

HARRISON APPRAISALS, LLC

204 East Main Street, Westminster, Maryland 21157 • 410-871-2017 •
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Object 12: Nineteenth Century American Portrait

LOCATION: Dining room.

TITLE: LADY IN ERMINE ROBE.

ARTIST: Attributed to Sarah Miriam Peale (American, 1800-1885).

PERIOD: Circa 1830-1840.

REGION: Baltimore, Maryland.

MEDIUM: Oil on canvas.

SITE SIZE: 36 ½ inches high x 27 ¼ inches wide.

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FRAME SIZE: 44 ¼ inches high x 36 ½ inches wide.

MARKS & SIGNATURES: No marks or signatures observed.

VERSO: Painting could not be removed from the wall; therefore, the verso was not examined.

CONDITION: Craquelure along with old repairs in upper left center and specks of gold paint near frame molding.

FRAME: Period giltwood and gesso frame with scalloped shell and acanthus leaf corners, repainted.

DESCRIPTION: Early 19th century American portrait attributed to Sarah Miriam Peale, the daughter of James Peale (1749-1831) and cousin to Rembrandt Peale (1775-1860). The painting depicts an unidentified woman in a yellow neoclassical dress and wine colored robe with ermine trim. The sitter rests on a red neoclassical sofa and gazes to her right while holding an ivory fan in her lap. Although the work is unsigned, several stylistic elements suggest a connection to Sarah Peale. The subject's high forehead, aquiline nose and full, slightly-upturned mouth—elements also seen in the work of Rembrandt Peale, with whom Sarah studied in 1818 and 1820-1822—were common techniques Sarah Peale used to depict female sitters. While the stylistic elements appearing in this portrait are not conclusive evidence that the work is by Peale, they do present a convincing case for attribution. According to one scholar, Sarah Peale's style: *...reflects the work of her uncle in its clarity of line stressed over brushwork, and the work of her cousin Rembrandt Peale in her talent for rich color and accurate detailing. Sarah's portraits are distinctive in their precisely rendered furs, laces, and textiles. Her typical figure shows an upturned mouth with a hint of a smile. Most of her portraits are single figures, although some are double portraits of a mother and child or of two children. She also executed many pendant portraits of married couples. From the mid-1830s on, her portraits predominately show seated half-length figures, and are a standard size of 30" x 25"...* The provenance conveyed to us during the examination also suggests a possible connection to the artist. Finally, two local fine art experts have attributed this portrait to Peale (see References below).

REFERENCES: Wilbur H. Hunter and John Mahey, Miss Sarah Miriam Peale 1800-1885: Portraits and Still Life (Baltimore: The Peale Museum, 1967) cited at http://marylandartsource.org/artists/detail_000000042.html; private consultations with local experts.

Estimated Replacement Cost: \$15,000.