

SA540179

Portrait of John Baines c.1680;
Circle of Simon Dubois
(1632-1706)

Price

Sold

Item Reference: SA540179

Date of manufacture: 17th Century

Dimensions

Height = 92 cm (36.2")

Width = 79 cm (31.1")

Depth = 6 cm (2.4")

Description

The gentleman in this portrait has been depicted wearing a striking crimson tunic and a well-made wig, something that was essential to a gentleman of fashion. The tunic is made of the finest iridescent shot silk and it would have been quite a spectacle as it shimmered as changed colour at different angles. Wigs were very unnatural hairpieces that no one could pretend to mistake them for natural hair. But their popularity was immense and by this time so fashionable. The demand fuelled prices so much that natural hair became a valued commodity, with the usual price being 3 pounds an ounce. Dealers sprang up in all quarters. In France every peasant girl was trying to sell her hair and in England the hair of an old woman, after death, sold for 50 pounds. Wigs could form part of a woman's dowry. Wig theft was so common that it was deemed necessary to create a name for a wig thief (chiving lay) and it was a precarious adventure taking a Hackney Carriage across London for fear that the back of the carriage would be slit and your wig stolen from your head. The sitter is by tradition John Baines (born c.1648) who in 1692 married his cousin Dorothy at Cawood (widow of John ...

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