THE LIMNER COMPANY



SOUTHERN GERMAN SCHOOL, CIRCA 1670

A lady, probably a bride, wearing black gown with white underdress, lace sleeves and lace-edged collar, an elaborate gold jewel in the shape of a ribbon set with a large ruby hangs from a gold collar at her neck; she also wears a lace 'calotte' or bonnet made from lace

Circa: Circa 1670

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Oval, 84 m (3.3 inches) high

Oil on copper

Gilt-metal frame

This seems to be a unique depiction of a young woman, most likely a bride, wearing a lace version of the 'flinderhaube' or gold spangled bonnet worn by women of the patriciate or nobility. Traditionally, these hoods or bonnets came from the countless "Flinderlein" (little tassels) hung on wire-reinforced pins in the silk weave. When worn, they hit each other and clinked, marking their owners not only visually but also acoustically as members of the upper class.

The bonnet worn by the present sitter would have been extremely expensive, made from lace and likely supported by wires in the same way that a 'rabato' ruff might have been. The sitter here may be related to the woman depicted in an oil portrait from a similar date, as she also wears both a gold 'flinderhaube' and bow-shaped jewel. This small oil portrait also shows the sitter wearing a jewel – a huge central ruby flanked by other precious stones and suspended from a gold and diamond collar. Again, this denotes the status of the sitter as a member of the noble classes.

While painting on vellum was not as popular as in England for small, portable portraits, German artists were more likely to paint a small oil on copper portrait for their patrons. The present work may be a reduced version of a larger oil painted to commemorate the sitter's marriage.