

Basic Detail Report



San Pedro

Primary Maker

Artist not recorded

Medium

Tempera, gesso, pine wood

Description

Board is bevelled on four sides, may once have been a lid or had other purpose before being made into a retablo. Figure is long overtunic or surplice with outlined circles the size of peas scattered over it, yellow (?) mantle or cloak over shoulder and around waist, holds small palm spray (?) in lefthand, large key in right hand. Key is held

by shank, not by top, and points the part to fit into the lock upwards. The key is topped by a large outlined circle--was this a halo for the key (of heaven)? The figure has a normal-sized halo behind the head, with the characteristic "buttonhole" lines of the Calligraphic painter. The head is drawn in the style of this santero, as are floral elements at right of panel, and the elaborate altar at left side. This has cross stretchers connecting front and back legs, with carrying or chip carving indicated, (intended to depict a wooden altar table), a fringed cloth with rosete and fringe at ends. Above are a small crucifix and an unidentifiable low object. Swags with linear dashes top left and right. The subject of San Pedro is sometimes found among santos of NM but was never common. This one seems to have been fairly elaborate in detail--but is difficult to decipher now due to chemical processes which have darkened the entire surface. whether this was due to excessive sun, scorching by heat, and to addition of insoluble matter (not the usual varnish) is not known. Yeso losses are relatively few, but the yeso has a fine allover crackle and retains much of the dark film. Pigments seem to be chemically inert. What color is detectable seems to have been yellow on mantle, (classic European color for St. Peter), and dark red tones in swags, floral motifs and border. The Calligraphic painter did a number of panels in which dark brown outlines (for black), and very sparing touches of red and yellow were the sole color scheme with yeso white ground. This may have been one of these. The design is as interesting as the subject despite the dark tone--which makes the retablo look like an old engraving with discolorations of time. Retained for study collections.

Dimensions

45 x 32.3 to 33.5 cm, 1.5 cm thick