

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

OLLIVIER, Mme Michel Barthélémy, née Faronne-Marie- Madaleine Lefebvre

Paris c.1730 – ?Madrid p.1762

French pastellist, recorded in Madrid in 1759. Her names are variously given as Faraona María Magdalena Olivieri, Pharaonne-Marie-Madeleine, Faronne, Faroune, Olivier, Ollivier etc. Considerable confusion surrounds her biography, which is correctly given by Luxenberg 1996; but later sources (of which perhaps Smith 1997 is the earliest, widely copied) state that she was the wife of the architect Jacques Marquet, whose portrait she submitted with her own in 1759, and the daughter of the Italian sculptor Giovan Domenico Olivieri (1708–1762), who was a member and director at the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando from its foundation in 1744.

In fact Faronne-Marie-Madeleine Lefebvre was born in Paris on 24.II.1716 (État civil reconstitué), the daughter of Jean Lefebvre, bourgeois de Paris; on 30.V.1750 (AN) she married Michel-Barthélemy Ollivier (*q.v.*); among the witnesses were the groom's brother Jean Ollivier, peintre and François-Pierre Leclerc, ancien professeur de l'Académie de Saint-Luc. Ollivier had earlier followed Louis-Michel Van Loo to Spain, and evidently they returned there. In 1759 she wrote to the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando requesting membership:

Dª Faraona María Magdalena Olivier, natural de la ciudad de París. Residenta en esta Corte con el debido rendimiento a sido inclinada al Arte de la Pintura de la que tiene algunas obras en diferentes Gavinetes de Europa, y deseando el Asociarse en la Rl. Academia de Sn. Fernando, presenta dos retratos originales hechos por su mano, y. suplica á Vd. se sirva admitirlos y si por su ejecución fuesen dignos de aprecio de la Academia, se le conceda el honor que fuese de su agrado. Espera merecer esta gracia de Vds.

Her application was unanimously agreed, her two submissions being praised “no solo exactos Conforme a las Personas que sirvieron de originales, sino también pintados con la mayor inteligencia acierto y primor, así por la summa corrección del dibujo, como por la gracia y exquisito gusto del colorido”. She was the first woman to be admitted as an académica de mérito, but her appointment prompted the election of several other pastellists and female artists.

Olivieri's technique, evidently influenced by Carriera, shows also a typically French placidity. She was part of the wave of French and Italian artists who began to fill Madrid from the middle of the century. Her work after 1759 is not known, and from her husband's estate inventory of 1784 it is unclear if she was still living. Several pastels included in that inventory might be by her.

Bibliography

Bénézit; Dussieux 1856, p. 241; Matías Fernández García, *Parroquia madrileña de San Sebastián: algunos personajes de su archivo*, 1995, p. 102; Luxenberg 1996; Pilar Muñoz López,

“Mirada de género en la creación plástica de artistas españolas”, in *Feminismos & interculturalidad*, V congreso internacional AUDEM, 2008, p. 303; Theresa Ann Smith, “Reconsiderando el papel de la mujer en la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando”, *Actas VIII Jornadas de Arte, La mujer en el arte español*, 1997, pp. 283f; Smith 2006; Soubeyroux 2006; L. de Grandmaison, “Essai d'armorial des artistes français”, *Compte rendu de la réunion des Sociétés de beaux-arts des départements*, 1904, XXVIII, p. 644

Pastels

J.5644.101 AUTOPORTRAIT, pstl, 56x45, a.1759 (Madrid, Real academia de San Fernando, inv. 94; inv. 1801, no. 213). Exh.: Madrid 1840. Lit.: Dussieux 1856, p. 241 n.r.; Luxenberg 1996, fig. 7; Smith 2006, fig. 2 φ



J.5644.103 Don Santiago Márquez, arquitecto [Jayme ou Jacques MARQUET (1710–1782), arquitecto francés en la Corte de España], pstl, 54x44 (Madrid, Real academia de San Fernando, inv. 706; inv. 1801, no. 216). Exh.: Madrid 1840; Madrid 1987. Lit.: Dussieux 1856, p. 241 n.r.; Pérez Sanchez 1964, p. 65; Luxenberg 1996, fig. 6 φ

