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Galería de Arte

*Soraya Cartategui*

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Dear friends,

This January the gallery presents this wonderful religious work of the Master of the Parrot.

Best wishes,  
Soraya Cartategui

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**THE MASTER OF THE PARROT**

(Active in Antwerp the first third of the 16th century)

*“Virgin of Lactation”*

Oil on panel

44,5 x 32,5 cm. (17,51 x 12,79 in.)

1610-15 ca.

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The Master of the Parrot was an important Flemish painter specializing in religious compositions and portraits. We do not know much exactly about his life, since he is an anonymous painter, but it is known that he was active in the city of Antwerp in the middle of the 16th century. It receives that name from the representation of a parrot in an interesting painting that is currently kept in the Museum of San Diego (USA), which shows the Baby Jesus playing with a parrot.

His works, in most cases, are iconographic representations of beautiful young women of the aristocracy in the role of saints or of the Virgin holding her son in her arms. His work is characterized by a great chromatic richness, expressiveness and humanity. In addition, we find a series of characteristic features within the representations of him, such as the fingers, long nails, a broad face and a thin nose, which give the figures a great sweetness.

We see influence in his paintings by painters such as Joos van Cleve (1485-1541), Jan Gossaert (1478-1532) or Ambrosius Benson (1495-1550). The proximity to the works of Ambrosius Benson suggests that he was in contact with the School of Brugge.



This excellent work by the Master of the Parrot, frames a religious scene, the Virgin of Lactation, it is an invocation and a widespread iconography throughout the History of Art. This symbolism identifies the Virgin as the Mother of the Church, just as Christ was born by the Holy Spirit, Mary becomes the Mother of all Christians.

The Virgin with Jesus are the main protagonists of the work. On the right, Mary holds the Baby Jesus with great

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her son. She is represented as a beautiful young woman with sweet features, coppery hair with delicate curls covered by a veil and a simple hair band. She wears a humble tunic of dark greenish tones that highlight the whiteness and purity of her skin. We can see that her outfit has delicate transparencies, especially in her chest area, accentuating the symbolism of motherhood and breastfeeding, these transparencies are mixed with numerous folds that provide realism and movement to the scene. Her hands with long and thin fingers are very characteristic of the author's work.

The Child, with golden hair, looks directly at the viewer, making him participate in that important moment. He clings to his mother's womb, a very typical fact of the oldest compositions, linked to breastfeeding. He appears to us as a little boy with mature features, his face corresponds to that of an older child, because of his insightful expression. We observe a masterful treatment of fleshy parts especially in the roundness of the arm of the Baby Jesus.



The color range used is characterized by earthy, green, black and brown tones that contrast with the white of the characters' skin. The triangular composition formed by the two figures emphasizes the importance of the represented iconography that exalts the Virgin's maternal sentiment.

The neutral background only highlights the heavenly sparkle of the figures of the Virgin and the Baby Jesus, and the fleshy character characterized by a whitish skin, symbol of the purity of the characters. This fund extols the importance of our beautiful work.

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until the 16th century. After the Council of Trent, the Catholic Church considered the fact of undressing the bosom of Mary indecent and put an end to the development of this theme. Therefore, these works are highly valued within the art market.

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## PROVENANCE

- Private collection, France.

## MUSEUMS

There are works by the Master of the Parrot in the collections of museums in various cities, including: Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, (Spain) - Museum of Fine Arts in Seville, (Spain) - Museum of Fine Arts in Bilbao, (Spain) - San Diego Museum, (USA) - Mayer van der Berg Museum, Antwerp, (Belgium) - Lázaro Galdiano Museum, Madrid, (Spain), etc.

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