

SA318428

**Portrait of a Gentleman c.1670:
Circle of Mary Beale**

Price

Sold

Item Reference: SA318428

Date of manufacture: Before 1700

Description

Oil on canvas in a carved and giltwood period frame. The sitter wears an Indian silk tea gown, highly fashionable, and so costly that Samuel Pepys had to hire one when his portrait was painted by Hayls. The sitter is depicted within a beautifully painted feigned stone oval, bearing fruit. This motif was used so often by Beale as to be almost her trademark. It also was intended to be a Classical reminder. MARY BEALE (1632-1697) was born in Barrow, Suffolk, the daughter of John Cradock, a Puritan rector. Her mother, Dorothy, died when she was 10. Her father was an amateur painter, and member of the Painter-Stainers' Company, and she was acquainted with local artists, such as Nathaniel Thach, Matthew Snelling, Robert Walker and Peter Lely. In 1652, at the age of 18, she married Charles Beale, a cloth merchant from London - also an amateur painter. She became a semi-professional portrait painter in the 1650s and 1660s, working from her home, first in Covent Garden and later in Fleet Street. The family moved to a farmhouse in Allbrook, Hampshire in 1665 due to financial difficulties, her husband having lost his position as a patent clerk, and also due to the Great Plague of...

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