

SA1218804

18th century English portrait of
Portrait of a Clergyman,
traditionally identified as John
Wesley (1703–1791)

Price

Sold

Item Reference: SA1218804

Date of manufacture: 18th Century

Dimensions

Height = 79 cm (31.1")

Width = 68.6 cm (27.0")

Description

The traditional identification of this sitter is of a youthful John Wesley, dating to around 1726 when he was elected a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. The portrait is an example of a fascinating tradition of early Methodist iconography from the 18th century, displaying the quiet intensity and scholarly sobriety of the sitter. The portrait is a captivating study in character, capturing the intense, introspective gaze of a young scholar on the precipice of his career. The lean facial architecture, heavy-lidded eyes, and prominent, aquiline nose are handled with a sensitive, restrained realism characteristic of the early Georgian period. Rather than the stylised idealism of the high court, the artist employs an honest, painterly directness that imbues the subject with immense presence. The life of John Wesley (1703–1791) is one of the most remarkable chapters in British ecclesiastical history. Alongside his brother Charles and their contemporary George Whitefield, John Wesley spearheaded the 18th-century Evangelical Revival, radically reshaping the religious, cultural, and social landscape of Britain and the American colonies.

Seller Details

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