

Grasping the Elusive Definition of Miniature Art in 2007 ~ by Wes Siegrist

Today in the 21st century a plethora of objet d'art vie for the title "miniature" in the fine art field.¹ Public perception equates it with anything small or tiny and regretfully few consider the original namesake for the term. As a professed miniaturist practicing in the genre of the traditional art form I noted firsthand the lack of knowledge today on the part of the general public and my peers and sadly the general confusion about the term². Perhaps even more disturbing is the general apathy by many modern artists practicing miniature art to the ramifications of this lack of clear understanding.³ I aspire to more clearly define the general parameters for the term in today's context as it pertains to the highly specialized genre developed in the 16th century and continued and revitalized to the present day.

For nearly 500 years this highly specialized art form has eluded specific definition. Its historic roots are speculatively explored and the terminology etymologically pondered⁴. Despite the lack of explicit guidelines and a clear foundation one ascertains that something unique began in the world of art back in the early 15th century. To encapsulate it on the basis of historical derivations, specific artistic techniques or isolated periods of time all fall short in grasping the unique scope of the art. Historically this art form can be broken down into three major periods of development:

1. The Origins – Initially derived on the basis of manuscript illumination techniques and the resulting artistic adaptations after the demise of the hand-written and elaborated manuscripts due to the invention of the Gutenberg printing press in the mid 15th century.⁵ Tragically confusion pervades the quest for definition due to the use ex post facto of the term "miniature" when reading historical accounts.⁶ This difficulty is further compounded when the threads of development are isolated and applied to the latter development periods.⁷
2. The Recognition apart from the originating influences until the collapse of the genre -By the 16th century the art of limning, or mignature, was established among the artists as a separate and distinct method of working apart from the manuscript both in form and function.⁸ It was not until the late 17th century that the term "miniature" was used to describe these unique works and was associated with small size.⁹ A proper understanding of the descriptive term grounds it firmly at this point in time when it was initially adopted. This is not to deny hundreds of years of precedents that form the basis for the miniature but rather to emphasize that these forerunners were not recognized by the term in their respective day. Historical accounts demonstrate that while the early nomenclature dually referred to the illuminated page and removed illustration the subsequent "miniature", at the time of its coinage, meant specifically the isolated artwork. Primarily the term related to the portrait mementoes that were small hand-held or worn art forms but it also encompassed the somewhat larger cabinet paintings designed more for parlor display.¹⁰
3. The Revival during the arts and crafts movement leading to the present day- The Revival Period is formally acknowledged today as commencing in 1896 with the formation of the Society of Miniaturists. For the purpose of understanding the definition of the term miniature in this movement primarily two trains of thought have dominated the successive generations of artists comprising the 20th century leading into today. The founding generation stressed an emphasis on the development of new styles and techniques to combat the public perception and the influence of photography while the present generation of artists has concentrated on size and scale.¹¹

To begin to define the term "miniature" the techniques, styles and formats leading up to its adoption should be considered as parts forming a whole. These integral units may be correctly perceived as "miniature" components but isolating any part inevitably falls short of encompassing the whole as the term has been generally perceived for the last 400-500 years.¹² The elements that contributed to the recognized miniature of the late 16th century that persists to today are namely technique, size and scale.¹³ Form, function and style have changed with public taste and resulting artistic trends and thus does little to reinforce a consistent

definition of the term.¹⁴ Exactly what persists and manages to maintain the miniature's uniqueness amidst namesake threats and evolutionary adaptations best defines the art so let us examine the principle three:

