

SA932229

Small Portrait of Barbara Villiers c. 1665; Attributed to Mary Beale.

Price

Sold**Item Reference: SA932229****Date of manufacture: 17th Century**

Dimensions

Height = 35 cm (13.8")

Width = 30 cm (11.8")

Depth = 2.5 cm (1.0")

Description

Oil on paper, mounted on an oak panel, with a fine late 18th century Rococo frame. Verso; a Christie's number and a very faint label written in pencil, "The Duchess of Cleveland in a Brown Dress by Lely". Barbara regards the viewer with a knowing and rather mischievous look. (The final image is shown with pair of spectacles as an indicator of size) As the most notorious and most frequently painted of King Charles II's mistresses, BARBARA VILLIERS Duchess of Cleveland (1622-1681) remains one of the most enduring symbols of the indulgences and excesses of the Restoration Court. This portrait derives from works by Sir Peter Lely, who painted her many times. At the Restoration Villiers was established as the king's favourite mistress and despite his marriage to Catherine of Braganza and the jealousy of other courtiers, she maintained a powerful influence at Court. At least three of her children were acknowledged as his by the king and by 1665 she was termed the 'maitresse en titre'. Among her various liaisons was one in 1668 with the actor Charles Hart in retaliation for the king's growing attraction for actresses such as Moll Davis and Nell Gwyn. In 1670 she was created Ba...

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