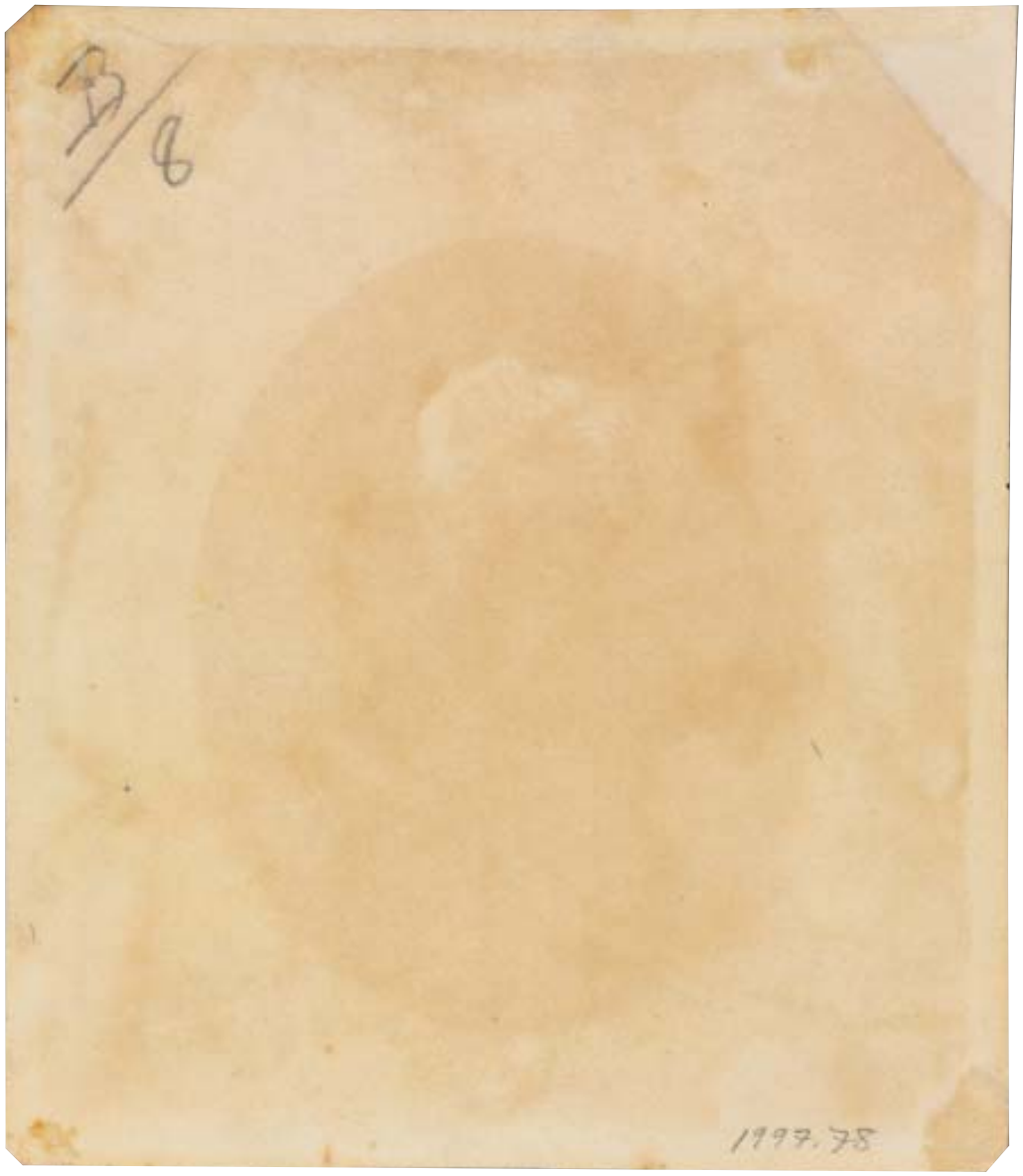
Miss Mary Tadman
John Sunet pinxit
Nov.r 1809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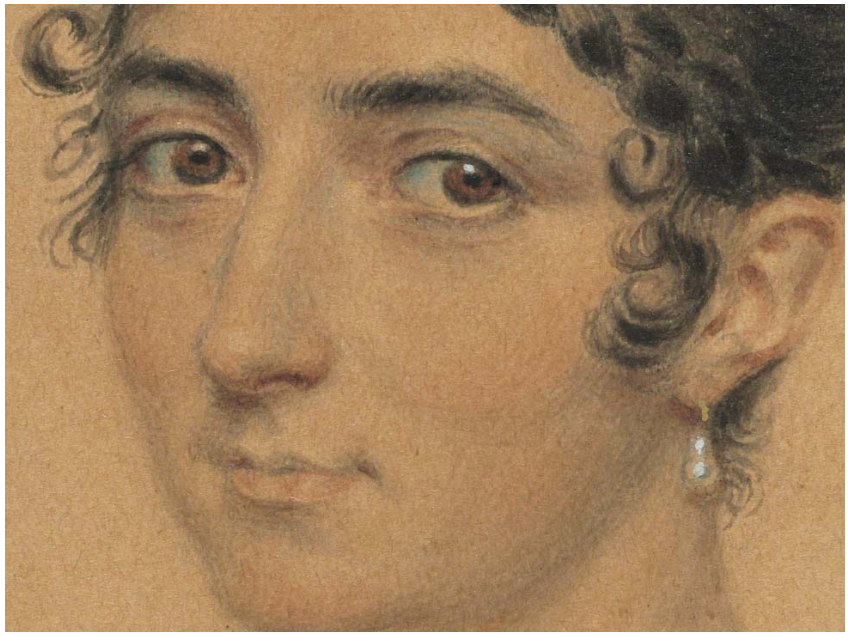