- 1. 1. Unique techniques and handling of the brush with a specific end product in mind. Paintings identified as miniatures reflect a unique method of painting that involved careful attention to detail by employing a variety of brushwork – i.e. stippling, hatching, blending. The intimate nature of the portrait miniature demanded exquisitely refined application of paint to captivate the interest of the viewer not just on the casual level but more on the cherished and reflective inspection of the details.¹⁵
- 2. 2. A small size dictated initially by function and form. Size was never explicitly considered a constituent part of the antecedent art form of limning apart from the manuscript primarily due to a lack of need to emphasize it. The limning, and even the later coined “miniature”, had no competing art form until the mid 1700's.¹⁶ Early portrait limnings on vellum were generally portable in size and typically small enough to conceal in a pocket or wear as jewelry.¹⁷ Larger format works serving as cabinet and parlor paintings in the 16th century can be found as large as 10 inches in height but still exemplify the delicate technique and small scale of the portrait limnings.¹⁸ To emphasize the implied small size it should be noted that the artists of the works, and the scholars researching them, label these works as “large” and hence deviants from the norm or evolutionary changes in overall style.¹⁹
- 3. 3. A greatly reduced scale determined by size and composition remains inherent in the broad scope of the genre's timeline. One can find life-size illuminations bordering the early limnings but separate works of equal scale are rare until the Victorian period of the mid 1800's²⁰. I find it rather awkward to place such life-sized works alongside the earlier paintings as typical and their existence and general place in the miniature's world seems peripheral at best.

In conclusion, these same three defining characteristics distinguish 21st century miniature art from the myriad of competing “miniature” work, small format art, ACEOs/ ATCs and reproductions on reduced scale. Unique technique, small size and reduced scale are the elements that together provide the best general sense of definition for the term “miniature” across the historic timeline into today. Perhaps nothing says it better than the work of the field's masters for to carefully hold such a delicate piece of handiwork in one's palm sets aside all doubt that this truly is an art form set apart from all other.²¹

¹ Common in 2007 are:

- Larger format miniatures typically 80 to 96 square inches but sometimes as large as 165 or greater (no restrictions on scale or technique). Popular with galleries and museum exhibitions.
- SFA/ Small format art measuring less than 14 inches (no restrictions on scale or technique). *See EBay*.
- OSWOA stands for “Original Small Works of Art,” and describes original artists' works or the original first print of a photography or digital art edition, in the size of 6 inches by 4 inches. *See EBay*
- ATCs: “Art Trading Cards” –project began in 1997 and experienced rapid growth due to the Internet. Primary guidelines are size which must be art created on 2 ½ X 3 ½ inch or 64 X 89 mm card stock for the purpose of free trading not sale. See: <http://www.artist-trading-cards.ch/history.html>
- ACEOs: “Art Card, Editions and Originals” –an offshoot of ATCs with the only difference being specifically created for sale/ profit. *See EBay*
- Mechanical reproductions on reduced scale which are popular for artists working larger to market the smaller more affordable options.
- Any tiny artwork, figurine etc. Internet searches for miniature are typically filled with gaming and dollhouse miniatures.

Historic name threats:

- Small size/ scale paintings usually in oil often referred to as “paintings in little” these later were incorporated into the mainstream miniature genre and “in little” later covered the broad spectrum of media, technique and style. (see The New York Times, Jan.4, 1998 for an example of the latter incorporation)
- Hybrid works of drawing and painting. Introduced by Cosway and adopted by other miniaturists, the combination of a painted head on a drawn figure offered a larger format work at an affordable price. Pg. 188 The English Miniature

- Paintings rendered over top of faintly printed photographic images: (Miniature Revival c. 1900) "...was quickly exploited commercially by all sorts of incompetents, charlatans, and cheap department stores, who threw in a miniature or two with every cash purchase. These, of course, were nothing more than the cheapest and most tawdry kind of colored photographs, made to simulate a miniature..." The New York Times Nov.10, 1907; *see also* Pg. 223 Looking For Eulabee Dix; *see also* pg. 469 Miniatures Dictionary and Guide
- IVORYTYPES: Photographs in style and form mimicking the miniature art. Pg. 208 The English Miniature; *see also* Pg. 46 & 223 Looking For Eulabee Dix
- Especially prevalent at the time of the Revival period were amateurish "miniatures" rendered by tracing a photograph and attempting to copy its look. "...many wholly incompetent pretenders, who saw...a profitable field for the exploitation of their otherwise unsalable efforts. These have been the worst enemies of the art of miniature painting, and their inept, poorly drawn, and badly colored ivories have done much to instill in the minds of many the notion that a miniature cannot be a serious work of art." The New York Times Nov. 10, 1907 ; *see also* Pg 103 How To Identify Portrait Miniatures

² The Siegrist's annual exhibit schedule in the wildlife art field places them and their art in contact with between 40,000 and 60,000 people. The vast majority are unfamiliar with both contemporary and historic miniature art in the sense discussed in this article.

