THE LIMNER COMPANY



JEAN BAPTISTE SINGRY (1782 - 1824)

Portrait of a Lady, probably the artist's wife, Catherine-Émélie (nèe) Mailfer, wearing white satin dress with gold cord belt, blue Kashmir stole with embroidered edging and a gold comb in her hair

Circa: Dated 1818

Dated 1818

Watercolour on ivory

Ivory registration number: KSHZRHDP

Original, rectangular ormolu frame with stamped outer border

Signed and dated 'Singry/ 1818'

Oval, 115 mm (4 $^{1}/_{2}$ inches) high

When the current owner showed the present work to a descendent of the artist (Madame Bouleau-Rabaud, then at the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts), she confirmed the portrait to be of Singry's wife, Catherine-Émélie Mailfer, whom he had married in 1807.

Jean-Baptiste Singry was a son of the painter Nicolas Singry. In his youth he went to Paris where he became a student of Vincent and Jean-Baptiste Isabey, probably the most revered miniaturist working in this period. From the outset, Singry seems to have found his niche in painting miniatures (although he also exhibited a number of lithographs). He made his Salon debut in 1806 with a self-portrait. He exhibited several miniatures in 1808 and (among others) the portrait of actress Mlle Alexandrine St. Aubin as "Cinderella" in 1810.

Singry rapidly formed a clientele amongst artists and theatre people. In 1812 he exhibited the portraits of Isabey and Mlle Pauline as well as his self-portrait; in 1817 - that of Michelot of the Theatre Francais. He exhibited at the Salon until the year of his death in 1824.

Schidlof writes, 'few French miniaturists of his period can be compared to Singry. His works, splendid in drawing and execution, have such a truth and force of expression that in some he even surpasses his master Isabey'.[1]

Very few of his portrait miniatures are represented in British collections, although there is one example in the Victoria and Albert Museum and two in the Wallace Collection.[2] In 2015, The Nationalmuseum in Sweden acquired the portrait of the actor Antoine Michaut from Sotheby's (22,500 EUR), painted in 1815.[3]

[1] Léo R. Schidlof, The Miniature in Europe in the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries (Four volumes), Graz, 1964, p.758.

[2] Reynolds, G., Wallace Collection Catalogue of Miniatures, London: The Trustees of the Wallace Collection, 1980, pp. 263-264, cat. no. 248 and 249.

[3] Link to press release: https://www.mynewsdesk.com/nationalmuseum/pressreleases/new-acquisition-miniature-painting-by-jean-baptiste-singry-1189300

Literature:

Christie's Review of the Year 1961-62, London and Bradford, n.d., illustrated p. 63.