

# Caylus



**JOSÉ CALLEJA**

(Active in Madrid, ca. 1670-1700)

*Saint Francis in Meditation*

1697

Coloured wax relief inset in a pinebox, with original tortoiseshell, sard jasper and silver inlaid and mounts ebonized frame

29.5 x 24.8 cm

Signed and dated twice: "Joseph Callexo Escultor de la Reyna D<sup>a</sup> Maria-Ana de Neoburg, & c. Ft 1697" in the pinebox and the back of the frame

#### RELATED LITERATURE:

URREA, J. «Apuntes para el estudio de la escultura en cera en España», *Boletín del Seminario de Estudios de Arte y Arqueología: BSAA*, 1979, nº 45, p. 488-495.

ESTELLA, M. «Obras maestras inéditas del arte de la cera en España», *Goya: revista de arte*, 1993, nº 237, p. 149-160.

GONZÁLEZ PALACIOS, A. «Retablillos en cera», *FMR*, 1993, nº 20, p. 41-66.

At the beginning of the 16th century in Italy, wax, a ductile material used until then by sculptors almost exclusively to design the amortized models after the execution of the final work, becomes a suitable medium for the realization of works of reduced format elaborated with a high degree of virtuosity and sometimes incorporated into singular elements of furniture; Artists such as the Abondio, Azzolino, Zumbo or Julianis, active in Florence and Naples, take the art of the ceroplastic to its highest levels between the XVI and XVIII centuries, with abundant works exported to Spain, still little known. The trend will be intensified with the arrival in Spain of Carlos III and the presence in Spain of works of wax made in the surroundings of the Neapolitan court, such as those of Giovanni Francesco Pieri (1699 - 1773), preserved in royal residences and even in this museum.

Before the arrival of imported pieces already since the end of the sixteenth century, in Spain its counterpart will be the productions of local artists formed in this specialty, still little valued and scarcely known. Among them are the Granada brothers Garcia, the Sarajevo knight Juan de Revenga (between 1614 and 1684) and the court Jose Calleja (active at the end of the seventeenth), who is supposed to be disciple of the great hispanic ceroplasty, the friar Mercedarian Juan Gutiérrez de Torices (1625 - 1709), author of complex scenes solved with a portentous detail. Both in Italy and in Spain during the whole of the seventeenth century these scenes, reflected in the inventories as "escaparates", are the preferred format, a small space surrounded by fine woods and bronze applications, inside which there is an architectural background or landscape in which small figurines represent profane and, more usually, religious subjects.



Joseph Calleso, Escultor de la Reyna D.  
María Ana de Neoburgo. A. 1697



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