

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

LEWIS, Mrs

fl. London 1783

Mrs Lewis is recorded as an honorary exhibitor at the Society of Artist in 1783, showing a crayon landscape as well as a miniature and a fruit piece in needlework. She may well have been the wife of one of the several Lewises who showed at the Society, perhaps of John Lewis, a director of the Society of Artists who also exhibited portraits, landscapes and fruit pieces until 1776.

It has been suggested, although it seems rather unlikely (since the exhibition took place two years after her death and included genres she had not previously practised), that she was Judith Lewis (1709–1781), sister of the portrait painter Stephen Slaughter (*q.v.*).

Judith Lewis's death on 6.IV.1781, "aged 70" (St Mary Abbots, Kensington: she had lived in Church Street, Kensington as a widow with her brother and their two unmarried sisters), has been known at least since Einberg 1983, but new information is revealed in the two versions of the allegation for marriage made at St Giles in the Fields on 4.I.1726 by her husband, the surgeon Paul Lewis (who in 1744 published a religious tract and was dead by 1764): she was sixteen at the time of her marriage (two years older than the previous inference) and her father Stephen Slaughter was, like his homonymous son, a painter. Several competent paintings, a romantic landscape and some conversation pieces in the style of John Wootton, dated between 1755 and 1758, are known, and Walpole praised her trompe-l'œil bas-reliefs. Examples of her work appeared in her brother's posthumous sale, which took place in London, 3–4.III.1766.; but there is no indication of work in pastel, miniature or needlework.

Bibliography

Elizabeth Einberg, 'The Betts family': a lost Hogarth that never was, and a candidate for Slaughter', *Burlington magazine*, CXXV/964, .VII.1983, pp. 414–16; Oxford DNB, *s.n.* Stephen Slaughter; Walpole 1828, II, p. 705; Waterhouse 1981

Pastels

J.4828.101 Landscape, crayons, Society of Artists 1783, no. 328