- Regarding current confusion over the term *see also* Pg. 17 Miniatures Dictionary and Guide

³ Sadly the same "demeaning attenuation of an age-old art form" according to Eulabee Dix was present at the turn of the century where miniature simply meant "little". Pg. 223 Looking For Eulabee Dix

⁴ Potential derivatives:

- "...a miniature is a portrait or scene, painted on a small scale and based upon technique...Originally these paintings were called *limnings* or *paintings in little*, and this term survived into the 17th century when the word *miniature* came into use. Pgs. 17-18 Miniatures Dictionary and Guide
- Portrait miniatures ultimately derived from two sources. One is the illuminated manuscript and small-scale portrait originally called "*limning*", a term derived from the word "*illumination*" and the second was the portrait medal. Pg. 14 American Portrait Miniatures in the Manney Collection
- "...the term '*miniatura*' came gradually to mean the picture painted by the artists as part of the illuminated book" Pg. 4 Dismissed Yet Dismaying *see also* Pg. 4 Miniatures
- "Little pictorial scenes...because of their size, called *mignature*. This word gradually became associated with tiny paintings." Pg. 14 Miniature Painting
- A pre-Revival period definition from 1877: "Miniature... a small portrait, on a small scale. Paintings by the *miniatori*, a set of monks noted for their paintings with *minium* or red lead. The first miniatures were the initial letters of rubrics, which generally contained the head of the Virgin or a saint, and hence the word came to signify a small likeness." Errors of Speech and of Spelling Pg. 662
- *Limnings/ miniator*: "these words pertained more to the miniature's detailed and realistic technique than to its size." Pg 16 Miniature Painting
- "Miniature" came from the Latin *minium*, the red paint used by the Benedictine monks, who were the *miniatori*, to decorate illuminated missals. Pg. 223 Looking For Eulabee Dix
- Hilliard used the term "limnatures" to refer to his isolated limnings. Pg. 79 The Way How To Lymne
- "...but, after a while, owing to the small dimensions of the work, the word became associated with the French word *mignature*, and so gradually was used with regard to paintings in little, which are with greater accuracy to be spoken of as "limnings." In process of time, the word has really lost its original meaning, and we now speak of a miniature bookcase, or miniature books, or of any object which is of small proportions, and we see the word miniature as an adjective to qualify it, and to express the sense that it is an exceedingly small example of its class. It is not easy to adopt a definition that will be simple and accurate for what we now call a miniature, perhaps the easiest way is to speak of a miniature as a portrait that can be held in one hand. It may perhaps be no bigger than the thumb-nail, it may perchance be as large as the palm of the hand, or even larger, but it must be a portable portrait, one that can be easily held and examined closely. It would be better, undoubtedly, if the use of the old word "limning" had survived.Pepys speaks of "paintings in little," and this is also a suitable phrase to apply to these small portraits, although perhaps an awkward one. "Limning" would be a better, but that also we have to trace back to the illuminated MSS. because the word is derived from the French word *enluminer* and that again is derived from the Latin *illuminare*, to paint. It is really impossible to lay down a hard and fast line at the present day for the use of the word, because we use the same word for portraits which differ as much as the tiny enamel by Petitot of Louis XIV which can be covered by an English farthing, and the portrait of Charles II at Goodwood which measures nine inches by seven, or the one of the three youths at Burghley which is about the same size, or the circular one of Henrietta Maria, in the Amsterdam Museum, which is over seven inches in diameter." Pg. 257 The Miniature Collector: A Guide for the Amateur Collector of Portrait Miniatures

