THE LIMNER COMPANY



WILLIAM GRIMALDI, R.A. (1751-1830)

Portrait enamel of Master Henry Edward Bunbury (1778-1860), wearing red velvet coat with white shirt and buff trousers, against a landscape background

Circa: 1830

1830

Enamel on metal

Oval, 86 mm (3 ⅜ in) high

Signed ‘grimaldi’, lower right

Inscribed verso: ‘*an enamel, / of Master Bunbury/ after Joshua Reynolds/ by Wm Grimaldi, Enamel/ Painter to His Majesty/ George IV/ 16 Upper Ebury Street, Chelsea*’ (verso, some inscriptions illegible)

Wood frame with inner gilded mount

There are at least three known copies of Reynolds’ portrait of Master Henry Edward Bunbury by Grimaldi, though this is the only known enamel copy. Two others are listed in the catalogue of Grimaldi’s works published by a descendant of the artist in 1873, though both of these are in watercolour. The original watercolour was considered by Reynolds himself to be a masterpiece of miniature painting, and Grimaldi may have produced it in enamel here to prove his ability in a further medium which is notoriously hard to master. Grimaldi has listed his address as Upper Ebury Street on the reverse of the miniature, which was his address in 1830, meaning that this portrait was painted much later than the other two. In fact, it is listed in the 1873 catalogue as his twenty-third and final enamel, which was taken from the Royal Academy following his death.

The original portrait by Reynolds, who was the sitter’s godfather, remains in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (M1928-1-29).

Henry Edward Bunbury was the second Henry Bunbury to be painted by Reynolds, the first being his father, Henry William (1750-1811). He was known as a caricaturist working in a time when he was considered among the greats of his art form, including Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827) and James Gilray (1756-1815). Henry Edward did not follow the artistic footsteps of his father and instead grew up to be a soldier and military historian. When this portrait was painted, however, he was still a young boy, around three years old. In 1787, he was appointed a page boy to Queen Charlotte (1744-1818). This appointment was likely through his father's connections to Prince Frederick, then the Duke of York (1763-1827), to whom he had been appointed groom of the bedchamber in the same year. Henry Edward would later go on to serve in the Duke of York's personal staff in the Netherlands in 1799.

Exhibitions

Royal Academy, London, 1830, no. 460.

Literature:

A.B Grimaldi, *A Catalogue, Chronological and Descriptive, of Paintings, Drawings, & Engravings, by and after William Grimaldi, R.A., Paris.*, London, 1873, no. 32, p. 12.