THE LIMNER COMPANY

ITALIAN SCHOOL (circa 1590)

A Noblewoman, wearing green dress, white lace ruff, pearls and a red flower in her hair

Circa: circa 1580-90

Oil on copper

Later ebonised wood frame

Circular, 622mm (2.4in) diam.

This oil on copper portrait of a Noblewoman demonstrates the far-reaching influence of the Italian Renaissance artist, Lavinia Fontana (1552–1614). Trained in Bologna alongside her father Prospero Fontana, Lavinia in particular excelled at portraiture. Working with her husband as her 'manager', Fontana ran a busy workshop with assistants who she trained.

This small oil on copper is typical of the type of commission taken on by Fontana - the sitter clearly a woman of wealth, huge pearls suspended from her hair which has been combed upwards in the fashion of the 1590s.

Despite the later restoration which has altered the subtle modelling of the face, the costume and ruff remain largely untouched and show the skill of the original artist.