

SA843391

Portrait of a Gentleman c.1800; Attributed to John Opie.

Price

GBP 7,950

| USD \$10,737 | EUR 9,298

Item Reference: SA843391**Date of manufacture: 1800**

Dimensions

Height = 91.5 cm (36.0")

Width = 79 cm (31.1")

Depth = 5 cm (2.0")

Description

John Opie was born in St Agnes, near Truro in 1761. From an early age he showed a talent for drawing, in addition to a more general academic excellence. He soon established a local reputation for portrait painting and was discovered by John Walcot who introduced him to London in 1781 as "The Cornish Wonder". This nickname was mainly due to the fact that he was completely self-taught. His style as a portrait painter was marked by strong realism, and striking contrasts of light and dark. This very fine and insightful portrait was created at the turn of the 18th century, and shows the sitter against a dark background with a hint of a rich drapery to his left. The half-turned head with its dark hair is set against the bright white necktie and waistcoat. The extraordinarily strong presence of the sitter evokes the spirit of Baroque painting during the seventeenth century. It was Opie's abilities in chiaroscuro which is said to have won the praise of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who reputedly described him as 'like Caravaggio and Velazquez in one.' The brooding spirit of early-Romanticism, through the lens of knowledge of the Old Masters, is strong in this work. Born the son of a c...

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