THE LIMNER COMPANY



SUSANNAH-PENELOPE ROSSE (née GIBSON) (c.1655 - 1700)

Portrait miniature of a Gentleman wearing a full-bottomed wig with white tied stock and ochre coloured cloak over his right shoulder

Circa: circa 1670

circa 1670

Watercolour on vellum

Oval, 61 mm (2 $^{3}/_{8}$ in) high

Silver-gilt frame with spiral cresting, set into later leather presentation box

The daughter of the miniature painter Richard Gibson, Rosse is best known for her copies of the works of her neighbour, Samuel Cooper. She was praised by George Vertue ‘as by these may bee seen; nobody ever copy’d him better’ (Vertue I, p.116). A talented artist, she did not need to work for a living, but produced portraits of family and friends that serve as an intimate record of her life. Many of her connections to artists and sitters came through her parents, who were famous at court not only for their artistic talents but also for their small stature.

The present example is typical of Rosse’s style of ad vivum portrait, seen most noticeably in the handling of the curls of the sitter’s wig which are highlighted very delicately with small, quick dashes of white. The style of wig which is very long and parted at the top is typical of that worn in post-Restoration England, having been introduced, along with a number of other French customs, by Charles II following his return from exile on the continent.