

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastelists before 1800*

Online edition

VINCENT DE MONTPETIT, Arnauld

Mâcon 13.XII.1713 – Paris 30.IV.1800

Arnauld Vincent was the son of Pierre Vincent and his wife Claudine Labulé; he was born 13.XII.1713 and baptised at Mâcon Saint-Pierre with that name (Arnaud and even Armand appear frequently). He seems to have used the surname Montpetit (erroneously Monpetit) at least as early as 1753, although it was an invention rather than a landed title; later he seems to have called himself simply Demontpetit. His father, described as a bourgeois négociant, was a vitrier in Mâcon whose fortune Montpetit inherited in 1752 (shortly after the death of his first wife, née Marie-Antoinette Roustain, whom he married in Bourg-en-Bresse in 1749; according to his marriage certificate, he had been living in Bourg for many years). This enabled him to devote himself to his interests in mechanical inventions and the arts. He received awards for horological innovations from the Académie des sciences from 1753, and the Bureau de Consultation awarded him 8000 francs for his ideas in 1793; he also published works on both art and engineering.

He is said to have lost his fortune during the Seven Years War. Around this time he also moved to Paris where (having earlier spent a year there, c.1753) he had many connections in the art world, among them Boucher and Fragonard, whose portraits Montpetit made (miniatures, in the eludoric method), while Boucher gave him two études de femmes, drawn in four crayons. On 6.XI.1766 he was admitted maître peintre-sculpteur at the Académie de Saint-Luc (the full text of the warrant is in Pradère 1874, presumably from family documents).

Montpetit was interested in the problem of fixing pastel, considering that the various inventions of Saint-Michel and others all resulted in darkening the colours of pastel, but Lorient's was the best. Montpetit's best known invention was a method of applying oil paint to the inside of glass, a development of the technique of glass transfer painting from engravings, but intended to eliminate contact between the surface of the oil painting and the atmosphere for conservation reasons rather than as a method of painting quickly. (The process interested other inventors at the time, notably Antoine-Nicolas Martinière (1706–1784), maître émailleur pour les horlogers à Paris, who presented his process to the Académie des sciences on 4.II.1769 – *Procès-verbaux*.) He is also credited with inventing zinc white as a less toxic alternative to lead white.

A number of these so-called eludoric paintings have survived, notably one of Louis XV (1774; Versailles MV 8452), and some of them have been described incorrectly as pastels. Whether the records of works which were so described but which are now lost are also of eludoric paintings is not known.

Montpetit exhibited at the Académie de Saint-Luc in 1774. A certain Leblanc (*q.v.*) recorded that he was a pupil of "Montpetit, Peintre du roi" in a 1784 advertisement.

Montpetit's pastel (from rue du Gros-Chenêt) was shown several times at the Salon de la Correspondance in 1782. His second wife and daughter (*q.v.*) seem to have worked with him, and Mme de Montpetit (née Jeanne Houdinet, from Parois, near Clermont-en-Argonne; they were married at Noisy-le-Roi, 24.IV.1773, although four years before she was recorded as his "gouvernante" living at the same address, rue du Gros-Chenêt, where he was recorded as early as 1766) opened a studio specialising in eludoric painting and preservation. After their deaths the discovery was forgotten.

Bibliography

AN MC XCVIII/603, contrat de mariage, 24.IV.1773; Bellier de La Chavignerie & Auvray; Bénézit; Chatelus 1991, pp. 24f, 46, 83ff; Guiffrey 1915, p. 398; Lalande 1800; Lemoine-Bouchard 2008; Lowengard 2008; Mariette 1851–60; Massing 1993; Pradère 1874; Ratouis de Limay 1946; Salmon 2004b, pp. 36–38; Sanchez 2004, *s.n.* Montpetit

Salon critiques

Nouvelles de la république des lettres et des arts, 27.II.1782, p. 70, 6.III.1782, p. 77 & 20.III.1782, p. 94:

3/4/10. Un Tableau au Pastel, représentant une Rosière de Salency, dans le costume de son couronnement, fait d'après nature, par M. de Montpetit, Peintre, rue du Jardinier/[rue du Gros-Chenêt] [*L'Abondance des matières force une seconde fois, de remettre à la Feuille prochaine, les détails qui avoient été annoncés par l'institution de la Rose.*]

4. Un tableau en Pastel, représentant *Marguerite le Peyre*, jeune Fille de Salency, âgée de 23 ans, la première qui ait reçu le prix de la Rose, après l'Arrêt du Parlement, qui, en 1775, a maintenu cette belle institution, dans ses anciens privilèges; par M. de Montpetit, Peintre, rue du Gros-Chenêt. Cette Rosière fut couronnée à Salency, le même jour que celui du Sacre du Roi, à Rheims.

Nous remettons à la prochaine Feuille, une courte notice sur l'institution m à laquelle nous devons le portrait dont il est question.

Pastels

J.762.101 Marie-Véronique LEPERE (1752–p.1787) [∞ 1777 Pierre Sézille], jeune fille de Salency, âgée de 23 ans, la première qui ait reçu le prix de la rose, après l'arrêt du parlement, qui, en 1775, a maintenu cette belle institution, dans ses anciens privilèges, pstl, 55x45, inscr. "Veronique Lepere couronnée en 1775" Salon de la Correspondance, 21.II.; 28.II.; 7.III.; 21.III.1782 (Paris PC 2002). Lit.: Ratouis de Limay 1946, as Marguerite Le Peyre; Salmon 2004b, repr. clr φ



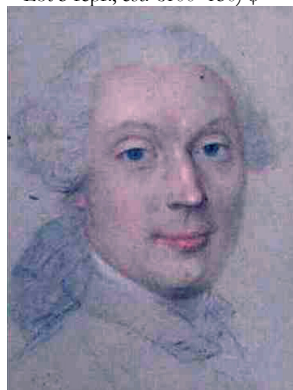
J.762.103 MARIE-ANTOINETTE (1755–1793), 1770, m/u, peint sur une vase, Académie de

Saint-Luc de 1774, no. 103 (rejected by royal family; presented to Joseph II). Lit.: *Mercur de France*, X.1770, pp. 172–74

~cop. Charles de Chatillon, *q.v.*

J.762.105 Mlle de VILAR, pstl, 40x30, s "De Montpetit" (Dr F. Collet, Paris, 1934). Exh.: Paris 1934, no. 142

J.762.106 Homme à la lavière blanche, trois crayons [preh. de pstl], 23.5x17.5 (Orléans, Dupuis, Semont, Pousse-Cornet, 22.X.2006, Lot 5 repr., est. €100–150) φ



J.762.108 Homme au catogan noir, trois crayons, 17x12.8 (Orléans, Dupuis, Semont, Pousse-Cornet, 22.X.2006, Lot 6 n.r.)

J.762.109 Homme, trois crayons, 17x12.8 (Orléans, Dupuis, Semont, Pousse-Cornet, 22.X.2006, Lot 7 n.r.)

J.762.11 Jeune homme, pstl, 23.5x17.5 (Orléans, Dupuis, Semont, Pousse-Cornet, 22.X.2006, Lot 8 repr., est. €60–90) φ

