in the mid-1750s, he did not join Ramsay's studio until the early 1760s. He is simply possible that this work is by Martin. » Higher resolution images on request. Worldwide shipping available. Canvas: 30 x 41" / 76cm x 104cm. Frame: 37.5" x 48" / 95cm x 122cm