THE LIMNER COMPANY



ENGLISH SCHOOL (17th century)

Portrait of a Gentleman, wearing a brown coat and white indoor cap

5.8 x 0 cm (2 $^{1}/_{4}$ x 0 inches)

Turned wood frame

This unidentified gentleman appears to be wearing an indoor cap, making it a rare depiction from the period of someone in such informal wear. Though in the beginning of the seventeenth century such caps would be decorated with elaborate floral embroidery, as the century progressed these became simpler. Therefore, it would make sense for the diamond design that can be seen here to be from this later period. Our sitter also wears a small, fine, lawn collar and simple brown jacket. The feeling of the depiction is quite informal in general and seems to be somewhat inspired by the portraits that Rembrandt was producing in this period.

The medium in which this portrait has been created is also rather rare. Many miniatures from the period were painted on vellum using watercolour, but here oil has been used instead. This was a common paint for use on metals, such as copper, but not vellum. As a result of this technique, the miniature looks quite literally like a small oil painting, and bears signs of great skill to be able to use this thicker medium on a small scale. Whereas copper would have allowed for this to move smoothly across the surface, vellum would have been rougher, making it much more difficult to manipulate the paint.

Although we have no artist for this portrait, the sensitivity and care with which the face of this gentleman is depicted suggests an artist of some experience.