THE LIMNER COMPANY



The Artist Signing ‘V’, probably FRANÇOIS-XAVIER VISPRÉ (1725 - 1792)

Portrait miniature of a Lady, wearing a purple dress

Watercolour on ivory (licence 7TMNAKTE)

Oval, 34mm. (1 1/3 in.) high

Gold frame, the reverse decorated with a floral wreath and a shield bearing the monogram ‘ESS’

This portrait, with its delicate pastel tonality, sits within the oeuvre of the artist signing ‘V’, presumed to be Francois-Xavier Vispré. Active at the end of the eighteenth century, he had been born in Voisey, moving to England in the 1750s. he enjoyed a successful career here, exhibiting at the Society of Artists, and working not only in London, but also Dublin, Cambridge, and Sheffield. Vispré was interested in more than just painting miniatures and wrote a dissertation on the growth of Wine in England in 1786.

It is clear that the Vispré was influenced by others working in England at the same time, including John Smart and George Engleheart. However, his work is characterised by the way in which he paints large, dark eyes, which contrast with the lighter colours used within the rest of the portrait. Both this miniature, and the other example by the artist which has been offered previously by The Limner Company, show sitters with a downward gaze, presenting them almost as if they are too shy to look at the viewer.

Exhibitions

Dublin, 2009, The Irish Architectural Archives