

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

DEVINS

fl. Cambridge 1799

In the *Cambridge chronicle and journal*, 21.XII.1799, “Mr Devins, miniature painter & drawing master, at Mr Gregory’s, Bookseller” advertised “Likenesses, in the best style, at different prices from three to five guineas”, and “teaches all kinds of drawing in Crayons and India Ink.” “Being a native of France” he also offered language lessons.

It seems likely that he was the Sieur Devins who specialised in life-sized wax portraits in Paris before running into problems with the communauté des maîtres peintres, sculpteurs-marbriers de Paris who felt his shop on the boulevard infringed their monopoly over the “arts de peinture & de sculpture”, including “portraits, paysages, fleurs, miniaures & autres genres desdits arts”. They initially succeeded in having his business closed by royal order of 15.III.1777; but in his appeal in the Grand’chambre, he succeeded in persuading them that wax modelling was not covered, and that he could lawfully sell his own products (but one infers not those made by others): the avocat général, Joly de Fleury, gave judgement on 8.IV.1786 (reported in the *Gazette des tribunaux*, p. 261ff). Devins was represented by MM. Charbonier, procureur and Gauthier, avocat.