

JOHN MITCHELL

FINE PAINTINGS



Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646 - 1723)

Portrait of George Clarke

oil on canvas

27 1/2 x 23 1/2 in. (70 x 60 cm.)

with fine carved period frame, c.1700

As the most successful and prosperous court and society painter of his age Godfrey Kneller had an enormous studio output, but the elegance and virtuosity of handling on display in this painting suggest it is by the master's hand. The original wooden stretcher on which this beautifully preserved portrait rests bears two old inscriptions that read *Mr G Clarke*. By cross referencing that name with Kneller paintings in national collections, we have discovered that this sitter is most likely one George Clarke, of All Souls, Oxford, who was an architect, print collector and Tory politician who sat in the English and British House of Commons between 1702 and 1736. There are no fewer than four portraits of him by Kneller and his studio, all of which bear a striking resemblance to this picture, even if ours appears to be the most youthful sitting.

Special mention is to be made of the fine and appropriate English frame with its carved and gilded acorn and leaf pattern, which perfectly enhances the portrait within.