- “The term *miniature* actually derived from the name of the red lead ink, *minium*,...and was a reference to technique rather than size” pg.1 Love and Loss American Portrait and Mourning Miniatures
- “Miniatures are not called miniatures because they are small. In the Tudor period miniatures were painted in watercolour on fine calf skin (vellum). This technique was called limning from the Latin *luminare* meaning to illuminate, and was related to the art of hand painting religious manuscripts, which today we call illuminations. The Italian for illumination is *miniatura* from the Latin *minium*, meaning red lead. The English adopted the word *miniatura* in place of limning in the 17th century, and because of the similarity to words indicating smallness such as 'minor', miniature came to mean small.” Portrait Miniatures of Elizabeth I (essay pg. 5)
- Portraits “in Littell” refer to small scale oil on copper works. Pg. 2 Love and Loss American Portrait and Mourning Miniatures; *see also* Pg. 66 European Miniatures in the Metropolitan Museum of Art

⁵ Heath emphasizes the influence of the Guttenberg Press on the changes in illumination leading to independent limnings. Pgs. 3 and 44 Miniatures

⁶ It would be much easier in the study of the evolution of the genre and the terminology itself if the scholars did not carry backwards into time terms that did not exist or represented an all together different meaning.

-A notable example would be the use of the term “miniature” in the preface of *The English Miniature* where the term is exclusively applied to the limning tradition of the 16th century on page v, noting the exclusion of other forms. The following page, vi, acknowledges changes in techniques and the developmental evolution of the term. *The English Miniature*

⁷ The terms *limnings* and *portraits in little* are popularly used today as synonymous with miniature. See endnote #4 for derivative notes on these terms.

⁸-Detached miniatures were already being executed in 15th century Flanders Pg.32 *The English Miniature*

- “French artist Jean Clouet, credited with the origination of the portrait miniature, further detached the devotional portrait from the manuscript page, creating a separate work of art.” Pg. 67 *European Portrait Miniatures in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*

-*see also*: Pg.1 Love and Loss American Portrait and Mourning Miniatures

-*see also*: Pg. 14 *American Portrait Miniatures in the Manney Collection*

- Miniature painting started in 16th century Britain. Pg. 20 *Miniatures Dictionary and Guide*

-“But it was not until the late 16th century that they came into their own as a singular art form, and were coveted tiny keepsakes or remembrances of people, events or other paintings.” *The New York Times*, Jan.4, 1998

⁹ - “The word ‘miniatures’ is commonly used for the individual pictures of the illuminated codices, but it would not be exact to consider ‘miniature painting’ as a synonym for ‘illumination’....It is only of late years that the word ‘miniature’ has been used in the restricted sense as applied to a small portrait. This usage of the term is due to its accidental confusion by the French writers with the French word *mignon* and the Latin *minus*.” *Reader in the History of Books and Printing*, Pg. 149

- Miniature had nothing to do with size until the 18th century when it assumed its current meaning. Pg. 14 *American Portrait Miniatures in the Manney Collection*

- “It was in the late 17th century that the word “miniature” came to be used to mean small painting.” Pg 11 *How to Paint Miniatures*

¹⁰ “...a new and radical approach to miniature painting was introduced. Small, oval portraits were replaced by larger, rectangular, densely painted works imitating oil paintings. Since rectangular miniatures were kept in folding cases or hung on the wall, the miniature lost its fundamental purpose as a personal memento to be worn or carried.” Pg. 13-14 *American Portrait Miniatures in the Manney Collection* *See also*: pg. 32; *see also* Pg. 18 *Miniatures Dictionary and Guide*

- Eulabee Dix mentions the larger format miniatures as “accommodated in apartments where life-size portraits were no longer suitable”. 206 *Looking For Eulabee Dix* ~ this is reminiscent of the works of Ross, Robertson, Carrick, Newton and Thorburn around 1840-1860 when they were competing with the conventional full-sized oil portraits both in look and function. Pgs. 199-209 *The English Miniature*

