JOHN SMART (British, 1741–1811)

JOHN SMART’S SKETCHES were finished to varying degrees and often incorporated graphite, watercolor, gouache, and sometimes chalk. They served to work out the particulars of a portrait before commencing the miniature on ivory, and they were useful in the event that a duplicate might later be required. They usually measure the same size as the finished portraits on ivory, though details of dress and coiffure are often incomplete in the sketches. Some of Smart’s sketches were intended as completed works of art; these are occasionally more than bust length and can incorporate a finished background. Both the preparatory and the highly finished types
are represented in Cleveland's collection. Smart inscribed many sketches on the front or back with the sitter's name, and most have been numbered at an unknown date, presumably for the purposes of inventory. Cory Korkow