

Basic Detail Report



La Inmaculada

Date

c. 1960

Primary Maker

George López

Medium

Wood

Description

George López, born on April 23, 1900, in Cordova, New Mexico, grew up immersed in the fervent Catholicism of this early Spanish settlement, renowned for its tradition of religious wood carving. Inspired by his father, José Dolores

López, a skilled santero (saint-maker), George observed the creation of santos—wooden figures depicting saints, biblical scenes, and religious stories. Rooted in the Counter-Reformation and influenced by Spain's great artists like El Greco and Velázquez, this craft evolved into a unique New Mexican folk art. López's upbringing in Cordova and the Penitente rituals he witnessed profoundly shaped his artistic vision, blending Catholic tradition, Spanish medieval art, and regional culture. Though he initially worked on railroads in the Southwest and Wyoming, López returned to woodcarving during quiet nights in railroad camps. His first significant piece, a "Tree of Life," reflected his father's influence. By 1952, he committed to carving full-time, creating santos such as St. Francis, St. Joseph, and the Virgin of Guadalupe, often using simple tools like a penknife. A sixth-generation santero, López perpetuated the tradition by teaching relatives while expanding his repertoire to include animals and devotional figures. "It's part of my life and my name," he said, viewing his work as a sacred legacy of his heritage. In 1982, López won the National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. This bulto, or carved wooden image of a saint, is titled La Inmaculada. Adorned with an oversized detachable halo, it is left unpainted, which is characteristic of the Cordova style. The design emphasizes simplicity, with minimal carved details directly etched into the wood.

Dimensions

19 7/8 × 10 5/8 × 4 15/16 in. (50.5 × 27 × 12.5 cm)