THE LIMNER COMPANY



Circle of JEAN ANDRE ROUQUET (Swiss, 1701-1758)

Portrait miniature of a Gentleman, wearing a crimson cloak, beige waistcoat, white stock and cravat, and a full-bottomed wig

Circa: circa 1720-1730

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Watercolour on ivory (license 64SQ1E55)

Oval, 38mm (1 1/2in) high

Clearly influenced by the work of Swiss artist Jean Andre Rouquet, the present work is possibly by the hand of a student or member of the artist's circle. It differs from the work of Rouquet in that this artist depends less on a stippling technique, instead using small strokes of paint to create texture in the skin of the sitter, and the background of the portrait. However, the handling of facial features, especially the eyes and lips of the gentleman, show that whoever was painting this must have been aware of Rouquet's work.

This unidentified gentleman wears a full-bottomed wig, a name that refers to the fact that the hair was left down, rather than styled en queue, or as a bag wig. It is possible to see how the artist has built up colour in the gentleman's cloak, which falls, rather informally, off of his right shoulder in the foreground of the portrait. Further informality has been added with the visibility of the bottom of the sitter's cravat, which pokes out just above the closure of his cloak and waistcoat. In many other portraits this would be shown tucked in, or at least with a finer, closed, finish on the end. Both of these features suggest that this portrait was not intended to be gifted formally but was instead painted for someone close to the sitter.