NATHANIEL PLIMER (British, 1757–1822)

BROTHERS NATHANIEL AND ANDREW PLIMER ran away from their home in Shropshire and the clock-making profession for which their father was preparing them, spending two years roaming the countryside with a band of gypsies before settling in London in 1781.¹ Andrew, the younger brother, became servant to painter Richard Cosway (1742–1821) and Nathaniel servant to enamelist Henry Bone (1755–1834). Within years both brothers were studying miniature painting with Cosway.

Nathaniel's miniatures are rarer and more difficult to identify than Andrew’s. Only the miniatures Nathaniel painted before 1789 are signed (“N.P.”) and dated; Andrew’s miniatures are also signed (“A.P.”) and dated only before 1789. Unlike his itinerant brother, Nathaniel seems to have been based in London throughout his career; he exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy between 1787 and 1815. Because he did not adopt his brother’s doll-like aesthetic, Nathaniel's paintings are less mannered, more naturalistic likenesses. Nathaniel was less prolific and less famous than his brother, and his miniatures have been less frequently faked. CORY KORKOW