

PATRICK JEFFERSON



Item ANTONIO VERRIO (c. 1639-1707); *MINERVA AND MARS*
Date Commissioned by King Charles II and painted between 1675-84.
Provenance Windsor Castle until *circa* 1824; private collection.
Dimensions Height 26”(66.04cm) Width 24” (60.96cm)

Description A section of fresco from the ceiling of the Queen’s Drawing Room at Windsor Castle; frame inscribed *verso*: ‘*On plaster from the ceiling of the state drawing room at Windsor Castle painted by Antonio Verrio in the reign of Chas 2nd.*’²

In 1673, King Charles II commissioned the architect Hugh May to transform the Upper Ward of Windsor Castle into a Baroque palace, emulating the suites of state rooms created by his cousin King Louis XIV in France. The Italian artist Antonio Verrio had arrived in England the previous year and was chosen to paint the ceilings in the new state apartments. Verrio started receiving payments in July 1676 and was occupied on this enormous project until 1684, making it one of his most important commissions; the same year he was appointed Principal Painter to the King, following the death of Peter Lely.

All but three of Verrio’s ceilings at Windsor were destroyed during George IV’s reconstruction of the Castle in the 1820s however this recently discovered double portrait has been identified by Desmond Shawe-Taylor, Surveyor of the Queen’s Pictures, from Wild’s watercolour of 1816 and appears to be the sole survivor from the Queen’s Drawing Room ceiling.¹

The diarist John Evelyn wrote in 1769 ‘*that excellent painter, Verrio, whose works in fresco at the King’s Palace at Windsor will celebrate his name as long as those walls last*’.

Price £35,000

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Fig. 1

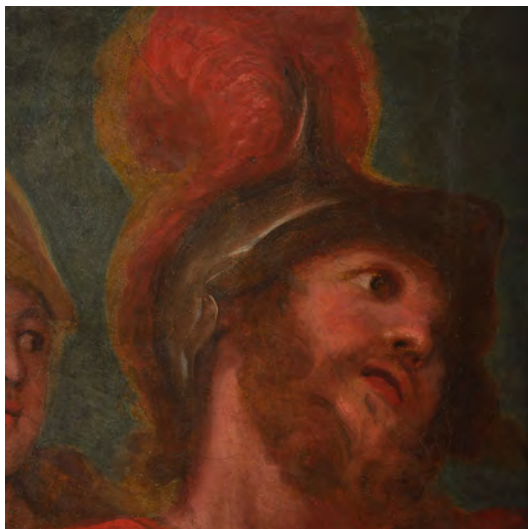


Fig.2



Fig.3