THE LIMNER COMPANY



JOHN SMART (1741 - 1811)

Portrait miniature of a Gentleman, traditionally identified as Mr. Ridley, wearing a blue jacket, with lace shirt and white waistcoat embroidered with flowers and gold thread

Circa: circa 1770s

circa 1770s

Watercolour on ivory (licence GLN1QX3N)

Oval, 45mm (1 ¾ in.) high

Gilt-metal frame with blue glass reverse

Although it was Smart's practice to sign and date every miniature, this may have been an unfinished work, dating to the later 1770s. Other alternatives may be that this was a secondary version or unwanted by the client. Intriguingly, there is an (unphotographed) sketch held by Norfolk Museums Service by Smart of a 'Mr. Ridley' which may be the basis for this miniature. There was also an engraver named William Ridley (1764-1838) working in India at the same time as John Smart – although the sitter would be too old in the late 1770s to be the same person, they may have been related.

The detailed gold thread and delicate floral embroidery on the sitter's waistcoat are typical of Smart's painstaking attention to detail and ability to convey texture in watercolour.

Exhibitions

Philip Mould, London 'John Smart; A Genius Magnified', Emma Rutherford; Lawrence Hendra; Lindsay Stainton; Haydn Williams, 2014, no. 9

Literature:

Probably Foskett, 1964, p.73

Philip Mould & Co., London 'John Smart; A Genius Magnified', Emma Rutherford; Lawrence Hendra;

Lindsay Stainton; Haydn Williams, 2014, pp.30-31