

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

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LIOTARD, Jean-Étienne

Geneva 1702–1789

After studying miniature and enamel painting in his native Geneva, Liotard went to Paris in 1723 and worked under Jean-Baptiste Massé (*q.v.*). Few works survive from this period (enamels and oils outnumber pastels), but his curiosity and ambition were evident in the announcement for his prints of Voltaire and Fontenelle in the *Mercur de France* (VI.1735, pp. 1392f): this claimed that his technique of colour printing was a “genre de peinture [qui] peut avoir la fraîcheur du Pastel et la force et la durée de la Peinture à huile.” Failing to be accepted by the Académie royale, in 1735 he travelled with the marquis de Puysieux to Rome and to Naples, where he remained for four months, returning to Rome 23.III.1736. There, in 1737, he made lost pastels of the exiled James Stuart and his sons (James, comparing the portrait of Prince Charles with Rosalba’s, thought Liotard’s “the better likeness”); the pendant portraits of Charles Edward and Henry, Duke of York were in the collection of Cardinal Silvio Valenti Gonzaga when he died in 1756, but the artist’s name was mistranscribed as Liu... and Lionardo in the 1756 and 1760 inventories, and his pair valued at only 20 scudi. Miniature versions survive. Liotard also visited Florence in 1737.

In Italy he attracted the attention of William (Ponsonby), Viscount Duncannon (later 2nd Earl of Bessborough), whom he accompanied to the Levant, leaving Naples 3.IV.1738. During his four year stay in Constantinople, Liotard was taken up by the British ambassador, Sir Everard Fawkener. He famously adopted Turkish dress, thus providing fuel for numerous doctoral theses which seek to explore oriental influences on his art and character. It may be argued that this has distracted attention from his true genius, which is firmly rooted in the tradition of Western European portraiture.

In 1743 Liotard travelled to Vienna; he met instant success at court, and painted the imperial family. The importance of these images is underlined by the number of repetitions and inevitably copies, but is also indicated by the fact that he retained and engraved for his *Traité* of 1781 (*v. infra*) his profile of Maria Theresia. The celebrated Belle Chocolatière, probably painted in Vienna but taken to Venice, so impressed Algarotti that he bought the pastel for the Dresden collection (II.1745: Liotard’s receipt for the price of 120 zecchini – about 36 louis d’or – is preserved in a private collection), and later (13.II.1751) described it to Mariette:

È questa pittura quasi senz’ombra in un campo chiaro; e prende il lume da due finestre, la immagine delle quali si vede riflessa nel bicchiero, tutta lavorata di mezze tinte, e di perimenti di lume insensibili, e

di un ammirabile rilievo. Ella esprime una natura per niun conto manierata; e tutto che pittura europea, piacerebbe sommamente a’Cinesi medesimi, nimici giurati come ella sa, dell’ombrare. Quanto all’estrema finezza del lavoro, per recar le molte parole in una, elle è un Olbenio in pastello.

This is a rather curious observation: there is a prominent shadow cast by the figure on the floor and wall, and the Chinese reference is not to do with orientalism. Another near-contemporary assessment (Lehninger 1782) described it as “d’une grande vérité & propreté de couleur; c’est dommage que les contours sont un peu trop tranchans.” Both critics are simply alluding to Liotard’s distinctive use of bright, uniform light in his works, so much at variance with prevailing approaches to portraiture. A set piece for art students in Dresden, the plethora of later copies and reproductions of this genre picture in various media insinuate a trivialisation of Liotard’s art.

From Venice Liotard returned to Vienna, accompanying the court to Frankfurt for the coronation of Franz I. Stephan in .IX.1745. He then moved on to Bayreuth and thence to Darmstadt (where Caroline Luise took lessons from him for six weeks). He had returned to Geneva by 1746; a trip to Lyon took place later that year. By 1747 his fame was such that a treatise on international commerce noted (in connection with Geneva) that “On ne trouveroit que peu de Peintres dans l’Europe qui pourroient l’emporter sur un Liotard dans l’art de Portraire, & de se mettre” (Jean Larue, *La Bibliothèque des jeunes negocians*, Lyon, 1747, p. 521).

By .VI.1748 he had returned to Paris, this time with a long beard. Soon after, Maurice de Saxe introduced him at court; the duc de Luynes recorded (.X.1749): “Sa Majesté entra chez Madame la Dauphine où on lui fit voir les portraits par le nommé Liotard, peintre habile... Il a peint Madame Infante, Mesdames toutes trois et l’infante Isabelle...il a fait aussi un portrait de Madame la Dauphine, mais qu’il n’a pas réussi.” (Confusions among the various portraits of Mesdames abound.) On 29.I.1750 he used the title “peintre du roi” when he was witness to the marriage contract of one Nicolas-Sylvain Petitjean, sieur d’Arzillières, ancien directeur des Aides, and Marie Robert Mamielle (AN MC XXVIII/315). Admitted to the Académie de Saint-Luc, he exhibited in 1751 (as “peintre ordinaire du roi”), 1752 (as “peintre du roi, conseiller de l’Académie”) and 1753; one of his pastels was in the Académie’s collection at its dissolution in 1774. His clientèle in Paris was not confined to the French: Garrick went to see his pictures on 13.VI.1751, and thinking them “very like”, sat for his own on five mornings over the following week. (A later fictional account of the arrival of the duchesse d’Orléans during a session in which Liotard was already painting a fermière générale can be dismissed, the source being a “rapsodie sans valeur.”) Between 1748 and 1757 Liotard purchased a number of annuities, suggesting a certain financial success.

