Margaret Dovaston (1884-1955)

Checkmate

Signed, lower right: *M. Dovaston*

Oil on canvas

20 x 27 in – 50.8 x 68.6 cm

Frame size

27¾ x 34⅞ in – 70.5 x 88.6 cm

Artist description:

Margaret Dovaston was amongst the first generation of well respected, successful female British artists.

She was brought up with her family in Ealing and attended the Art School there, after which she continued her artistic education at South Kensington School of Art (now the Royal College of Art). Finally, she studied at the Royal Academy Schools under Charles-West Cope (1811-1890), a painter of historical and genre scenes who was obviously a great influence on the young Dovaston. Her draughtsmanship was greatly admired and won her various awards, most notably of which was the British Institution Scholarship.

In 1904 she exhibited her first works at the Royal Academy and was an immediate success, being elected a member of the Royal Society of British Artists in 1905. Dovaston's paintings appeared widely throughout the major British exhibitions for the rest of her life, including the Suffolk Street Galleries of London and the Walker Gallery in Liverpool.

The majority of her subjects are that of genre, often with historic themes. She was an avid collector of 17th, 18th and 19th Century antiques and costume that fuelled her interest and enthusiasm towards her work. She was a fine portraitist and figure painter, paying great attention to detail, accuracy, settings and backgrounds of her paintings to provide an honest study. Dovaston's work belongs firmly amongst other great genre painters such as Frank Moss Bennett (1874-1953) and Heywood Hardy (1843-1933).