THE LIMNER COMPANY



FRENCH SCHOOL

Portrait of a Nobleman, called Gaston (Jean Baptiste) Duke of Orleans (1608-1660), wearing the blue sash of the Order of the Holy Spirit, lovelock and falling lace ruff

Circa: circa 1650

circa 1650

Watercolour on vellum

Oval, 32 mm (1 $^{1}/_{4}$ in) high

Silver locket frame, the reverse with faint pen inscription

This miniature, painted by an unknown French artist in the mid 17th century, perfectly captures the character of this rebellious royal prince. He spent his life plotting against his own family, as well as against ministers who worked for the crown.

As the third son of King Henry IV of France and Marie de'Medici he was known at court as Monsieur or Le Grand Monsieur and was the heir to the throne for three decades (1611-1638) until the birth of the future Louis XIV.

His life was dominated by his scheming plans, where he was easily influenced by his noble friends to start revolts, and even civil war (including against Cardinal Richelieu), but his plans inevitably ended in failure, leading to multiple temporary exiles and endless royal pardons.

This miniature was likely painted for one of his supporters and seems to rely on contemporary engravings of the Duke.