

PAINTING

Virgin of Guadalupe

This Virgin of Guadalupe presided over the main altarpiece of the Chapel of Saint James, which was completed with the legacy left by Francisco Antonio González de Echavarrri in 1773. It was accompanied on its side panels by canvases of Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Anthony of Padua. The altarpiece was completed transformed in the late 19th century and the painting was moved to the epistle side of the presbytery.

Tradition has it that the representation of this dark Virgin was based on an image that was miraculously imprinted on the cloak of the Aztec Indian Juan Diego at the moment of her apparition. The existence of this model meant that any painter wanting to create a replica was obliged to respect the original, even in its established dimensions. As is customary, the Virgin appears inside a mandorla with sunbeams. She is portrayed standing on a crescent moon with its corners rising upwards and a small angel whose wings open as a pedestal. She is somewhat hieratic, a crown on her head, her gaze lowered and her hands joined in prayer. She wears a red tunic with rich gold brocade and a blue cloak with gold stars and border. At the bottom of the canvas is the phrase “TOCADA A SU ORIGINAL”, which refers to the act of consecration in which the artists went to the basilica to touch the original canvas with their painting. The work adds sweetness, harmony of proportions and sobriety to its thematic conventionalism, in addition to a certain Neoclassical touch. The canvas was somewhat altered, most likely when it was moved to the place where it is located today, as it has been relined and has an additional feature at the top. It also seems to have undergone a certain amount of repainting, at least in the cloudy area that surrounds it.



Author: Anonymous

Date: c. 1773

Technique: Oil on canvas

Measurements: 194 x 121 cm

Place: Saint Mary's Cathedral (Vitoria-Gasteiz). Chapel of Saint James. Today's Saint Mary's Church



Basic bibliography:

AZCÁRATE RISTORI, José M.^a de. “Catedral de Santa María (catedral Vieja)”. En: PORTILLA VITORIA, Micaela J. et al. *Catálogo Monumental Diócesis de Vitoria: Ciudad de Vitoria*. Vitoria-Gasteiz: Obra Cultural de la Caja de Ahorros Municipal, tomo III. 1968, p. 113.

BARTOLOMÉ GARCÍA, Fernando R. “El legado de don Francisco Antonio González de Echávarri (1700-1774) a la capilla de Santiago de la catedral de Santa María de Vitoria-Gasteiz”, *Akobe. Restauración y conservación de bienes culturales*, 9, 2008, pp.13-23.



A Living Treasure

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