

SA518208

Portrait of a Lady as
"Cleopatra" Dissolving the Pearl
c.1755; Attributed to Marianne
Loir (c.1715 - 1769)

Price

Sold**Item Reference: SA518208****Date of manufacture: 18th Century**

Dimensions

Height = 107 cm (42.1")

Width = 91 cm (35.8")

Depth = 7 cm (2.8")

Description

Oil on canvas. This work is a particularly fine example of the category of allegorical portraiture as practiced in the middle of the eighteenth century in France. The woman has been depicted as Queen Cleopatra and references the account of her legendary wager with the Roman general Mark Antony and a legendary episode of a wager between the two lovers, who vied with each other to stage the most sumptuous banquet. After an extremely lavish meal at Mark Antony's expense, Cleopatra boasted that she could lay a banquet of much greater extravagance. On her ears she was wearing two enormous pearls — the two largest pearls in the world, left to her by oriental kings of the East. She removed one of them, dropped it into a single vessel containing an acidic substance mixed with wine and when it was dissolved she drank it - an extravagant gesture of seduction – and so it was declared that she wins the wager. The account was first recorded by Pliny the Elder in his 'Naturalis Historia' written in 77 A.D. (IX.59.119-121; also Macrobius, Saturnalia, III.17.14-17). From Pliny's own words: "When Antony had been sated by her, day after day, with the most exquisite banquets, this..."

Seller Details

Titan Fine Art

London United Kingdom



Tel: 07875 412 111

International Tel: +44 7875 412 111