THE LIMNER COMPANY



CHRISTIAN FRIEDRICH ZINCKE (c.1683 - 1767)

Portrait miniature of a Gentleman in crimson velvet jacket with a stock and lace jabot wearing a white wig

Circa: circa 1730

circa 1730

Enamel on metal

Oval, 45 mm (1 7/8 in) high

Gilt metal frame

Christian Friedrich Zincke (c.1683-1767), was born in Dresden in the 1680s. He trained as a goldsmith, in the profession of his father, but he also studied portrait painting under German artist Heinrich-Christoph Fehling (c. 1653-1725). This background made him well-suited to execute portraits in enamel which required skill in painting as well as in manipulating metal and glass. In 1706, Zincke moved to England where he began working under Swedish enamellist Charles Boit (1662 - 1727). Eventually, Zincke surpassed his teacher in skill and established his own practice as an enamellist. With the support of portraitist Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646-1723), Zincke earned commissions from prominent, even royal, patrons, appointed in 1732 as cabinet painter to Frederick, Prince of Wales (1707-1751).

The distinguished gentleman in the current enamel remains unidentified; however, his commissioning of this portrait and his fine dress suggest he was a well-to-do, fashionable member of English society. While living in London, Zincke painted all manner of elite individuals, including royals, nobles, military officers, and scholars. The man in this portrait would have belonged to one of these groups, or at the very least he would have associated with them.

By 1730, it had become popular to wear coats unbuttoned and waistcoats undone at the top to show the ruffle attached to the shirt underneath, as the gentleman in this enamel has done.[1] Other portraits dating around 1730, including several enamels by Zincke himself,[2] show men wearing very similar

ensemble. For example, the sitters in the portraits of Nathaniel Hooke in the National Portrait Gallery[3] and an unknown gentleman in Middlethorpe Hall [4] both wear these luminous, red coats.

[1] Anna Reynolds, Style & Society: Dressing the Georgians (Royal Collection Trust, 2023), 118.

[2] Christian Friedrich Zincke, Portrait of a gentleman, circa 1725, for sale with Sotheby's April 2021. https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2021/old-master-paintings/portrait-of-a-gentleman-circa-1725.

[3] Style of Joseph Highmore, Portrait of an Unknown Gentleman in a Red Coat, circa 1725-1735, Middlethorpe Hall, National Trust [NT 1548241]. https://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/1548241.

[4] Bartholomew Dandridge, Portrait of Nathaniel Hooke, circa 1726-1739, National Portrait Gallery [NPG 68]. https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw03231/Nathaniel-Hooke.