John Hayls - Portraits Of A Lady In A Wide Landscape



16 500 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 122cm

Height : 130cm

Depth : 4cm

Description

A magnificent, rare, large-format portrait of a lady by John Hayls, painted in the 17th century. The as-yet-unknown noblewoman is perched on a bank in a vast landscape by a river. She is richly dressed in the sumptuous, brightly colored silks of the period, the prestige and fashion, her left hand clasping her breast and her right hand outstretched. John Hayls (pronounced Hales) was among the most talented portrait painters in mid-17th-century Britain. Even so, it is perhaps surprising that so few details of her life have survived. His portrait of the diarist Samuel Pepys (now in the National Portrait Gallery) has remained the most influential image of this iconic and infamous Restoration figure. Like so many other portraits of this period, Hayls's portraits drew heavily on the works of the prolific Sir

Dealer

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Anthony van Dyck, whose death in 1641 breathed new life into a new generation of painters. This portrait of an unknown woman is no exception. The dramatic pose, drapery, and setting all reflect the tone set by Van Dyck some 40 years before this work was created. Although unsigned, the attribution to Hayls is most evident in the painterly style applied to the canvas. The combination of thin, soft glazes, particularly visible on the face, contrasting with the masterful drapery, is typical of the artist's work. Hayls's Titian-like treatment of red drapery, employing deep red glazes over an assured white lead impasto, is characteristic of his approach to this subject. A recipe written in Richard Symonds's notebook, compiled mainly between 1651 and 1652, testifies to the pleasure Hayls would have taken in experimenting with various pigments and binders. The same is true of the landscape to the sitter's right, whose vivid sunset strongly recalls other works by the painter. The inclusion of this setting gives the painting a contemporary exoticism, which seems to evoke a Californian rather than a British sunset. Such portraits recall the growing competition among painters during the reign of Charles II. Artists such as the Dutch-born Sir Peter Lely, who also excelled in this three-quarter format, presented a significant challenge to English painters like Hayls. It is noteworthy that the pose of this unknown model, with her hand on her heart as if to ask for our sympathy for her plight, is repeated by Lely on numerous occasions. Hayls is known to have missed out on at least one important commission for the Guildhall judges, an honor that ultimately went to his fellow Briton John Michael Wright. Attempts to identify the model have proved unsuccessful. Although this aristocratic lady bears a vague resemblance to several portraits by the miniaturist Samuel Cooper, most strikingly that of Mary, 1st Duchess of Bolton, no direct correspondence has been established. It is often possible to compare Cooper's miniatures with Hayls's paintings, as the two artists were distant

relatives and seem to have copied each other on a few occasions (Francis, 3rd Baron Brooke is an example). The painter died prematurely in 1679: "Returning from the servant's house, he fell down dead in the garden, dressed in a velvet suit to go to a feast of the mayor." Provenance: Private collection, Spain. High-resolution images on request. International delivery available. Canvas: 101 cm x 127 cm. Frame: 130 cm x 122 cm.