# THE LIMNER COMPANY



**JOHN SMART (1742 - 1811)**

**Portrait miniature of a Gentleman, traditionally identified as Consul Murray, wearing a green coat, embroidered floral waistcoat and a white stock, with a pink powdered wig**

Circa: 1772

1772

Watercolour on ivory

Ivory license number: SUNS6LR6

Signed and dated ‘1772’

Gold frame set with diamonds arranged in a bow shape on top, with a pin set into the back, to make it a brooch

Oval, 1 ¼ in (31mm) high

Traditionally, the sitter of this portrait has been identified as Consul Charles Murray, later Lord Kenyons. Murray was based in Madeira between 1771 and 1802. If he is indeed the sitter of the portrait, this is one of the only depictions of him known to date. The only other lasting evidence of his life can be found in correspondence, and in the town in which he was a consul, Funchal, Madeira. Here, Murray had built a fountain for pilgrims on their way to Our Lady of Monte, and had transformed the nearby Monte Palace into a ‘Pleasure Estate’.

A sketch by John Smart, exhibited at Philip Mould & Company in 2014, bears a striking resemblance to this miniature[1], and may have been the initial sketch for it. Particular details, such as the wash of the hair and the light sketches of the embroidery on his waistcoat point to the two being related. If this is so, the present miniature would be the lost 1772 portrait that was referred to in the 2014 exhibition.

Smart was known to use sketches as preparations for his miniatures, and drawing was a skill that he

had learnt in William Shipley's drawing school, from 1755. Following his attendance of Shipley's school, Smart was able to establish himself as a successful miniaturist in London. Later in his career, in 1784, Smart would travel to India with the permission of the East India Company. Here, he would continue to paint portraits, including one of the Nawab of Arcot. The present miniature features details that separate smart as a brilliant artist. His hair has already been mentioned, and has a subtle pink tone. Smart's father was a peruke maker, and it has been suggested that this is where his attention to detail for this particular element of his miniatures came from. Smart was also capable of bringing brilliant colour into his miniatures, including in the delicate embroidery detail here, which matches Murray's wonderful green coat.

[1] E. Rutherford et. al, John Smart (1741-1811): A Genius Magnified, Philip Mould & Company, 2014, cat. no. 43, p.122.