- Eulabee Dix and her contemporary miniaturists painted what they called “table portraits” in a larger format for display on parlor tables. Pg. 209 *Looking For Eulabee Dix*

¹¹ The date generally attributed to marking the end of the era of miniature art is c.1860. In 1865 a major exhibition of contemporary and historic miniatures was mounted in an effort to halt the impending crisis and revive public interest in the art. Regretfully the effort failed. Pgs. 208-209 *The English Miniature*

- “The majority of miniature painters of the present day do not in their work approach the excellence of the old masters, largely owing to the pernicious effect of photography on their art...”~Alyn Williams Pg. 103 *How to Identify Portrait Miniatures*

- “...the modern painter of small portraits labours under many disadvantages, and has many difficulties to content with....He has to face a long-continued degeneracy of the art and a perverted public taste, mainly due to photography.” Pg. 220 *Miniatures*

-“There is no lack of present-day interest in the art; it only lacks discretion and culture on the part of the public and robustness and individuality on the part of the artist.” Pg. 221 *Miniatures*

- Miniature Societies and Exhibitions today either specifically or general hold to the 1/6th scale guideline. The rule was conceived by the Miniature Art Society of New Jersey in 1970 and later adopted by the Miniature Art Society of Florida in 1974. In the words of the Societies’ Founder Bede Zel Angle: “Contemporary artists have made guidelines to miniature art to give it a competitive relationship. That is, primarily, the one-sixth rule” *MASF Exhibition Catalog 1975*. Miniature Societies today

generally agree that miniature is defined by a surface area of 24-25 square inches or less. It should be noted that one of the two oldest societies, the RMS, has gradually lowered their acceptable sizes for exhibited miniatures (due to space constraints) from 12x10" in 1896 to 6x4½" today. Their scale rule specifies a human head or single object to be 2 inches or less.

- The formal formation of two miniature societies in England in 1896 is recognized as the start of the Revival Period.

- For information on Societies and organizations of the Revival Period see: <http://www.artofwildlife.com/miniaturesocieties.html>
¹² see Pg. 3-4 The Way How to Lymne

- A prime example of trying to define "miniature" using just one of the three components and its resulting confusion in the modern day can be seen in Willies assertion "... as long as the miniature technique is observed, a wall could be painted in miniature..." Pg. 13 Miniature Painting

¹³ These three elements are either implicitly or explicitly part of the "miniature":

TECHNIQUE:

- "The Miniaturist's method – precise, exquisite brushwork..." Pg. 14 American Portrait Miniatures in the Manney Collection

- Murrell states "the only proper definition of miniature painting is in terms of its specialization and minuteness of technique; a technique which is common to no other type of painting and which appears flawless even on the closest observation" Pg. 4 The Way How to Lymne

- 16th and 17th century miniaturists' techniques were closely allied to limning until the introduction of ivory in the 18th century as a base which facilitated an adaptation of techniques Pgs. 20-21 Miniatures Dictionary and Guide

- "The term miniature relates first of all to technique and identification and only secondly to the size of a painting" Pg. 13 Willies

- "The real tradition of miniatures is not that of the 'mignard' portrait, treated as the work of ants-so reduced as to be only a curious trifle. The real tradition is that of that of the artistic miniature-a small picture which is valuable as showing the talent and originality of the artist..." Francois Monod as quoted in Looking for Eulabee Dix, Pg. 191

- The Miniature was meant for close observation and intense scrutiny. Pg. 15 Dismissed Yet Dismaying

- "...miniatures are not just small paintings." "detail should be seen in the closest inspection" Pg. 13 How to Paint Miniatures

- Emily Drayton Taylor discusses the refinement of painting miniatures contrasting with larger works and notes a lack of obtrusive brushwork. Heirlooms in Miniature, Pg. 240

SIZE:

