

# Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

## Online edition

### MAY, Georg Oswald

Offenbach 1738 – Frankfurt 1816

The son of a silk stocking maker, he was taught in Offenbach from 1759 “bey einem geringen Maler”, according to an early biographer, Meusel; here he learned the art of portraiture and of pastel in particular. He completed his training in Mannheim and Düsseldorf, becoming a proficient copyist of Rubens and Van Dyck. He also worked in Offenbach, Bayreuth, Weimar and Würzburg. His best known works are the portraits of the leading German writers of the day. The 1779 portrait of Goethe is particularly celebrated; the pastel was executed in May, while an oil version followed two months later, in July.

#### Bibliography

Bénézit; Darmstadt 1914; Scholke 2000

#### Pastels

*Carl, v. Karl*

CHARLOTTE Sophie Ernestine Fürstin zu Isenburg-Birstein, née von Anhalt-Schaumburg (1743–1781) (Offenbach, Museum)

FRIEDRICH FERDINAND Konstantin Prinz von Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach (1758–1793), pstl, 54x43.2, 1779 (Weimar, SWKK, inv. KGe/00752) ♀



Frau Johann Kaspar GOETHE, née Katharina Elisabeth Textor (1731–1808), mother of the poet (“Frau Rat”), pstl, 53.5x45 ov., 1776 (Frankfurter Goethe-Museum, inv. 1710. Robert-Friedrich Heuser-Nicolovius, Munich; acqu. 1938). Lit.: Beutler & Rumpf 1949, no. 6 repr.; Michaelis 1982, no. 129 repr. ♀



~cop., pstl (Heidelberg, Winterberg, 6.XI.2010, Lot 314 repr., Umkreis J. H. W. Tischbein, est. €2800) ♀



Johann Wilhelm von GOETHE (1749–1832), pstl, 1779 (Weimar, SWKK, 31/50). Lit.: Boyle 1991, fig. 15 ♂



*Photo courtesy Stiftung Weimarer Klassik und Kunstsammlungen*  
GOETHE, m/u, .VII.1779. Lit.: *Bibliothek des allgemeinen und praktischen Wissens*, 1905, v, p. 85 repr., Deutsche Literaturgeschichte ♂



KARL AUGUST Großherzog von Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach (1757–1828), pstl, 54.2x42 ov., 1779 (Weimar, SWKK, inv. KGe/00745) ♀



Gotthold Ephraim LESSING (1729–1781), author

Christoph Martin WIELAND (1733–1813), author

WOLFGANG Ernst II. Fürst zu Isenburg (1735–1803) (Offenbach, Museum)

#### Portraits in other media

Frau Georg von LA ROCHE, née Marie Sophie Gutermann von Gutershofen (1731–1807), Schriftstellerin, pnt., c.1776 (*olim* Halberstadt, Gleimhaus. Lost). Lit.: Scholke 2000, pp. 134ff repr. 202