

# Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

## Online edition

### BRÉA, Charles-Paul-Jérôme de

Rouen 1739 – Paris 1820

While there is considerable confusion about Bréa, and while it is by no means certain that the Carnavalet and Versailles pastels are by the same hand, it seems likely that one figure sold pictures and also produced prints, miniatures and enamel portraits, as well as some pastels. A painting in the church of Saint-Sever in his native Rouen, signed and dated 1745, is presumably by a member of his family (possibly also responsible for a 1754 female portrait reported in 1905). Bréa's first known pastels, from 1765–66, have a somewhat provincial feel, and may predate his arrival in Paris, documented on his first wife's death certificate (23.I.1770).

According to an announcement in the *Avant-Coureur* (7.I.1771, pp. 7f, followed also in the *Mercur de France*, III.1771, pp. 179f):

Le Sr Bréa, Peintre en huile & en pastel, tenant boutique à Paris, rue Plâtrière, devant la grande Poste, se flatte d'avoir trouvé le secret de fixer le pastel & le dessin au crayon, & de leur donner un coup-d'œil permanente & beaucoup plus beau. On peut voir chez lui des pastels qu'il a fixés, & d'assurer de la solidité de son secret en passant, dessus la main ou même une pierre-ponce sans que la couleur en soit altérée. Le Sr Bréa enseigne le dessin, tient Collection de Tableaux en huile Italiens, Flamans & Français, & fait des envois en Province.

He was included in the *Liste générale des maîtres peintres... de Saint-Luc* of 1771 as a "peintre en huile et au pastel, inventeur du secret de fixer le pastel"; rue de Grenelle-Saint-Honoré, then rue du Dauphin. In 1786–92 he resided at rue Montmartre, vis-à-vis Saint-Joseph, then at the nearby rue du Croissant, an address given on one miniature and several engravings. The subjects of his engravings included portraits by Mme Vigée Le Brun (Calonne, published in London in 1802) and Greuze (Franklin) as well as genre or galant pieces (Greuze, Lavreince), and there are miniature versions of some of these. Greuze mentions a miniature copy of his 1791 portrait of Mme Deviette to be made by "de Bréa, peintre en miniature" for a snuffbox in a letter of 13 prairial an IX (2.VI.1801, cited Vaillat 1912, p. 88). Bréa was among the artists and scientists awarded support (2000 livres) by the Convention nationale on 3.I.1795.

Schidlof believes he may have studied with Hall, whose style in miniature painting he occasionally resembled closely. The same cannot be said for his pastels, which range from a fairly primitive level in the mid-1760s to the highly finished portrait of the philosopher Laromiguière of 1813 (on the back of which Bréa is described as "ancien peintre du comte d'Artois", but this is not corroborated).

### Bibliography

Bénézit; Chatelus 1991, p. 72f; *Oeuvres de M.-J. Chénier*, Paris, 1826, v, p. 187; Goncourt; Guiffrey 1915, p. 205; *L'Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, 10.VII.1905, LI, col. 6; Lemoine-Bouchard 2008; Michel 2008; New York 1996, pp. 93f; Ratouis de Limay 1946; Salmon 1997a; Sanchez 2004; Saur; Schidlof 1964–65; Thieme & Becker

### Pastels

M. BURARD, docteur en médecine, pstl, 64x53 ov., sd \ "Bréa/1787" (Paris, Hôtel Dassault, Artcurial, 19.VI.2007, Lot 16 n.r., est. €800–1200)

Pierre LAROMIGUIÈRE (1756–1837), pstl/ppr br., 60x49, sd \ 1813 (Versailles MV 4828. M. de Chabrier; Louis-Philippe; dep. Louvre, 25045). Exh.: Versailles 1997, no. 35. Lit.: Salmon 1997a, no. 46 repr. φ



Michel-Philippe dit Théophile MANDAR (1759–1823), écrivain, homme politique, pstl/ppr, 54x44.5 ov., sd "Bréa 1792"; & pendant: épouse, pstl/ppr, 54x44 ov. (Paris, musée Carnavalet, D.9032. Legs Mme Veuve Moreau 1935). Exh.: Paris 1984a. Lit.: Montgolfier 1982, no. 7/8 repr. ⬢



Photos courtesy musée Carnavalet

Homme avec une carte, pstl/ppr, 63x53, sd → "peint par Bréa – 1765" (Paris, Thierry de Maigret, 7.VI.2002, Lot 1 repr., est. €1500–2000, b/i; Paris, Thierry de Maigret, 6.XII.2002, Lot 54, est. €1200–1500, €1200) ⬢



Homme en habit noir, pstl, 62x51, sd \ 1766 (Bordeaux, Jean Dit Cazaux-Sahuquet-Royère, 17.IV.2008, Lot 55 repr., est. €1000–1200) φ



Jeune fille en robe rose tenant un oiseau, pstl, 59x47 ov., s ← "de Bréa" (Anita Semail; vente p.m., Paris, Drouot, Choppin de Janvry, 30.III.2009, Lot 96 n.r., est. €1200–1500, €4800) φ

Venus and a nymph confiscating Cupid's flaming arrows, pstl, 59x47 (New Orleans, Neal Auction, 4.III.2006, Lot 523 repr., est. \$1200–1800, b/i; New Orleans, Neal Auction, 23.VII.2006, Lot 1062 repr., est. \$1000–1500, \$686) φ

