

# THE LIMNER COMPANY



**RICHARD COSWAY (1742 - 1821)**

## **Portrait miniature of a Child with a dog**

Circa: Circa 1790-1800

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8.3 x 0 cm (3 1/4 x 0 inches)

Watercolour on ivory

Ivory registration no: 44K1DCSM

Richard Cosway is known to have included dogs in numerous miniatures, often shown as a loving companion alongside his sitters. Here, the addition of the pet makes this portrait a sweet and intimate record of the relationship between owner and dog. Possibly a spaniel, the dog does not look at the viewer as the child does, but instead is turned towards her, visibly showing affection. In this period dogs were kept both for practical reasons, such as hunting, but were increasingly kept as is more common today, as pets.

In fact, this miniature bears resemblance to a few of the miniatures that were being painted by Cosway in the last decades of the 18th century. For example, another miniature of Lady Mary Osbourne, c.1800, has the same pillared background, coloured with similar pale blue and white shades. The tender depiction, the young girl's kind smile, and gaze directly towards the viewer, reminds us that this miniature was intended to capture a moment from the sitter's childhood. Because children were not dressed in a particularly gendered style in this period, it has not been possible to ascertain whether the sitter is a young girl or young boy.

Richard Cosway's career began at a particularly young age, when he was sent to London to join the school run by William Shipley. Here, he learned to paint with other young men, including Ozias Humphry

(1742-1810). Throughout his career, he would become a fashionable and popular portraitist, in both large-scale oils and miniatures. In fact, for some time, he was appointed miniaturist to the Prince of Wales. He exhibited at the Society of Artists (1760), the Free Society of Artists, and The Royal Academy (1770-1806). Many of his paintings can be found in important collections in Britain, including the Royal Collection, Fitzwilliam Collection, and the V & A.