However he was never admitted to the Académie royale: Mariette, the abbé Le Blanc, Cochin and Pierre were unanimous in despising his work (*v. infra*). The exhibitions of the Académie de Saint-Luc did not receive the same

critical attention as those of the Académie royale; the single anonymous critic of the 1751 exhibition noted the “respectables portraits de M. Liotard”, and while both 1752 critiques mentioned him, that in the *Affiches* preferred to lavish praise on Louis Vigée. Saint-Yves (1748, p. 114) however lamented the absence from the Louvre exhibitions at least of Liotard’s enamels, an art which the French had allowed to die since Petitot brought it to perfection, and which “M. Liotard vient de nous rendre. Pourquoi le Public est il privé du plaisir d’en voir les ouvrages au Salon?”

In 1753, perhaps at the invitation of Duncannon (although Northcote says that it was Sir Everard Fawkener who persuaded him to come), he travelled to London, where he stayed for two years. Although Walpole records his arrival in London (letter to Sir Horace Mann of 5.III.1753), it has hitherto escaped attention that he was presented to the royal family almost immediately, but there can be no doubt of the identity of the artist described in this notice in *Old England’s journal*, 31.III.1753:

This Week a Turkish Gentleman, lately arrived here, who is very eminent in Portrait Painting, and known to Sir Everard Faulkner in Turkey, was introduced to his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, and graciously received. This gentleman is dressed in the Habit of his Country, and remarkable by his Beard being long, curiously sharpened and curled.

It was no doubt his stock which was advertised in the *Public advertiser*, 21.XI.1753–

To be Seen, at Two Shillings a-piece

At the House next Door to Monsieur Leotard’s, the Golden Head, in Golden-square.

A Collection of PORTRAITS in crayons, most of them Originals.

A longer advertisement appeared in the *Public advertiser*, 11.I.1754 (repeated the following day), significantly addressed–

To the CURIOUS

The Eagerness which the Public expresses, to see Mr LIOTARD’s Performances, engages him not to neglect any Thing that can give the Curious some farther Satisfaction; consequently he has added to his Works an original Picture of the Czar Peter the Great, done from the Life, while he was in Holland; a Picture of the Empress Queen on Horseback, dressed as she was at her Coronation at Presbury, as Queen of Hungary; an Original Drawing of the last Pope; another Original Drawing of the famous Achmet Pacha, Count de Bonneval, and several other Drawings of Turkish Figures, all done from the Life at Constantinople.

☞ His Friends are welcome to see the Paintings gratis.

Soon after another advertisement appeared in the same journal (28.II.1754, repeated 1, 2.III.):

The Three Graces, drawn at Rome by Mr Liotard, after the Antique Marble Group in the Prince Borghese’s Villa and coloured here after Life, are to be seen with his other Paintings at the Two Yellow Lamps in Golden Square.

(The enamelist Jean-Adam Serre, “Portrait Painter to the Empress Queen”, also advertised from the same address in the *Public advertiser*, 15.XII.1753 and the two following weeks, offering his *Essais sur les principes de l’harmonie* as well as his miniatures of the Austrian and French royal families, Mme de Pompadour, Fontenelle, Crébillon etc.; although it is generally assumed that Serre copied Liotard, a note in a letter from

Fontenelle to Vernet of 16.VII.1750 reveals that Serre had just painted the author from life.) From another notice in the *Public advertiser*, 13.III.1755 (repeated 14, 15.III.) we learn that Liotard returned to France in the summer of 1754:

Mr LIOTARD gives Notice that he is come back to London, chiefly in order to finish some Portraits he had begun before he went to France last summer, and therefore does not intend to make here a longer Stay than will be required for that purpose.

He has brought over a couple of large Conversation Pieces in Crayons of his highest finishing.

He lives in the same house in Golden Square.

Undoubtedly one of the conversation pieces he mentions was Le Déjeuner Lavergne, considered by many to be his masterpiece, and known to have been executed in Lyon in 1754; the other presumably was the 1752 portrait of his nephew Lavergne with a boy. Evidently this stay in France was rather longer than known hitherto.

His celebrity was rapid: writing in *The world*, 2.I.1755 (and copied as widely as in the *Maryland gazette*, 8.V.1755), Lord Chesterfield, denouncing English women's overuse of cosmetics, adds: "It is even whispered about town of that excellent artist, Mr Liotard, that he lately refused a fine woman to draw her picture, alledging, that he never copied any body's works but his own and GOD ALMIGHTY'S."

Liotard was commissioned by Augusta, Princess of Wales to make a series of pastels of the royal family (still in the Royal Collection). Bubb Dodington's diary records that Augusta was sitting to Liotard on 14.II.1754; an invoice, dated 15.VIII.1755, shows that four of these pastels cost 108 guineas. He is estimated to have made between £6000 and £7000 in London in a single year (somewhat improbably, as this would imply several hundred portraits): the unnamed indignant English artist reported by Whitley added "when at the same time we had a Cotes who in crayon painting infinitely excelled him." John Shebbeare made the same comparison, but with Soldi, in his 1756 attack on the unnamed Liotard (*Letters on the English nation*), where he denounced the English people for measuring "the value of his works by the length of his beard": "This singularity of dress has given him an air of superiority, and credit of being a singular good painter; he has had double the price of all others; and yet, if it was not for his beard, he would not be a better painter, nay not so good, as many who reside in London." Shebbeare had already attacked Liotard by name in several passages in his 1755 novel *Lydia*: "Prithee, *Ishmael*, does that Beard assist you in your Trade, as it does *Liotard*?" The length of Liotard's beard was sufficiently proverbial to be cited in *The prater* by "Nicholas Babbie" [Edward Long], 2nd ed., 1757 (p. 160).

