Basic Detail Report

Charles Willing

Date
1746

Primary Maker
John Wollaston the younger

Medium
oil on canvas

Description
Dark-painted spandrels in the four corners create an oval frame for this bust view of Charles Willing. He is turned slightly to the viewer’s left and wears a powdered gray queue wig with two tight, horizontal curls on each side and a black bow at the nape of his neck. Black, gray, and white brushstrokes are apparent in the wig. The artist carefully shaded Willing’s white neck cloth with a gray-blue paint. He wears a brown velvet coat, which is unbuttoned to reveal a waistcoat of the same material and color, fastened with six brown buttons. Five brown buttons are visible on the left side of the coat, six large buttonholes on the right. The right edges of the buttons are slightly highlighted with yellowish-tan paint. The same color was boldly used to suggest the highlights along the outside of the sitter’s left arm as well as along the inside of that arm and across the top two buttonholes. Similar highlights appear above, below, and through the fastened buttons on the waistcoat, indicating folds in the fabric. The sitter’s face is large and round. His eyebrows were formed with brown and gray strokes of paint, beneath which some flesh-colored paint can be seen. The eyelids are obscured with gray paint, but a reddish-brown line marks the bottom of the lids. Willing’s eyes are blue. The iris and large pupil are oval. A small dot of white opaque paint appears in the upper right of each pupil. In the corner of the left eye is a daub of flesh-colored paint. A white highlight running the length of the nose ends, at the tip, with a circular daub of paint. A dark, reddish-brown shadow falls along the left side of the nose. Reddish-brown shadows from the wig are visible at the hairline on both sides of the sitter’s face and below his double chin. His cheeks are red. His lips are full and appear to be outlined in gray; there is a pronounced indentation in the upper lip. The background is made up of varying shades of gray. For instance, below Willing’s face and to his left the background is relatively light, with areas of pink blended into the gray. The background becomes a darker gray at the lower left.

Dimensions
canvas: 75.6 x 62.2 cm (29 3/4 x 24 1/2 in.)