



FRANÇOIS DUMONT (1751 - 1831)

Portrait of Pierre Simon Benjamin Duvivier (1730-1819), engraver, making a medallion

Circa: Dated 1799

Dated 1799

Watercolour on ivory

Signed and dated 'Dumont / f. l'an 8.' And inscribed on the reverse 'P.S.B. Duvivier peint par Franc. Dumont en 1799'

Rectangular, 84 x 84 mm (3 1/4 x 3 1/4 inches)

Pierre Simon Benjamin Duvivier came from a large family of engravers from Liege, now Belgium and was widely known for his engravings of medals commemorating the lives of Kings Louis XV and Louis XVI. Having moved to Paris, Duvivier soon gained popularity. In 1762 he was appointed official engraver to Louis XV and, on the ascension of Louis XVI, in 1774 he became Engraver-General of the Paris Mint. Dumont suitably portrays Duvivier holding in one hand a wax impression taken from a steel mould (also depicted in front of him in the composition) and in the other, a graving tool.

François Dumont was one of the greatest miniature painters working in France during the reigns of Louis XVI and Louis XVIII. Following the death of his parents, Dumont had to provide for his five brothers and sisters. After four years working and studying in Rome, he returned to Paris and in 1788 was accepted as an Academician and granted an apartment in the Louvre.

For the greater part of his life, he lived and worked in Paris, often alongside his brother Tony Dumont who was also a miniature painter. Both brothers signed with their surname only and there often are unfortunate issues with attribution. However, we know this work to be of François' hand due to its registration in the artist's fee book during the year VIII of the French Revolutionary calendar. It could be

presumed that Dumont encountered Duvivier in Louis XVI's court and held a relationship following the King's execution in 1793.

Exhibitions

Paris, Salon, 1800, no. 135 (part);

Geneva, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Chefs-d'œuvre de la miniature et de la gouache, 1956, no. 136;

Zurich, Haus am Rechberg, 1957-58;

Zurich, Haus am Rechberg, 1961.

Literature:

Listed in the artist's fee book for the year VIII of the French Revolutionary calendar, p. 29 as 'Le C. [itoyen] Duvivier Graveur de medailles Payé';

B. Hofstetter, Le miniaturiste François Dumont (1751-1831). Catalogue raisonné. Thèse de doctorat n histoire de l'art, Paris, 1994, I, p. 52, II, pp. 471, 494;

N. Lemoine-Bouchard, Les peintres en miniature actifs en France 1650-1850, Paris 2008, p. 214 ;

B. Hofstetter, Portraitminiaturen. Hundert Bildnisse aus der Sammlung JRKV, Potsdam, 2018, p. 178.