

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

BARRET, George

Dublin 1728/32 – London brd 14.III.1784

Landscape artist who worked in various media, including occasionally pastel. The son of a clothier, he was apprenticed to a stay-maker before becoming a pupil of Robert West by 1747, when he won a prize and (according to Crookshank & Glin 1994) was, among West's pupils, "by far the finest draughtsman in both black and white, in watercolour and in gouache", although they thought he did not use pastel.

George Barrett "Landskip painter" and Frances Percy of the parish of St Ann, Dublin, spinster were married on 30.IX.1757. She was the granddaughter of a lord mayor of Dublin. Three sons of their nine children became painters. A lease of a property in Brabazon Street, Dublin, dated 29.X.1757 (Irish deeds index, no. 131977), lists as joint lessors Frances Percy and her sisters and their husbands (presumably acquired as heirs of their father Robert Percy): Henrietta and Colonel William Tenison of Finglas; Elizabeth and Patrick Shee; and Catherine and Mary Percy, both unmarried. Barret was still in Dublin, at Hog Hill, in 1761, but the following year he moved to London, in Orchard Street before settling in Westbourne Green, Paddington in 1772 where he died in 1784. The register for St James's Paddington records the burial on 14.III.1784 of "George Barret (an eminent Landscape Painter; & worthy Man!"

He was taken up by Edmund Burke, who encouraged him to draw from nature. His landscapes were made popular through engravings but do not seem to have been financially successful. They were not received with unanimous praise: Walpole's annotations of various exhibits include "some merit" (1767), "well" (1768) and "this whole set of pictures was the Worst that had been exhibited" (1764). In contrast, in a letter from London by Jean-Claude Pingeron in the *Journal d'agriculture* for .IV.1768, p. 84, he and Wilson (*q.v.*) were named as the two best landscape painters. Records of his landscapes in gouache are apt to have been misdescribed, although a couple of surviving examples do seem to be in pastel.

Bibliography

Alexander 2021; Bénézit; Crookshank & Glin 1978; Crookshank & Glin 1994; Dictionary of Irish biography; Edwards 1808; Figgis 2014; Oxford DNB; Strickland 1913

Pastels

J.1282.101 Cattle in a wooded landscape, ?Powerscourt, pstl/prepared canvas, 40.4x58.5 (London, Sotheby's, 1.IV.1993; London, Christie's, 20.V.1999, Lot 143 repr., est. £3–5000, £3000 [=£3450]; John Ross; London, Christie's, 14.XI.2019, Lot 42 repr., est. £3–5000) φσ



J.1282.103 River landscape with three fawns, pstl/ppr, 35.5x52 (Dublin, De Veres, 22.VI.1999, Lot 92 repr., est. Ir£1500–2500, Ir£2700) φ

