Miniature portrait - Self Portrait

Metalwork Collection

Accession Nr.:	69.1323.1
Artist/Maker:	Harper, Johann (1688 - 1746)
Date of production:	ca. 1740
Place of production:	Germany
Inscription:	balra lent: Massé (vsz. hamis jelzés)
Materials:	bronze; ivory
Techniques:	tempera
Dimensions:	height: 6,8 cm width: 8,1 cm

The rectangular portrait depicts a painter of miniatures, looking up from his work, in front of a greyish-blue background. The man, sitting on a chair with an upholstered back and voluted armrests, wears a red gown the sleeves of the coat reveal the laced sleeves of the shirt. There is a red cap, lined with grey fur, on his head. He wears a violet velvet sash around his waist — the end of the sash is spread across the arm-rest of the chair. The painter works on a miniature, placed on a slanted stand on a table supported by masks. He holds a magnifying glass in his left hand and a thin brush in his right. In a clumsy and rather unexplained way, the composition ends with blue draperies on the left. The draperies are marked on the left: Masse.

Jean-Baptiste Masse (1687-1767) was a famous painter of miniature portraits of the age however, no authentic piece of his activity has been identified yet. The face is a brilliantly executed part of the picture the perfect painting of lights and shadows makes the slightly round, effeminate face even more realistic. Despite the light brushwork however, the other weaknesses of the composition bring into question the identity of the painter suggested by the signature. Even the marking does meet the requirements when compared to some known Masse markings. Despite the contradictory facts, the portrait was earlier published as an authentic piece of Masse. However, as Dr. Rainer Rückert / Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich, has made clear, the miniature is a copy of the self-portrait of Johann Harper, the painter (1688-1746), now in the Akademie der Künste in Berlin.

Literature

- Szerk.: Szilágyi András, Péter Márta: *Barokk és rokokó. Az európai iparművészet stíluskorszakai*. Iparművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, 1990. - Nr. 6.211. (Maros Donka Szilvia)
- Szerk.: Voit Pál: Miniatűrök. *Régiségek könyve*. Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 1983. - 58. színes kép (Koroknay Éva)
- Koroknay Éva: *Miniatűrök és szelencék. (A Nagytétényi Kastélymúzeum kiállításának ismertetője)*. Iparművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, 1979. - Nr. 1.

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