

SA1080512

c.1656 Pair of Portraits
Gentleman & Lady, William &
Rachel Helyar; Circle of Robert
Walker, oil on canvas paintings,
Civil War period

Price

Sold

Item Reference: SA1080512

Date of manufacture: 17th Century

Dimensions

Height = 132 cm (52.0")

Width = 112 cm (44.1")

Depth = 6 cm (2.4")

Description

These fascinating portraits depict Colonel William Helyar and his wife Rachel Helyar. They are exquisite examples of portraiture during the Interregnum when England was under various forms of republican government. The history of the seventeenth century is in part the story of the Stewarts but another fascinating dynasty also ruled Britain: the Cromwell's. Between 1653 and 1659, following the Civil Wars, Oliver Cromwell governed as Lord Protector followed by his son Richard. Cromwell's Protectorate is usually imagined as a grey, joyless, military regime - but it was actually a colourful and fashionable court where music and the arts flourished, masques were revived and the first English operas performed. When Cromwell was invested as Lord Protector for the second time, the lavish ceremony and procession through London rivalled any previous coronation for pageantry with thousands lining the streets, bells ringing, bonfires blazing and free French wine flowed through the city. The gentleman in our portrait is Colonel William Helyar (1621-1698), Sheriff of Somerset and as a Royalist during the English Civil War. The Helyar's were one of the most prominent old families of t...

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