

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



The Hon. Frances Duncombe

Thomas Gainsborough (British, 1727–1788)

Date ca. 1777

Medium Oil on canvas

Dimensions 92 1/4 x 61 1/8 in. (234.3 x 155.3 cm)

Credit Line Henry Clay Frick Bequest

Accession Number 1911.1.61

Currently On View

First Floor, Room 7, Dining Room

Commentary Frances Duncombe was born in 1757, the only daughter of Anthony Duncombe and Frances Bathurst. Gainsborough's portrait of her reveals the artist's admiration for Van Dyck, not only in its elegant proportions, graceful pose, and Arcadian setting, but even in the costume, which recalls fashions of the seventeenth century. It was probably painted while the subject was living with the family of the Earl of Radnor, into which her stepmother married; the Earl commissioned from Gainsborough a number of portraits in the grand style to complement his collection of Old Masters. In 1778 Frances married John Bowater of Woolwich, who suffered various reverses and went to debtors' prison despite the considerable fortune she brought him. Frances died seventeen years after her husband in 1827. Source: *Art in The Frick Collection: Paintings, Sculpture, Decorative Arts*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996.

Collection History Mrs. John Bowater, Old Dalby Hall. Rev. W.G. Sawyer, Old Dalby Hall. Sold in 1871, for about £6. Bought by Henry Graves, London, either for £150 or for £300. Sold by him for £1,050 to the Earl of Chesterfield, who died before the transaction was completed; returned to Graves. Sold by Graves to Lionel de Rothschild, London, 1872, for £3,150. C.J. Wertheimer, London. The picture hung for a time in J. Pierpont Morgan's house, Princes Gate, London, but was never in his possession. Duveen. Frick, 1911. Source: *Paintings in The Frick Collection: American, British, Dutch, Flemish and German*. Volume I. New York: The Frick Collection, 1968.