

SA134479

Portrait of Dorothy, Lady Townshend c.1710; Attributed to Charles Jervas.

Price

Sold

Item Reference: SA134479

Date of manufacture: 1700

Dimensions

Height = 86 cm (33.9")

Width = 72 cm (28.3")

Depth = 4.5 cm (1.8")

Description

Oil on canvas in gilded frame. Portrait possibly of DOROTHY, VISCOUNTESS TOWNSHEND (1686-1739). Dorothy was the sister of Sir Robert Walpole, England's first prime minister who was a close friend and political ally of Charles, Viscount Townshend of Raynham, leader of the House of Lords. They dominated Whig party politics but later fell out. Lady Townshend was a favourite sitter of Jervas, being painted on several occasions. As well as painting portraits of several members of the Townshend family, Jervas restored and reworked earlier portraits at Raynham Hall, Norfolk. Dorothy had been Lord Townshend's first love but her father was the young man's guardian and forbade the match; it was not until the death of Townshend's first wife that they married in 1713. The union produced three children. In the meantime Dorothy had become involved with the profligate Lord Wharton. When Townshend discovered this after their marriage he confined Dorothy to her rooms at Raynham Hall, where she died of smallpox although there were rumours of more sinister causes of death. Lady Townshend's ghost, known as 'The Brown Lady' (because of the colour of her gown) is said to haunt the oak staircase.

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