

THE LIMNER COMPANY



HORACE HONE (1754 - 1825)

Portrait of a lady, wearing a blue dress, pearl necklace, her natural hair worn up

Circa: Dated 1777

Watercolour on ivory; signed with initials 'HH' and dated 1777

Silver frame set with paste, bow surmount also set with paste

Oval, 41mm. (1 3/5 in.) high.

As his son, Horace Hone had been trained by the revered artist Nathaniel Hone the Elder (1718-1784). He had been born in London, though his father was Irish, and had moved to England before beginning his career in painting. It can be assumed that Horace was able to enter the Royal academy in schools not only because of his father's connections to the academy (Nathaniel had been a founding member), but also due to his skill in painting in the miniature form. He exhibited regularly for a period of fifty years between 1772 and 1822, having become an academician in 1779, shortly after the present miniature was painted.

The sitter of the present portrait is unidentified. Her hairstyle is typical of the late 1770s, a period in which the large, top-heavy hair styles put into vogue by Marie Antoinette had arrived in England. Though it is piled in a large volume on top of her head, it remains straight, or at the most wavy, in style and is not curled or decorated particularly heavily. Such was the common fashion in England, where styles tended to remain slightly less extravagant than their French counterparts. Her dress is simple, in comparison to her hair, which was again a fashion common in this decade, as more informal costume with lighter fabrics became more popular.