

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



Sir John Suckling

Anthony van Dyck (Flemish, 1599–1641)

Date ca. 1638

Medium Oil on canvas

Dimensions 85 1/4 x 51 1/4 in. (216.5 x 130.2 cm)

Credit Line Henry Clay Frick Bequest

Accession Number 1918.1.44

Currently On View

First Floor, Room 16, East Gallery

Commentary Sir John Suckling was the son of the secretary of state and the nephew of the lord treasurer of England. After an education on the Continent, he gained a reputation as a spendthrift, lothario, and gambler but also as an accomplished poet and playwright. Suckling may have sat for Van Dyck in 1638, the year his tragedy *Aglaure* was staged. By displaying Shakespeare's First Folio in his portrait, Suckling took a stance in contemporary debates about the merits of Shakespeare and modern (as opposed to classical) poetry. A similar position is expressed with the line from the Roman satirist Persius inscribed on the boulder to the right of Suckling: NE TE QUÆSIVERIS EXTRA (Do not seek outside yourself).

Collection History Lady Southcott. Sir Thomas Lee, Bart., and his descendants, Hartwell House, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. Dr. John Lee, Hartwell. E.D. Lee, Hartwell. Frick, 1918. Source: *Paintings in The Frick Collection: American, British, Dutch, Flemish and German*. Volume I. New York: The Frick Collection, 1968.