

Portrait of Mrs FitzGerald

John Downman



Description

John Downman, A.R.A. (1750-1824)
Portrait of Mrs FitzGerald

Signed with initials and dated lower left of original backboard: J D 1807 and inscribed lower right on original backboard: Mrs Fitzgerald from Ireland/Fancy dress

Pencil, brush and ink and watercolour and stump

27 by 21 cm., 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ by 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Provenance:

Anonymous sale, Christie's South Kensington, London, 11 December 2007, lot 555;

With Abbott and Holder, London, where bought by the father of the present owner

The inscription 'Mrs Fitzgerald from Ireland' suggests that this may be a portrait of Mary Frances Fitzgerald (1779-1855) who married her cousin the MP John Fitzgerald (1775-1852) in 1801. She was the daughter and heiress of John Fitzgerald of Little Island, Waterford and was renowned for her beauty. After her marriage she lived at Bredfield near Woodbridge, Suffolk. He became MP for Seaford in Sussex while his wife spent her time socialising in London and Brighton and they eventually separated. She was painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence in 1825 and also by Thomas Phillips. Their son was the poet Edward Fitzgerald (1809-1883) best known for his translation of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.