- "Miniature painting is literally what the word signifies, a 'painting in little,'..." Heirlooms in Miniature, Pg. 227

- "...the dimensions of which alone increase the difficulty one hundred fold" Pg. 81 Miniatures

- "...the term implies a small painting" Despite a variety of sizes "...these paintings cannot be larger than conveniently held in the hand." Pg. 18 Miniatures Dictionary and Guide

- "Miniatures were usually small enough to hold in the palm of the hand" Pg. 7 Love and Loss American Portrait and Mourning Miniatures

- "The size of a miniature is traditionally described as small enough to carry in a person's hand, pocket or bag. But this implies that sizes can vary enormously.... Presumably, as long as the miniature technique is observed, a wall could be painted in miniature, even though the preciousness of the hand-held miniature would be lost." Pg. 13 Miniature Painting (see endnote #12)

- Williamson did not attempt to define "miniature" but concentrated his efforts specifically on the portrait miniatures "painted in little," as these fascinating pictures were originally termed; with minute representations of the human face and form... of such size to be easily carried in a pocket" Pg. 2 Portrait Miniatures: From the Time of Holbein 1531 to that of Sir William Ross 1860

- Size has varied over the course of miniature painting history but it's generally agreed that the works cannot be larger than can conveniently be held in the hand. Pg. 18 Miniatures Dictionary and Guide

- The portrait miniature... is a small painting... the term "miniature" later evolved to reference the size of the standard portrait miniature, typically less than three inches in height and width. Pg. 13 Dismissed Yet Dismaying

- "Portraits in miniature... dimensions encompass a range from the truly diminutive to a painting too large to put in a pocket but small enough to be passed around a dinner table." Pg. 1 "Surrounded with Brilliants" Essay

- SMALL SCALE:

- "Portrait miniatures were unique, personal works on account of their small scale and easy portability." – Mark Evans, Victoria & Albert Museum, London – Country Living Magazine, Nov. 2006, Pg. 59

- "The form of the miniature and its small scale are in favor of its general revival..." The New York Times, Feb. 9, 1913

- "Because of their delicacy and small scale, miniatures were often left unsigned." Pg. 7 American Portrait Miniatures in the Manney Collection

- The genre of miniature - "fine original art in small scale" (preface ix) Miniature Art Society of Florida Catalog of the Collection

- Revival period miniatures were "...so remarkable that the effect suggested a gallery of finely studied life-size portraits seen through a diminishing-glass" – Century Magazine, Vol. 60 Pg. 824

- "A Miniature is a portrait or scene, painted on a small scale and based on the technique handed down from the illuminators of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries." "...the term implies a small painting". Pg. 18 Miniatures Dictionary and Guide

- Miniatures assumed the meaning of "small-scale portrait" in the 18th century / method was precise, exquisite brushwork Pg. 14 How to Paint Miniatures

-“Portraits in minimal” and “indulge in fanciful pictures on a small scale” New York Times press release Feb. 3rd, 1901 ~ Highlighting the 2nd Exhibition of the American Society of Miniature Painters.

- “Modeled after similar English Societies, the American miniaturists set out to re-establish ‘painting in little’ as an art form separate from imitative photographs...For good reason, miniatures are called the ‘jewelry’ of portraiture” Pgs.46-47 Looking for Eulabee Dix

- “subjects...should be less than life size” Pg. 16 The Techniques of Painting Miniatures

- Wood suggests finely detailed techniques and the miniaturizing of any subject (the scaling down) Pgs. 7-8 Painting Miniatures

-“The art of painting on a small scale in minute detail...” Pg. 7 How to Paint Miniatures

-“...painting in miniature is made challenging by the constraints of medium and scale” Pg.10 Love and Loss American Portrait and Mourning Miniatures

- (Diary of Samuel Pepys ~ Jan. 25th 1660/61): “...Mr. Salisbury’s coming in, who came to see me and to show me my Lord’s picture in little, of his doing.”

