

THE LIMNER COMPANY



PIERRE ADOLPHE HALL (1739 - 1793)

Portrait miniature of a Lady, standing in a wooded landscape, wearing a white dress with a tiered lace collar and yellow bodice, decorated with bright blue ribbons, flowers in her hair and at her corsage

Circa: circa 1770

circa 1770

Watercolour on ivory (licence 6M66NJFZ)

Circular, 68 mm (2 ⁵/₈ in) diam.

Ormolu frame with engraved border.

Pierre Adolphe Hall was born in Sweden but moved to Germany to study painting in Berlin in 1756, in Hamburg in 1758, and then in Stockholm from 1760 to 1766. By 1769 he was in Paris, where he became an associate of the Academy. His work is typified by his imaginative use of colour and fluid brushwork. He soon gained a following for his work on ivory and enamel. A critic, writing on Hall's miniatures on the occasion of the Paris Salon of 1777, stated: "Mr Hall attracted the attention of all those who, in enamel and miniature painting, look for the gracefulness in the drawing, the immediacy of the brush and this subtlety of the brushwork, which, while miniaturising the model, bestow new appeal on it".

The present work, painted circa 1770, would have been an early work during Hall's settlement in France. Despite his Swedish origins, Hall's style and subject matter characterised French taste so completely that he is considered one of the greatest French miniaturists of the eighteenth century. This work, painted in gouache, encapsulates the exciting appeal of Hall's rapid brushwork and vivid colour. Although he excelled at painting women in bucolic settings wearing country-style bodices adorned with fresh flowers, he also painted complex and sincere portraits of some of the most celebrated men of the period, such as the portrait of fellow artist Dominique Vivant Denon (1747-1825).[1] In 2023, the Nationalmuseum in Sweden hosted an exhibition of Hall's work entitled 'The Mysterious Peter Adolf Hall', which included some 70 portrait miniatures from the museum's collection, both by Hall himself and followers who were 'heavily influenced by his mastery of free style'.

[1] Sold Christie's, Paris, 23 June 2010, lot 65.

Exhibitions

'Fem Stora Gustavianer' ('Five Great Gustavians') exhibition at the National Museum in Stockholm, Sweden, 3 October – 15 November 1943, no. 218.