

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

DU SUAU DE LA CROIX,

François, comte

Dondon, Haïti 1771 – New Orleans 1857

Also du Suau etc., not to be identified with the Toulouse painter Jean Suau (*q.v.*) as, for different reasons, Mesuret and Karel have suggested.

François, comte du Suau de La Croix was born in Saint-Domingue in 1771 but educated at the Benedictine school at Sorèze from at least 1784, as attested by an album of botanical and zoological drawings by “divers élèves de l'École royale de Sorèze en 1783–84” which bear the signature “pinx Du Suau 1784.” In that year “Du Suau, major” (i.e. François rather than his younger brother Pierre, who is not recorded among the drawing pupils) competed for prizes in topography and “Dessin de la figure et du paysage”, for which he was prepared by M. Bonnet. Together with his father, Joseph du Suau de La Croix, chevalier de Saint-Louis, lieutenant-colonel au régiment du Cap français, he left the island during the rebellion of 1793. Du Suau evidently drew upon his drawing skills to support himself on his arrival in South Carolina, advertising in the *Charleston City gazette and daily advertiser* on 25.I.1794:

Monsieur Du Suau, Lately from St Domingo, RESPECTFULLY informs the public, that he professes painting in all its branches, which art he is perfectly master of. He paints in oil, crayons, &c., takes portraits at full length, profiles or in any attitude or posture whatever. He flatters himself to be particularly happy in taking miniatures, where he never fails of giving very strong likenesses; he likewise offers his services to teach the art of painting. Those who honor him with their commands may depend upon his utmost exertion to please. Enquire of Mrs Ramage on Meeting-street.

Soon after this, du Suau moved to New Orleans where he was nominated to the legislature despite of objections to the US President Jefferson from the governor of Mississippi, a political opponent. In 1814 he alerted President Jackson to the attempt by British forces to seize New Orleans. He was a founder of the Louisiana State Bank. He married Anne-Marie Cavalier in 1800.

Less is known of François's younger brother Pierre: he married a Victoire de La Garde de Pujol and died in Philadelphia. A miniature of Samuel Prioleau in the Gibbes Museum of Art, formerly catalogued as by “Du Shaw”, and reattributed to Suau by Karel, is in fact signed only D. 1796 and is unlikely to be an example.

Bibliography

Exercices publics des élèves de l'École royale-militaire de Sorèze tenue par les religieux Bénédictins de la congrégation de saint Maur, Carcassonne, 1784, pp. 47, 56, 87, 89; Robert Mesuret, “Un professeur d'Ingres, Jean Suau, dessinateur d'histoire naturelle?”, *Archives de l'art français*, XXII, 1950–57, pp. 280–86; Karel 1992; Rutledge 1949; Martha R. Severens, *The miniature portrait collection of the Carolina Art Association*, Charleston, 1984; soreze.com