THE LIMNER COMPANY



SUSANNAH-PENELOPE ROSSE (c.1655 - 1700)

Portrait miniature of Anne (née Palmer/FitzRoy,) Lennard, Countess of Sussex (1661-1721/1722), wearing a white silk dress, ermine trimmed and gold embroidered blue robe, and pearl drop earrings

Circa: Circa 1685

Circa 1685

3.2 cm (1 $^{1}/_{4}$ inches)

Watercolour on vellum

Original gilt brass clasp frame, link and loop suspension

Engraved verso with crowned cursive initials

Previously believed to depict Mary of Modena, Beatrice d'Este, Duchess of York and Queen of England, a more likely sitter is Anne (née Palmer/FitzRoy,) Lennard, Countess of Sussex (1661-1721/1722). Formerly Lady Anne FitzRoy. Anne was the eldest daughter of Barbara Villiers, 1st Duchess of Cleveland (1640-1709), mistress to King Charles II. In 1674, at the age of 13, Anne married Thomas Lennard, 15th Baron Dacre, who was subsequently created Earl of Sussex. Anne's father, Charles II, paid for both the couple's wedding and their dowry.

Daughter of celebrated miniature painter Richard Gibson and wife of the court jeweller Michael Rosse, Susannah-Penelope Rosse had access to the members of the Restoration Court. A talented miniaturist or limner, she did not need to work for a living, but produced portraits of family and friends that serve as an intimate record of her life.

Born in 1652, Rosse grew up in London and became close friends with her neighbour, the acclaimed miniaturist Samuel Cooper. Throughout her career Rosse copied many of Cooper's works, studying his

technique to improve her painterly skill. She became well known for her copies of Cooper's work and was praised by George Vertue; 'as by these may bee seen; nobody ever copy'd him better'.[1] So successful were these copies, that misattributions of Rosse's work have often been credited to the hand of Cooper. Misattributions of this kind have occurred in numerous works by Rosse, including several now within the Victoria & Albert Museum collection, a testament to her accomplished technique and probably also her gender.

[1] Vertue I, p.116