

# Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

## Online edition

### VALLAYER-COSTER, Anne

Paris 1744–1818

Daughter of a goldsmith established at the Gobelins factory, Anne Vallayer, or Valayer, must have come into contact with Madeleine Basseporte (*q.v.*), godmother to one of her sisters. A pupil of Vernet, she was *agrégée* and *reçue* 1770 as a flower painter, exhibiting from 1775. She also made a small number of portraits, but only one in pastel is known with certainty – the portrait of the queen (who had taken her up the previous year), referred to in a letter of 17.VII.1780 from the artist to d'Angiviller: “Je n'ai pas encore remis la lettre que vous avez eu la bonté de me donner pour la princesse de Chimay parce qu'elle n'était pas à Versailles lorsque j'ai été pour travailler au portrait de la Reine et que l'on m'a conseillé d'attendre que son portrait soit entièrement terminé pour réclamer ses bontés; j'espère que dans les premiers jours de la semaine prochaine je pourrai en faire usage.” In 1781 she was granted lodgings in the Louvre, and that year she married the lawyer Jean-Pierre-Silvestre Coster.

Although her exhibits in the salon of 1779 seem to have been oils, one critic, the abbé Grosier, called her “la Rosalba de ce siècle.”

The attribution of a still-life in Bordeaux has been questioned, on the basis that she made very few pastels; an alternative attribution to Roland de La Porte is scarcely more plausible as he is not known to have worked in the medium at all. The status of a second cannot be determined in the absence of a photograph.

#### Monographic exhibitions

Vallayer-Coster 2002: *Anne Vallayer-Coster, painter to the court of Marie-Antoinette*, Washington, National Gallery of Art, 30.VI.–22.IX.2002; Dallas Museum of Art, 13.X.2002 – 5.I.2003; New York, Frick Collection, 21.I.–23.III.2003. Cat. Eik Kahng, Marianne Roland Michel

#### Bibliography

Bellier de La Chavignerie & Auvray; Biedermann 1987; Blanc 2006; Greer 2001; [abbé Jean-Baptiste-Alexandre GROSIER], “Coup d'œil sur les ouvrages de peinture...au Salon”, *Journal de littérature, des sciences et des arts*, 1779, v, p. 105; Grove 1996; Lemoine-Bouchard 2008; Los Angeles, 1976; Valerie Mainz, in *Gaze* 1997; New York 1999a; Ottawa 2003; Paris 1974b; Roland Michel 1970; Sanchez 2004; Toledo 1975; Wright 1992

#### Pastels

Jean-Pierre-Silvestre COSTER (Paris, musée Carnavalet, inv. D.6196) [*v. Éc. fr.*]

Mlle COSTER, *nièce de Mme Vallayer (Versailles)* [*v. Éc. fr.*]

1.741.101 MARIE-ANTOINETTE, reine de France (1755–1793), pstl/ppr, 73x62 ov., sd ← “Vallayer/1780” (Florence Bouchy-Picon 2002. Paris, Sotheby's, 2.XII.2004, Lot 122 repr., est. €40–50,000, b/i; Versailles, Perrin Royère Lajeunesse, 4.X.2009, Lot 31 repr., est. €12–15,000, €40,000). Exh.: Vallayer-Coster 2002, no. 140, pl. 63. Lit.: Engerand 1901, II, p. 470; Roland Michel 1970, no. 329, as lost

since 1780; Paris 1974, p. 631, as lost; M. & F. Faré 1976, p. 229 n.r.; Blanc 2006, p. 137 repr.; *Gazette Drouot*, 25.IX.2009, p. 101 repr.; 2.X.2009, p. 44 repr.; 9.X.2009, p. 57 n.r. Φσ



Photo courtesy Sotheby's

1.741.105 Deux tableaux de fruits, pstl (Paris, Nagus, 2.VI.1779 & seq., Lot 265)

1.741.106 Nature morte, corbeille de pêches, pstl/ppr, 38.5x46.5 (Bordeaux, mBA, inv. Bx 1993.1.189; 1983.9.57. René Domergue, Paris, don 1983; legs 1993). Exh.: Paris 1954f, no. 147, as by Vallayer-Coster [attr. retained; cf. Roland de La Porte] φα



1.741.108 Nature morte, pêches et raisins, pstl, gch., 36x41 (London, Christie's, 4.VII.1972, Lot 164 n.r., 280 gns)

#### Anon. related pastels

Madame VICTOIRE, pnt., ov. (Versailles MV 3807)

1.741.111 ~cop., pstl, 68x53 rect., inscr. ✓ “JBP 1780” (A.-H. Laglenne; Paris, Drouot, 3–4.III.1905, Lot 95 repr., as Perronneau, inconnue, F1505). Lit.: Daurel, *Mercur de France*, 15.III.1905, p. 314 n.r., “donnait l'impression d'avoir été retouché et la femme...n'est pas d'une beauté absolument séduisante?; Vallayer-Coster 2002, *s.no.* 60 n.r. Φκ

