THE LIMNER COMPANY



The Artist Signing ‘V’, probably FRANÇOIS-XAVIER VISPRÉ

Portrait miniature of a Lady, almost profile to the left, wearing pink dress, with white underslip, her hair lightly powdered

Circa: Circa 1777

Circa 1777

Oval, 3.6 cm (1 $^{3}/_{8}$ inches)

Watercolour on ivory

Ivory registration number: 7W8TKXW5

Associated gilt-metal frame with engraved border

Signed with a ‘V’

This delicate portrait, signed with a single ‘V’, may be by the artist Vispré, who was born in Voisey, but moved to England in the 1750s. He is recorded as working in Bristol and London, exhibiting at the Society of Artists between 1760 and 1783 from Soho addresses. Painted in the mid to late 1770s, the current portrait shows the typical characteristics of the small number signed ‘V’, including the subtle colouration and soft brush strokes. It is clear that the artist of this miniature was influenced by miniaturists working in London at this point in time – his attention to detail recalls the work of John Smart, but his tendency to show his sitters almost always in part profile perhaps owes more to the work of George Engleheart.

Vispré worked in other media, including pastel, oil and mezzotint. He was also friends with the sculptor Louis-Francois Roubiliac (a director of the Society of Artists, where John Smart also exhibited). He also travelled to Dublin, exhibiting there in 1777 around the year the present work was painted. Vispré’s interests extended to wine making, where, in Bath, he published his Dissertation on the growth of wine in England (1786). He also worked in Cambridge and Sheffield, his advertisement in the newspaper stating that ‘No pay is expected if likenesses are not approved of.’