Walpole (who privately admitted to Henry Fox that he found the artist "very tedious" – letter, 20.VIII.1753) provided an English view (*Anecdotes*, 1888, III, p. 28f):

He painted admirably well in miniature, and finely in enamel, though he seldom practised it. But he is best known by his works in crayons. His likenesses were as exact as possible, and too like to please those who sat for him; thus he had great business the first year, and very little the second. Devoid of imagination, and one would think of memory, he could render nothing but what he saw before his eyes. Freckles, marks of the small-pox, every thing found its place; not so much from fidelity, as because he could not conceive the absence of any thing that appeared to him. Truth prevailed in all his works, grace in few or none. Nor was there any ease in his outline; but the stiffness of a bust in all his portraits. Thence, though more faithful to a likeness, his heads want air and the softness of flesh so conspicuous in Rosalba's

pictures. Her bodies have a different fault; she gave to men an effeminate protuberance about the breasts; yet her pictures have much more genius.

Elsewhere (*Anecdotes*, 1849, II, p. 429, Isaac Fuller), Walpole comes back to this theme, citing Liotard as "a living instance" of the sterility of artists who "succeed only in what they see": "he cannot paint a blue ribband if a lady is dressed in purple knots." Maximilian Joseph von Lamberg, in a curious work entitled *Mémorial d'un mondain* (1774, p. 50), described the artist's problem when required to paint the Princess of Wales "qu'il ne vit qu'assise dans sa Tribune", suggesting that he resorted to a list of numbered features derived from other works. Northcote, no doubt reflecting Sir Joshua Reynolds's views, repeated Walpole's passage, adding "His likenesses were very strong, and too like to please those who sat to him; thus he had great employment the first year and very little the second. Devoid of imagination, he could render nothing but what he saw before his eyes.... Minuteness prevailed in all his works, grace in none; nor was there any ease in his outlines, but the stiffness of a bust in all his portraits. Thence his heads want air and the softness of flesh." Reynolds made further remarks in his commonplace book (Hilles 1936, p. 18):

those who are not capable of judging for themselves I think might smell something of the Quack from his appearance the long beard [and] Turk's dress which as well[as] his behaviour is of [the] very essence of Imposture, a few nights ago some Itahans talking about Liotard of the Great Success he met with in England in comparison of what he did in France, one of them opening his Eye with one of his fingers says Gli Francesi hanno gli occhi aperti, the French have their eyes open and can see through imposture, with much more good humour than I fear I have shown in this Letter they begun to ridicule him, one ask'd what punishment might be due to any one who should by any means cut off his beard since would deprive him of his support, another said he was like Samson his strength lay in his hair.

The impoverished artist in Hogarth's 1751 engraving *Beer-Street* "in a truly deplorable plight; at the same time that he carries in his countenance a perfect consciousness of his talents in this creative art" was said to be a caricature of Liotard (John Ireland, *Hogarth illustrated*, 1806, II, p. 78; repeating *Biographical anecdotes of William Hogarth*, 1781, p. 115); chronologically improbable, the passage nevertheless reflects contemporary artists' views of their rival.

Liotard moved on to Holland in 1755 to join his nephews in Delft. He stayed in Amsterdam and The Hague until at least 13.VIII.1756, when he sacrificed his beard to marry Marie Fargues, the daughter of a French Protestant merchant living in Amsterdam. During his stay in Holland, he made a large number of pastels of Dutch sitters, perhaps introduced by Bentinck, of whom Liotard had drawn a portrait in England the year before. Liotard returned to Geneva in 1757. There were further trips to Vienna (1762), Paris (.VI.1770; .XII.1770–71), The Netherlands (1771–73), London (1772–74, during which he travelled to Birmingham in 1773), and again to Vienna (1777–78).

In Geneva Liotard took on the 14-year old Louis-Ami Arlaud (*q.v.*), his only recorded apprentice; within two years the boy had left for Paris. Another unidentified pastellist, also described as a pupil of Liotard, was involved in attempts to have a pastel portrait made of Rousseau in 1764 but withdrew when his father died (this pastellist cannot have been Arlaud, whose father lived until 1806): Liotard's offer to

step into his pupil's shoes was deferred by Rousseau, possibly because John Wilkes was to come with him. The pastel which Liotard made of Rousseau in Lyon in 1770 must have been made before Rousseau left the town on 8.VI.1770. Liotard continued on to Paris, where, on 22.VI.1770, Charles Burney records having dinner with him, Grétry and the abbé Arnaud, but oddly says nothing about the portrait (Burney later adapted Rousseau's music; his nephew and son-in-law was named Charles Rousseau; Burney's meeting with Rousseau, on his return from Italy, in a house belonging to an unnamed pastellist – perhaps Bréa? – in the rue de Grenelle, 13.XII.1770, was the high point of his journey). A further trip to Paris in .XI.1770 was undertaken at the explicit command of Maria Theresa, to paint the Dauphine in full *parure*, not *en négligé*, nor in male costume. Liotard was at work on the portrait between .XII.1770 and .III.1771; a version reached Schönbrunn by 7.V.1771 to the disappointment of the Empress; she hoped that a larger, apparently equestrian, portrait would be better, but Mercy appears instead to have supplied one by Kranzinger (*q.v.*).

