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Presumed Portrait Of Jeanne Victoire De Crespy, Lady Of Chauvigné, French School, Circa 1755



3 200 EUR

Period : 18th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Description

This delicate mid-18th-century portrait depicts a lady of quality holding an open snuffbox, while a gilt watch rests on her sumptuous floral gown. The sitter, captured with a gentle restraint, embodies all the feminine elegance of Louis XV's reign, where graceful gestures and impeccable attire reflected both social status and moral refinement. The precise and luminous brushwork evokes the hand of an artist close to François-Hubert Drouais or Jean-Baptiste Perronneau: the diaphanous complexion, vibrant fabrics, and subtle gaze all reflect the same pursuit of delicate realism characteristic of French portraiture in the 1750s and 1760s. The understated, ethereal landscape background enhances the presence of the beautifully modeled face and hands. Textile and decorative analysis:

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The meticulously painted dress evokes taffeta or embroidered silk muslin, decorated with large floral motifs--peonies, anemones, forget-me-nots--in a range of pastel shades of pink, blue, and celadon green. The rendering of the organdy lace and satin ribbons demonstrates a perfect knowledge of contemporary fabrics, likely inspired by Lyon silks and the designs of Jean Pillement, whose floral compositions were widely circulated in weavers' workshops and fashion pattern books. This sartorial elegance reflects the taste of enlightened provincial elites for Parisian fashion, while remaining faithful to a certain provincial aristocratic restraint. Here, clothing becomes a metaphor for the harmony between nature and culture, so dear to the aesthetics of the Enlightenment. Symbolic interpretation: the watch and the snuffbox. The objects held by the lady fully contribute to the moral interpretation of the portrait. The watch, suspended from a gilt chain, evokes the fleeting nature of time and a meditation on the brevity of life--a discreet memento mori imbued with elegance. The snuffbox, a symbol of refined civility and worldly spirit, refers to the civilized pleasure of conversation and self-control. By combining these two attributes, the artist composes a subtle discourse on moderation and temperance, feminine virtues valued in 18th-century society.

Provenance and identification: The work comes from the former collection of a château near Lion-d'Angers (Maine-et-Loire). According to family tradition passed down with the painting, the sitter was Jeanne Victoire de Crespy, Lady of Chauvigné, daughter of François Julien de Crespy, Lord of La Guerche, and Catherine de La Mothe. Married on November 9, 1728, to Jules Constantin de La Lorie, Lord of Marans and Le Planty, she belonged to an old line of Angevin nobility, whose alliances and possessions are documented in regional archives. The style of dress, the powdered hairstyle, and the accessories perfectly place the portrait in the decade of 1750-1760, a period corresponding to Jeanne

Victoire de Crespy's maturity, thus confirming the validity of this identification. Condition and presentation: Oil on canvas in its original carved and gilded oak frame, typical of the mid-18th century. The canvas is in very good overall condition, with a stable and unrestored surface, and its original stretcher. The paintwork retains its freshness, and the modeling and textile details remain perfectly legible. A work of rare elegance, combining naturalistic precision, discreet symbolism, and aristocratic memory, it is an eloquent testament to French refinement during the reign of Louis XV. Dimensions: Visible area: 79.5 × 63 cm - Framed area: 93 × 76 cm