

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

SUAU, Jean

Toulouse 1755–1841

Also du Suau etc. His self-portrait is in the musée des Augustins, Toulouse. “Un des meilleurs élèves du chevalier Rivalz”, according to du Mège, who provides a biography as well as revised dates (given as 1758–1856 in Bénézit etc.), confirmed by his tombstone (he is buried at the cemetery of Terre-Cabade with his wife, née Anne-Françoise Pradines). Born into a family which provided several capitouls, he was originally intended for the law, but turned to art. He won all the prizes at the Toulouse académie, culminating in the grand prix de peinture in 1784 for an *Allégorie sur l'indépendance de l'Amérique*. Two years later he was appointed professeur, later becoming directeur of the musée de la ville de Toulouse and professeur at the École de la Haute-Garonne. He was an active teacher and numbered among his pupils Ingres, his son Pierre-Théodore Suau, and numerous pastellists. When the académies were suppressed in 1793, according to Bellier he alone remained in charge of teaching art in Toulouse, but he generously shared his salary with his unemployed colleagues. He cannot therefore be the artist Du Suau (*q.v.*) who was in America in 1794 and with whom he has been understandably confused by Karel 1992 and Mesuret 1950–57. It would have been highly unlikely that Suau would have given himself such a prefix.

Bibliography

Robert Mesuret, “Un professeur d’Ingres, Jean Suau, dessinateur d’histoire naturelle?”, *Archives de l’art français*, XXII, 1950–57, pp. 280–86; Bellier de La Chavignerie & Auvray; du Mège 1846, IV, p. 205; Karel 1992; Mesuret 1972; Rutledge 1949; Sanchez 2004