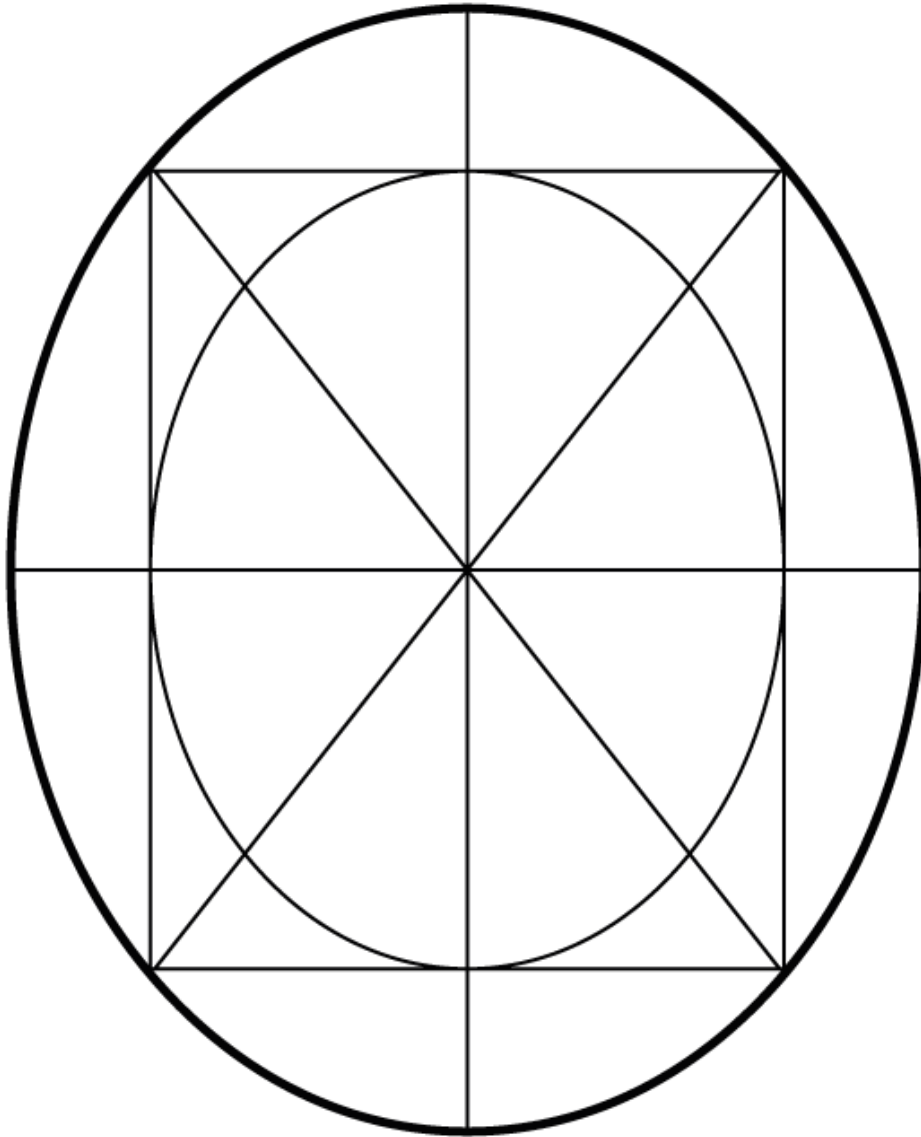


INTRODUCING THE LIMNER COMPANY

JUNE 01, 2023



“Limning is a thing apart from all other Painting or drawing and tendeth not to comon mens use”

- Nicholas Hilliard, A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning, circa 1600

Why ‘Limner’?

The word ‘Limner’ is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as ‘Reflecting the origins of the portrait miniature in illuminated manuscripts’, to ‘limn’ (from the Latin *luminare*) meant to ‘illuminate’ The words ‘limining’, ‘limn’ and ‘limner’ applied to both painting free-standing miniature portraits and manuscript illumination.

A portrait miniature is not defined by its size but by its materials – and these materials were initially the same as illuminated manuscripts – transparent and opaque watercolour, often with gold paint applied to vellum (parchment). For limnings, the vellum would be stuck to ‘pasteboard’ - or card - of which the easiest available was playing cards. Later in the 18th century, the definition included watercolour and bodycolour using small ivory discs as support.

Although the Italian word ‘miniatura’ was in use in the 16th century, ‘limning’ was the word chosen by Nicholas Hilliard (c.1547-1619) and his contemporaries to describe a new type of portrait. Portable, exquisite, expensive and often secretive, the limner was to be a key player in relationships – both personal and political – over the next five hundred years.

Who are we?

EMMA

After completing a Master’s degree in Victorian Art and Architecture, Emma Rutherford began her career working on the national collection of portrait miniatures at the Victoria and Albert Museum. A self-confessed history nerd, Emma is passionate about portrait miniatures as their tangible nature often feels like a secret portal into the past. Held in the hand, usually painted from life and often set into incredible contemporary cases, portrait miniatures hold a fascination for Emma that she has turned into a career.

Emma has been involved with some of the most important miniature discoveries of the last thirty years, including a [lost portrait of Charles Dickens](#), the first signed [portrait by Mary Queen of Scots's artist Jean Decourt](#), and the [portrait of Ethiopian Zaga Christ by Giovanna Garzoni](#).

Emma’s consultancy spans working for institutions such as [The National Portrait Gallery](#) and [National Trust](#), curating exhibitions, lecturing and researching within the private and public sector. Her research is widely published and she has regularly spoken on podcasts and appeared on television.

REBECCA

Rebecca Ingram has been working closely with Emma since 2018, running Emma’s Instagram and website. She first came across portrait miniatures during her undergraduate degree in art history, for which she specialised in early modern female portraiture. But it was not until she met Emma in her capacity as portrait miniatures consultant at Philip Mould & Co. that Rebecca developed a great an interest in miniatures.

Rebecca now works with The Limner Company as a freelance researcher and digital manager.

ALAN

Our conservation consultant, Alan Derbyshire, was formerly Head of Paper, Books and Paintings conservation at the Victoria and Albert Museum, where he worked for 37 years.

As a specialist in the conservation of portrait miniatures and works of art on paper, he works for various dealers, private collectors and institutions around the world.

In 2018, Alan was awarded the Plowden Medal for significant contribution to the advancement of the conservation profession

and in particular, to the field of paper conservation and the conservation of portrait miniatures.

What we do

We are a group of specialists who work together researching and selling antique portrait miniatures. Our expertise also includes conservation and framing. Find out about the services we offer [here](#).

Sign-up to our e-newsletter below to receive regular miniatures news, and follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) for more insights.