

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

GOUNOD, François-Louis

Paris 1757–1823

The son of a fourbisseur du roi, Nicolas-François Gounod, the artist was born in the galleries du Louvre, apparently on 20.III.1757, although 1758 appears in most reference works. He was a pupil of Lépicié, whose portrait of his 10 year old protégé was in the Gounod family collection. He competed for prizes at the Académie royale from 1778, winning first prize in 1779 and taking the prix d'expression three times (1782, for L'Étonnement, 1783, for La Surprise mêlée de joie, and 1785, La Contemplation). He left for Rome in 1788, with the following introduction from d'Angiviller to Ménageot: "Le s^r Gounod, qui cultive depuis plusieurs années la peinture et qui a gagné plusieurs prix d'expression étant sur le point de partir pour Rome, m'a paru mériter un encouragement particulier et, d'autant plus, que chargé d'un père infirme depuis bien des années, il sacrifie tout pour le soutenir et le reste de sa famille. J'ai donc jugé à propos de lui accorder la pension du Roi à l'Académie de Rome, où il sera comme surnuméraire mais, d'ailleurs, jouissant de tous les avantages des autres pensionnaires." His examiners were generally favourable, Ménageot reporting on 15.IX.1790 that "La figure du s^r Gounod est d'un joli ensemble, d'un dessin très fin et d'une couleur agréable, quoiqu'un peu blanche. Elle est beaucoup mieux que celle de l'année dernière, mais il a besoin de beaucoup peindre et surtout de composer." After a trip to Naples with the architect Jean-Baptiste-Louis Le Faivre, Gounod returned to Paris in 1792, where he ultimately became professeur de dessin à l'École des pages du roi.

Writing of a striking pastel in the Louvre, Ratouis de Limay (in a long entry) praised "la fermeté de son modelé, l'harmonie et le finesse de son coloris, l'intensité de l'expression"; traditionally described (based on an illegible inscription) as of the "marquis de Wailly, fermier général", it could be of the elder brother of the architect Charles de Wailly.

Gounod exhibited numerous portraits in unspecified media in the Salons from 1799 to 1822, and is known to have practised in oil, engraving and lithography as well as pastel, but only a handful of works are known in the latter medium. In 1806 he married Victoire Le Machois; it seems that his health declined over the following two years. The composer Charles Gounod (1818–1893) reports that his father had been considered one of the most talented draughtsmen of his generation, but he lacked energy and had difficulty finishing his portraits.

Gounod's posthumous sale, in 1824, included two Chardin pastels from the Silvestre collection, as well as 23 pastels (of which 10 glazed) and 36 chalk drawings, some mixed with pastel (8 glazed), supposedly by La Tour; and another 6 chalk studies with pastel by Charles Le Brun. The unattributed lot 13 is presumably his own work. Lot 15 was a life-size female mannequin, dressed in a *tricot de soie*, by M. Gallois, while Lot 16 included boîtes de pastels as well as other artist materials. He is described on the title page as "Peintre, ancien Pensionnaire de l'École de France à Rome,

Dessinateur du Cabinet de Feu S. A. R. Mgr le Duc de Berry, et Maître à dessiner de MM. les Pages du Roi"; the catalogue has a useful biographical note.

Bibliography

Bellier de La Chavignerie & Auvray; Chardin 1979; Duviérier 1861; Gounod 1896; Lassus Saint-Geniès 1963; Anatole de Montaiglon, notice bibliographique, in Renouvier 1863; Paris 1957a; Ratouis de Limay 1929d; Ratouis de Limay 1929e; Ratouis de Limay 1946; Sanchez 2004; Vente p.m., Paris, hôtel de Bullion, 23.II.1824

Pastels

André-Gaspard-Parfait, comte de BIZEMONT Prunelé (1752–1837), chevalier de Saint-Louis et de Saint-Lazare, chef d'escadron au régiment du Maine, adjoint au maire d'Orléans, dessinateur amateur, m/u, XIX^e
~grav.: pour Émile Davoust, *Le Comte de Bizemont, artiste-amateur orléanais, son œuvre et ses collections*, Orléans, 1891

Benjamin DUVIVIER (1730–1819), graveur général des monnaies, pstl, 46.5x37.9, s "Gounod", 1789 (Louvre inv. RF 12008. H. Nocq; Paris, Drouot, 2.III.1929, Lot 133, part). Exh.: Paris 1933d, no. 184; Paris 1949, no. 67; Versailles 1955, no. 301; Paris, 1957a, no. 31. Lit.: Ratouis de Limay 1929d; G. Rouchès, "Un pastel de J.-L.-F. Gounod", *Bulletin des musées de France*, 1929/4, pp. 68f repr.; Monnier 1972, no. 55 φ



~cop. Lequien, pstl (Paris, musée de la Monnaie)

M. LE PICARD (1757–1819), secrétaire général du ministère de la justice, pstl, 55x46, sd "Gounodf/1786" (Dijon, Vrégille-Bizouard, 16.XI.2002, Lot 105, est. €2–3000). Lit.: *Gazette Dronot*, 1.XI.2002, repr. ◻



L'oncle de MONTAIGLON, sd "Gounod fec. 1784" (A. de Montaiglon)

M. de WAILLY [?Noël-François, abbé De Wailly (1724–1801), grammairien et lexicographe français], pstl, 45.8x37.5, sd → "Gounod f/1786", inscr. *verso* "M^r de Wailly...?... général" (Louvre inv. RF 29894. Desc. baron J. de Lassus Saint-Geniès; acqu. 1951). Lit.: Ratouis de Limay 1929d; Ratouis de Limay 1946, pl. LX/91; Monnier 1972, no. 54 φ



Sujets de prix: études de figures et de portraits, m/u (Partiste; Paris, hôtel de Bullion, Regnault-Delalande, 23.II.1824 & seq., Lot 5, as by Gounod)

Portraits d'hommes et de femmes, études de têtes et de draperies, 30 pstls, 1 glazed, 4 more framed (l'artiste; Paris, hôtel de Bullion, Regnault-Delalande, 23.II.1824 & seq., Lot 13, in 3 lots, artist not specified)

La Contemplation, pierre noire, craie, 47.4x39.1, concours de la Tête d'expression, 1785 (Paris, ENSBA, inv. EBA 4381). Lit.: Ratouis de Limay 1946, as Mater dolorosa
Enfant, pstl (Paris art market, 1940s)