Although the dates of Liotard's second trip to London are normally given as 1773–74, we know that he was already in the capital by late 1772 from the minutes of the Society of Arts. Charles Pache had submitted his crayons for approval, and the committee sought views on their merit from the "most eminent" pastellists. The secretary reported on 27.XI.1772 that Liotard, whom he had approached, had not yet had an opportunity to compare the crayons with his own; but Liotard later issued a certificate (presented to the Society on 4.XII.1772) declaring that "the Crayons of Mr Pache are as good as those of Stoupan, and that the dark Browns are rather more beautiful."

Liotard was also a collector–dealer in old masters. In 1761 Reifenstein (*q.v.*) visited his studio on behalf of Caroline Luise von Baden (*q.v.*), producing a list of 17 paintings by Dutch and French masters from the collection from which the Markgräfin was to choose five; Reifenstein describes his pleasure in Liotard's praise of his own works. Ten years later Liotard exhibited his collection in Paris, producing a catalogue in an effort to sell some 126 old masters. In 1773 another sale was organised in London, from his own house, as advertised in the *St James's chronicle*, 6–9.III.1773 and other journals:

Mr Liotard, at Mr Henry's, in Great Marlborough Street, facing Blenheim-street, opened on Monday last, an Exhibition of Pictures, by the most admired Masters. This capital Collection may be seen every Day, Sundays excepted, from the Hours of Ten till Three, on the same Conditions with those of the annual Exhibitions of Pictures. NB Descriptive Catalogues may be had on Admittance.

The following year, Christie's were instructed for a sale that took place 15.IV.1774 (advertised, for example, in the *Daily advertiser*, 9.IV.1774). When Sophie von La Roche and a companion visited Liotard in Geneva in 1784 (La Roche 1787, p. 230), she picked out a picture by Rosalba for particular praise (the Diana listed in Liotard's estate inventory). They were also shown flower and fruit pictures by Van Huysum, as well as Liotard's own peaches, which her companion preferred. By 1785 he attempted unsuccessfully to sell some 53 paintings to d'Angiviller for the French royal collection.

Liotard worked in a range of media including enamel and oil painting, but it is in his remarkable pastels where his pre-eminence is most evident. As many as 15 self-portraits are

known, in various media; the 1744 version hung in the Uffizi during his lifetime (“notre ami Liotard...saute aux yeux avec sa longue barbe”, wrote the traveller Pierre-Augustin Guys in 1776; he owned the famous oil of M. Levett et Mlle Hélène Glavany), while his self-portrait shown at the Royal Academy in 1773 was described by Walpole as “very bold”. From around 1783, he executed a series of extraordinary still lifes in pastel. His portraits depict his models against plain backgrounds with astonishing directness and a characteristic lighting; many of his works are highly finished on vellum, leaving a smooth, porcelain effect; a number of what are patently quick studio replicas also survive. In a couple of cases (Bessborough, 1754, and Phipps, 1774) he worked directly on prepared canvas (the technique had been pioneered in 1753 by Reifenstein, who visited Liotard in 1761: Liotard’s recipe for preparing paper similarly, including ground pumice stone and fish-glue, was provided in a manuscript found among his papers). Such preparations, as well as the technique of scraping the smooth surface of vellum instead of drawing on the rough side, have led to persistent confusions in the cataloguing of his supports.

Liotard is known for his stated abhorrence of visible strokes of pastel: these are not found in nature, and must be eliminated from faithful representations, as he argued in his *Traité des principes et des règles de la peinture* (1781), which included a print he made after a Dutch master in which he omits the brushstrokes to illustrate this point-de-touches doctrine. To achieve these effects Liotard compressed the pastel deeply into the support with various types of stumping, reducing the reflectivity of the pastel and resulting in a finish analogous to oil painting. His highly personal style was no doubt in part the result of his not having been trained in a conventional way: for example, the juxtaposition of the shadowed part of the face of Wilhelmine von Brandenburg-Bayreuth against the darker background broke the basic rule (which La Tour wrote about) requiring just this part of the background to be lightest. Sir Joshua Reynolds said “his pictures are just what ladies do when they paint for amusement” (Northcote 1819, 1, 60), but this concealed a fear of the extraordinary meticulousness and truthfulness of the autodidact’s work which Reynolds pejoratively termed “neatness”, echoing Liotard’s own thesis in his *Mercur de France* article of 1762: “les qualités les plus agréables et les plus essentielles dans la peinture sont la netteté, la propreté et l’uni.” Sinner, on his trip to Geneva c.1781, admired Tronchin’s portrait with his Rembrandt; visiting the artist’s studio, he observed that Liotard was noted for his “fini précieux & la fidélité de l’imitation”, adding “Il fait gloire de ces deux qualités qui sont sans doute bien estimables, mais qui ne suffisent pas pour mettre un homme au rang des grands peintres.”

