THE LIMNER COMPANY



PIERRE PAUL EMMANUEL de POMMAYRAC (1807 - 1880)

Portrait miniature of a Lady, called J. Berville Fremer, wearing green silk dress with ribbons, white chemise, black silk mantle, and green headdress with pink roses

Circa: circa 1835

circa 1835

Watercolour on ivory (licence M7ZDC9EX)

Oval, 108 mm (4 $^{1}/_{4}$ in) high

Signed on the face of the ivory in red 'P. de Pommeyrac' (mid-right)

In ormolu easel-stand frame engraved 'J. Berville' on the reverse

It is recorded that Pommayrac (also known as Pommeyrac) was born in ‘Portorico’, or Puerto Rico. This was a Spanish Colony when Pommayrac was born to French parents. He moved to Paris to train as an artist, and worked under both Lizinska de Mirbel (1796-1849), and Antonie Jean Gros (1771-1835), the son of another miniature painter, Jean Antoine-Gros (1725-1790).

Pommayrac’s sitters included Napoleon III and Princess Eugénie, as well as numerous unknown sitters dressed in lavish clothes of silk, fur, and other expensive fabrics. Many of his portraits are of a similar, larger format. The present example is framed with a stand, allowing it to be placed on a mantlepiece or table for display.

The identity of the lady in this portrait as J. Berville Fremer comes from an inscription on the reverse of the frame. Other than this, there is no record of a sitter by this name by Pommayrac, partially due to the rarity of extant works by the artist. There is also no further record of who this lady was. She was clearly a

woman of some wealth and status; this was at least the impression she hoped to give by being painted in the outfit shown here. The contrast between her black shawl and the lighter colours of her dress and headdress is striking- elaborate hair decoration became increasingly popular throughout the 1830s.