

SA181598

Portrait of Lady Elizabeth Felton (?). c. 1680; Studio or Circle of Sir Peter Lely.

Price

Sold

Item Reference: SA181598

Date of manufacture: Before 1700

Description

Oil on canvas in richly carved period frame. The sitter, possibly Lady Elizabeth Felton, (nee Howard) (1656-1681) looks out at the viewer...her head tilted provocatively and her chemise pulled partly out of her dress. The image is charged with an eroticism that was typical of Elizabeth. Lady Elizabeth Howard was the daughter of James Howard, 3rd Earl of Suffolk and Barbara Villiers. She was considered a great beauty in her day and had become notorious at the Restoration Court by the time of her sudden death in 1681 aged 25. At the age of 19 she had married Thomas Felton, a Groom of the Bedchamber to Charles II, against the wishes of her parents; Elizabeth then proceeded to engage in a series of extra-marital affairs, notable even at the promiscuous Carolean court. Amongst her lovers were the infamous rake and poet, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester and Charles II's illegitimate son James, Duke of Monmouth. SIR PETER LELY (1618 - 1680) was the most important portraitist in the reign of Charles II, although he had painted portraits throughout the Commonwealth. Principal Painter to the King, he painted everyone of importance, maintaining a busy and active Studio to help with...

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