THE LIMNER COMPANY



JEAN ANDRÉ ROUQUET (1701 - 1758)

Portrait enamel of a Gentleman, called Samuel Howard, wearing blue velvet coat and embroidered yellow waistcoat, powdered bag wig

Circa: Circa 1740

Circa 1740

4.3 cm (1 $^{3}/_{4}$ inches)

Gold frame

The sitter in this portrait has not been identified but it is certainly by the Swiss enameller Jean André Rouquet, and not by Christian Friedrich Zincke as previously thought. Rouquet was a fascinating artist - talented, intelligent and well-connected, but mentally unstable (he eventually died in incarceration).

Born in Geneva, Rouquet moved to London aged 21, where he would spend around 30 years of his working life. He was a fierce advocate for the works of William Hogarth, publishing explanations of his works in French to foster a greater appreciation for his talent outside of England.

Aside from his miniatures, Rouquet is best known for a book he published in 1755 called *L'État des Arts en Angleterre*. Diderot quoted from Rouquet's book directly in his 1751-1772 *Encyclopédie* under the entry for enamel, specifically the passage in which Rouquet argues that the medium is best suited for works on a miniature scale. The present work displays the naturalism and soft rendering of fabrics which are characteristic of Rouquet's work in enamel paint – unlike some of the harder drawing found in Zincke's work. His sitters appear to vary from wealthy merchants to nobility and like Hogarth he rarely flattered his patrons.

After exhibiting five enamels at the Académie in 1753 Rouquet was given an apartment in the Louvre

and was made a member of the Académie Royale de la Peinture et de la Sculpture in 1754. However, in 1758, reports of his dangerous and manic behaviour from his fellow artists lodging at the Louvre resulted in his incarceration in the Charenton, where he died a few months later.