JOHN SMART (British, 1741–1811)

# *Portrait of Miss Mary Tadman*

1809

Watercolor and graphite, heightened with traces of white gouache on paper; unframed, 15.4 x 13.4 cm (6 x 5¼ in.)

Signature: in gray watercolor at lower right: John Smart pinxit / Novr 1809; inscribed on front of paper in gray watercolor at lower left: Miss Mary Tadman; inscribed on back of paper in graphite at upper left: B / 8

Setting: unframed

Bequest of Mrs. A. Dean Perry, 1997.78

**Provenance**

Until 1811
John Smart (1741–1811); by inheritance to his son John James Smart (1805–1870).

1811–70
John James Smart; by inheritance to his daughter Mary Ann Bose (née Smart, 1856–1934).

1870–1934
Mary Ann Bose; by inheritance to her daughter Lilian Mary Dyer (née Bose, 1876–1955), great-granddaughter of the artist.

1934–37
Lilian Mary Dyer.

1937
Sold Christie's (London), November 26 (lot 42).

After 1937
Colnaghi, London.

Before 1957
Edward B. Greene (1878–1957, Cleveland); by inheritance to his daughter Helen Perry (née Greene, 1911–1996, Cleveland).

c. 1957–96
Helen Perry.

1996
Upon Helen Perry's death, held in trust by the estate.

1996–97
Estate of Helen Perry; gift to the Cleveland Museum of Art, 1997.

1997
The Cleveland Museum of Art.

**Exhibitions**

None.

**Bibliography**

Foskett, Daphne. *John Smart: The Man and His Miniatures,* pp. 74, 88. London: Cory, Adams & Mackay, 1964.

ALTHOUGH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to say whether or not it was always part of the artist's process to execute a preparatory sketch prior to painting each miniature, we do know that John Smart retained many hundreds of these sketches. A great number were inherited by his son John James Smart, who in turn left them to his daughter Mary Ann Bose. Upon her death in 1934, they were divided between three of her children: William Henry Bose, Lilian Dyer, and Mabel Annie Busteed. It was from these three collections that they were sold at auction through Christie's, London, in February 1937, November 1937, and December 1936, respectively.[1]

Helen Perry (née Greene) left six drawings by Smart to the Cleveland Museum of Art when she died in 1996. Perry was the granddaughter of one of the museum's founding members, Jeptha Homer Wade II, and the daughter of Edward B. Greene, who gave his renowned collection of portrait miniatures to the museum

1 The catalogues for these three sales are reproduced in Daphne Foskett, *John Smart: The Man and His Miniatures* (London: Cory, Adams & Mackay, 1964), pp. 78–90. It is not known which, if any, drawings were retained by the family members.

THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

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primarily during the 1940s. Several CMA curators were asked to visit Perry's collection in 1988 as she updated her will and wished to know which works might be donated to the museum. After his visit, Michael Miller, assistant curator of prints and drawings, wrote the director Evan Turner that the "miniature portraits by John Smart of General McAllister [sic] and Mary Tadman are quite fine, but our drawings collection has never included material of the sort. I'd leave them to your judgment." Miller evidently was unaware of the ten Smart sketches that had been left to the museum during the 1940s by Edward Greene. Turner included the sketches of MacAlister and Tadman on the wish list he gave to Perry in 1989. There is no record indicating why they had not been previously bequeathed to the museum with the Greene collection, as Perry did not collect miniatures or small portrait drawings. It is likely that they were overlooked rather than purposefully retained for her by her father. Greene's love of miniatures had previously influenced his daughter's support for the museum; in 1960 she gave $9,600 for the purchase of a miniature by Nicholas Hilliard in memory of her father.[2] Among the works by Smart in Cleveland's collection, the group bequeathed by Perry has benefited considerably from recent research that has revealed sitters' identities and reunited drawings with their miniature counterparts on ivory.

Mary Tadman's head and shoulders face right. Her eyes are brown, and she wears a necklace of small pearls and a drop pearl earring. She wears her dark brown hair high in a classically inspired bun, with a braid across the hairline and many curls falling over her forehead and in front of her ears. Her white dress is delicately embroidered at the edges along the bust and is tied at the Empire-style waist, with a small pin fastened to the front. The translucent white sleeves worn beneath the dress are probably made of muslin

Figure 1. *Portrait of Mary Bellasis (née Tadman),* c. 1821. Unknown artist. Current location unknown. From Margaret Bellasis, *Honourable Company* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1952), facing p. 240.

and detachable, since they do not appear in the ivory version of the portrait. Detachable sleeves were popular during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and enabled a dress to function as day- and eveningwear.[3] The nature of this work as a finished drawing rather than exclusively a preparatory sketch for a miniature on ivory is evident in the degree of finish of the sitter's clothing, heightened with white gouache and painted to the elaborated penciled oval border. A Colnaghi label was removed from the verso after the work entered the museum's collection.

