



English School, 1644 - Portrait Of Lucy Hutchinson (1620-1681) By Thomas Or Edward Hutchinson



30 000 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 107cm

Height : 125cm

Depth : 3cm

Description

Fine and historically significant English school portrait of a lady and her son, traditionally identified as Lucy Hutchinson (1620-1681) and Thomas or Edward Hutchinson (b. 1639). The elegant sitters are depicted three-quarter length within an interior. Lucy is seated upon a blue fringed throne chair and she affectionately holds the hand of her son who stands beside her. Dressed in the highly fashionable shimmering silk clothing of the period, she sports a yellow silk robe with slashed sleeves and jewelled clasps and over this a claret coloured wrap. Her extensive jewellery includes a single strand pearl necklace, large drop pearls earrings, a four strand pearl bracelet, and a feather and gem set hair ornament. He wears an elaborate gold coloured 'Vandyke' costume with lace collar, lace cuffs and

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a blue sash. Behind them is an open window through which a stormy sky and fruiting grapevine can be seen. Note This portrait is traditionally understood to depict one of the most important seventeenth century female biographers and poets, Lucy Hutchinson. Rightfully considered a significant female writer and translator in early-modern England, Hutchinson witnessed and wrote historical accounts of the English Civil Wars, one of the most turbulent periods of the nation's history. The traditional identification is strengthened to due its close comparison to a portrait of Lucy by the interregnum artist Robert Walker. The Sitter Born in 1620 at the Tower of London, where her father Sir Allen Apsley (1566/7-1630) served as lieutenant, Lucy was provided with a substantial education rarely afforded to girls of the period. Her engrossed learning of texts, particularly sermons and biblical verses, was also due to the fervent Puritan sympathies of the Apsley family. After the untimely death of her father in 1630, and the difficulties her mother faced in her second marriage, fate ensued an encounter with her future husband John Hutchinson (c. 1615-1664) of Owthorpe in Nottinghamshire during her travels there. Their union, it seems clear, was one founded on a mutual appreciation for the arts with both familial and friendly connections with both musicians and writers, including John's fellow lodger the musician Charles Coleman. They were married in Holborn, London, in 1638. After pursuing studies in theology, John eventually answered the call of the Parliamentarian army and enlisted in the early 1640s during the outbreak of the Civil Wars. By 1643 he was appointed governor of Nottingham and of Nottingham Castle, presumably shortly before this portrait was produced. This period saw the beginnings of Lucy's private accounts of John's career, a pursuit which would eventually result in a full biography of her husband which was widely circulated in manuscript form but was never printed during her lifetime. The year 1644,

painted onto this portrait, was one fraught with danger and uncertainty. Nottingham and the Midlands in general was particularly prone to Royalist bombardments and attacks during this early phase of the war, including those undertaken against the city by Sir Charles Lucas in that very year. 1644 witnessed one of the fiercest confrontations, including the Battle of Marston Moor in July which obliterated the Royalist forces in the north thus concentrating their remaining power in the Midlands and South. For Lucy, famously, by the increasingly calmer period of the 1650s her seriousness in the field of writing was enshrined by her translation of Lucretius's *De rerum natura*, a lengthy project which was undertaken alongside other tracts possibly including Republican defences against the growing power of the likes of Oliver Cromwell. Art and painting was a serious interest to the Hutchinsons. As Angus Haldane has shown, Colonel Hutchinson was a significant buyer at the posthumous sale of the King's Goods after the execution of King Charles I in 1649. Having spent a fortune of £1,349 on 23 paintings, including on portraits by Hans Holbein, and mythological subjects including the celebrated *Pardo Venus* by Titian (now in the Louvre, Paris), it is clear and perhaps surprising that the couple had a particularly refined taste for sixteenth century painting. Their collecting habits and patronage adds further intrigue into the commissioning of paintings such as this one, which although remains unattributed, must have been undertaken by an Anglo-Flemish artist who was aware of the portraiture of Sir Anthony Van Dyck and his immediate successors.

Portrait The identification of Lucy Hutchinson is strengthened due to the very clear comparisons that can be made to Robert Walker's portrait of the sitter, which survives in a private collection. Walker's portrait, which Haldane dates to circa 1650, shows a compelling resemblance in physiognomy to the features found in this painting. This is particularly the case in Lucy's

strongly modelled brown, nose and face, along with her prominent lips. The arrangement of featuring a single son within the composition, mirrored in both this image and the Walker painting, is also noteworthy. It is almost certain that the repetition of this choice must have been down to Hutchinson herself. As Haldane has pointed out, the prominent column in Walker's portrait, which also features in this example, may be a reference to her pedigree as a scholar of classical literature. This very touching familial image, which bears the prominent date of 1644, is traditionally said to show Lucy affectionately with her arms around one of her five-year-old sons Thomas or Edward. Both boys, who were twins, were born in 1639 a year after her marriage to John Hutchinson. Their dress, which betrays a great deal of richness in the fine silks, pearls and plush seating, further adds complexity to the myth and misconception of the Calvinist 'Puritan' aesthetic. Lucy was, after all, the wife to the Governor of the important Midlands city and castle of Nottingham when it was painted, and her clothing befits the wife of a commander.

Additionally, her son is depicted wearing a very fine slashed doublet, decorated with a Van Dyckian lace collar and bright blue sash around his waist. Recent conservation of this painting has also revealed grape-laden vines, which were apparently painted out of the composition much later during the portrait's history. Symbolically, the associations of the resilient hardy vine to notions of renewal and abundance would be very apt for a family whose protestant religiosity and staunch republicanism sustained them during this turbulent decade and a half.

Later Life

As a signatory to King Charles I's death warrant, John Hutchinson's safety after the Restoration of 1660 was a constant concern for Lucy. The compiling of his biography, an attempt perhaps to vouch for his name and character, alongside the creation of documents and prints recanting his republicanism, consumed her time and energies. Alas, her efforts were eventually dashed by his

arrest in 1663 on charges relating to allegations of his involvement in the Farnley Wood Plot. After spending a considerable time at the Tower, which was the birthplace of his wife, John was eventually transferred to Sandown Castle in Kent where he died in September 1664. Her remaining years were dedicated to attempts to keep her finances and estates in order, alongside the futures of her surviving children out of the nine she brought into the world. The continued dedication to her writing, including her husband's biography, lasted well into widowhood. Her accounts of the Civil Wars, and particularly the local conflicts she witnessed, remain of great interest to scholars to this day. Notebooks and manuscripts too, scattered in various collections, attest to her continued interest in theology and religion, including texts against religious extremist sects and the growing atheism experienced in Restoration England. Lucy died at her home in Owthorpe at the age of 61 in 1681. She was buried alongside her husband under the monument she had designed for him in the Church there nearly two decades earlier. This fine and historically significant portrait is in an excellent state of conservation having undergone a thorough campaign of conservation and cleaning. It is now ready to hand and enjoy in a later gilded 'lely' style frame. Higher Resolution images on request.

Worldwide shipping available. Canvas: 42.5" x 35" / 108cm x 89cm.

Frame: 49.5" x 42" / 125cm x

107cm.