SCHIPPER, Gerrit

Krommenie, near Amsterdam 1775 – London ?1822

Schipper was active as a pastellist during the early nineteenth century; his work, sometimes attributed to Sharples, is not catalogued here (David Meschutt's investigation of pastels incorrectly attributed to Sharples included a number identified as by Schipper). His personal papers were burnt on his death at his request, but some biographical information was provided in a short biography by his son Nicholas.

Schipper was the son of a sail-maker and was intended for the same profession. Educated in Brussels, he visisted Paris during the Terror and was trained at the "school of design", it seems as an amateur (thre is little sign of this training in his subsequent work, which is closer to Dutch artists such as Anspach than the French school). On his return to Holland, he soon found the sail-making business in difficulties following the invasion of Napoleon and the imposition of high taxes on Dutch enterprises. He travelled to St Petersburg, where he seems to have commenced a professional career as a miniaturist.

He then spent eight years in North America from 1802 (just after the return to England of the Sharples family), arriving in Philadelphia with no knowledge of the English language. After a short trip to the West Indies, he was recorded briefly in New York (1802), Charleston (.IV.1803, where he advertised portraits in crayon "with elegant frame and glass", 30.5x25.4, for $18, or $10 in profile, and half as much again for miniatures), and Savannah (1803), before settling in Boston, where he was to be found in the drawing room of Mr Wakefield's house in Milk Street. Here, in the weekly *Columbian centinel and Massachusetts federalist* for 14.I.1804 (repeated in the two following issues), he advertised:

> G. SCHIPPER – *Miniature Painter*, BEGS leave to inform the Ladies and Gentlemen of *Boston* that he has now in complete order, his *Achromatic Camera Obscura*, by which he takes Likenesses;—this Instrument, being preferable to any for imitating Nature correctly, enables the painter to be certain of his Likeness, and is highly valued by the Artists in *Europe*. LIKENESSES done in Coloured Crayons, with an elegant Frame and Glass, for Seven Dollars, and if not esteemed a Likeness no payment will be required.

The machine was no doubt some variant of the physionotrace. Schipper subsequently advertised in the *Salem gazette*, 5–19.VI.1804 and in the *Worcester gazette*, 1.VIII.1804, this time at $10 per portrait. In addition to pastels and miniatures, he advertised "embroidery pieces painted in an elegant style" in the Hartford newspaper. In 1806 he married an Eliza Burt in upstate New York. By 1807 he was in Canada, recorded in Québec and Montréal. A notice issued in Canada describes his "New method of painting in crayons":

> G. SCHIPPER, Miniature Painter, who lately arrived in this city, has by a new experiment adopted to take likenesses in Crayons, in a small size; which he warrants not to fade or change their colours, so he has prepared the Crayons himself , avoiding each ingredient, which by experience will not stand. The price is Six Dollars, (an elegant gold frame with glass, included;) and if not approved of, no payment will be requested.

Around 1810 he settled in England (his son Nicholas was born there on 7.XII.1810), living in Camden Town and keeping a shop at the sign of "The Three Beggars". The details of his death remain uncertain, but his widow returned to the US and remarried, in Rochester, New York, in 1834.

Bibliography

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