

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

KING, Margaret

fl. London 1779–87

Exhibited pastel portraits at the Royal Academy between 1779 and 1787 from Soho (44 Frith Street, 1779; 16 Percy Street thereafter). The *London magazine* was disappointed with the ladies' contributions to the Royal Academy in 1784: "Miss Margaret King, who stands first in merit, and almost alone, as an artist in crayons, has given us but one portrait, not finished with her usual care...." An anonymous correspondent in a piece on women artists in the *Artist's repository and drawing magazine* (1785), mentions her after Mary Benwell (*q.n.*): "Mrs MARGARET KING has often excited my applause in the same manner."

Is she to be identified with the Miss King, portrait-painter and teacher of drawing, Bath recorded in various directories between 1799 (Burlington Street, no doubt no. 11, the lodging house of a Mr King), 1812 (5 Green Street) and 1819 (4 Trim Street)? Also christened Margaret, she was the daughter of a Mrs Catherine King, and was mentioned in the will of her godmother, Margaret Lovegrove (1730–1802) of Chippenham; she may have been related to the local clockmaker, Stephen King.

Bibliography

Bénézit; PQR 1785, p. 141; Sée 1911; Sloman 2002, p. 201; Waterhouse 1981

Critiques

Anon., "Exhibition", *St James's chronicle*, 1.v.1779: MARGARET KING

171. *A Lady in Crayons.*

This is the first Specimen of the Talents of a very young Artist. Her Subject seems to have been scarcely an animated one, but of a beautiful Form. The Face is a little too much raised, so as to show the whole left Eye. We mention this Circumstance not to discourage, but to direct Talents so very promising as those of Miss King. The whole Figure is drawn with a light and elegant Hand; the Countenance is made the most of; and the Hair represented, coloured and disposed, with the most exquisite Taste.

Anon., "Account of the Exhibition...at the Royal Academy", *St James's chronicle*, 5.v.1781; continued 10.v.1781:

180. *Portrait in Crayons*, by Margaret King. This is undoubtedly the best Picture in Crayons in the Room.

Anon., "Royal Academy Exhibition", *London courier, Westminster chronicle & daily advertiser*, 1.v.1782:

50. Portrait of a young lady, crayons. Margaret King. a most delightful picture, which brings to our painful, yet pleasurable remembrance, one Cotes.— Stand aside, Miss Read.

Anon., "Account of the Exhibition...at the Royal Academy", *St James's chronicle*, 9.v.1782:

MARGARET KING

50. Portrait of a Lady/419. Portrait of a Gentleman — Crayons.

We have observed for some Years the rising Excellence of this Artist. She copies Nature sometimes with a timid Fidelity, but with great Taste and Judgement. In Crayons she has also no Rival.

Anon., "Exhibition at the Royal Academy, Somerset-place", *London magazine*, II, 1784, p. 383–87:

The ladies have not distinguished themselves greatly this year. Mrs Cosway's ideas are too high for her execution. Miss Moser has quitted flowers for subjects unsuited to her genius. And Miss Margaret King, who stands first in merit, and almost alone, as an artist in

crayons, has given us but one portrait, not finished with her usual care; and the picture hardly to be found in the ante-room.

Anon., "Exhibition...at the Royal Academy", *St James's chronicle*, 10–12.v.1787:

MARGARET KING.

We have regretted the Absence of this Lady from the Exhibition for two Years, as she unites great Modesty to the Talents of her Sex, and takes the Lead in Crayons painting.

The Editor of the Catalogue, however, has pledged his Judgement against her; and No. 193. a Portrait of a delicate and beautiful Lady, he has pronounced to be that of a young Gentleman. It is executed with great Clearness of Colouring, and great Taste in the Outlines of a correct and elegant Figure. The Features, though small and regular, are expressively and pleasingly marked, and the Voice of the Publick will pronounce the Whole a beautiful Woman, in Spite of the Opinion of the Catalogue-Maker.

