



Van Dyck School - 17th Century Oil On Panel Portrait Of Queen Henrietta Maria



19 200 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting on wood

Width : 48cm

Height : 54cm

Depth : 3cm

<https://www.proantic.com/en/1504519-van-dyck-school-17th-century-oil-on-panel-portrait-of-queen-henrietta-maria.html>

Description

Fine and jewel like oil on panel portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria c.1635 by an artist in the circle of Van Dyck.

When Queen Henrietta Maria married Charles 1 in 1625 she brought with her the French fashions in clothing and make up with we see here. In this jewel like oil on panel we see the rouged cheeks and red lips of which the Puritan public disapproved, and also the 'lovelock' hairstyle - a single curling ringlet dangling down and inviting amorous fingers to play with it.

Such a low neckline is unusual in depictions of the monarch, except for those which she is whine wearing a crown to denote her high status. It is likely that this is the reason why this small corm is included, as it is an unusual feature.

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Several Van Dyke portraits of Henrietta Maria reveal the same diagonal sweep of jewels over the chest, it being held in place by being intertwined with a horizontal string of pearls. The jewels are diamonds and we can see this from their square shape and the fact that they are table cut. Pearls such as this were worn to accentuate the pearlescent quality of a woman's complexion. Here they emphasise the rounded breast between which a circular jewel has been placed defying logic. Stripped of the usual cloth that would cover the breasts there is little space for the jewel to be pinned. The overall effect is sumptuous and well as suggestive. It may also relate to another unusual feature of the sitters costume in the form of a high and wide waistline, which seems indicative of pregnancy, and although this was a regular feature of Henrietta Maria's life throughout the 1630's it is seldom seen in her iconography.

Queen Henrietta Maria (1609-1669)

Born on 25th November 1609, Henriette Maria of France was the youngest daughter of Henri IV of France and Marie de Medici. Sister to Louis XIII of France, Isabel of Bourbon. Queen of Spain, Gaston of Orleans and Christine, Duchess of Savoy, Henrietta Maria was a great match for any prince of Europe. Henrietta Maria was born before the tragic death of her father, Henry IV, in 1610 (he was assassinated in a stabbing). It was her brother, Louis XIII, who rapidly became a father figure to her and her mother, Marie de Medici, who ensured that her children would play important political roles in early modern Europe. Following the failed attempt to marry Charles (heir to the English and Scottish thrones) to the Spanish Infanta negotiations began between the English and French crowns. Despite her Catholicism Henrietta Maria was the perfect match for Charles. She was nine years younger than the English/Scottish prince and would secure a strong alliance with France to counterbalance Spain's growing power over Europe.

On 1st May 1625, Charles was married by proxy to the French princess in front of the doors of Notre Dame in Paris. Soon Henrietta Maria's presence at the Protestant court generated gossip and issues. People feared that Charles was becoming more and more tolerant towards the Catholics of the country with some believed that Henrietta Maria was in part responsible for this. When it came to her religion, Henrietta Maria was unapologetic and expressed her feelings openly and as a result attacks on Henrietta Maria intensified. In 1632 a Puritan, William Prynne, published a book entitled *Histriomastix: the Player's Scourge or Actor's Tragedy*, which was a critique of English Renaissance theatre and actors.

In his work, Prynne directly referenced the queen and called her a 'whore'. For his attack, he was sentenced to have his ears cropped and to be imprisoned for life in the Tower. He was also fined £5,000 and his book was to be burned by the common hangman.

Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641) was commissioned to portray the queen's beauty, and many others were inspired by his portraits of the queen.

Henrietta Maria was glamorous and had expensive tastes and unfortunately her beauty, colourful style and perfect hair were also at odds with Protestant expectations of what a queen should be. Henrietta Maria was also known for her frivolity, which was often embodied by her favourite companion at court: a dwarf named Jeffrey Hudson (1619-1682).

Despite this the royal couple mostly presented a united front and after five years of marriage, Henrietta Maria and Charles finally secured the dynasty with the birth of a son on 29th May 1630 - later to become Charles II. They had eight children in total, six of whom reached adulthood. Henrietta Maria was a divisive figure in the seventeenth-century English court. Loved and adored by her husband, she represented hope for the English Catholics and trouble for the

Protestants. She could never conquer all hearts and, during the Civil War, she eventually fled to her native France, where she tried to gain support for her husband. Charles was to be executed in January 1649.

Losing her husband was without a doubt Henrietta Maria's greatest source of grief. Yet, she remained a fervent defender of the monarchy and of the English crown even after his death, supporting her son, Charles II, during the Restoration.

Regardless, Henrietta Maria left a mark on both British and French history and should be remembered as more than a mere wife and mother: as her own political and diplomatic master. During her time in exile, she developed strong connections all over Europe to help secure her son's royal restoration in 1660. In 1665, she moved back to Paris, where she died on 10th September 1669.

This diminutive and jewel like work is in a splendid state of conservation and is housed in a sumptuous later marbled gilt frame with velvet slip.

Higher resolution images on request.

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Provenance: Private collection Belgium. Christies stencil verso.

Panel: 31cm x 26cm. Framed: 48cm x 54cm