

# Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

## Online edition

### SIRIÈS, Violante Beatrice, Sig.ra Giuseppe Cerroti

Florence 26.I.1709–20.IV.1783

Daughter of the French cameo engraver Louis Siriès, who worked in Florence; history painter and portraitist in oil, miniature and pastel. A pupil first of the sculptor Filippo della Valle and then of the pastellist Giovanna Fratellini (*q.v.*), she travelled to Paris in 1726 when her father was appointed jeweller to the French court. She studied in France under numerous teachers including, it is said, Rigaud and Boucher. The family was recalled to Florence in 1732, where she was accepted into the Accademia del Disegno. She made a visit to Rome in 1734, where her portraits were well received. Her teacher Filippo della Valle had moved to Rome from Florence c.1724. Perhaps she saw Luti's work there, as there is something of his colouring and luminosity in the only surviving example of her pastels. On her return to Florence, her self-portrait was commissioned for the Uffizi. In 1737 she married Giuseppe, the son of the stonemason Francesco Cerroti who worked with Filippo della Valle.

According to Joannon de Saint-Laurent 1757,

Si la Signora Violante s'est attaché à faire le portrait, elle réussit à prendre une ressemblance avec beaucoup de justesse: & on pourroit dire que rien n'est plus gracieux que son expression, rien de plus aisé que ses touches, que partout dans ses tableaux, outre l'air de vérité qu'ils ont, on y admire ces légères beautés, ces coups brillans qui seuls peuvent sortir du pinceau d'une Artiste née avec les graces & qui les possède. Mais en peu de mots, nous en dirons davantage; son portrait est parmi ceux des Peintres illustres que l'on conserve dans la Galerie de Florence. Voilà un Eloge de fait, qui est au dessus de tout ce qu'on peut exprimer, & qui annonce de reste qu'elle doit être son mérite.

The *Gazetta Toscana* for 30.V.1767 (no. 22) noted the "bella Tavola dipinta con somma diligenza dalla nostra Sig. Violante Cerroti", a large altarpiece decorating the newly opened church of S. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi. By this stage it seems that most of her output was in oil.

She taught Anna Piattoli and Maria Cosway (*qq.v.*): the latter wrote that, aged 8 (c.1768). "I was...put under the Care of an old Celebrated Lady, whos portrait is in the Gallery... This lady soon found I could go further than she could instruct me." She may also have taught Maria Saracini Gori, who copied her pastel of a young artist in 1738 (thus resolving the question of the dating of the original, the third digit having been erased).

#### Bibliography

Bénézit; Fortune 2009; Jane Fortune & al., *La signora pittrice*, Pisa, 2016; Greer 2001; Inghirami 1844, XIV, p. 292f; Joannon de Saint-Laurent, *Description et explication d'un camée de lapis-lazuli fait ... par Louis Siries*, Florence, 1757, p. 112n; Orlandi 1778; Camilla Parisi, "Pioneering sculptural workshop techniques...", *Sculpture journal*, xxx.2, 2021, pp. 153–62; Pilkington 1770; Thieme & Becker

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#### Pastels

J.681.101 AUTORITRATTO, pstl, Florence 1737 (Gabburri)

~?cop. Carlo Lasinio, m/u, 1783. Lit.: Borroni Salvadori 1987, p. 144

J.681.102 Il fu sig.r senatore Vincenzo RICCARDI, pstl (Marchese [Vincenzo?] Riccardi, Florence, inv.1753)

J.681.103 Jeune artiste lisant un traité de dessin, pstl, 63x50.5, inscr. *verso* "Violantes Siries fecit/Florentie 17[?]3[?]5" (Monaco, Sotheby's, 23.VI.1985, Lot 267 repr., as sd 1773; London, Christie's, 6.XII.1988, Lot 154 repr., as sd 1775, est. £2–3000. John Winter; London, Sotheby's, 10.XII.2015, Lot 179 repr., as sd 1775, est. £3–4000, £1250) Φσ



Photo courtesy Sotheby's

~cop. Maria Saracini Gori, 1739, J.6543.205 *q.v.*

J.681.106 Testa, pstl, Florence 1737

J.681.107 Mezza figura, pstl, Florence 1737