S.J. PHILLIPS



Louis XVI vari-coloured gold mounted tortoiseshell and portrait miniature box by Francois Delanoy, Paris 1779, the miniature of the Comte d'Angiviller by Jean-Baptiste Weyler (French 1747-1791),

the round box with detachable cover having tortoiseshell panels, the cover inset with the oval bust-length portait of the Comte facing right wearing a lilac jacket over a green waistcoat and frilled shirt, the frame and rims with entwined circle and dot scroll bands in lemon gold on yellow, the sides with upper foliate scroll rim, lyre uprights, the base centred by a foliate rosette, gold lined, inscribed to lid interior: 'LE COMTE D'ANGIVILLER DIRECTEUR GL. DES ARTS. EMAIL PAR WEYLER. 1779', contemporary fitted case.

Charles-Claude Flahaut de La Billarderie, Comte d'Angiviller (1730-1810) was a soldier and statesman born in French Saint-Remy-en-Water in Beauvais. He enjoyed a distinguished military career under King Louis XV and rose to the rank of brigadier. He was a personal friend of King Louis XVI and was appointed Director General of the King's Buildings, Arts, Manufactures and Gardens in 1774. He was a main proponent of neoclassicism and paintings illustrating important moments in French history and lifesize sculptures of the great men of France were commissioned by the government to restore a noble style and serious content to the arts of the nation. From the mid-1770s he was charged with opening up the royal art collections to the public and planned to use the Grande Galerie of the Louvre for this purpose, but the French revolution intervened before the project could be started. Accused of embezzling public funds he left France in 1790 and died in a convent in Germany in 1810.

As d'Angiviller was responsible for the distribution of the royal commissions, he became subject to permanent flattery and was frequently portrayed. Jean-Baptiste Weyler's admission piece at the French Royal Academy on 25 September 1779 was a large half-length enamel portrait miniature of d'Angiviller, now in the Louvre (illustrated in L. Schidlof, Die Bildnisminiatur in Frankreich im XVII., XVIII. und XIX. Jahrhundert, Vienna/Leipzig, 1911, pl. III). A bust-length enamel version, from the Felix Doistau collection, is also in the Louvre (Inv. RF 5101). A variant, in watercolour and gouache on ivory, signed and dated 1780, was in the D. David-Weill and Sir Charles Clore collections (illustrated and described in L. Gillet, C. Jeannerat and H. Clouzot, Miniatures and enamels from the D. David-Weill Collection,

Paris, 1957, pp. 324-325, no. 212, and sold Sotheby's, London, 10 November 1986, lot 99).
Diameter 7.3cms / 2 7/8"
Weight: 134.5g