

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

SPILSBURY, Jonathan

Worcester bpt 6.II.1737 – London 3.IV.1812

Engraver and portrait painter, frequently confused with his brother John “Inigo” Spilsbury (1739–1769), resolved only by Susan Sloman’s article in the Oxford DNB. After apprenticeship in Birmingham, Spilsbury moved to London around 1757, joining Hudson’s studio and making engravings. A single portrait, “in chalks”, was exhibited at the Society of Artists in 1763; he exhibited there again in 1770 and 1771, and at the Royal Academy between 1776 and 1784, but there is no further evidence of his using pastels. According to the registers of the Royal Academy Schools, Jonathan Spilsbury was admitted on 25.III.1776, aged 39; the council minutes have this pupil as John. He taught drawing at Harrow in the 1780s, and this led to his being engaged by Mrs Tighe of Rossana, Co. Wicklow for £300 a year to teach her daughters, one of whom was the future Caroline Hamilton (1777–1861). From 1781 Spilsbury was a member of the Moravian church. His daughter Maria, Mrs John Taylor (1776–1820), exhibited from 1792.

Bibliography

Alexander 2021; Bénézit; Bryan 1849; Crookshank & Glin 1994, pp. 132, 134, 311; Foskett 1984; Oxford DNB; Waterhouse 1981; Charlotte Yeldham, *Maria Spilsbury (1776–1820): artist and evangelical*, Aldershot, 2010

Pastels

J.6902.101 Young lady, chalks, Society of Artists
1763, no. 193