

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastelists before 1800*

Online edition

HUSSARD, Michel-Nicolas

Paris .III.1749 – Nantes 8.v.1827

Director of the école gratuite de dessin at Nantes. His acte de décès is the main source of biographical information: he was born in Paris and married Marie-Josèphe-Henriette Torès or Thorez in Paris, Saint-Laurent, 5.vii.1787. He was probably the son of the Michel-Nicolas Hussard, négociant à Nantes, whose widow Louise-Élisabeth Fournié, born in Paris 1716, was buried in Nantes, Saint-Nicolas, 4.i.1792. He was evidently the “Michel Hussard peintre de paris”, aged 17 last March when he enrolled as an élève protégé under Pierre in .iv.1765; his addresses were given as “che M. le chevalier de Saint-Andin, rue de Richelieu à l’hôtel Royale” initially, and, in 1767, “che M. Deschamps marchand de vin.”

A document in the Archives nationales, papiers des comités d’Instruction publique (F/17/1330, dossier 4, an IX (1801/2) mentions “Hussard, demeurant à Orléans, 98 rue Bannier, ex-directeur de l’école gratuite de dessin de Nantes.” He had been appointed to the position in 1790 in succession to Ligeret; the school was effectively closed in 1796, but reopened in 1805, again under Hussard’s direction (until his death in 1827). He seems to have maintained friendly relations with a number of artists, and in 1815 was a witness at the marriage of musician Nicolas-Philippe Demonchy in Nantes.

An oil portrait of Hussard by Greuze, 1805 (now in the mBA, Nantes), was in the Paris 1878 exhibition (no. 836), where the pastel of Louis XVIII is reported by Charles Marionneau, who notes the verses of dedication in which the artist refers to “mon faible talent”, an observation endorsed by Marionneau. It seems he had not advanced far beyond the skill shown in his miniature of a sieur Grandin, after a Mlle Félix, of the resemblance of which the expert in the Châtelet proceedings found “beaucoup de chose à désirer” in the case brought 19.ii.1771. His lack of ability and the prominent form of signature suggestive of later pastiches may have resulted in some of his pastels escaping cataloguing.

Bibliography

Bénézit; Mathilde Legeay, “L’école de dessin de Nantes”, Les papiers d’ACA-RES, Brefs historiques 2019; Lemoine-Bouchard 2008; Wildenstein 1921, 99

Pastels

- J.4116.101 Claude BENOIT[-Deshautchamps (c.1759–1819)], en buste; & pendant: J.4116.102 épouse, née Elisabeth Pryvé [(c.1759–1837)], pstl, 62x51, sd v 1788 (Paris, Drouot, Bellier, Carpentier, 5.vi.1935, Lot 26 n.r., F195)
- J.4116.102 Armand-François DELAVILLE (1734–1806), armateur nantais, pstl, 58x48, s v (Nantes, Couton Jamault Hirn, 2.xii.2025, Lot 15 repr., est. €600–800) φ



J.4116.103 LOUIS XVIII, pstl, s “Le professeur de l’École royale de dessin de Nantes, Hussard” (mairie de Nantes a.1878)

J.4116.104 Homme à la veste bleue, pstl, 58x48, s v (Evreux, Thion, 30.v.2004, Lot 106 repr.) φ



J.4116.104 Homme à la veste brune, pstl, 45x37, s v (French art market 2025) φ



J.4116.106 Homme en habit gris, gilet rouge et or, pstl, 52.5x42.5, s ← “hussard”, c.1810 (Paris, Drouot, PIASA, 16.vi.2004, Lot 190 n.r., est. €800–1000; Paris, PIASA, 8.x.2006, Lot 47, est. €600–800, b/i. Dreux, Laurent Bernard, 7.xi.2015, Lot 8 repr., as by Bussard, est. €200–300) Φσ



J.4116.109 Fruits et nature morte, dessin reh. pstl (Roux, Tours; Paris, Pillet, Mannheim, 17–20.ii.1868, Lot 466 n.r.)

