

# Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

## Online edition

### JURINE, Sébastien

Lyon 13.II.1722 – Geneva 24.XI.1779

The son of Philibert Jurine, a passementier, and his wife, Jeanne-Marie de Lafont, Sébastien Jurine was baptized at Saint-Nizier, Lyon; his parents settled in Geneva (where his father was granted habitation in 1726). Sébastien trained as a guimpier before becoming a machiniste and inventor. He was still in Geneva in 1745 when he too was awarded his habitation, eight days before his marriage to Anne-Esther Favre (21.II.1745). He was the father of the celebrated surgeon and naturalist Louis Jurine.

Some of his engines were submitted to the Académie des sciences in Paris, where he must have known Lorient (*q.v.*). He was recommended by Liotard to the Earl of Bessborough for fixing pastels “as well as Lorient” (letter 28.VI.1763): in the three months prior to the letter, Jurine had fixed nine of Liotard’s pastels, three for the collector William Chaloner (*q.v.*) which Liotard had previously painted, and more than 60 other portraits in Geneva.

Jurine was probably already in London at that stage. On 17.VIII.1763 he wrote to the Society of Arts concerning his method of fixing crayons. Consideration was postponed until the November meeting of the Polite Arts committee. Jurine presented some specimens at that meeting, but the committee asked Francis Cotes to investigate the feasibility of fixing two pastels by Rosalba. Cotes reported back that the charge would be 8 gns with hands, 6 without; on 16.XII.1763 the committee authorised the expenditure of up to 16 gns. At the same time, several other applications were considered (apart from Mr Keyse’s wax crayons): Katherine Read, and the anonymous AB and JD. AB’s samples were subjected to brushing and having water poured over them. On 23.III.1764 the committee met with Jurine in attendance: they inspected a “Picture by Rosalba fixed by him” (it is unclear if this was one of the copies Cotes had been authorised to acquire), and resolved that Jurine’s method “will prevent the colours from falling or being Shaken off” and that it was their opinion “that by this Method Crayons are better fixed, than by any other hitherto known to have been practised in England.” However Jurine then asked for authenticated copies of the minutes, with a view to advertising his method: on 4.V.1764 the committee considered the request, but thought it prudent first to ask Cotes’s advice. A week later they resolved that it was *not* in the Society’s interests to grant such a certificate: the reasons were not clear (but may be due to Cotes’s report on the fate of his pastels), and Jurine received no premium or bounty. (Jurine also sent two letters to the Society in 1764, one about the tree engine, the other about a machine for cleaning harbours.)

Jurine then advertised in the London *Gazetteer & new daily advertiser* on 28.I.1765:

Sebastian Jurine continues to fix Pictures in Crayons, to the entire Satisfaction of all who put such Paintings in his Hands: His Method not only prevents the colours from falling or fading, or being easily rubbed off, but likewise takes out every Spot of Mouldiness, and hinders the forming of others. I need not enlarge on the Utility of fixing Pictures

drawn in Crayons, their aptness to be spoiled when not thus secured, in a sufficient Proof of the Value of my Discovery, and the Certificates of several persons of Distinction now in my Hands, and which I am ready to produce, will remove any Doubt concerning the Efficacy of this Method; I shall here mention only few of them, namely, the Countess of Bolingbrooke, the Earl of Besborough, and General Conway, but I shall readily shew several more to such as are desirous of seeing them. As my Affairs require my Presence in other Countries, my stay here will not exceed three Months more at most: I continue to lodge at Mr Brochet’s, Jeweller, in Suffolk-street, near Charing Cross. P.S. I fixed for that celebrated Painter, Mr Coste [*sic*], one half of a picture in Crayons, without at all touching the other Half; it was exposed to public View in the Great Room belonging to the society of arts, etc. in the Strand: No one could distinguish the Side which was fixed, from that which was not. I am always to be met with at my Lodgings at One o’Clock till the Evening every Day, Saturdays excepted.

Lady Bolingbroke, a pastellist, was better known as Lady Diana Beauclerk (*q.v.*); “Coste” was evidently Francis Cotes (*q.v.*; the only pastels that can be meant are the two male heads exhibited in 1764, nos. 20 and 21; the latter, of General Keppel, now in the National Army Museum, shows a distinctly different surface to other Cotes pastels). Number 20 may have been the pastel of Sir William Chambers, whose fate we learn from a passage included by John Russell in the second (but not the first) edition of his *Elements* (1777, p. 18f, where Jurine is not named):

Mr Cotes painted a portrait of Sir William Chambers, which is in Lord Besborough’s collection. An ingenious foreigner had discovered a method of fixing crayon pictures, so that they would not rub or receive an injury if any accident happened to the glass. The Society for the encouragement of Arts had before offered a premium to any one who should discover so valuable a secret, for which premium he made application. Mr Cotes being eminent in his profession, was desired to lend a picture for the trial, and give his judgment, which was made on this portrait of Sir William Chambers. The crayons he indeed so perfectly fixed as to resist any rub or brush without the least injury, which before would have entirely defaced or spoiled it: but the picture, which before had a particularly warm, brilliant, and agreeable effect, in comparison became cold and purple; and though in one sense the attempt succeeded to the designed intention of fixing the colours, yet the binding quality of whatever fluid was made use of in the process, changed the complexion of the colours, rendering the cold tints too predominant.

Jurine’s announcement in the *Gazetteer* was followed by another in the same paper on 15.III.1765: “Mr Jurine gives notice to those who have Crayons to fix, that his Stay in England will be no longer than this Month.” Previous advertisements (including a lengthy notice in the *Gazetteer* for 22.I.1765) concerned his engine for pulling up trees; it was later sent to Russia. Jurine’s lodgings were with the Huguenot jeweller Peter Brochet, at the Eagle & Pearl in Suffolk Street; Brochet was mentioned in testimony in the murder trial of the enamellist Théodore Gardelle (in which Perronneau was also a witness).

In his last years in Geneva, Jurine was involved in a complicated legal dispute with the

heirs of a certain Pierre Delor over a mill on the Rhône, and the legal principle as to the ownership of its flows.

### Bibliography

Anderson 1994; Roethlisberger & Loche 2008, p. 740, reprinting Liotard’s letter of 28.VI.1763; RSA archives

GENEALOGIES [Jurine](#); ESSAY [Lorient](#), [Pellechet](#), [Jurine](#): [the secrets of pastel](#)