

SA224775

Portrait of a Gentleman c.1685;
Circle of John Riley.

Price

Sold

Item Reference: SA224775

Date of manufacture: Before 1700

Description

Oil on canvas in 18th century giltwood frame. The sitter wears a fashionable and expensive Indian silk draped over his shoulder, these were so costly that Samuel Pepys hired his when he had his portrait painted. He also wears a large and very expensive wig; the expression 'bigwig' for a rich or important person comes from this fashion. JOHN RILEY, or Ryley, (1646 – March 1691) was an English portrait painter. He painted portraits of Charles II and James II, and was Court Painter to William III and Mary II. One of his pupils was Jonathan Richardson. Riley was born in London, one of the sons of William Riley or Ryley, Lancaster Herald and Keeper of the Records in the Tower of London, who was created Norroy king-at-arms under the Commonwealth, but reverted to his herald's office at the Restoration. Riley studied painting under Isaac Fuller and Gerard Soest, and from the latter learnt a forcible, straightforward style of portraiture which rendered his portraits noteworthy. Riley did not attain much eminence until the death of Sir Peter Lely, when courtier and royal official Thomas Chiffinch sat for him, and was so much pleased with his portrait that he showed it to the kin...

Internal Ref: 8728

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