Antipathy in France was also profound (as Reynolds had observed): for Mariette, “On estima ses pastels pour ce qu’ils valaient; on les trouva secs et faits avec peine; la couleur tirait presque toujours sur celle du pain d’épice; de plus, ses têtes parurent plates et sans rondeur, et si la ressemblance y parut assez bien saisie, on crut reconnaître que cela ne venait que de ce qu’il avait plutôt pris la charge que la véritable forme des traits qu’il imitait.” The abbé Le Blanc wrote to La Tour (8.IV.1751) from Florence, where he had seen Liotard’s self-portrait which he found scandalous, calling the artist a “chianlit” and noting that the pastel was “le plus mauvais qu’il ait fait. Il est plat, plat, plat, trois

fois plat, et tout ce qui a jamais existé de plus plat.” Pierre described him as “une espèce de charlatan” (letter to d’Angiviller, 18.V.1785), while Cochin lamented the success of drawings he thought overworked, heavy and unintelligent (“sans esprit”) in a way that would only appeal in England or Germany (*Lettres à un jeune artiste peintre*, [1774], pp. 75f). This is a theme that persisted in France even among critics of the post-Goncourt generation: For Henry de Chennevières (1858–1946), a conservateur at the Louvre, “Ses pastels, tant vantés par ses contemporains et ses compatriotes, n’égalent pas le moindre ouvrage d’un élève de Perronneau” (*Gazette des beaux-arts*, XXIX, 1884, p. 63). Louis Réau (1881–1961) writing (1938c, p. 253) about the differences between French and Germano-Swiss artists, offered this among other examples:

Comparez un pastel émaillé, porcelainé, de Liotard à un pastel velouté de Perronneau...vous devinerez sans erreur possible lequel des deux est l’étranger. Malgré un vernis français prompt à s’écailer, Liotard reste Genevois.... Une gaucherie trop appuyée, un idiotisme helvétique... suffisent à [le] dénoncer.

Whether in response to criticism of this nature or for other reasons, Liotard often ignored his strictures against visible hatching, even in his early Uffizi self-portrait, where his cheek is modelled by minute strokes in black chalk. Later Liotards occasionally adopt a stiffness of composition that would be deplored in the work of a lesser talent. Indeed many of the earlier works also have indications of such weaknesses in his drawing that would not have been tolerated with a more rigorous training; and because so much of Liotard’s appeal lies in the perfection of his surfaces, these deficiencies can be troublesome and can endanger the hyper-realist programme. Lady Fawkener, for example, is at first sight one of the most beautiful pastels ever made: but her hands are awkwardly modelled and oddly lit. In a number of otherwise flawless pictures, there are often details that do not seem to be as intended: mouths in particular are sometimes disturbingly wrong. Some of these deficiencies can arise as a result of conservation problems or later restoration.

Compositions were often repeated with only the faces changed: the various portraits of “Lady Coventry”; Milliken–Bute; Northampton–Hawke etc. In the case of “Miss Bacon”, a name taken from a label which may be that of an owner rather than the sitter, the dress is stitch-for-stitch identical to that of Lady Egremont, and the faces so similar that only the condition precludes reidentifying the sitter with confidence. Liotard experimented constantly with the mise-en-page of his sitters, frequently adding strips to one or more sides of the works (since the support was already mounted, these entailed the addition of battens of wood fixed to the strainer behind the strips). Many of his compositions were far more ambitious than those of cocontemporary pastellists: they are not always convincing in terms of perspective, nor is the appearance of large areas of empty space entirely successful. For the composition of the large Lord Mountstuart, Liotard followed the vocabulary of Ramsay’s 1758 portrait of the sitter’s father., probably from Rylands’s 1763 engraving. The influences on the composition of *Mme de Vermeux remerciant Apollon* include Reynolds’s *Lady Sarah Bunbury* (Chicago).

Vellum is particularly prone to mould, but Liotard’s self-taught technique may be responsible for the other condition issues which affect a large number of his works today. Areas with red lake pigments in particular are often found apparently unfinished, but probably with

extensive losses: Chaperon’s treatise warned especially of the need for care in choosing red lake: “rejettez celle qui ne s’attache pas bien au papier.” (1788, p. 38). Some of his works were fixed by Jurine (*q.v.*), notably some of those owned by Lord Bessborough (it appears from the much-quoted 28.VI.1763 letter to Bessborough about this that Liotard did not himself fix his pastels, although the opposite inference is widely found in the literature), and may have suffered as a result. However at least one of the nine pastels at Roehampton listed by Sir William Musgrave in 1785 (BL Add MS 6391, ff199–200) made after Jurine’s departure also presents condition issues, while others have disappeared. The Rev. Daniel Lysons (1792) noted “in the breakfast room [at Roehampton] are several [portraits] in crayons of English gentlemen, principally in Turkish dresses, by Liotard.”

Liotard’s concern with surfaces may however have been at the expense of psychological insight, and it is difficult to see him as the equal of La Tour in this area. Perhaps the real point is that Liotard, reinventing portraiture on his own, adopted a system of showing every part of his surface in strongly and evenly lit detail which simply skipped a century of art history, ignoring the discoveries of the baroque (Wölfflin’s “Unklarheit”), which were part of the collective understanding of all sophisticated French artists. Two centuries later this anachronism no longer shocks in the same way, and modern viewers seem more tolerant of drawing errors than Mariette and his contemporaries. In 1957 Louis Aragon, discussing the Dresden museum with Jean Cocteau, thought that Liotard was “un peintre absolument pas mis à sa place” (Aragon & Cocteau 1957, p. 135), and the rehabilitation was complete when the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston bought a Liotard for a reported \$2 million. Liotard’s pastels have since consistently achieved the highest prices in the salerooms and attract museum curators who are normally unenthusiastic about pastel; and the literature devoted to him is far larger than for any other eighteenth century pastelist (and not far short of that of all other pastellists put together). It is unlikely that users of this *Dictionary* will agree with both parts of the assessment by a curator of the 2015 UK exhibition that Liotard is “the greatest 18th century artist whom nobody knows.”

