

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

DESCARSIN, Rémi-Furcy

Chauny 4.VII.1747 – Nantes 14.XI.1793

Portraitist in oil and perhaps miniature; Badel's catalogue of his œuvre lists just two dozen canvases. He appears to have been a pupil of Descamps, and is mentioned several times in Cochin's correspondence with the Rouen drawings teacher. In one of these letters (30.V.1780), Cochin wrote:

Voici mon ami un petit service que je vous prie de me rendre. On m'a donné en paiement [pour des estampes] le billet de 190 livres que vous trouvez inclus dans cette lettre. Il est d'un M. Descarsin au Havre (peut-être est-ce celui qui est peintre, dont par parenthèse j'ai vu chez M. de La Tour d'assez bonnes têtes).

This is the only indication that Descarsin was connected with La Tour, and there is nothing specifically to indicate that he worked in pastel (although the inference is tempting). Although Descarsin failed to be accepted by the Académie royale (he submitted a self-portrait on 25.IV.1789), he worked for the comte de Provence and for the duc d'Harcourt, gouverneur de Normandie (portraits of the 4th and 5th ducs, signed and dated respectively 1783 and "à Paris 1784", were shown in Paris 1878, nos. 413/414).

The son of a lawyer and procureur du roi, Descarsin married Anne-Marie-Eve Kaigre (c.1746–Paris 24.IV.1812) in Noyon 1770. She seems to have come from Pont-Audemer. During the Revolution Descarsin was in Nantes, where he was guillotined. There were two daughters, both recorded as precocious harpists in Paris in 1780s. In 1787 they were in Bordeaux, where a benefit concert was held; the notice in the *Journal de Guienne* (7.VI.1787, p. 632) added "M. Desgarsin père fera, pendant la séance, l'exposition des portraits de plusieurs personnes qu'il a peintes dans son séjour à Bordeaux."

Marie-Caroline (Péronne 1774/75–), also a painter and miniaturist, was still in Nantes six months after her father's execution, unmarried, giving birth to an illegitimate son Jean-Jacques (the father was a 40-year-old former chevalier de la garde du roi, Jean-Jacques Gentet de La Chenellière). She had married a M. Prigent by 1799 when she was recorded in Augustin's atelier. Her sister Henriette-Sophie (1777–1845) married Joseph Fouchard in 1811, legitimating three children she had had by him.

Bibliography

Pierre-Yves Badel, "Du nouveau sur le peintre de portraits, Remi-Furcy Descarsin (Chauny, 1747 – Nantes, 1793), un talent décapité", *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de l'art français*, 2011, pp. 37–61; Bellier de La Chavignerie 1865, p. 61; Morvan Becker 2010, p. 552