THE LIMNER COMPANY



WILLIAM GRIMALDI

Portrait miniature of a young girl, called the Honourable Miss Herbert, wearing a white dress, a straw hat with blue ribbon, holding a basket of grapes, with a landscape background

Circa: 1787

1787

Watercolour on ivory (licence 35D1T1RM)

Oval, 103 mm (4 in) high

Signed 'Grimaldi' (lower right)

Inscribed verso '*Esther/ Miss: Herbert./ By/ Wm Grimaldi/ Enamel painter to his Royal/ Highness the Prince/ of Wales/ and/ Enamel and Miniature/ painter to Their R. Hs/ Duke and Duchess/ of York*'

Wood frame with inner gilded mount

There are two watercolour versions of a portrait of 'The Honourable Miss Herbert' listed in the 1873 catalogue of Grimaldi's works. The present work is the second listed, painted by the artist for himself. It is stated that the watercolour miniatures are painted after a portrait by Joshua Reynolds, however, there are no extant records of the original painting.

One possibility is Charlotte (1774-1784), the daughter of Henry Herbert, 10th Earl Pembroke (1734-1794), though she died at the age of ten in 1784. For the girl in this picture to be her, Grimaldi would have had to copy Reynolds' portrait after her death. Another potential identification is Frances Herbert (d.1830), the daughter of Henry Herbert, 1st Earl Carnarvon (1741-1811). The mothers of both of these girls were painted by Reynolds. However, both of these girls were daughters of earls, and the title Hon. is only given to their sons.

Even without a certain identification, the young Miss Herbert painted here is a quintessentially Reynoldsian girl, and Grimaldi has captured this well in a miniature form. Her basket, filled with grapes, is reminiscent of Miss Crewe (Tate Britain, L02926), though this depiction is much lighter; she has a sun hat on to protect her from the bright day behind.

We are grateful to Antony Halls for his expertise on William Grimaldi.

Exhibitions

Possibly London, An Evening Soiree at King's College, 1857;

Possibly London, Ironmongers Company Fine Art Exhibition, 3-5 May 1861.

Literature:

A.B Grimaldi, *A Catalogue, Chronological and Descriptive, of Paintings, Drawings, & Engravings, by and after William Grimaldi, R.A., Paris.*, London, 1873, no. 30, p. 14.