Neil Jeffares, Dictionary of pastellists before 1800

Online edition

Friederike Sophie WILHEL Mine
Markgräfin vonBayreuth, née von Preußen

Berlin 3.VII.1709 – Bayreuth 14.X.1758
Sister of Friedrich der Große, Wilhelmine was originally intended to marry Frederick, Prince of Wales, but after complicated negotiations she eventually (in 1731) married Friedrich von Bayreuth, who became Markgraf three years later. The couple established Bayreuth as a cultural centre, building or reconstructing palaces, theatres and opera houses, as well as founding the university at Erlangen. Wilhelmine assembled a collection of pastels at Bayreuth by Roslin, Liotard and Hægæns around 1758. Other pastellists who may be represented include Hægæns's widow, Frau Winkelmann, as well as an unnamed "Nürnberger Pinslers" whom Wilhelmine mentioned in a letter to Friedrich der Große in 1747. It is unclear whether any of these was the author of the group of pastels listed under the Bayreuth pastellist (p.x). Some 29 pastel portraits of actors, dancers and singers (Wilhelmine was a passionate musician and even composed an opera) were counted in the Musikzimmer of the Neue Schloß, presided over by an anonymous pastel of Voltaire who was a visitor to the court. The Markgräfin was herself an amateur pastellist (Pesne’s 1750 portrait at Sans, Souci showed her as a hermit with music, books and a box of pastels), but her technique is not sufficiently definite to justify an attribution to her of the pastels which were executed after Roslin’s departure. Most of her works are lost or were given away as presents, such as a copy after Van Dyck sent to her brother and acknowledged in a letter of 2. III. 1747:

J'ai reçu le tableau que vous avez eu la bonté de m'envoyer. J'ai été bien fâché de voir que le voyage avait terni une partie de ses beaux; cependant il en reste assez pour voir qu'il est de la main d'un grand peintre. Vous en devez pas réunir tant de talents différents sur la même tête. Je crains que cette peinture ne fasse du tort à votre santé...

Bibliography


GENEALOGIES Preußen; Bayreuth

Pastels


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