Inevitably the question of replicas, copies and fakes arises. The enamelist Serre, mentioned above, does not seem to have worked in pastel, but others in Liotard’s immediate circle who may have done included Kobler and Schuncko (*qq.v.*).

The definitive catalogue, by Marcel Roethlisberger and Renée Loche (“R&L”), came out in 2008 (Roethlisberger 2014 contains several additions). Catalogue numbers have been added in the form R&L *n* (references to the earlier, 1978 summary catalogue are given as L&R *n*); copies and variants are cited by page (R&L p. *x*).

Monographic exhibitions

Liotard 1885: J.-E. Liotard, *te Geneve*, Amsterdam, Groote Gehoortaal, 1885

Liotard 1886: *Liotard*, Geneva, Société des Arts de Genève. Summary printed cat.; more detailed manuscript by A. Revilliod, Société des Arts

Liotard 1925: *Liotard*, Geneva, musée d’Art et d’Histoire, 1925. cat. in Baud-Bovy 1925

Liotard 1978: *Jean-Etienne Liotard, Genf 1702–1789: Sammlung des Musée d’art et d’Histoire*,

- Genf, Zurich, Kunsthau, 16.VI.–24.IX.1978. Cat. Felix Baumann & Romy Storrer
- Liotard 1985: *Liotard in Nederland*, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, 24.VIII.–13.X.1985. Cat. Frans Grijzenhout
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Salon critiques

Anon., *Lettre de M. H... à M. P... son ami en province, au sujet du concours en peinture et sculpture de MM. de l'Académie de Saint-Luc, ouvert dans une salle des Grands-Augustins, à Paris, le 20 février 1751*

MM. les peintres de portraits, tant à l'huile qu'en pastel, viennent ensuite et font en bonne partie les honneurs de la salle; mais ce qui frappe le plus, ce sont le portrait du Roi et de M^{me} la Dauphine, de M^{me} Adélaïde et de M^{me} Victoire; on y admire, avec un plaisir mêlé de respect, les traits de S. M., la grandeur et la bonté, ses principaux attributs, et ceux de son auguste famille. Ces respectables portraits sont de M. Liotard, de même que *la Charmante liseuse*. Mais, depuis que j'en suis à l'article des portraits, je ne puis m'empêcher d'observer un avantage qu'on a toujours considéré dans ceux qui sont sortis du pinceau de Rubens, de Vandik et autres fameux peintres. C'est qu'on a eu soin, pour l'habillement des deux sexes, de suivre la mode présente, en sorte que, dans le cours des siècles à venir, on verra avec plaisir de quelle manière nous étions habillés, et notre coiffure, qui n'est point trop chargée d'ornemens inutiles, n'y perdra point du côté de la simple nature. Si on avoit toujours eu cette attention, on ne verroit pas aujourd'hui, dans une maison royale, une *Purification de la Vierge* où le velours est prodigué jusqu'au bedeau de ce temps-là. L'abbé de Villiers, auteur du poème de l'art de prêcher, n'auroit pas été dans le cas de froncer dans ses vers deux de nos peintres fameux en les appellant marchands de drap d'or et de soye.

Anon., *Affiches, annonces et avis divers*, 1752, p. 27: Les ouvrages de MM. Liotard Peintre du Roi & Conseiller de l'Académie; Vien Conseiller; Vigée, Pougin de S. Aubin; & de plusieurs autres, qu'il seroit trop long de nommer, attirent sur-tout les yeux du Public.

Anon. [DANDRE-BARDON], "Exposition des tableaux de l'Académie de Saint-Luc commencé le 15 mai dans les salles de l' Arsenal", *Journal économique*, 1752, p. 78: Le pastel a paru dans ce Salon avec un avantage distingué; mais quoique M. de la Tour, de l'Académie royale, ait porté ce genre de peinture à une telle perfection qu'il l'a rendu précieux, cependant comme il laisse encore derrière lui ceux qui courent la même carrière & que peu de personnes sont capables d'en mesurer les différentes distances, on peut dire que le règne du pastel, qui devient si fort en vogue, annonce la décadence de la peinture à l'huile. Ce triste présage ne nous empêchera pas de rendre la justice qui est due aux talents des artistes dans ce genre. Ceux qui ont le plus mérité les suffrages du public sont,

M. Liotard, dont les principaux morceaux ont été une tête de Vierge, le portrait de mademoiselle de Paully & le sien propre.

