
Late 18th Century portrait of a lady possibly Mary
Wordsworth, Lady Kent (1751-1815)

£7,500

REF: 5118

Height: 8.3 cm (3 1/4")



Short Description

Signed on the obverse with initial N, gold frame, the reverse with dark brown plaited hair

The portrait bears a strong resemblance to the portrait of Mary Wordsworth, Lady Kent painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1777.

This exceptionally large miniature appears to form part of a group of portraits by James Nixon showing young women in naturalistic settings or posing as mythological characters. See, for example, the portrait of Mary Elton as 'Ophelia' in the collection at Clevedon Court or the portrait of Portrait of Elizabeth Farren (1759-1829), later Countess of Derby, holding a mask (private collection). Nixon worked on illustrations, had some oil paintings exhibited at the Royal Academy and had several of his portraits engraved, including those of the Duchess of Devonshire and the sisters Jenny and Nelly Bennet.

James Nixon was an extremely talented miniaturist, with a highly sophisticated and largely aristocratic clientele. He was a leading miniaturist of his time, and held the appointments of limner to the Prince of Wales and miniature-painter to the Duchess of York. Despite this, his miniatures are far rarer than those by his contemporaries and he was not financially successful. His works in miniature show an innate understanding of some of the great oil painters of the day, in particular Sir Joshua Reynolds. This 'grand' style of painting in miniature probably earned him his celebrity following, with those in the world of the theatre particularly attracted to his dramatically large and painterly miniatures.

Lady Mary Kent was the daughter and coheiress of Josiah Wordsworth, of Wadworth, Yorks and his wife Anne Robinson; married, c.1776 Sir Charles Eggleton Kent. She died at Poynton House, near Grantham, 17 September, 1817.

More Information

Year	Circa 1777.
Medium	watercolour on ivory,
Signed	Signed on the obverse with initial N
Provenance	Albion Collection, Bonhams, London, 4th April 2004, lot 113
Exhibition	Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 2000-2003
Condition	Good