



Portrait Of A Lady Picking Oranges Circa 1655 - Circle Of Sir Peter Lely.



14 300 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 79cm

Height : 89cm

Depth : 2cm

Description

A refined, richly coloured and highly detailed portrait of a lady picking oranges circa 1655 by an artist in the circle of Sir Peter Lely (1618-1660). The elegant woman dressed in silk is depicted half-length, in an ensemble of richly coloured draperies, held by jewelled clasps and strung with rows of pearls. Her cloak is formed of a fabric woven with thin strips of wire or 'garlands' designed to catch the light. She stands beside an orange tree which is set inside an urn decorated with a grotesque mask. Her elegant neck is stretched and as she turns towards the viewer she is picking an orange. The artist has chosen to emphasise the smooth, pearly skin of the woman's slightly sloping shoulders and décolleté, which are further offset by her necklace and earrings. Her hair is styled in curls, some of

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which frame her face, while others cascade naturally around her bare shoulders. Also of note is the expressive use of the sitter's forearms as a focus and site of erotic appeal as she plucks fruit from the hem of her costume.

Seventeenth-century audiences were well aware of the symbolism of fruit and flowers present in paintings. The presence of both in this painting confidently identifies the plant as an orange tree which can be associated with fertility, as the tree bears both fruit and flowers and can produce plenty of both. The orange blossom was closely associated with brides in the nineteenth century (when Queen Victoria received betrothal jewels with this iconography from Albert, and also chose to wear a crown of orange blossoms rather than a tiara). In the 17th century, oranges were an expensive and luxurious import from Spain and Portugal - and therefore an appropriate fruit to display as a tribute to Queen Catherine of Braganza. As this portrait shows, orange trees were grown in large pots that were kept outdoors in the summer and brought indoors to overwinter in a heated environment. Rarely and diminutive in scale, this beautiful work is in an excellent state of preservation. It is housed in a late 18th century carved and gilded 'centre and corner' frame with a wonderful soft patina. I am very grateful to Jacqui Ansell, costume historian and lecturer at Christie's Education, for her detailed information and analysis on fashion and costume. High resolution images on request. Worldwide shipping available. Canvas: 24" x 28" / 61cm x 71.5cm. Framed: 31" x 35" / 79cm x 89cm.