

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

VIOLET, Pierre-Jean-Noël

Paris 25.XII.1742 – London 9.XII.1819

Miniaturist. Although his year of birth is widely given as 1749, this seems improbable as he enrolled in the school at the Académie royale in Paris in 1758, under Louis-Michel Van Loo; 1742 is cited in other sources, and accords with his age of 76 at his death. In 1782 he was accepted by the Académie de Lille, and exhibited that year a number of miniatures and an oil portrait. However there were difficulties with delays over his *morceau de réception*. Returning to Paris, he developed a career as a miniaturist, managing his public profile through the appearance of a number of pamphlets and the publication in 1788, in Paris and Rome, of a *Traité élémentaire sur l'art de peindre en miniature*. One pamphlet, entitled *De tout un peu* (1787), refers to a “monsieur Violet, célèbre par ses beaux portraits au pastel”. During the Revolution he emigrated to London. Among his exhibits at the Royal Academy in London was a portrait of Bartolozzi. Ingamells noted an undated “pastel miniature” by him which appeared in a Grangerised copy of Tuer’s monograph on Bartolozzi (Christie’s, 16.IV.2010, Lot 161).

His first marriage, in Paris on 7.VIII.1770 (contract of 20.VII.1770), was to Marie-Félicité Legeste, when his parents’ names were recorded as Jean and Magdelaine L’Heureux. He was divorced on 12.III.1794, and, on 11.XII.1797, at St James, Piccadilly, he married Marguerite Becret (1769–1851); Francesco Bartolozzi was witness. There were two daughters born before the marriage. He died at 1 Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square and was buried at Old St Pancras, aged 76.

Bibliography

Alexander 2021; Ingamells 2004, p. 40; Lemoine-Bouchard 2008; *L’Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, LIII, 1906, 783, 924; Oxford DNB