JOHN SMART (British, 1741–1811)

Portrait of a Woman

c. 1775

Gray and red wash over graphite, heightened with white gouache on laid paper; unframed, 5.4 x 4.7 cm (2⅛ x 1⅞ in.)

Signature: none; inscribed on paper backing in graphite in bottom half: Anne of / Denmark; in graphite upside down in top half: 141; inscribed on back of drawing beneath paper backing in graphite at top: very dark brown hair / . . . ry . . .; in brown ink: to be set[?] in . . . / and put in a Black / Frame largest . . . / [G . . .'s?] Size

Setting: unframed

Bequest of Mrs. A. Dean Perry, 1997.82

Provenance

Until 1811
John Smart (1741–1811); by inheritance to Sarah Smart (1781–1853), daughter of the artist by Sarah Midgeley.[1]

1811–c. 1853
Sarah Smart.

c. 1853
Gift to Mary Smirke (d. 1853, Slough); by inheritance to her brother Sydney Smirke (1798–1877).

1853–77
Sydney Smirke; by inheritance to his daughter Mrs. Lange (née Smirke, d. 1928).

1877–1928
Mrs. Lange; by inheritance to her brother Edward Smirke.

1928
Edward Smirke.

1928
Purchased by Leo Schidlof (1886–1966, Paris) at Christie's (London) sale, December 10 (lot 9).[2]

1929
Purchased by Edward B. Greene (1878–1957, Cleveland) from Leo Schidlof for £50 ($250.00) around July; 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.

1 Following his first marriage, John Smart had two children out of wedlock with Sarah Midgeley: John (1776–1809) and Sarah (1781–1853).

2 Called "Anne of Denmark" and framed with five other miniatures including "Eleanara"; "La Belle Gabrielle"; "Miss Bennet"; "Duchess of Bourbon"; and "Elizabeth Palkin."

Exhibitions

1904
Moncorvo House, London, *Royal Amateur Art Society Exhibition of Miniatures,* March 5–8 (possibly).

Bibliography

Foskett, Daphne. *John Smart: The Man and His Miniatures,* pp. 70, 89. London: Cory, Adams & Mackay, 1964.

THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

A GROUP OF PREPARATORY SKETCHES descended through the Smirke family after John Smart's daughter Sarah gave a sketchbook containing preparatory portrait studies to her friend Mary Smirke, sister of the celebrated Victorian architect Sydney Smirke. This book was probably broken up around 1877 when its contents was divided between the architect's daughters Mary Jemmett and Mrs. Lange, whose portions were both sold at auction in 1928. Eleven sketches were purchased by Edward Greene for around $250 each in 1929 and 1930 from the European art dealer Leo Schidlof, who had had them placed in square, gilt metal frames with a narrow white enamel border in 1928. The majority of these sketches are in compromised condition, with fading and foxing especially prevalent.

Greene, who gave his renowned collection of portrait miniatures to the Cleveland Museum of Art primarily during the 1940s, also donated ten preparatory studies by Smart to the museum in 1941 and 1942. This drawing of an unknown woman was among the miniatures listed as part of the Greene collection in 1941, but it was not brought to the museum with that group of studies. Along with the study formerly identified as Mr. Batson (1997.81), it came to the museum in 1997 as a gift of Greene's daughter Helen Perry. It was still in the 1928 frame that Schidlof had placed it in—a small brass frame with enamel border, oval opening, black velvet strainer, and easel back—which was by this time heavily damaged and therefore removed; it was also tagged 18195/11.

Perry left six drawings by Smart to the CMA when she died in 1996. As well as being the daughter of Edward Greene, she was also the granddaughter of one of the museum's founding members, Jeptha Homer Wade II. 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 Perry's father. Turner included the sketches of MacAlister and Tadman on the wish list he gave Perry in 1989, but there is no record as to why the six drawings had not been previously bequeathed to the museum with the Greene collection. Perry did not collect miniatures or small portrait drawings, so it is likely that they were overlooked rather than specially 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.[3] 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.

This portrait was assigned the historically colorful but fictitious title of "Anne of Denmark" at some point after memory of its true identity had been lost.[4] Giving illustrious titles to portraits of unknown sitters was a popular strategy adopted by dealers during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, often applied to miniature portraits and, in particular, to Smart's sketches of women. Only the sitter's head and neck are drawn, and a low-necked dress is faintly suggested. Her head is turned to the left, and her brown hair is dressed high, with flat curls against the back of her head. A veil is lightly drawn falling over the back of the hair and shoulders. The sitter's sagging jaw line and the lines beneath her blue-green eyes suggest that she was painted as a mature woman. The sketch is generally faded, and the background is unpainted. The finished ivory

3 *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."

4 The date at which this new title was adopted is unknown, but it had been applied by 1928 when it was so catalogued in the Christie's sale.

miniature for which this drawing was presumably a preparatory sketch has not yet been discovered.

The sitter's identification has been based on a later inscription in graphite on the verso of the paper backing (fig. 1). When the paper backing was removed from the back of the drawing in 2011, an inscription in brown ink in the artist's hand was discovered (fig. 2). The writing appears to be a fragment, created when the small rectangle containing the portrait was cut from a larger sheet. It reads, "to be set[?] in . . . / and put in a Black / Frame largest . . . / [G . . .'s?] Size." Above this is written in graphite "very dark brown hair."

CORY KORKOW

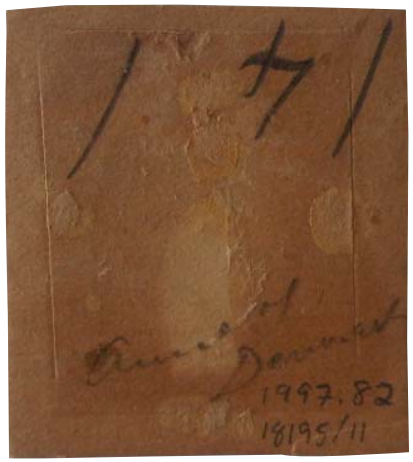

Figure 1. Verso inscription reading "Anne of Denmark."

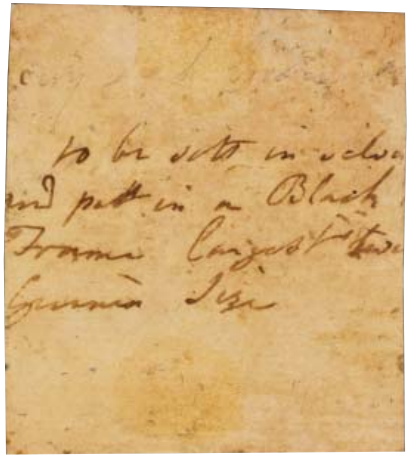

Figure 2. Inscription in brown ink on back of drawing, revealed by removal of paper backing.