THE LIMNER COMPANY



SUSANNAH-PENELOPE ROSSE (née GIBSON) (c.1655 - 1700)

Portrait of "Miss Kirke", later Countess of Oxford (d. 1719)

15.4 x 11.6 cm (6 x 4 $^{5}/_{8}$ inches)

Black chalks on paper prepared with a pink wash

The daughter of Richard Gibson (c.1605-1690), Susannah-Penelope Rosse was a successful miniaturist in her own right, demonstrated here in this delicate portrait. She is assumed to have spent most of her life in London, even while her parents moved to The Hague to follow Princess Mary in her marriage to William of Orange. Rosse is known for a selection of works within a notebook in the Victoria and Albert Museum, all of which were originally attributed to Samuel Cooper. Re-attributions to Rosse are not an uncommon occurrence, in fact the present miniature had also previously been attributed to Cooper, but this was changed by Daphne Foskett in 1974 (D. Foskett, London, 1974, Samuel Cooper, 1609-1672, p.85).

The sitter, 'Miss Kirk', has traditionally been identified as Diana Kirk, who would later marry Aubrey de Vere, 20th Earl of Oxford (1627-1703) and become the Countess of Oxford. Other portraits of Diana exist, including one by Lely (Yale Center for British Art, B1981.25.756). However, if this is indeed the sitter in the present portrait, she is pictured here at a much younger age, before becoming a countess. The present portrait relates to a more complete version, again, attributed to Cooper, but sold as by Rosse in 1983 (Christie's, 13th December 1983, lot 85).