

SA541852

Late 19th Century Silhouette of a Victorian Lady heightened with gilt paint

Price

Sold**Item Reference: SA541852****Date of manufacture: Victorian**

Dimensions

Height = 13 cm (5.1")

Width = 11 cm (4.3")

Depth = 2 cm (0.8")

Description

With the heavy competition for miniature portraits and profiles, even the name of portraiture began to change – from its origins of “shadow portraits”, which was the common name, to the newly exotic name of profile portraits, or “Silhouettes”. The word silhouette is derived from the name of Étienne de Silhouette, a French finance minister who, in 1759, was forced by France's credit crisis during the Seven Years' War to impose severe economic demands upon the French people, particularly the wealthy. Because of de Silhouette's austere economies, his name became synonymous with anything done or made cheaply and so with these outline portraits. Prior to the advent of photography, Silhouette profiles cut from black card were the cheapest way of recording a person's appearance. The term silhouette, although existing from the 18th century, was not applied to the art of portrait-making until the 19th century. In the 18th and early 19th century, “profiles” or “shades” as they were called were made by one of three methods: 1. painted on ivory, plaster, paper, card, or in reverse on glass; 2. “hollow cut”, where the negative image was traced and then cut away from light colour...

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