

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

EISEN, Charles-Dominique-Joseph

Valenciennes 17.VIII.1720 – Bruxelles 4.I.1778
Several members of this family share the name Charles and were attached to the Académie de Saint-Luc. Charles-Dominique-Joseph was the son of the painter and engraver François, or Frans, Eisen and his wife, née Marie-Marguerite Ganse. He moved to Paris around 1740 and worked in Lebas's studio, mainly as a draughtsman, producing book illustrations. His admission to the Académie de Saint-Luc was delayed for two years in a dispute over whether his talent entitled him to a reduced fee; he won a legal case and was admitted without fee in 1750.

He was supported by Mme de Pompadour, to whom he gave drawing lessons; she engraved several drawings by him, exhibited at the Salon de Saint-Luc in 1752. He was professeur de dessin des cheveau-légers de la garde du roi (four volumes of drawings for a collection of *État des troupes*... for the marquis de Paulmy are known, 1756–58: BnF, ms 4472–75), and he was a member of the académie at Rouen. In 1774, he was appointed assistant rector of the Académie de Saint-Luc. Mme Filleul (*q.v.*) presented a portrait in oil of him as her reception piece in the Salon de l'Académie de Saint-Luc of that year. He married an Anne Aubert at Paris, Saint-Séverin, 20.IX.1745, with Jean Chevalier (*q.v.*) as witness. She was 10 years older than him, and it is thought that his departure to Brussels shortly before his death in reduced circumstances may have been due to an affair a younger woman, Marie-Charlotte Martin. The Paris index des scellés (AN Y15) nevertheless recorded the application of seals on 13.I.1778.

Eisen is perhaps best known for book illustrations (notably for the Fermiers généraux edition of *La Fontaine*) but he also made numerous drawings, decorative paintings and other works in varied genres and media. The only known pastels seem to be têtes de vieillards which may have had a tutorial role (he left a number of oil studies of vieillards in the same manner).

Bibliography

Bénézit; Goncourt 1880, II, pp. 139–80, Grove; Guiffrey 1915, pp. 283–87; Jal; Lemoine-Bouchard 2008; Claire Lemoine-Isabeau, “Les peintures de Charles Eisen”, *Gazette des beaux-arts*, .X.1961, p. 223–36; Sanchez 2004; Saur

Pastels

J.2992.101 Vieillard de profil, à g., pstl/ppr, 55.4x44, sd √ “Eisen 1774” (Valenciennes, mBA, inv. D.46.2.460. Don Desquenue 1935) Φσ



Photo courtesy musée des Beaux-Arts de Valenciennes, © Régis Decottignies

J.2992.121 Tête de vieillard barbu, ?apôtre; & pendant: J.2992.121 autre, pstl/ppr, 31.5x23.5, sd ✓ “Ch Eisen fecit/1769” (PC 2024; Fontainebleau, Osenat, 27.I.2024, Lot 131 repr., est. €3000–4000, €8568) φ

