

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

CARON, Suzanne

fl. Paris 1761; The Netherlands 1768–79

Also Susanne (and erroneously Sophie); poet, painter and draughtsman. Of French birth, she is mentioned in an article in Mme de Beaumer's *Journal des dames* (III, .XI.1761, p. 191) giving her address as Quai des Morfondus, Paris; “[elle] ne doit pas être oubliée dans la liste de nos femmes Peintres. Elle est attachée à la peinture en pastel où elle se distingue. Nos Connoisseurs lui promettent du succès.” Nothing else is known of her origins with certainty, but the address suggests that she was a member of the household where the unfortunate and impecunious Mme Calas lived at the time that that Mme de Beaumer was writing – “chez M. Caron, quai des Morfondus”; he was possibly the Pierre Caron, lapidaire-joaillier, who in 1751 leased a boutique in the quai de l'Horloge (the alternative name for the quai des Morfondus). He may have been a member of the Protestant clock-making family (which included Beaumarchais, whose father André-Charles Caron converted to Catholicism).

Possibly for religious reasons, Mlle Caron emigrated to The Netherlands some time after Mme de Beaumer's article. One pastel was apparently made in Vlissingen in 1768. On 14.II.1769 she became a member of the Haagse Confreriekamer van Pictura; here she was commissioned by the masonic lodge Indissoluble to make a portrait of their latest member, the Corsican patriot Pasquale Paoli; it was engraved by Houbraken. News of its completion appeared as far away as London: the *Whitehall evening post* (21.IX.1769) printed an anecdote in which the painter asked Paoli in what uniform she should show him, to which he replied “Si vous vouliez me donner l'habit qui convient à ma condition, vous me représenteriez en chemise, car le roi de France a pris soin de me dépouiller.” (The chalk drawing, now in the bibliothèque municipale in Bastia, shows him civilian clothing, while the Houbraken engraving has him in military costume.) She advertised in the *Annales de Spa*, 27.VI.1770: “La dame S. Caron, n'ayant plus qu'un petit nombre d'estampes du portrait du général Paoli qu'elle a peint à Amsterdam, les offre aux amateurs.” (Some years later, writing to Maria Cosway from Cheltenham, 22.VIII.1786, Paoli was unable to remember which French female artist had made this portrait: “No mi sowiene ora il nome di quella francese che prese il mio Ritratto all'Aja. Forse se non fu Madama Le Brun sarà stata l'altra che Ella mi dice vedere con piacere; ne parleremo al di lei ritorno.”)

Caron was in Amsterdam in 1770 where she was married, and spent the next five years in Suriname before returning to Amsterdam where she is recorded 1776–79. She also worked in oil: a copy after Liotard's portrait of Jan Maximilian van Tuyll van Serooskerken is in the Kastell Amerongen.

Bibliography

AN MC ET/CXIX/301, 5.VI.1751; Bénézit; rKD; Scheen 1981; Franco Venturi, “Pasquale Paoli in Olanda”, *Etudes corses*, 18/19, 1982, pp. 194, 200

Pastels

David Henri GALLANDAT (1732–1782), genceesheer te Vlissingen, oprichter en thesaurier van het Zeeuwsch Genootschap, pstl, 1768 (Schoonhoven PC). Lit.: Moes 1897–1905, I, no. 2619/2; zel. ill. iv, no. 389; C. W. Bauer bij zeeuwsch genootschap, 1957; *Zeeland*, 3(...).2, p. 47 repr.; Zeeuws Archief, *KZGW Zelandia Illustrata*, IV-389, repr. ♀

