

**Cornelis de Vos, *Portrait of a Lady dressed in Black***

oil on panel, the reverse of which bears the brand of the Antwerp panelmakers' Guild and an unknown maker's mark  
29 by 21 inches (73.6 by 53.3cm.)  
inscribed and dated upper left: 'AE (in compendium) TA.s 35 1632'

provenance: Anonymous sale, London, Sotheby's, October 30, 1996, lot 60 (as attributed to Cornelis de Vos);  
Collection of Giancarlo Baroni

note: Cornelis de Vos was born in Hulst in Zeeland in *circa* 1584/5. De Vos's brother Paulus was also a painter; his sister Margaretha married Frans Snyders in 1611. The de Vos family moved from Hulst to Antwerp in about 1596, and in 1599 Cornelis became a pupil of David Remeers. Upon completing his apprenticeship in 1604, de Vos applied for a passport to travel and 'learn his profession', but there is no evidence of his actually having embarked on this journey. He became a master in the guild of St. Luke in 1608, was elected dean in 1619, and high dean in 1620. He became a citizen of the city of Antwerp in 1616. Along with artists such as Jacob Jordaens, de Vos worked with Rubens on the decorations for the Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi in 1635, and for the Torre de la Parada from 1637. He died in Antwerp on May 9, 1651.

Although much of de Vos's oeuvre is devoted to portraiture, he also painted Caravaggesque genre scenes, and history paintings strongly influenced by Rubens in their composition and execution. De Vos was the premier portraitist of haute-bourgeois and patrician society in Antwerp. His carefully observed and honest likeliness are intimate and probing, yet are presented in formal settings that reflect in detail the wealth and social standing of the sitter. While de Vos was influenced by van Dyck's work from the mid-1620's, his portraits emphasize more the bourgeois qualities of solid prosperity than the courtly grace and refinement expressed by van Dyck.<sup>1</sup>

At the time of the 1996 sale, the painting was seen a firsthand by Drs. Katlijne van der Stighelen who has since accepted the painting as a fully autograph portrait by Cornelis de Vos. Drs. Van der Stighelen believes the painting dates from *circa* 1630.

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<sup>1</sup>. Biographical information from: P.C. Sutton, *The Age of Rubens*, Boston 1994, p. 374