(Diary of Samuel Pepys ~ Feb.20th 1662): “Went by promise to Mr. Savill’s and there sat the first time for my picture in little, which pleased me well”

(Diary of Samuel Pepys ~ May 3rd 1662): “Thence, at the goldsmith’s, took my picture in little,—[Miniature by Savill]—which is now done, home with me, and pleases me exceedingly and my wife.”

(Diary of Samuel Pepys ~ May 15th 1663, pg. 139): “Sir Thomas showed me his picture..., in Croyon (pastel) in little, done exceedingly well.”

Shakespeare uses the phrase “picture in little” in exactly this way (Hamlet II, 2, 268-272)

¹⁴ Many Revival Period miniaturists typically eschewed the traditional meticulous techniques in favor of more “artsy” styles and developments. But there were still some who practiced the old ways. (see note 28 on page 51) Pg.49 Dismissed Yet Disarming

¹⁵ Portrait miniatures differ fundamentally from larger works in their nature of begging for closer inspection of details and their function of being worn or cherished in private. Pgs.1, 34 Love and Loss American Portrait and Mourning Miniatures

-“The companionable proportions of the miniature portrait make peculiar appeal to our affections” Pg. 2 Miniatures

-“Miniature paintings make demands. They invite close scrutiny and, en masse, draw viewers into their world. They’re so minute and detailed, they generate a different perception,” said Barbara Scribner, director of public information at the Stamford Museum and Nature Center. “That’s their attraction. You have to marvel at the skill.”- New York Times, Jan.4, 1998

-“Public taste rightly demands that a miniature should be highly finished. A portrait of such small dimensions is handled at close range and studied with leisured care.” Pg. 221 Miniatures

¹⁶ - see endnote #1 about the drawing/ painting hybrids

¹⁷ Pg.7 Love and Loss American Portrait and Mourning Miniatures

¹⁸-“It was rather large for a miniature, measuring about 8in.x5in, but was painted in miniature fashion...” The Miniature Collector: A Guide for the Amateur Collector of Portrait Miniatures Pg. 257; Pg. 79 How to Identify Portrait Miniatures

¹⁹ - Roy Strong discusses the early large-scale miniatures of the late 16th century (limited roughly to the decade c.1585 to c. 1595) and comments that such extended formats strike one less as miniatures but more as precursors of the English Watercolor School. Pg. 54 The English Miniature *see also* Pg. 72 “miniature on a huge scale”.

-Patrick J. Noon highlights the “new style of miniature painting” introduced by Andrew Robertson and his followers in the early 1800’s which featured far larger formats and greater depth in color as an effort to compete in the market of full-scale oil portraits. The difficulties in working in such a large format are noted and interestingly the adaptations to fit the market, though well received, were not enough to stave of the decline of the miniature. He delineates the resulting changes in artistic technique, style and market competition to emphasize the futility of work in miniature on such a scale. Pgs. 198-207 The English Miniature

- NY Times article highlighting the ASMP Exhibition notes several unusually large miniatures are potentially attempting to counteract getting “lost” among large scale works. Note the introduction of display cases to both contain and highlight the miniatures. New York Times, April 2,1916

²⁰ Pg. 63 Miniatures

- Comments about Thorburn’s larger miniatures imitating oil paintings Pg. 82 How to Identify Portrait Miniatures

²¹ - Pg 62 A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning

-“Frances Duncan in writing of Miss Hills’ work said: “Her portraits are not large portraits done small, but essentially miniature; they have that exquisite jewel-like quality peculiar to the miniature in the hands of the few masters of this exquisite and lovely art, the quality which will make miniature painting a thing apart.”” Biographical Sketches of American Artists Pg. 85

-“It would indeed be sad to witness the extinction of an art which can, “in the hands of a master, pack the story of a lifetime into a few square inches...” ~ Dr. Johnson Pg. 235 The Antiquary

- “The best definition can be achieved by looking at the work of miniature art masters.” Pg. 16 The Techniques of Painting Miniatures; *see also* The New York Times Nov. 10, 1907

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