

THE LIMNER COMPANY



RICHARD COSWAY (1742 - 1821)

A Gentleman, with the initials 'CC', wearing blue coat with brass buttons, white waistcoat and tied stock, his hair powdered

Circa: circa 1790

circa 1790

Watercolour on ivory

original gold frame with pearl border

oval, 70 x 0 cm (27 1/2 x 0 inches)

This strong and dynamic portrait, housed in the original pearl-bordered frame, is typical of Cosway's portraits of the early 1790s. At this date, Cosway alighted on a particular pose which gave his sitters a sense of movement, where the subject has their eyes averted, the light blue sky background suggesting airy space. The resultant success of this captivating and vibrant portrait also reflects Cosway's wide range of influences through his own collecting and artistic connections. Other examples of this can be seen in the art museum in Cincinnati (a Mr C Bradshaw, circa 1790, MMH5N4), portraits of George, Prince of Wales and indeed in his own self portrait drawing, now in the National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG 304). The present work is particularly well preserved by the red leather travelling case, which has protected it from the light.

The present miniature was painted at the height of Cosway's fame, when he lived for many years in Schomberg House in Pall Mall close to Carlton House, and not far from the court at St James's. His relationship with his most important patron, George, Prince of Wales was, in many ways, the gateway to Cosway's successful career as artist and ambitions as courtier. He was also the artist central to the prince's relationship with Maria Fitzherbert, whom he had secretly (and illegally) married in 1785.

Cosway's dominance of the portrait miniature market at this date is also evident through his patronage and his influence on other artists – he trained Andrew and Nathaniel Plimer and also dictated the style

of William Wood, Charlotte Jones and Anne Mee. Stephen Lloyd describes him as “undoubtedly the most important, influential, and fashionable portrait miniaturist and draughtsman active during the last two decades of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth.”