THE LIMNER COMPANY



ANDREW PLIMER (1763 - 1837)

Portrait miniature of a young Lady wearing a white dress with a tied fichu, a straw hat with a frilled white cap beneath and tied a ribbon below her chin, her curled and powdered hair worn loose

Circa: circa 1795

circa 1795

Watercolour on ivory (licence 69VTXNEM)

Oval, 64 mm (2 ½ in.) high

Gold frame with reverse glazed to reveal light brown hair

Andrew Plimer worked at the zenith of the portrait miniature in England during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He painted prolifically from his studio on Golden Square, in London's fashionable Soho, where other artists such as Angelica Kauffman R.A. (1741-1807) and Martin Archer Shee P.R.A. (1769-1850) also resided in the 1780s and '90s.

This young lady's portrait is dateable to the mid-1790s and she wears the fashionable white chemise dress of the period. The straw hat she wears may have been a studio prop, as an almost identical hat with the very pale brown ribbon appears in many of Plimer's female portraits of this period. With her hair worn loose, it's likely the sitter was unmarried, perhaps a debutante making her first foray into London society. This occasion, termed 'coming out', may have been marked by commissioning her portrait in miniature – possibly intended for a potential husband, or maybe a family keepsake in anticipation of her inevitable departure to married life.