

SA300519

Portrait of Louise de Keroualle,
Duchess of Portsmouth c.1671;
by Mary Beale.

Price

Sold

Item Reference: SA300519

Date of manufacture:

Description

Oil on canvas in a later frame (damages). The Duchess lounges sensuously on the ground, in an Arcadian landscape....she holds a shepherd's crook, a lamb by her side. This is possibly the first time Lely used this pose which he was to use many times. Louise demonstrates her new status amongst the most elevated at Court by wearing a daring 'undress'...this was a means of demonstrating one's superiority. LOUISE DE KEROUALLE, DUCHESS OF PORTSMOUTH She was highly successful in her career as a mistress, and as an agent in the interest of King Louis XIV. She had first come to England in 1670 as a Maid of Honour to the Duchess of Orleans, the King's sister. When the Duchess died in that year, Louis sent her back to England in order to captivate the King, whose mistress she became in the following year. She was the most absolute of the mistresses, and remained with the King until his death. Charles's obligation to Louis was considerable — he received a pension from the French king in consequence of the Secret Treaty of 1670 — and neither this money nor Louise de Keroualle let him forget it. In 1674 she was created Baroness Petersfield, Countess of Fareham and Duchess of Portsmouth...

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