



Virgin of Guápulo

Date

mid 18th-late 18th century

Primary Maker

Unknown, Peru (Cuzco School)

Medium

Oil on canvas

Description

This painting depicts the Virgin of Guápulo. Our Lady of Guápulo is a local variant of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Extremadura, Spain. The image venerated as Our Lady of Guápulo originated as a sculpture, commissioned in Quito, Ecuador, in 1584 and transferred to a chapel in the nearby village of Guápulo in 1587. St. Catherine is depicted at lower left and St. Lucy is at the lower right holding a plate that typically would hold her eyes. The Cuzco School was an artistic tradition that arose in and around the major Peruvian city following its conquest by the Spanish in 1534. The new Cuzqueño tradition was bolstered by the arrival of Italian Mannerist and Jesuit priest Bernardo Bitti (1548-1610) in 1583, who was sent to Cuzco by the Jesuit mission and the Viceroyalty of Peru. Members of the Cuzco School were restricted to painting only religious scenes and portraits using contemporary European

techniques. Scholar Guy Brett notes that “all colonial painting began in a process of copying,” but that “after a period of sheer copying, some themes took off.” Furthermore, as time passed, Cuzqueño works took on an increasingly independent style influenced primarily by indigenous artists. Paintings by the Cuzco School can typically be characterized by their religious subject matter, a lack of perspective, and the use of distinctly warm tones (red, yellow, brown). The paintings also exhibit a stylistic looseness that cannot be found in their contemporary European counterparts. Sources: Brett, Guy. “Being Drawn to an Image.” *Oxford Art Journal* 14, no. 1 (1991): 3–9. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1360273>. José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña* (1982) (Most thorough discussion of the Cuzco school, in Spanish)

Dimensions

Overall: 51 3/8 x 38 7/8 in. (130.5 x 98.7 cm)