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ART & ANTIQUES

Luisa Roldán
know as "*La Roldana*"
Seville, 1652 – Madrid, 1706

Virgin with Child

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Polychrome terracotta
48 x 25 x 23 cm
Provenance: Private collection, France

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This polychromed terracotta figure by Luisa Roldán, executed probably during her time in Madrid as court sculptor to Charles II, follows the typical Marian iconography, emphasising Mary's role as a mother and intercessor of Christ. At the bottom of the image, a cloudburst of glory houses small, winged cherubs with the chubby cheeks typically found in Roldán's terracottas. A practically identical composition of our Virgin with Child is the polychrome terracotta version which was in the Lullo Pampoulides Gallery, and which has now become part of the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (Fig. 1).¹ Two other versions of this composition are in private collections.

With few changes, the present work repeats similar motifs represented in Roldán's other terracotta figures, such as the Virgin with Child and cherubs kept in the Collection of the Convento de la Inmaculada Concepción, Madres Capuchinas, in Málaga, Spain (Fig. 2). Some of the most popular small-format scenes, focusing on the Virgin Mary, include the Nursing Madonna, the Virgin and Child with Saint John the Baptist and the Holy Family.

This piece may date from circa 1690-1700 as it resembles a similar terracotta Virgin and Child signed and dated to 1692 at the Loyola University Museum of Art, Chicago (Fig. 3) and another example dated 1699 at the Convent of San José in Seville (Fig. 4). The first example has similar angel heads under the Virgin and the Virgin in the second sculpture is painted with the same pink and blue tones.

Palomino singled out La Roldana's skill in producing polychromed terracotta sculptures: "She possessed singular grace in modelling in terracotta on a small scale, in which she made excellent things that I have seen at this Court, in different urns; such as the Virgin with her Precious Son; Saint Teresa; Saint Peter of Alcántara; Saint John of God carrying a poor man on his back and an angel helping him, and other similar ones."²

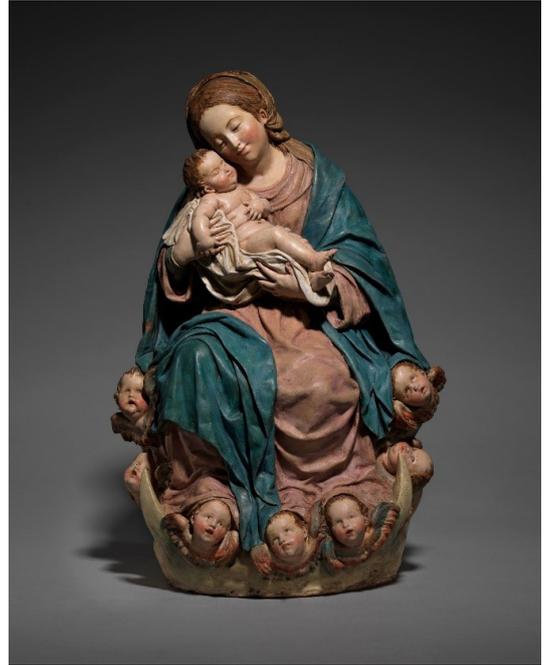


Fig. 1 Luisa Roldán, called La Roldana (1652–1706), *Madonna and Child*, c.1690 - 1706, Polychrome terracotta, H 41 cm



Fig. 2 Luisa Roldán (1652 – 1706), *Virgin with Child*. Collection of the Convento de la Inmaculada Concepción, Madres Capuchinas (Málaga).

¹ Luisa Roldán, called La Roldana 1652 – 1706, *Madonna and Child* c.1690 - 1706 Polychrome terracotta 41 cm high. Provenance: Almost certainly Federico García Sanchiz (1886 - 1964), before 1963.

² A. Palomino. *El Museo Pictórico y Escala Óptica. El Parnaso Español pintoresco y laureado*, vols. 2-3. Madrid: En la Imprenta de Sancha, 1795, p. 685.

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Fig. 3 Luisa Roldán, called La Roldana 1652 – 1706 *Virgin and Child*, signed and dated to 1692, Loyola University Museum of Art, Chicago.



Fig. 4 Luisa Roldán, called La Roldana 1652 – 1706, *Virgin with Child*, 1699. Polychrome terracotta. Convento de San José, Madres Carmelitas Descalzas de Sevilla (Seville).

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