

L'Annunciazione di Nancy di Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio

The Annunciation from Nancy by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio

Prior to the exhibition held in Rome at the Scuderie del Quirinale in 2009/10, Caravaggio's *Annunciation* from the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Nancy underwent a thorough scientific survey during which the aesthetic presentation was improved. The altar piece, which has always been kept at Nancy, was clumsily transferred from canvas to canvas in the early 19th century and was subsequently restored by the ICR in 1967/69. Forty years later, in 2009/10, we had the chance to check the state of the restoration and to identify the causes of alterations in the painted surface and some of the retouching. At the same time, the whole painting was carefully cleaned and touched up using more stable pigments. The diagnostic study involved checking the operation of the expansion frame, inspecting the various layers of canvas, re-examining the stratigraphic sections taken during the restoration in the 1960s (using methods and equipment not available at the time), a new radiographic survey of the whole painting using non-destructive XRF tests and reflecto-graphic techniques to identify the pigments and to render the under-drawing visible. The survey brought to light several peculiarities of Caravaggio's technique which were previously less evident, such as preparatory drawings and incisions, while the sequence of the painted layers and the limited range of pigments confirm that the work belongs to the later stage of Caravaggio's career. Radiography clearly showed that the upper part of the frame, roughly prepared, was not a subsequent addition but corresponds to a strip of canvas left on purpose by the artist to enable him to adapt the painting to the size of the altar where it would be positioned.

Studio delle tracce di pigmenti azzurri in due affreschi della chiesa inferiore di San Clemente a Roma

Traces of blue pigments on two frescoes in the lower church of San Clemente in Rome

In 2009, the Higher Institute for Conservation and Restoration conducted a worksite to examine and carry out essential restoration on the frescoes depicting the *Leggenda di Sant'Alessio* and the *Messa di San Clemente* in the central nave of the lower church in the basilica of San Clemente (Rome), dating from the late 11th century. During the worksite, it was extremely difficult to interpret the composition of the original paint films due to the poor state of conservation of the paintings. However, careful and repeated study of the surfaces made it possible to identify traces of blue pigment on the dark grey background of both walls. In particular, the granules of pigment were localised in micro lesions on the plaster, in surface abrasions and cavities. Two types of blue pigments were identified: natural ultramarine and egyptian blue, probably mixed together and present in different quantities in the two works.

Dipinti murali strappati: proposte innovative per la ricostruzione del supporto

Detached wall paintings: innovative proposals for reconstructing supports

In the late 1960s, a new conservation approach was developed regarding the operative methodology and materials used in the reconstruction of supports for detached wall paintings. Over the years, especially more recently, the basic principle has always been to ensure the reversibility of the materials used and therefore of the whole restoration. The purpose of this article is to outline a methodology which employs materials with these characteristics. An important aspect was the results obtained through an experimental protocol applied to the study of restoration materials used for treating the painted film and for preparing the intervening layer placed between the film and the new support panel. The main focus of the project – researching the solubility characteristics of materials – could be important for setting up future conservation projects. Antonio Forcellino has analysed the work in relation to drawings by Michelangelo in the British Museum (inv. 1895-9-15-504r) and in the Louvre (inv. 698r; inv. 720r) often cited by critics with reference to this composition. More in general, the analysis compared the executive technique of

ABSTRACT

Renaissance paintings, examining the question of transferring the work from the preparatory drawings to the painted surface, in works by Raphael and Michelangelo. Finally, images obtained by infra-red reflectography enabled Franca Persia and Ombretta Cocco to examine the under-drawings of the paintings in question, comparing the different quality of the preparatory drawing, estimating the amount of information transferred during the reproduction of the drawing, and the technique used for this operation.

Una pianeta tessuta ad arazzo nel Tesoro del duomo di Rieti

A cape of woven tapestry in the Treasury of Rieti Cathedral

This article concerns a cape of woven tapestry, kept at the Diocesan Museum in Rieti. Restored in 2008, it is an extremely rare item not only for the executive technique but also for the iconography. It is decorated with the figures of saints Francis and Joseph, together with liturgical scenes and stories from the Passion. According to documents, it was donated to Rieti Cathedral by archdeacon Fabrizio Aligeri (1503-1585). Probably made in northern Europe, it dates from the first half of the 16th century and was included in the 1586 inventory. Restoration was based on the principle of "minimum intervention", and took place as follows: a preliminary phase to evaluate the state of conservation using precise graphic and photographic documentation, and a working phase to improve and resolve structural and aesthetic problems by cleaning and carefully extending the fabric into shape, removing vestiges of previous restoration work, repositioning the stolone on the back, and consolidating the fabric with stitching. Following restoration, the work was placed in a specially constructed box while waiting to be put on display in the museum.

L'Istituto Centrale del Restauro nel complesso del San Francesco di Paola a Roma (1939-2010)

The Central Institute for Restoration in the complex of San Francesco di Paola in Rome (1939-2010)

The article covers the history of the Central Institute for Restoration, its foundation in the 1930s and 40s, up to its transfer to the San Michele a Ripa complex in October 2010, through the history of the building which housed it – the monumental complex of San Francesco di Paola in Rome. Based on careful study of archive documents as well as published and unpublished sources regarding the building, the history of the institute is recounted from three different points of view. Firstly, a section on construction and structural matters, showing the development of the Cesarini-Borgia palazzo which stands on the ruins of the palazzo of the vescovi tiburtini, followed by the erection of the Convent and the church of San Francesco di Paola through testamentary provisions. Secondly, the founding of the Central Institute for Restoration and the cultural context in which it took place. Thirdly, the "Fondo di Silvio Radiconcini", commissioned by Cesare Brandi to design the "Casa del Restauro", with the first publication of a historical and critical study of the graphic project and the documents attached to it, kept in the ISCR archive.