

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

REIFENSTEIN, Johann Friedrich

Ragnit 22.V.1719 – Rome 6.X.1793

Reifenstein, Reiffenstein or Reifstein (he is even listed in Bénézit and AKL as Riefstein), antiquary and amateur landscape painter, pastellist, engraver and sculptor. Educated at Königsberg, he spent some time at the court in Kassel (where he was gouverneur des pages du landgrave) before becoming bearleader to the son of Graf Rochus zu Lynar. He accompanied his charge in 1760–62 on a tour through Germany, France, Switzerland and Italy, eventually reaching Rome, where Reifenstein settled. He became involved with, and acted as Roman agent for many of, the leading figures in the art world, from Winckelmann to Schuvalov, Goethe (who mentions him frequently in the *Italienische Reise*), Grimm and Ernst II. von Sachsen-Gotha-Altenburg, taking them to the studios of the leading artists – among them Angelica Kauffman, who portrayed him c.1785. He was a member of the academies of Göttingen, Leipzig, Augsburg etc.

While experimenting with pastels in Kassel early in 1753, he investigated the use of wax pastel applied directly to canvas prepared with a coating of ground glass rather than paper. He found that pigments mixed with deer fat and wax enabled stronger colours to be made with a consistency that could be used more satisfactorily than the normal recipes. He demonstrated his technique to two experts in Kassel at the time, whom he identifies only as MM. D. & H.

We know that Reifenstein made a portrait of C. P. E. Bach in pastel in Kassel in 1754 from a letter of 20.IV.1774 from the musician and collector to the biographer Johann Nicolaus Forkel, who had asked about his painted copy of it:

Wer had den mein Portrait, welches Sie besitzen, gemahlt? Vielleicht ist es eine Copie von H. Reifenstein, welcher mich anno 1754 in Caßel mit trocken Farben abmahlte.

In 1761 Reifenstein visited Liotard's studio on behalf of Caroline Luise von Baden (*q.v.*), producing a list of 17 paintings by Dutch and French masters from his collection from which the Markgräfin was to choose five; he describes his pleasure in Liotard's praise of his own works. Liotard had himself used prepared canvas very occasionally, as early as 1754 (as in the Rijksmuseum version of Bessborough).

Bibliography

Pons-Augustin Alletz, *L'Albert moderne, ou Nouveaux secrets éprouvés et licites*, 1773, pp. 287–90; *Annales, affiches, avis divers*, 22.II.1757; Bénézit; Cabezas & al. 2008, p. 11; Fiorillo 1818, III, p. 389; Karlsruhe 2015; Lauts 1977, p. 66; Loche 1980, p. 185; Ratouis de Limay 1946, p. 141; "Pensées de M. Reifstein sur la peinture, avec l'exposé d'une nouvelle façon de peindre en pastel", *Journal étranger*, .II.1757, pp. 100–6; Reuter 2015; R&L, pp. 96ff

Pastels

J.6138.101 Carl Philipp Emmanuel BACH (1714–1788), Kapellmeister in Hamburg, chlk, pstl/ppr, 30x26.5, inscr. "Emanuel Bach von

A. F. Oeser" (Anthony van Hobloken, Ascona, 1958. London, Sotheby's, 17.V.2002, Lot 4 repr., £23,900, as by Oeser or Reifenstein; PC London 2012; London, Sotheby's, 12.XII.2023, Lot 1 repr., est. £20–30,000, £23,900). Exh.: Munich 1958, no. 166 n.r., attr. Reifenstein. Lit.: *Musik in Gesch. und Gegenwart*, I, 1949/51; Walter Haacke, *Die söhne Bachs*, 1962; David Schulenberg, "Performing C. P. E. Bach: some open questions", *Early music*, XVI/4, .XI.1988, p. 542 repr., attr. Oeser; Richards 2012, App., no. 2, repr. p. 316 ☐



Photo courtesy Sotheby's

J.6138.102 Johannes BÜRKL (1745–1804), Obervogt in Erlenbach, pstl/pchm, 40x32, inscr. verso "Johannes Bürkli, geb. 26. Okt. 1745 gew. Obervogt zu Erlenbach; gest. 2 Sept. 1804" (Bern, Dobiaschofsky, 3.V.1986, Lot 539 n.r., attr. Liotard, est. SwFr2000; PC Switzerland; Zurich, Koller, 22.III.2024, Lot 3436 repr., attr. Liotard, est. SwFr1200–1500, SwFr1500; PC) [new attr., ?] ☐



J.6138.104 Plusieurs princes et princesses de la maison de Cassel [HESSEN-KASSEL], pstl à l'encaustique. Lit.: *Journal étranger*, .II.1757, p. 79

J.6138.105 Friedrich Gottlieb KLOPSTOCK (1724–1803), Dichter, pstl, 1770. Lit.: Letter Angelica Kauffman to sitter, 4.XII.1770, Klopstock, *Werke und Briefe: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, Berlin, 2007, V, 175, p. 51

J.6138.106 Jacob Friedemann Graf von WERTHERN-NEUNHEILIGEN (1739–1806), pstl, 57x45, sd → "Reiffstein/fec. 1761" (Frankfurt, Goethe-Museum, inv. IV-1951-16. Heinrich Freiherr von Friesen-Rötha, Wesel; acqu. 1951). Lit.: Michaelis 1982, no. 185 repr. ☐