In December 1809, the year this drawing was executed, Mary Tadman (1786–1862) married Major William Jolliffe Eldridge. He died in 1818 in Poona, India, and three years later, his widow married Colonel Daniel Hutchins Bellasis (1785–1836), with whom she had two children: Flora and Augustus Fortunatus.[4] Mary lived for nearly

2 *Portrait of Baron Howard of Effingham,* 1576. Nicholas Hilliard (British, c. 1547–1619). Watercolor on vellum; 4.9 x 4.4 cm (1⅞ x 1¾ in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. A. Dean Perry in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Belden Greene 1960.39. The miniature was purchased from Agnew & Sons as "An Elizabethan Gallant."

3 Jill Condra, *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Clothing Through World History: 1801 to the present* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008), p. 32.

4 "Births and Marriages of Remarkable Persons," *The Gentleman's Magazine* 106 (December 1809): p. 1174. See also *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and its Dependencies* 12 (November 1821): p. 514.

two decades in India, where she was a celebrated beauty, and where her second marriage into the militarily distinguished Bellasis family seems to have secured her presence in high society. On the occasion of her marriage in 1821, she wrote her spinster sister, "I forgot I have not told you a word of my marriage, which by the by was the grandest affair known in Bombay, I am almost tired of the subject—visits and congratulations, etc. The Governor and Staff went with me to Church . . . and all the people of any consequence in Bombay about 100 came to a Breakfast at Randall Lodge—since which it has been one constant scene of gaiety. Last week, pity me when I tell you, how I was obliged to exert myself—we gave a dinner party to 40 people. The Governor's family . . . and all the Big Wigs who gave me parties—the same evening 160 came at ten to a dance—afterwards a supper very splendid I assure you."[5] An unidentified artist painted a portrait of Mary around this date, when she was in her mid-thirties (fig. 1).

A related ivory version of this miniature is in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (fig. 2), signed and dated at the lower left: "J S / 1809." While Miss Tadman's coiffure, countenance, jewelry, and dress are identical to the Cleveland sketch, in this portrait she wears an elaborate black and red, flowered Indian shawl with white border over her white dress, the under-sleeves omitted. Indian shawls, particularly those from Kashmir, were extremely expensive signifiers of social status in India and Europe, and by the end of the eighteenth century, they often formed part of the trousseau of a wealthy French or English bride.[6] The shawls were particularly fashionable worn in contrast with the high-waisted gauzy white dresses of the Empire period. While many portraits and miniatures from the early nineteenth century depict women conspicuously displaying their Indian shawls (fig. 3), Miss Tadman wears hers in a manner not often seen in European portraits: across one shoulder and around the waist, like a sari.

Mary and William Eldridge wed in December 1809, one month

Figure 2. *Portrait of Miss Mary Tadman,* 1809. John Smart. Watercolor on ivory; 7.6 x 6 cm (3 x 2⅜ in.). The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, no. 3879. From Robert Bayne-Powell, *Catalogue of Portrait Miniatures in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 202, pl. VI.

Figure 3. *Portrait of Sophie Guillemette, Grand Duchess of Baden (1801–1865),* 1831. Franz Xaver Winterhalter (German, 1805–1873). Oil on fabric; 39.1 x 28.5 cm (15⅜ x 11¼ in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, The Thomas L. Fawick Memorial Collection 1979.43.

5 Margaret Bellasis, *Honourable Company* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1952), pp. 240–41.
6 Sherry Rehman and Naheed Jafri, *The Kashmiri Shawl from Jamavar to Paisley* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Antique Collector's Club, 2006), pp. 326–32.

after Smart signed this sketch. Because Smart depicted Miss Tadman during her engagement, the shawl worn in the finished ivory portrait may have been a gift from her betrothed, who had been stationed in Bombay in 1809. While appropriate for a half-length portrait, the under-sleeves were probably deemed unnecessary for the miniature, which shows little of the arm and instead depicts the sitter more formally, wrapped in her shawl.

The existence of a larger, finished drawing as well as a miniature on ivory suggests that the finished drawing may have served a variety of roles, while also implying that another preparatory sketch for both may exist. At nearly twice the size of the ivory, Cleveland's drawing is not likely to have been the sole preparatory exercise for the finished miniature. There is no question that as a young bride-to-be, Miss Tadman was thinking carefully about how she wished to be represented at a pivotal moment in her life, and that a single portrait was insufficient to accommodate all of the accoutrements that were of significance to her. The neo-Grec coiffure, *au courant* Empire-waist dress with detachable sleeves, pearl parure, ornamental pin, and costly shawl communicate clearly the social ambitions to which her biography is also a testament. CORY KORKOW