THE LIMNER COMPANY

JOHN COX DILLMAN ENGLEHEART (1784 - 1862)

Portrait of a subaltern of the Line Infantry, wearing a red coatee with a single epaulette, gold lace and yellow facings, a dark cloak over his left shoulder

Circa: 1827

Watercolour on ivory (licence SX1D95N2)

Papier-mache frame with oak leaf surmount

Inscribed 'J.Dillman Engleheart/ Pinxit./ 1827./75 Upper Berkley Street/ London Portman'

Rectangular, 95 x 75 mm (3 ¾ x 3 in)

The nephew of George Engleheart (1750-1829), one of the greatest portrait miniaturists of his day, John Cox Dilman Engleheart (often shortened to JCD Engleheart) was both a student and assistant to his uncle. He became a successful miniaturist in his own right, and the present work stands as an example of the distinct style he developed.

One signature feature of this portrait is the dark background against which the subaltern's red coat contrasts. Using a dark background like this was a departure from the blue sky backgrounds popular in the late eighteenth century, and is also reflected in JCD Engleheart's self-portrait in the National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG 2754).

The rather generic style of uniform worn by this young gentleman makes it difficult to identify his exact position within the British Army. Wearing only one epaulette on his right shoulder means he was a subaltern. There are numerous regiments in which he could have been an officer, including those of the British Line Infantry, Militia, Volunteers or one of the East India Company's regiments. This portrait is likely to have been commissioned upon his entering one of these regiments, as both a record of his position and a memento through which his loved ones would be able to remember him.