

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

VALLAYER-COSTER, Anne

Paris 1744–1818

Daughter of a goldsmith, Joseph Vallayer, established at the Gobelins factory and his wife, née Anne Cornut de La Fontaine, Anne Vallayer, or Valayer, must have come into contact with Madeleine Basseporte (*q.v.*), godmother to one of her sisters. At the inventory of their father (AN Y5276, 18.IX.1770), the girls were represented by Madeleine's husband, Gaspard-Gaëtan Motet (–1776), maître en fait d'armes de l'Académie du roi (his trade card was engraved by Noel Le Mire: Waddesdon). The other two sisters, Henriette-Elisabeth and Simone-Adélaïde, both married members of the Bouhébert family of bankers, Josué and Mathieu respectively; a cousin later married the miniaturist Jean-Baptiste-Jacques Augustin (*q.v.*).

A pupil of Claude-Joseph Vernet (who was also subrogé tuteur of the minors at the 1770 inventory), Anne was *agrée* 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 (23.IV.1781, at Saint-Louis-du-Louvre) she married the lawyer Jean-Pierre-Silvestre Coster (1745–), avocat, receveur general du tabac à Domfront, son of a marchand juge consul.

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. Two profiles in coloured chalk of members of her family traditionally attributed to Vallayer-Coster were rejected in 2006 as they do not show the same characteristics as her signed pastels; with the appearance of a third formerly bearing an attribution to her, the group has been tentatively reinstated.

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

J.741.031 Jean-Pierre-Silvestre COSTER (1745–1824), avocat, receveur général du tabac, épouse d'Anne Vallayer, pstl, cr. clr/ppr, 46x38 ov., c.1790 (Paris, musée Carnavalet, inv. D.6196. Don Marcel Guérin 1940). Exh.: Paris 1984a; Vallayer-Coster 2002, cat. no. 142, pl. 64, as Vallayer-Coster. Lit.: Montgolfier 1982, no. 44 repr., *Éc. fr. fin XVIII^e*; Salmon 1997a, p. 80 n.5, ?cf. Fouquet; Jeffares 2006, *Éc. fr. Øα*



Photo courtesy musée Carnavalet

J.741.033 Mlle COSTER, ?nièce d'Anne Vallayer, cr. clr, 46x38 ov., c.1790 (Versailles inv. DESS 908. Marcel Guérin; acqu. F500, 5.IV.1906). Exh.: Rouen 2001. Lit.: Vallayer-Coster 2002, repr. p. 219, as Vallayer-Coster; Jeffares 2006, *Éc. fr. øαδ*



J.741.051 ?Mme Antoine-Philippe GENTIL, née Louise-Élisabeth-Marie Collet, [fille du secrétaire de Madame Sophie de France, ø 1775 premier valet de la garde-robe du roi], cr. clr, 41x25.5 ov., olim inscr. verso “Madame Gentil nee Collet par Mademoiselle Valayer” (Cambridge, Horvitz Collection, inv. D-F-1511. Joly Art Conseil, Paris; acqu. 2014). Exh.: Gainesville 2017, no. 122, pl. 108; Paris 2017b, no. A.958 øαδ



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

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

J.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. ØΦ



Photo courtesy Sotheby's

J.741.105 Deux tableaux de fruits, pstl (Paris, Nagus, 2.VI.1779 & seq., Lot 265)

J.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] øα



J.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

Mme Josué BOUHÉBANT (∞ 1773), née Elisabeth Vallayer (1747–1779), pnt., Salon de 1773 (n/k). Lit.: Roland Michel 1970, no. 309, fig. 206; Vallayer-Coster 2002, no. 21 repr.

~cop., pstl (art market, Bruxelles, 1992). Lit.: Vallayer-Coster 2002, p. 199 n.r.

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

J.741.111 ~cop., pstl, 68x53 rect., inscr. √ “JBP 1780” (A.-H. Laglenne; Paris, Drouot, 3–4.III.1905, Lot 95 repr., as Perronneau, inconnue, fr1505). 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’un beauté absolument séduisante”; Vallayer-Coster 2002, *s.no.* 60 n.r.

Φκ



J.741.113 ~cop., pstl, 46x38 (Chicago, Leslie Hindman, 15.VII.2014, Lot 88 repr., anon., unknown sitter, est. \$300–500) [new attr.] φκ

~pastiche, v. *Labille-Guiard*