

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

VILLEBRUNE, Marie-Anne Goüel de, Mme du Noblet

fl. Paris, London 1767–83

Mary de Villebrune, portraitist in oil and pastel, exhibited at the Society of Artists from 1771 to 1774, and at the Royal Academy between 1772 and 1782. She is evidently the “Marianne Goüel Devillebrune” of St Ann’s, Westminster, who married “Antoine Dunoblet” at St George’s Hanover Square, on 2.XII.1773 (parish records), and is surely the sister of Mme J. A. de Peters, née Marie-Élisabeth Gouel de Villebrune (p.1738–1785) recorded in the posthumous inventory (1780) of their mother, née Marie Coquart-Chéry.

Her brother-in-law’s 1776 sale included a pastel “fidèlement copié d’après” Mengs; the source was a pastel belonging to the marquis de Croixmare which Diderot mentions as being exhibited at the École militaire in 1763. Works by Mlle de Villebrune appeared in an earlier sale (1767), again apparently sold by de Peters; in the catalogue she was described as a “jeune Artiste qui annonce beaucoup de talens”. The couple of pastel heads sold with some by Le Mettais in 1776 were presumably also made in Paris before she emigrated. To judge from the subject matter, and specifically a “Dormeuse”, she may, like le Mettais, have been a student of Boucher. The pendants of girls, one with a pet dog, the other tying a ribbon around a cat’s neck, no doubt conform to the types of which numerous versions are found among the anonymes.

In London she had a studio in King Street, Soho, and lived in Church Road, Hampstead; she exhibited also from Castle Court, Strand, from Frith Street, Soho, and at Mr Cossen’s Foreign Cordial Warehouse near the Opera House, Haymarket. Walpole noted her drawings at the 1771 Society of Artists exhibition, which included two ladies singing. However “her powers as an artist were not sufficiently forcible to impress the memory of [Edward Edwards] with any recollection of her productions.”

Bibliography

Bénézit; Edwards 1808, p. 57; Granges de Surgères 1893; Greer 2001; Sée 1911; Waterhouse 1981

Pastels

Deux jeunes filles à mi-corps, dont une écrit, & l’autre lit, pendants, pstl (de Peters & al.; Paris, Helle, Glomy, 26.I.1767 & seq., Lot 88, 10 livres 1; Glomy)

Jeune demoiselle chantant, & pendant: une autre accompagnant de la guitare, pstl (de Peters & al.; Paris, Helle, Glomy, 26.I.1767 & seq., Lot 89, 15 livres; Joullain)

Deux autres jeunes filles, dont une caresse un chien, & l’autre attache un collier à un chat, pstl (de Peters & al.; Paris, Helle, Glomy, 26.I.1767 & seq., Lot 90, 12 livres 1; Glomy)

Ladies, singing, pstl, Society of Artists 1772, no. 296 (2)

Quatre jolies têtes de femmes, par Mettay & Mlle de Villebrune, pstl (Neyman; Paris, Basan, 8.VII.1776, Lot 1246 part, 24 livres)

Jolie femme, ajustée galamment, pstl (Paris, Hayot de Longpré, Joullain, 8.VII.1777 & eq., Lot 117, 12 livres 14)

Une jeune Grecque ayant une couronne de fleurs sur la tête; elle tient dans sa main gauche un chalumeau, au bout duquel il y a une boule de savon, pstl, 39.3x31.2 (Johann Anton de Peters; Paris, Remy, 9–13.III.1779, Lot 112, 120 livres; Langlier). A/r Mengs pstl, Courtisane athénienne (*olim* marquis de Croismare)

La dormeuse, “pstl fixé” [a/r Boucher] (Paris, Remy, 7–20.II.1782, Lot 472)

Young lady, pstl, Royal Academy 1782, no. 404

Lady, pstl, Royal Academy 1782, no. 424

Tête de femme, pstl (Paris, Serreau, Joullain, 1.V.1783 & seq., Lot 15, 3 livres with Lot 16)

Quatre sujets d’enfants très-joliment composés & dessinés, pstl (Huquier fils; Paris, Basan, 21.III.1768 & seq., Lot 692, divisé: 18 livres; Basan/9 livres; Basan)

Two other drawings, pstl, Society of Artists 1772, no. 296

A pastoral, pstl, Royal Academy 1772, no. 266

A fancy head, pstl, Society of Artists 1773, no. 354

A fancy head, pstl, Free Society 1773, no. 45

A fancy head, pstl, Free Society 1773, no. 46

Neuf jolies têtes, pstl (MM. Belange & Nau; Paris, Buldet, 18–29.III.1776, Lot 34, 71 livres 2)