



17th/18th Century Old Master Painting By Arnold Houbraken (1660-1719) Esther And Ahasveros

8 500 EUR

Period : 18th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting on wood



Description

Arnold Houbraken (Dordrecht 1660 - 1719
Amsterdam)

Esther and Ahasveros

Oil on panel, 51 x 61.7 cm (20.1 x 24.3 inch)

Signed 'A. Houbraken' (lower left)

Provenance Private collection, The Netherlands

Arnold Houbraken was born in Dordrecht on 28
March 1660 as son of the
tailor Jan Jansz Houbraken and Truycken Gudde.

He married Sara Souborg

in 1685, with whom he had ten children; his

daughter Anonina married the

goldsmith Jacob Stellingwerf and his daughter

Christina married the

painter Anthoni Elliger. Houbraken was taught

the art of painting by

Dealer

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Jacobus Levecq and Samuel van Hoogstraten.¹ In 1680 Houbraken travelled to England, and then settled as an independent artist in his native Dordrecht, where he lived in a house named Maastricht on the Varkenmarkt. Around 1709 he and his family moved to Amsterdam, where he had found a wealthy Maecenas, Jonas Witsen. In 1713 he travelled to London again, where he visited the house of Philip Wharton, where he saw 32 portraits by Van Dyck. Although in Dordrecht he had mostly painted portraits, in the cultural climate of Amsterdam Houbraken was able to concentrate on mythological subjects, painted in a refined academic manner, which were highly esteemed during the period and the ultimate test of a painter's ability. Houbraken is best known today for his *Groote Schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, which appeared in print between 1718 and 1721 - it remains the most important source of biographies of artists of the Dutch Golden Age.²

This meticulously executed painting is very well preserved and is likely to have been painted around 1700-1705, when Houbraken was still working in Dordrecht. It is a good example of Houbraken's mastery of 'fijnschilderen', 'fine-painting', pioneered by Gerrit Dou and other masters of the Leiden School around the middle of the seventeenth century. It can be compared to Houbraken's painting *The Calling of St Matthew* in the Dordrechts Museum, Dordrecht (fig.).³

1. For the artist, see: B. Cornelis, 'A reassessment of Arnold Houbraken's *Groote Schouwburgh*', *Simiolus* 23 (1995), p. 163-180. 2. See B.

Cornelis, 'Arnold Houbraken's Groote
Schouburgh and the canon of 17th -century Dutch
painting', *Simiolus* 26 (1998), p. 144-161.3. Oil
on panel, 41.3 x 49.3 cm, inv. no. DM/006/876.