Pastels

- AUTO PORTRAIT, pstl/ppr gr-bl., 37.5x25, sd ↓
 "Gio:Stefanus Liotard Genevra/fatto da se medesimo l'anno 1737 in Firenze", Florence 1737 (Geneva, mA, inv. 1934-12. Acqu. Francesco Maria Gabburri 1737, Florence. ?London, Christie's, 1848; 7s.; Graves, London? Acqu. c.1893 in pawnbroker's shop, City of London, F. William Cock, Well House, Appledore, Kent, 10/-. Bernard Naef, Geneva; Louis Dunki, dealer; acqu. 1934, SwIt3800). Exh.: Zurich 1978, no. 1 repr.; Liotard 2002, p. 31 repr. Lit.: *Connoisseur*, XCII, 1933, p. 38; Loche 1976 repr.; L&R 27 repr.; Buysens 1988, no. 186; Liotard 2006, p. 27 repr.; R&L 36, fig. 34; Williams 2012, fig. 3; Liotard 2015a, fig. 30 φ



AUTO PORTRAIT, pstl/pchm, 61x49, sd \ "J E Liotard/de Geneve Surnommé/le Peintre Turc peint/par lui meme a/Vienne 1744" (Uffizi, inv. 1980, no. 1936. Franz Stephan, Vienna; sent to the Granduca in Florence a.1753). Exh.: Florence 1977, no. 16 repr.; Milan 2003, no. 1.95 repr. clr; Karlsruhe 2015, no. 35 repr. Lit.: Pierre-Augustin Guys, *Voyage littéraire de la Grèce...*, 1776, II, p. 323; Manners 1933, pl. II; Ratouis de Limay 1946, pp. 131f; L&R 72 repr.; Berti 1979, A537 repr. clr; Gregori 1994, no. 795 repr. clr; Holleccek 2001, pl. v; Liotard 2002b, repr. p. 9; Bonfante-Warren 2006, p. 259 repr. clr; R&L 128, fig. 212; Williams 2012, fig. 4; Burns & Saunier 2014, p. 98 repr.; Williams 2014, fig. 68; Koos 2014, p. 154 repr.; Liotard 2015a, fig. 31 φ



Zoomify
 Photo su concessione del Ministero dei Beni e le Attività Culturali; reproduction forbidden
 ~grav.: Gregori. Lit.: R&L p. 322, fig. 213
 ~grav.: Joh. Caspar Füssli. Lit.: R&L p. 322, fig. 214
 ~grav.: Carlo Lasinio. Lit.: R&L p. 322, fig. 215
 ~grav.: anon. Lit.: R&L p. 322, fig. 216
 ~cop. Jean-Jacques de Boissieu, crayon noir, 28.3x17.9, sd "JDB/1784" (Nicos Dhikeos; Paris, Christie's, 16.XII.2005, Lot 87 repr.). Lit.: R&L p. 322 n.r.
 AUTO PORTRAIT à la toque moldave, pstl/ppr, 60.5x46.5, 1746 (Dresden P159. ?Duc de Richelieu 1747; acqu. a.1765). Lit.: Riedel & Wenzel 1765, p. 243; Hübner 1856, no. 1945; Brieger 1921, p. 100 repr.; Posse 1929, no. P159 repr.; Ratouis de Limay 1946, pl. III/77; L&R 74 repr. clr pl. XIII; Marx 1992, p. 437 repr.; Bell 2000, p. 209 repr. clr; de Herdt 2003 repr.; Marx 2005, I, p. 674, II, p. 623, no. 2277; Henning & Marx 2007, pp. 101ff repr.; Tarabra 2008, p. 295 repr.; R&L 158, fig. 262; Koos 2014, p. 155 repr.; Liotard 2015a, fig. 34 φ



~photo repr. (Mme Menard, Bez, Gard). Lit.: L&R 73, as pstl; R&L p. 361 n.r.

AUTO PORTRAIT à la barbe, pstl/ppr, 97x71, 1751–52, Salon de Saint-Luc 1752, no. 69, Geneva 1789, no. 44 (Geneva, mAH, inv. 1843-5. Liotard; legs 1789, Bibliothèque de Genève; dep. 1843). Exh.: Liotard 1886, no. 44; Liotard 2002a, p. 27 repr. Lit.: V. & L. Adair 1971, p. 126 repr.; Loche 1976; L&R 102 repr. clr px XXIII; Buysens 1988, no. 172; Renard 2003, p. 73 repr. clr; de Herdt 2003, repr.; Liotard 2006, p. 25 repr.; R&L 196, fig. 323; Koos 2014, p. 156 repr.; Liotard 2015a, fig. 3 φ



~?étude préparatoire/repl., pstl/pchm, 79x62.5 (Winterthur, Museum Oskar Reinhart am Stadtgarten. Rodolphe Dunki, Geneva; acqu. 1946). Exh.: Berlin 1993a, repr. p. 22; Winterthur 2001, no. 16; Karlsruhe 2015, no. 44, repr. p. 76. Lit.: Zelger 1977, p. 228, no. 106; L&R 103 repr.; R&L 197, fig. 324 φ



Photo courtesy Museum Oskar Reinhart am Stadtgarten, Winterthur

~variant, pstl/ppr, 68x55 (Rodolphe Dunki, Geneva; B. Naef, Geneva, 1978; PC 2008). Exh.: Liotard 2006, no. 11 repr. Lit.: L&R 104 repr.; Liotard 1992 repr.; R&L 198, fig. 325 φ



~cop. Mme Louis Sordet, née Marie-Amélie Vignier (1828–), pstl, 99x73, XIX^e (Tilanus, Amsterdam, 23.X.1934, Lot ?1034/?1039. Hausamann, Zurich. PC; Paris, Christie's, 27.XI.2002, Lot 212 repr., attr. Mme Vignier, est. €8–12,000 London, Christie's, 2.VII.2013, Lot 60 repr., as by Mme Vignier, est. £5–8,000, b/i London, Christie's, 2.X.2013, Lot 210 repr., est. £2500–4000; London, Christie's South Kensington, 21.I.2014, Lot 51 repr., est. £1500–2500, £1875). Exh.: Liotard 1885, no. 6, as by "Mlle Vigier, petite-fille de Liotard". Lit.: R&L p. 405, fig. 326 φ



