

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

RILEY, Charles Reuben

London c.1752–1798

Also Riley; English history painter, illustrator and engraver. He was awarded a premium (class 135, “drawings of any kinds by boys”, given 1765–66) of 3½ gns by the Society of Arts; his address was given as at Mr Roger’s, Bird Street, Grosvenor Square. On 14.II.1769, aged 17, he was admitted as a student at the Royal Academy Schools (Ryley appears in the register, Riley in the council minutes). He received a silver medal in 1770. After this he worked at Goodwood and Merley, and in 1775 went to Ireland where he decorated the Long Gallery at Castletown for Lady Louisa Conolly. He returned to England in 1777, becoming a pupil of Mortimer at the Royal Academy. In 1778, he received the Academy’s gold medal in 1778 for an oil painting of the Sacrifice of Iphigenia. He exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1780. John Russell was a friend of this “young Christian artist”. He died young, being “of deformed and of feeble constitution”. Although none of his “crayons” (which may not be pastel) is known, one of the examples in his posthumous sale attracted Le Brun as a purchaser.

Bibliography

Bénézit; *Dictionary of Irish architects 1720–1940*; Michaud; Oxford DNB; Saumarez Smith 2012, p. 128; Waterhouse 1981; Williamson 1894, p. 28

Pastels

- J.6424.101 Three nymphs, in crayons (artist sale p.m., London, Christie’s, 15.XI.1798, Lot 31, 8/-; Townley)
- J.6424.102 Two heads in crayons (artist sale p.m., London, Christie’s, 15.XI.1798, Lot 30 part, 9/-; Alexis Delahante)
- J.6424.103 Head in crayons (artist sale p.m., London, Christie’s, 15.XI.1798, Lot 27 part, £1/8/-; Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Le Brun)