THE LIMNER COMPANY



SAMUEL COOPER (1607/8 - 1672)

Portrait miniature of a Gentleman facing left, wearing breastplate with gilt studs and white lawn collar, long brown curling hair and moustache, column and sky background

Circa: Dated 1645

Dated 1645

Watercolour and bodycolour on parchment

Signed with initials and dated ‘S.C. / 1645’

Oval, 635 mm (2 $^{1}/_{2}$ inches) high

Samuel Cooper was born in London and was raised alongside his brother Alexander by their uncle John Hoskins (1589-1664). Hoskins was an established miniature painter and trained the two brothers in the art of limning until around 1641/2 when Samuel set up independently in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden.

Operating during the Civil War and Commonwealth Period meant that Cooper had a range of Patrons from Parliamentarians and Oliver Cromwell to Royalists alike. Following the Restoration in 1660, King Charles II, who had heard of Cooper’s talent from exile, was quick to appoint him as his official limner. A superbly talented miniaturist, on Cooper’s death, the artist Charles Beale (1632-1705) wrote that he had been ‘the most famous limner in the word for a face’.

The identity of the sitter remains anonymous and the background provides no further evidence for identification. That being said, this is a fine example, particularly in the execution of the soldier’s face, of Cooper’s talent during the First English Civil War.