Photo courtesy Christie's

AUTO PORTRAIT en chapeau rouge, pstl/soie, 43.5x37.5, 1768 (Liotard, Paris, 11.IV.1771 & seq., Lot 25; don: Samuel Voute, Amsterdam, 1778. J. W. R. & C. B. Tilanus, Amsterdam; Laurent Rehous, Geneva, 1934; Jacques Salmanowitz, Geneva, 1978; PC 2008). Lit.: Loche 1973; L&R 270 repr.; R&L 440, fig. 649 φ



~étude, pierre noire, graphite, crayons bleu et rouge/vl, 12.1x10.2 (Geneva, mAH, 1976–334. Liotard. New York, Parke-Bernet, 4.XII.1975, Lot 360 n.r., \$900. Baskett & Day, exh. 16–30.III.1976, no. 1 repr.). Lit.: L&R 269 repr.; Day 2008, pp. 227ff, fig. 61; R&L p. 583, fig. 648 φ



~version, pstl/pchm, 63x51, 1768 (Geneva, mAH, inv. 1827-20; dep.: Bibliothèque de Genève depuis 1843. Louis Odier-Lecoinge, Geneva; sa veuve; legs 1828). Exh.: Geneva 1886, no. 33; Geneva 1936, no. 7; Geneva 1948, no. 48; Zurich 1978, no. 22. Lit.: Cat. musée Rath 1859, no. 66; L&R 271 repr.; Buysens 1988, no. 170; Buysens 2006, pp. 146, 149 repr., Liotard 2006, p. 29 repr.; R&L 442, fig. 647; Oresko 2010, fig. 1; Williams 2012, fig. 5; Koos 2014, p. 158 repr.; Liotard 2015a, fig. 33 φ



~version, pstl/pchm, 50x41 (Jean-Jacques Sellon, Geneva, cat. c.1795, no. 36; desc. Revilliod de Muralt; Manderot-Revilliod; Bernard Naef, Geneva, c.1950; PC 2008). Exh.: Liotard 2006, no. 39 repr. Lit.: L&R 273 repr.; R&L 441, fig. 650; Williams 2012, fig. 6 φ



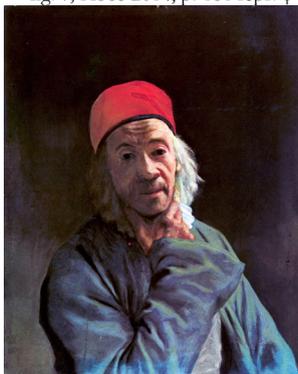
~repl., enamel (Geneva, musée Patek Philippe, inv. E-196). Lit.: R&L 444, fig. 651

~grav.: J. R. Schellenberg. Lit.: R&L p. 585, fig. 654

~other copies in various media

AUTO PORTRAIT âgé, la main au menton, pstl/ppr, 63.5x51, c.1770–73, Royal Academy 1773, no. 176 (Geneva, mAH, inv. 1925-5. Lord Bessborough, London, c.1773; ?Roehampton, 1785, Musgrave's lists; desc.: Claude A. C. Ponsoby; London, Christie's, 28.III.1908, Lot 7, 120 gns; Colnaghi; acqu. 1925). Exh.: Liotard 1925; Geneva 1942, p.

24; Geneva 1943, no. 841; Paris 1948d, no. 31; Geneva 1948, no. 52; Liotard 1978, no. 25; Geneva 2007. Lit.: Loche 1976; L&R 281 repr.; Buysens 1988, no. 183; Liotard 2006, p. 32 repr.; R&L 447, fig. 658; Williams 2012, fig. 7; Koos 2014, p. 161 repr. φ



~étude, dessin (Geneva, mAHI, inv. 1960-32).
Lit.: Debrie & Salmon 2000, p. 61, ill. 23;
Liotard 2006, p. 33 repr.; R&L p. 589, fig. 659
~grav.: Liotard. Lit.: Baltimore 1984, repr.
~cop. Mlle Thomasset, embroidery, 64x52
(Vevey, musée Jenisch). Lit.: R&L p. 590, fig.
660

AUTO PORTRAIT

~grav.: Liotard (FD 1361)

AUTO PORTRAIT, [??]crayons, in a large square
shagreen case [gch./pchm, 4.2x3.8]
(Farmington, Lewis Walpole Library. Mrs
Delany; left in her will of 22.II.1778 to
Duchess of Portland, who died before the
testator; legs by codicil, .VII.1785: Horace
Walpole; Strawberry Hill sale, 10.V.1842;
Forster, for R. R. Preston. London, Phillips,
12.VII.1949, Lot 9, £78; Sabin; acqu. Lewis
1954, £85). Exh.: New Haven 2009, no. 164,
fig. 342. Lit.: R&L 445, fig. 656; Jeffares 2009;
Koos 2014, p. 157 repr.

AUTO PORTRAIT, Liotard the painter, in frame
and glass (Sir Everard Fawkener; sale p.m.,
London, Ford, 27.III.1759, Lot 27)