



HAWTHORNE Fine Art

Mary Jane Peale (1827-1902)

Clara E. Peale, 1858

Oil on canvas laid on panel

20 1/8 x 17 1/8 inches

Albert Peale, age 9, 1858

Oil on canvas laid on panel

20 1/8 x 17 1/8 inches

Mary Jane Peale was the daughter of Rubens Peale and the niece of Sarah Miriam and Anna Claypoole Peale. She inherited the family talent and encouraged her father to take up painting late in his life.

She was born into the first family of American artists in 1872 in New York City when Rubens had a museum there. She spent most of her life in Philadelphia. Her uncle, Rembrandt Peale, was her first teacher, and she also studied with Thomas Sully. She studied at the PAFA from 1856-1858 and again in 1878, when women were admitted to the life drawing classes. She also studied in Paris in the late 1860s.

Rubens probably began painting his first picture in 1855, with the encouragement of his daughter, visiting him on the family farm in Pottsville, PA. She may have given him some tips from her own studies as they worked side by side. There is also some indication that they collaborated on some paintings.

Mary Jane Peale had a greenhouse on the farm and used the flowers and plants as subjects for some of her paintings. She was also noted for still lifes of fruit, in the Peale tradition. She painted a number of portraits, often of family members, including her father. These two portraits, both dated 1858, are also of family members, in this case her niece and nephew, Clara Elizabeth Peale (born 1851) and Albert Charles Peale (1849-1914). Both are inscribed "Riverside" on the reverse. They are the children of her brother Charles Willson Peale.



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Mary Jane never married and died on the farm in Pottsville in 1902. She seems to have exhibited a number of still lifes at the Great Central Fair in Philadelphia in 1864, and possibly at the Philadelphia Sketch Club, if one can sort out the confusing assortment of M. Peale and Misses Peale in the exhibition records. Her paintings are found in the Mead Art Museum, Amherst College; Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Westmoreland Museum of Art; Lehigh University; Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Hagerstown, MD; Rutgers University; and the National Museum of Women in the Arts.