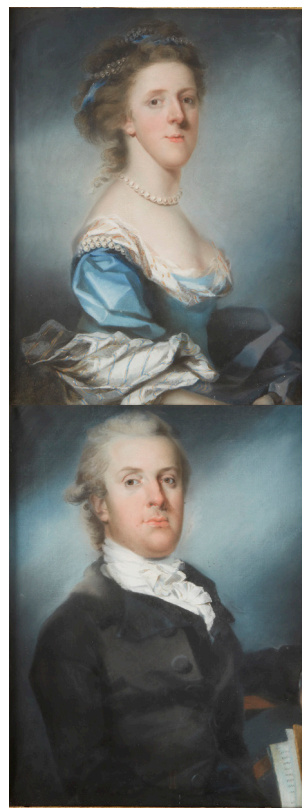
No. 434, charmingly painted, but the subject not pleasing. We should have executed the Editor if he had mistaken this Lady for a Gentleman.

Pastels

J.4304.051 John Maurice EYRE (1753–1815), of Landford; & pendant: J.4304.052 Elizabeth Eyre, pstl/ppr, 66x50.8, sd ← "M King/pinx 1782" (Virginia PC; Philadelphia, Freeman's, 16.X.2018, Lot 541 repr., est. \$3–5000) øv



J.4304.055 Jane EYRE; & pendant: J.4304.056 gentleman in dark coat, ?of the Eyre family, pstl/ppr, 66x50.8, sd ✓ "M King/pinx 1782" (Virginia PC; Philadelphia, Freeman's, 16.X.2018, Lot 542 repr., est. \$3–5000; Philadelphia, Freeman's, 13.II.2019, Lot 280 repr., est. \$1500–2000) øv



J.4304.075 Rev. Thomas SCUTT [(1769–1852), clergyman, of Litlington and Brighton], pstl, 47x42 (desc.: sitter's granddaughter, Miss Isabel Johnson 1889). Exh.: London 1889b, no. 212 n.r.

J.4304.101 Mrs Nathaniel STILL of Salisbury (∞ 1744), née Sarah Tatum (–1787), 67x51.5. Exh.: London 1986, no. 31 repr. ø



J.4304.103 Gentleman, pstl, Royal Academy 1780, no. 92

J.4304.104 Young gentleman, pstl, Royal Academy 1782, no. 411

J.4304.105 Gentleman, pstl, Royal Academy 1782, no. 419

J.4304.106 Gentleman, pstl, Royal Academy 1783, no. 98

J.4304.107 Gentleman, pstl, Royal Academy 1786, no. 117

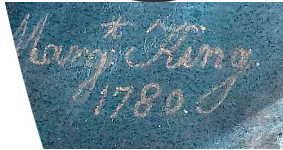
J.4304.108 Young gentleman [lady], pstl, Royal Academy 1787, no. 193

J.4304.109 Lady, pstl, Royal Academy 1779, no. 171

J.4304.11 Lady, pstl, Royal Academy 1780, no. 126

J.4304.111 Lady, pstl, Royal Academy 1780, no. 349

J.4304.112 Lady, pstl, 70x49 ov., sd ← “Marg^t King/1780”, inscr. *verso* “Margaret King/No 16 Percy Street/Rathbone Place” (English sale, location n/k, 14.XI.1907, Lot 710, “clever pastel portrait”; [Mrs Bowring-Hanbury] London, Puttick & Simpson, 31.V.1932, Lot 8 n.r., 11 gns; Harper. Acqu. London trade, £30; Gerald Pendred, a.1989; Nottingham, Mellors & Kirk, 24–25.XI.2011, Lot 534A repr.; PC; Cambridge, Cheffins, 17–18.IX.2014, Lot 479 repr., est. £600–800; PC; Cambridge, Cheffins, 29–30.IX.2021, Lot 160 repr., est. £600–800). Lit.: Pendred 1989, fig. 3 φσ



J.4304.115 Lady, pstl, Royal Academy 1781, no. 119

J.4304.116 Lady, pstl, Royal Academy 1782, no. 50

J.4304.117 Lady, pstl, Royal Academy 1783, no. 266

J.4304.118 Lady, pstl, Royal Academy 1784, no. 343

J.4304.119 Lady, pstl, Royal Academy 1787, no. 434

J.4304.12 Portrait, pstl, Royal Academy 1781, no. 180

J.4304.121 Child, pstl, Royal Academy 1783, no. 81