THE LIMNER COMPANY



ENGLISH SCHOOL (18th century)

A Nobleman, wearing gilt-edged steel armour, white jabot and red cloak, powdered full wig

Circa: Circa 1720

Circa 1720

Oil on copper

Ormolu mount

Oval, 78 mm (3 $^{1}/_{8}$ inches) high

This portrait of a young Nobleman, dressed for battle, styles itself in the manner of Nicolas de Largillière (1656-1746), popular at the French court. Painted using lively brushstrokes, the image shows the young man prepped for battle, wearing armour and a dramatic red sash. In fact, he may have just returned from fighting in The War of the Quadruple Alliance. This was fought from 1718 to 1720 by Spain, and the Quadruple Alliance, a coalition between Britain, France, Austria, and the Dutch Republic. Caused by Spanish attempts to recover territories in Italy ceded in the 1713 Peace of Utrecht, most of the fighting took place in Sicily and Spain, with minor engagements in North America and Northern Europe. Spain also supported the Jacobite rising of 1719 in Scotland in an effort to divert British naval resources. The sitter's large wig and fine armour suggest he was from the nobility.

Small oil portraits such as this example were commissioned from artists who worked in large scale oils or the assistants in their studios. Very few names can be attributed to these works, and in fact this example could just as easily have been painted by a French or Dutch artist while the sitter was away on military duty, as by an English artist on his return home. Although not strictly defined as a portrait miniature, these small oils were nevertheless portable works of art which functioned in a similar way.