

THE LIMNER COMPANY



ENGLISH SCHOOL (17TH CENTURY)

Portrait of a Gentleman, wearing gilt-edged armour and lace jabot, his blond hair worn long

Circa: circa 1655

circa 1655

Oil on copper

Oval, 63mm (2 1/2 in) high

Gilt metal frame with scroll hanger (unglazed)

The current portrait is rare in depictions of men in armour of the English Civil War period in combining the scale and format of a traditional watercolour on vellum portrait miniature with the technique of oil paint on a small scale. The bright blue background is archaic for this period, being more closely associated with Elizabethan portrait miniatures, or limnings, of the later 16th century.

The artist may have known of the work of John Hoskins (?1590-1664) or John Hoskins Jr. (?1617-1703), father and son whose work seems to overlap from the late 1640s. They seemed to continue to favour a vivid blue background, brighter and lighter than the traditional azurite (or occasional lapis lazuli) of the century before. Two miniatures recently sold at Sotheby's in London shared this characteristic.[1]

The sitter portrayed here was possibly too young to have fought in the English Civil Wars, which raged between 1642 and 1651. One consequence of these was the creation of a first national standing army, but it is not likely that this young man was in their ranks. His expensive lace jabot and glossy, groomed hair suggest that he was more likely hoping to re-join the court when Charles II returned from exile.

[1] See Sotheby's, London, Portrait of Sir Thomas Peyton, 2nd Bt. (1613-1684), 5 December 2019, lot 213 and Sotheby's, London, Portrait of a gentleman wearing armour, circa 1650, 6 December 2018, lot

