



Press release: February 2019

**'Jewel in the Hand: Early Miniatures from Noble and Private Collections'**  
**An Exhibition at Philip Mould & Company**

12<sup>th</sup> March – 18<sup>th</sup> April 2019



Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617) *A Gentleman in damascened armour*, watercolour and bodycolour on vellum, gold and blue enameled locket, oval, 2.1 in (54 mm) high

**Philip Mould & Company are delighted to announce 'Jewel in the Hand: Early Miniatures from Noble and Private Collections' 12<sup>th</sup> March – 18<sup>th</sup> April.** This exhibition has gathered 30 of the finest portrait miniatures produced in England between 1570-1620 housed in noble and

private collections for generations. Many of the works that will be on display at Philip Mould & Company are not ordinarily on view to the public and a select few have never been publicly exhibited. Hidden away and fiercely guarded in private collections, in some cases for centuries, *Jewel in the Hand* marks a rare opportunity to gaze upon relics of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Courts.

There will be examples by the most important artists of the period, including Elizabeth I's image-maker Nicholas Hilliard, Isaac and Peter Oliver. This intricate and highly detailed artform was primarily confined to courtly circles and Royalty. *Jewel in the Hand* will showcase portraits of Tudor and Stuart monarchs including the boy King and son of Henry VIII, Edward VI, the 'Virgin Queen', Elizabeth I, King James VI / I and his wife Anne of Denmark alongside members of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Nobility.



Attributed to Levina Teerlinck (1510-76), *Portrait of King Edward VI*, (1550), watercolour on ivory set in an ivory turned case, circular, 43 mm high

At the Courts of Elizabeth and James the miniature became a powerful social and political tool of exchange but also came to be seen as an outward expression of one's taste and fashion. As the uses for these minute artworks evolved over time so too did the way in which they were displayed. During the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods wearing the miniature as part of one's dress became a standard practice and an important symbol of devotion to the sitter.

*Jewel in the Hand* is a unique chance to see some of the earliest portrait miniatures displayed as they would have been originally worn. Incorporating historic costume generously on loan to Philip Mould & Company by the Royal Shakespeare Company, a select number of the miniatures on display will be affixed to items of historic clothing and shown next to examples of original lacework from the period.

**Emma Rutherford, Portrait Miniatures Specialist and Consultant at Philip Mould & Company has said:**

‘Setting these early portrait miniatures against the type of costume and accessories that would have originally surrounded them shows them in a completely new light. These small jewels played such a key role in the political and social whirl of the Elizabethan and Jacobean court – hopefully to see them in context will deepen our understanding of how they were originally used.’

**Philip Mould has said:**

‘Great Miniatures such as these crystallise Tudor and early Jacobean mystique. Artists like Hilliard and Oliver provide a visual dimension to Shakespearean England. We are very grateful to the lenders for allowing us to display some of these objects within an exhibition that will show how they once magically performed.’

**Context of the Portrait Miniature in England**

Having flourished at the court of King Henry VIII (1509-47) as an artform distinct from illuminated manuscripts, Portrait Miniatures (*limning*) truly won the favour of court and nobility during the reign of his daughter, Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603) and her successor King James VI / I (1603-25). Indeed, the late-Tudor and Jacobean miniatures produced at this time secured the fate of this intimate, jewel-like form of painting among Royal and noble circles as one of the most popular artistic expressions in England for centuries to come. The late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries laid these foundations and it is to the work of three primary artists to which we now attribute the success of the portrait miniature’s meteoric rise to fame at this time; Nicholas Hilliard (1547? - 1619), his pupil Isaac Oliver (c.1565-1617) and his son Peter Oliver (circa 1589-1647).

**When**

12<sup>th</sup> March – 18<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Monday – Friday 09:30 – 18:00

\*Please note that the gallery will be closed on 26<sup>th</sup> March due to filming\*

**Where**

18-19 Pall Mall

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