THE LIMNER COMPANY



GEORGE ENGLEHEART (1750 - 1829)

A portrait miniature of a Lady, possibly Anne Torrence or Torrens (b.1747), wearing blue-bordered white dress, her light brown hair curled and decorated with blue ribbons

Circa: Circa 1772

Watercolour on ivory (licence SND3P5SK)

Gold bracelet clasp frame with pierced border and later hanging loop

Oval, 36mm (2.5in) high

This early miniature by Engleheart, dating to the early 1770s, shows him working in the first stage of his career. Here, he was following his contemporaries in painting miniatures worn as jewellery – using careful detail and bright colours which eventually gave way to a more sombre palette. Likely painted around the time of her marriage, Anne Torrence would have been in London for her portrait – even at this early point – and still only in his twenties – Engleheart was struggling to find the time to paint all of the commissions he was gaining.

As Engleheart's career developed, so did his style, making the present portrait unique in its depiction of Miss Torrens. Many of the women painted by Engleheart in later years are seen with powdered hair and large, exaggerated fichus and collars. In its simplicity, this portrait of Anne is particularly beautiful and captures the essence of a young lady, likely just before or as she was getting married.

Aside from the name inscribed on a label on the reverse of this miniature's frame, little is known about the identity of the young lady depicted here. She bears a resemblance to the Mrs Acheson Ffrench painted by Henry Pelham in 1779 and exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery in 1969 [1], but this Mrs Ffrench was a Miss Miller before she was married.

[1] Exhibited in the 'Irish Portraits' exhibition, 1969, no. 132.