







GEORGE ENGLEHEART (British, 1752–1829)

Portrait of a Man

c. 1795

Watercolor on ivory; oval, 7.6 x 6.2 cm (3 x 2½ in.)

Signature: none

Setting: original gold frame

The Edward B. Greene Collection, 1943.640

Provenance

Before 1929

Sir Harry Waechter (1871–1929, Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia [now Harare, Zimbabwe]).

By 1929

Leo Schidlof (1886–1966, Paris).

1930

Purchased by Edward B. Greene (1878–1957, Cleveland) from Leo Schidlof for £65 (\$325); gift to the Cleveland Museum of Art, December 29, 1943.

1943

The Cleveland Museum of Art.

Exhibitions

None.

Bibliography

Chong, Alan, ed. *European and American Painting in The Cleveland Museum of Art*, p. 286. Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1993.

Milliken, William M., and Harry B. Wehle. *Portrait Miniatures: The Edward B. Greene Collection*, p. 27, no. 11, pl. XVII. Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1951.

EXECUTED AROUND 1795, this work exhibits strong yet restrained tones. The background is painted in muted gray-browns, not the bright blue cloudy sky for which George Engleheart became known. The sitter's position is somewhat awkward, with his shoulders nearly squared with the picture plane but his head in a three-quarter view. He wears a gray coat with fabric-covered buttons and the high collar fashionable in the 1790s. His hair is carefully delineated with dark gray brushstrokes applied over a pale gray ground. The sitter's powdered hair is worn long, and his dark, deep-set eyes cast shadows that lend drama to the portrait. This proto-romantic sensibility is characteristic of the artist's work between 1780 and 1795, as is its relatively modest size. Painted on ivory measuring 6.9 centimeters high, it is the smaller format of Engleheart miniatures before the turn of the century, after which the format expanded, as seen in the museum's other two works by the artist. The portrait is unsigned, which is typical for his works of this period. The simple gold frame is original.



During this period, Engleheart charged 10 to 12 guineas for his miniature portraits.¹ Such a fee would have been within the means of aristocratic and upper-middle-class patrons. In 1795 12 guineas would have been equivalent to the government-mandated minimum for nine months salary for a laborer with a family of four.² The work was in the collection of Sir Harry Waechter, Bart., the British businessman and philanthropist, until his 1929 death at his home in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). CORY KORKOW

1 George Charles Williamson, *George Engleheart, 1750-1829, Miniature Painter to George III* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1902), p. 38.

2 John L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond, *The Village Labourer, 1760-1832: A Study in the Government of England Before the Reform Bill* (London: Longmans, Green, 1927), 1: pp. 138-40.