

THE LIMNER COMPANY



Attributed to FRANCISZEK SMIADECKI (17th century -)

A pair of portraits of Lady and Gentleman, possibly mother and son, she in a low cut blue dress with pearls, he with a white lace collar and black coat,

Circa: Circa 1650

Circa 1650

3.8 cm (1 ½ inches)

Oil on copper

Later silver frames with scroll cresting

This pair of portraits, by the same artist, show a man and woman differing in age – very possibly a mother and her son. This was not an unusual pairing, and can be seen in joint portraits such as the earlier double portrait of Mary Neville, Lady Dacre and her son, Gregory Fiennes, 10th Baron Dacre by Hans Eworth of 1559 [NPG 6855]. Small oil portraits such as these were often commissioned alongside large oil portraits from artist's studios, or from artists only working on this scale, such as Smiadecki. A number of oil miniatures share the same characteristics – including contrasting lighting, with dark shadows under the eyes of the sitters – painted in England in the mid seventeenth century and occasionally signed with the initials 'FS'.

Very little is known about Smiadecki, who was born in either Poland or Russia, and is believed to have been the son of a serf of the Orlov family (who were members of the Russian nobility). He is thought to have been tutored by Alexander Cooper in Sweden. The work of Smiadecki has only really gained the deserved recognition in the last fifty years, and like many other portrait miniaturists working in oils, did not always sign his work, making the possibility for study limited. He appears to have attracted royal patronage, as small, independent oils of Charles II exist by him.¹

¹ Smiadecki painted several portraits of Charles II including a large work on copper sold through Christies in 1984 depicting the king half-length facing left with the Garter star half visible on his shoulder and another, previously in the Berger Collection (sold Christie's, 21st October 1997, lot 1).