

MOM'S JOY ROOM

2964 Fairmont Road, Morgantown, WV 26501 | (304) 282-3671

CERTIFICATE OF DESCRIPTION & VALUATION

Antique Poured Wax Character Doll — Tribute to a Masterpiece

THE BOY IN RED

Circa 1885–1910 — In the Likeness of Goya's "Manuel Osorio Manrique de Zúñiga" (1787–88)



The Doll, With Full Tableau



Goya's Original — For Comparison



"The Boy in Red" — Antique Poured Wax Character Doll

Depicting Goya's "Manuel Osorio Manrique de Zúñiga" (1787–88)

Original Red Velvet Suit, Ecrú Lace Collar & Cream Silk-Style Sash

Displayed with Companion Cats, Magpie & Birdcage, and Framed Print of the Original Painting

THE PAINTING BEHIND THE DOLL

This remarkable doll bears a striking resemblance to one of the most beloved child portraits in Western art: **Manuel Osorio Manrique de Zúñiga**, painted by **Francisco de Goya y Lucientes** in 1787–88, now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The sitter, known popularly as "The Red Boy" or "Boy in Red," was the young son of the Count and Countess of Altamira. He is shown at



Poured Wax Character Doll — "The Boy in Red"
Red Velvet Suit, Lace Collar & Cream Sash
Displayed with Framed Print of Goya's Original
Full Tableau: Cats, Magpie & Birdcage

CURRENT MARKET VALUE

\$750 – \$1,500+

Genuine circa 1885–1910 antique poured wax character doll
(family assessment)

Original Little Lord Fauntleroy-style costume & hand
construction support this dating

Premium for exceptional thematic rarity, striking Goya
resemblance & full tableau presentation

Antique wax doll & collector market data 2024–2025

about age three, freshly "breeched" into his first suit of boy's clothing — a red jacket and trousers, wide lace collar, and silk sash — accessories of a fashion ritual marking his passage out of infant dress. In his hand he holds a leashed magpie, which carries a calling card bearing the artist's own name in its beak — a rare instance of Goya inserting his signature directly into the scene. Behind the magpie, three cats crouch with unmistakable predatory intent, watching both the magpie and a nearby cage of finches. Art historians have long read the painting as a meditation on the fragility of childhood innocence, poised between Enlightenment-era ideals of childhood purity and the ever-present shadow of mortality — a reading made only more poignant by the fact that the real Don Manuel died at around age eight, only a few years after the portrait was completed. The painting itself was orphaned from its companion family portraits for seventy years before being reunited with them in the Met's 2014 exhibition, "Goya and the Altamira Family."

◆ *"The magpie holding the artist's card in its beak is one of art history's quiet in-jokes — Goya signing his masterpiece from inside the very story it tells."* ◆

DATING THE DOLL — THE FAUNTLEROY CONNECTION

Rather than a deliberate modern "tribute" piece, the evidence points to this doll being a genuine antique in its own right, dating to roughly 1885–1910. Goya's painting was not publicly well known until the Metropolitan Museum acquired it in 1944 and did not become widely reproduced until decades later — so no one was making tribute dolls to this specific artwork in the 19th century. However, the doll's costume — a velvet suit, wide lace collar, and broad sash — is instantly recognizable as the "Little Lord Fauntleroy" suit, an extremely popular boys' fashion that swept the United States and Britain following the 1885 publication of Frances Hodgson Burnett's novel and its 1888 stage adaptation, peaking in popularity around 1889–90 and remaining fashionable through roughly 1910. The doll's aged wax coloring and the hand-construction details of its clothing are consistent with this same window. In other words: this doll was very likely created as a fashionable "boy of the day" character doll during the height of Fauntleroy-suit popularity — and only decades later was recognized by its current owner as bearing an uncanny resemblance to Goya's famous portrait, since both draw on the same romantic, aristocratic child-fashion visual language of velvet, lace, and sash. That recognition inspired the present owner's beautifully staged tribute diorama.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DOLL

The doll itself is a poured wax character figure with softly modeled, aged facial features, dark hair styled in the period bob seen in the original portrait, and glass or glass-style eyes. It is dressed in a faithful recreation of Don Manuel's costume — a red velvet-style jacket and trousers, a wide ecru lace collar, and a cream sash tied at the waist — and is posed holding a cord, echoing the magpie's leash in the original composition. The doll is displayed together with a small menagerie of companion

figures (three cats, a magpie, and a birdcage) and a framed print of Goya's painting for direct comparison — together forming a complete and quite touching tribute tableau to the original masterpiece.

◆ *A notable construction detail: the figure has an internal hole running through the body, through which a mounting pole is inserted to stand him upright, rather than resting on a conventional doll stand beneath the feet. This type of pole-mount construction is more characteristic of wax museum, exhibition, or diorama display figures than of dolls made purely for play or shelf display — it may point toward this piece having originated as a wax sculptor's exhibition or tableau figure rather than a doll produced for the collector toy market.* ◆

PROVENANCE

This doll was acquired via an online auction listing several years ago; the seller had no information about the figure beyond its wax composition and offered no history or identification. Through her own research into the costume details — the red velvet suit, wide lace collar, and sash, along with the wax's aged coloring and the clothing's hand-construction — the current owner identified the figure as a likely genuine circa 1885–1910 antique whose Fauntleroy-suit costume closely resembles Goya's "Manuel Osorio Manrique de Zúñiga." The original costume was subsequently sent to a professional cleaner to be freshened and preserved. The owner then sourced a framed print of the original Goya painting and built the current diorama — including the companion cats, magpie, and birdcage — as a full staged tribute to the masterpiece that inspired the doll.

NOTABLE INFORMATION

- ◆ Subject: Tribute to Goya's "Manuel Osorio Manrique de Zúñiga" (Boy in Red), 1787–88
- ◆ Original painting location: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
- ◆ Material: Poured wax character doll (family attribution)
- ◆ Costume: Red velvet-style suit, ecru lace collar, cream sash — closely follows the original portrait
- ◆ Displayed with: three cats, magpie, birdcage & framed print of the original painting
- ◆ Maker: Unattributed — no maker's mark or artist signature identified
- ◆ Construction: Internal pole-mount hole through the body (rather than a doll stand) used to stand the figure upright

Honest Disclosure: No maker's mark, artist signature, or documented production history has been identified for this doll. The circa 1885–1910 dating is an informed estimate based on the wax's aged coloring and the clothing's construction and style, as assessed by the current owner, together with the doll's costume matching the well-documented "Little Lord Fauntleroy" fashion window — it has not been confirmed by a professional conservator or doll authentication specialist. The internal pole-mount construction (rather than a doll stand) is unusual for a doll of this era and could suggest later repurposing or display modification; its significance is offered as informed observation rather than confirmed

fact. The accompanying cats, magpie, birdcage, and framed print are display/staging elements added by the current owner to complete the tribute and are not evaluated here as antiques. Valuation reflects genuine antique status as assessed, fine original costume survival, and the notable rarity and visual impact of its resemblance to Goya's celebrated portrait. A professional in-hand appraisal is recommended to confirm age and material for insurance purposes.

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Certificate Issued: July 2026 | Values based on doll artist & collector market data 2024–2025

Sandy Wade, Proprietor

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Proprietor
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