

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

HÜNNEMANN, Christopher William

Hannover .v.1755 – London 21.xi.1793

Also Hunnemann, Hunneman, Hanneman etc.; portraitist in oil, miniature and pastel. He was the son of the court physician in Hannover, and arrived in London around 1773 when he enrolled in the Royal Academy Schools (6.xii.1773, “aged 18 last May”). He won a silver medal in 1776. His oil portrait of Sir John Soane is said to have been painted in Rome in 1779, but may have been painted in 1776 when both were at the Academy. Best known as a miniaturist, he also made copies of Gainsborough portraits in the royal collection (on 4.xi.1789 Queen Charlotte’s diary noted that Hünemann was at work in Windsor on a portrait of the king; together with its pendant it remains in the Guildhall in Worcester). He exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1776 until his death: from Little Chelsea, 1776; from Mrs Price’s, Maiden Lane, 1777–79; Eaton Place, 1780–82; Berwick Street, 1783; St James’s Street, 1785–89; 59 Frith Street, 1790–93, where he was insured with the Sun Fire Office. He died “aged 38”, of “decline” according to the burial records of St Anne, Soho. His will (made 20.vii.1792, proved 6.xii.1793) describes him as “Christopher William Hunneman of Frith Street...portrait and miniature painter,” leaving everything to his wife Sarah Ann, née Wadsworth (1766–1816), whom he married (against her friends’ wishes) at St Margaret’s Westminster in 1786. Hünemann and his wife were mentioned frequently in the journals of Mrs Papendieck; the house in Frith Street was newly furnished, and Mrs Hünemann dressed fashionably.

He may have been related to John Hunneman (1740–1839), botanist, and was employed in 1792 to make copies (apparently in watercolour) of the heads of two Labrador Inuit from the pastels by Nathaniel Dance (*q.v.*) in Sir Joseph Banks’s collection at the request of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (now in Göttingen), for which he paid 6 guineas. Blumenbach (letter to Banks, 10.ix.1794, correspondence, letter 869) sought permission for the artist (whom he was unaware had died) to copy Russell’s oil of Mikok and Tootac, in Banks’s collection, mentioning that Hunnemann might copy them “in the same manner with Crayon or black lead as he copied the other both. As far as I know him I am certainly persuaded that he will take the greatest care for the pretious originals.”

Bibliography

Bénézit; Foskett 1989; Myrone 2022; Oxford DNB; Sée 1911; Peter Thornton & Helen Dorey, *Sir John Soane: the architect as collector, 1753–1837*, 1992, p. 125; Matt Lodder, *Painted people*, 2022; Waterhouse 1981; Wright 2006

Pastels

J4102.101 Gentleman, crayons, Royal Academy 1778, no. 167

J4102.102 Young gentleman, m/u, Royal Academy 1783, no. 226