# THE LIMNER COMPANY



**PETER CROSS (c.1645 - 1724)**

**Portrait miniature of a Gentleman, wearing crimson velvet coat with gold buttons, over embroidered blue silk waistcoat and white shirt with tied neck scarf; powdered wig**

Circa: circa 1700

circa 1700

*Watercolour on vellum*

Oval, 74 mm (2 15/16 in) high

Gold frame, possibly by Seamer, with engraved acanthus leaf border, the reverse also engraved, the whole in original sharkskin case

The present work has been protected from the light, apparently since it was finished by the artist over 325 years ago. The original sharkskin case in which it sits opens to reveal a work of astonishing luminosity and a glimpse of what the first owner of this miniature may have seen. The character of the gold frame suggests the work of the goldsmith Colonel James Seamer (Seymour; circa 1658-1739), who was also a passionate amateur draughtsman. Operating at the Flower-de-Luce in Fleet Street between 1694 and 1734, Seamer is celebrated for designing highly distinctive turned frames for portrait miniatures. Although the sitter is at present unidentified, he bears some resemblance to a portrait of a ‘Mr. Braddyll’, bought by the collector Arthur Tite from a sale at Christie’s, probably in the early 20th century [National Portrait Gallery Archive].

Painted by the miniaturist Peter Cross, who was historically referred to as Lawrence Cross(e), the present work bears his distinctive monogram delineated in gold paint.[1] Miniatures by Peter Cross were surrounded by confused attributions due to a monogram thought to spell either ‘PC’ or ‘LC’. It was not until 1935 when a miniature of a William Gore surfaced, signed with the apparent monogram ‘LC’, but signed and dated on the reverse ‘P. Cross, 1670’, that both ‘LC’ and ‘PC’ were understood to be the same artist.

Described as one of the most talented miniature painters of the 17th century, Peter Cross's work has been called finer than that of Samuel Cooper (1607/8-1672), with whom Cross may have trained.[2] Ancestrally Cross is presumed to have been French, with the surname 'de Crosse'; his parents Anthony and Margaret Crosse had considerable wealth and lived in London. Peter was the youngest child of seven. He married Arabella Burman in 1667 and had seven children of his own. Arabella died in 1700 and Cross went on to marry the widow of his brother-in-law. His studio and residence at the Sign of the Blue Anchor in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden - the very street where Cooper and his wife Christiana lived from at least as early as 1650 until Cooper's death in 1672.

[1] In 1979 in *The Burlington Magazine* Mary Edmond definitively concluded that Lawrence and Peter Cross were the same miniaturist named Peter Cross; M. Edmond, 'Peter Cross, Limner: Died 1724' in *The Burlington Magazine*, vol.121, no.918, pp.585-6.

[2] L.R. Schidlof, *The Miniature in Europe*, (Graz, Austria) p.173; D. Foskett, *Miniatures Dictionary and Guide*,

(Woodbridge, 1987) p.520.