Basic Detail Report

Hugh Jones

Date
1777

Primary Maker
Joseph Blackburn

Medium
oil on canvas

Description
Hugh Jones is a three-quarter-length portrait. The seated figure is turned three-quarters left, with his blue eyes looking toward the viewer. He is an alert elderly man wearing a white wig, which is parted in the middle. The face is modeled in blended yellows, reds, and grays, and the cheeks are painted in a rosy pink over peach flesh tones. The sitter wears a reddish-brown coat and breeches, apparently made of wool. The collarless coat is adorned simply with cloth-covered buttons, the top three of which are unfastened. The proper right cuff is folded back and secured by two more buttons. A plain white neck cloth is tied at the neck and secured near the fringed ends with a band. The ruffled white cuffs of the shirtsleeves are visible on each hand. A brass buckle secures the cuff of the breeches. The figure is seated in a green upholstered chair with a low, gently arching back. The upper portion of the chair frame, including the arms, is painted the same green as the upholstery. Below the seat, the frame and legs of the chair are dark brown. The sitter is working at a table draped with a green cloth. With his proper left hand, the man holds against his thigh a yellow bag, which is gathered at the top. The forward edge of the bag and the knuckles are highlighted. In his proper right hand he holds a quill pen, the point of which rests on the top sheet of paper in a stack of documents. The front edge of the sheet curls up slightly to reveal a manuscript note that is only partially visible but appears to include the tops of characters spelling out a date, perhaps "October 10 [or 18 or 19]." Although partially obscured, the letters on the next document in the stack appear to spell "Charles Morgan Es." A red ribbon binds together the next eight documents. Below these papers is a volume of lavender-edged pages bound with a yellow-brown cover and inscribed, on the spine, "Abstracts of Ruperra/Rentalls/From ye year/1725 to Octob/24th—1777." The bottom sheet of paper on the table is partly tucked under the volume; its front corner hangs over the edge of the table, and its left corner turns up sharply, creating a deep shadow in the fold. This trompe l'oeil element is inscribed with the artist's signature and the date 1777. Behind and to the left of these objects is a gray inkwell, probably pewter, holding a second quill that continues beyond the edge of the canvas. The background is dark brown. Level with the man's chest there are two ridges that appear to define the upper molding of wainscoting.

Dimensions
canvas: 128.3 x 102.2 cm (50 1/2 x 40 1/4 in.)