

PHILIP MOULD

FINE PAINTINGS

Press Release
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MULTI MILLION POUND VAN DYCK DISCOVERY TO STAR IN PHILIP MOULD'S NEW ART EXHIBITION

Treasured by 19th century connoisseurs, prized by the Rothschild's, snatched by the Nazis, and subsequently lost behind layers of dirt, a hugely valuable Van Dyck painting recently re-discovered in a Parisian auction house will go on display to the public in the UK for the first time this Thursday. It will be the centrepiece of an exhibition called *Finding Van Dyck*, which will run from 15 June - 13 July at Philip Mould Fine Paintings, 29 Dover Street, London, W1. Admission is free.

Van Dyck's rediscovered work *A Portrait of a Young Girl* first caught the eye of fine art connoisseur, broadcaster and author Philip Mould OBE when he and his co-director, Bendor Grosvenor, were flicking through a Christie's catalogue for a Parisian house sale of the Rothschild banking family last autumn. The artist had been overlooked and it had an estimate of 15,000-20,000 Euros.

Painstaking research began before the sale to piece together the painting's history. In the few weeks available Bendor Grosvenor managed to establish that it had, in fact, been sold by Christie's before as a genuine Van Dyck and had passed through the hands of many owners, including Prince Talleyrand, Napoleon's foreign minister.

Other notable owners included Emmerich Joseph, Duc Dalberg (1773-1833) – a prominent German diplomat who served under Napoleon and later Louis XVIII, and Lord Charles Townshend, who paid £200 for it when it was sold to him in 1831 by a leading 19th century art dealer John Smith from the collection Talleyrand. Later that century it came into the possession of the Rothschild family but was stolen from them by the Nazis in the Second World War. It was restituted to the Rothschilds in 1946.

However, when Mould and Grosvenor spotted the painting, listed among umbrella stands and drinks trolleys in Christie's September 2010 catalogue it was simply described as *Flemish School, 17th Century, Portrait of a young girl with a fan*. The estimate was €15-20,000. The only other information given was that the picture had previously been identified as Henriette of France.

Mould was immediately able to rule out the previous identification of the sitter. Henrietta Maria of France, wife of Charles I, as she was born in 1609, would have been too old to appear in the portrait, which dates to 1630-34.

“What I was certain of however was that beneath the dirt – what I surmised was half a century of cigar and cigarette smoke generated at the Rothschild's Parisian soirees – lay a genuine masterpiece,” said Philip Mould.

Fighting off strong competition for the painting he eventually secured the portrait for €1,017,000, inclusive of buyer's premium – fifty times its upper estimate.

“Cleaning dramatically revealed its former glory – including previously obscured details, such as the ribbon in the girl's hair and the usual range of colours, glazes and half-tones one would expect to see in a Van Dyck,” added Philip Mould.

The portrait, which is now accepted as a genuine work, has more than tripled in value since Philip Mould bought it at Christie's.

Other recently discovered works by Van Dyck will be on view at the exhibition, including a portrait of lady, unearthed Philip Mould in the basement of the Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle, County Durham.

For *Finding Van Dyck* exhibition opening hours and details of how to acquire the accompanying catalogue, please visit www.philipmould.com

For further press information, images or an interview with Philip Mould, please contact:

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Notes to Editors

Philip Mould Ltd is a leading specialist dealer in British art and Old Master Paintings – and the world's leading authority on British Portraiture. Based in Dover Street in the heart of London's fashionable art market, the gallery offers a large selection of fine paintings for sale, from Tudor and Jacobean panel pictures to 18th century landscapes, as well as works by Old Masters such as Titian and Van Dyck, and antique portrait miniatures. Exhibitions are regularly held in the gallery, which feature loans from national and international institutions as well as works owned by Philip Mould Ltd.