

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

GREENWOOD, John

Boston 1727 – Margate 1792

Painter and engraver. He was one of seven children of Samuel Greenwood, a Harvard graduate (and brother of a professor there), and his wife Mary Charnock (who later married Joseph Prince, 1757, and Humphrey Devereux, 1762); he was born 7.XII.1727, although 1729 appears widely, as well as a middle name, “Inigo”, which appears to be a misreading of the “Mr Ino Greenwood” on William Pether’s posthumous portrait of him. He was apprenticed to the Boston engraver Thomas Johnston on his father’s death in 1742. Over the next ten years he painted numerous portraits, of which some four dozen are now known; one of his portraits was engraved by Copley’s step-father Peter Pelham in 1750.

Greenwood travelled to Suriname in 1752, leaving a memorandum of his six-year stay, listing some 113 portraits painted there, from which he earned 8025 guilders. Moving to Europe, he settled initially in Amsterdam in 1758, joining the *Amsterdamsche Teeken Akademie* and painting, drawing and learning mezzotint from Michiel Elgersma. Among the drawing techniques he used were chalk and pastel, and he worked closely with artists such as La Croix and Jelgerhuys, *qq.v.*

He came to England in 1763 (via Paris: a memento of his stay there is the chalk drawing of the engraver Huquier in the British Museum), exhibiting in various media at the Society of Artists from addresses in London (Piccadilly 1764–67; Golden Square 1768–69; Margaret Street, 1773–76), including several pastels between 1767 and 1775. He became a director of the society. On 17.XII.1769 he married Frances Stevens at St George’s Hanover Square.

He took up picture dealing. A notice in the London *Public advertiser* 31.I.1765 announced the auction the following two days by Hobbs, Piccadilly of “the genuine and curious collection of Italian, Dutch and Flemish pictures and antique bronzes, collected abroad by Mr John Greenwood, many of which are out of that well known Cabinet of Cardinal Valeti.” He told Copley in a letter of 23.III.1770 “I have brot into London above 1500. pictures, and have had the pleasure of adorning some of the finest Cabinets in England”. Among his clients were Sir Lawrence Dundas and the Earl of Bute, for whom he undertook a trip to France and the Netherlands in 1771, acquiring the Steinberg and van Schulembourg collections. By 1776 he had become an auctioneer.

It appears from his 1770 letter to Copley that he may have known the artist for a long period, going back to his days in the West Indies (Copley later made a portrait of Greenwood’s mother), but it is uncertain if he played any role in introducing pastel to New England. When Copley finally came to London in 1775, he exhibited at Benjamin West’s Royal Academy in preference to Greenwood’s Society of Artists.

He worked in various genres (from landscape and architectural to animal and botanical), making numerous prints (including one after a pastel by La Croix) and oil portraits; but only one pastel seems to have survived.

Bibliography

Bénézit; *Letters & papers of John Singleton Copley and Henry Pelham 1739–1776*, ed. C. F. Adams & al., Boston, 1914; Edwards 1808, p. 107; Roeland van Eynden & Adriaan van der Willigen, *Geschiedenis der vaderlandsche schilderkunst*, Amsterdam, 1816–40, II, pp. 202ff; Hargraves 2006; Oxford DNB; Pilkington 1852; Denys Sutton, “The Dundas pictures”, *Apollo*, LXXXVI/67, .IX.1967, pp. 204–14; Waterhouse 1981; Washington 1987; Whitley 1928, I, pp. 261f

Pastels

J.3592.101 Pieter KLAVERWEIJDE (1701–1781) with his wife (2^o ∞ 1722), née Willempje van Grieken (1680–1763), pstl/ppr, 27x32, sd r 1761 (Kamerik PC 2007). Lit.: rKD repr. φ



J.3592.104 Head, crayons, Society of Artists 1767, no. 63

J.3592.105 A gypsy fortune teller, crayons, Society of Artists 1773, no. 114

J.3592.106 Lady, crayons, Society of Artists 1775, no. 102