

SA1186791

Portrait of Elizabeth
Wriothesley, Countess of
Northumberland (1646-1690)
(later Duchess of Montagu)
c.1665-1669; Studio of Peter
Lely (1618-1680), Oil on canvas
painting
Sold

Item Reference: SA1186791

Date of manufacture: 17th Century

Dimensions

Height = 139 cm (54.7")

Width = 116 cm (45.7")

Depth = 6 cm (2.4")

Description

This three-quarter-length portrait depicts Elizabeth Wriothesley (1646–1690)—Countess of Northumberland and later Duchess of Montagu—one of the most celebrated women of the Restoration court. More than a refined likeness, it is a cultural artefact: a dynastic and diplomatic figure rendered in the visual language Peter Lely shaped for England's revived monarchy, produced within the workings of Lely's studio. Elizabeth was the daughter of Thomas Wriothesley, 4th Earl of Southampton, a leading statesman after 1660. In 1662 she married Joceline Percy, 11th Earl of Northumberland, joining one of England's greatest dynasties and its world of estates, display, and court visibility. Widowed young, she married in 1673 Ralph Montagu (later 1st Duke of Montagu), English ambassador in France, placing her at the crossroads of aristocratic authority and the French-influenced sophistication that defined Restoration taste. The portrait's broader significance lies in its proximity to the "Windsor Beauties," Lely's famed early-1660s series for Anne Hyde, Duchess of York—a programme that turned glamour into a statement of legitimacy and courtly power. Lely's approach, celebrated for creat...

Seller Details

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