



Restoration of assets of artistic and cultural Value at Qrendi Parich Chrucl

The restoration project consist of a Canvas painting by Suor de Domenici and the polychrome Papier-mâché Crucifix

The Canvas painting by Suor de Domenici

The works included the packing and transportation of the painting from Qrendi Parish Church to the conservation laboratory, and its return to the church after the restoration process was completed. An on first-aid treatment was required prior to transportation to the conservation laboratory. A valuation of the painting and an insurance cover was effected to cover the painting when in the conservation laboratory. The valuation of the artifact was presented to the authorities prior to the initiation of conservation works. Photographic documentation and further non-invasive analysis using diffuse light, raking light, ultraviolet fluorescence (UVF), infra-red (IR) and false-colour infrared (FCIR) was done to study further the damages. The documentation was presented to the Qrendi Local Council on completion of the restoration project.

The works included the manufacturing of a new, bolt-expandable stretcher frame made of tulip wood to keep the painting taut. Also, the restoration and conservation treatments of the painting included the first aid consolidation treatments, temporary facing to prevent further paint loss during handling and transportation, scientific analysis and sample taking, surface cleaning of both sides of the painting, the removal of the varnish and non-original paint, local re-adhesion of paint was necessary to prevent paint loss, the dismantling of the painting from its auxiliary frame, the removal of any past interventions from the verso, the reducing canvas and paint deformations, the re-adjustment and re-alignment of torn parts, the re-adhesion of tears using an appropriate conservation-grade adhesive, individual yarns, and patches, canvas lacunae were filled using linen inlays that fitted exactly within the loss and having similar weave orientation and yarn count, the assessment of the original canvas support:

- where on-the-one-hand, the original textile was found to be in a good state of conservation, the painting was strip-lined with frayed linen canvas and
- where on-the-other hand the original support was very weak, re-lining was affected.

The painting was then stretched on the newly-manufactured tulip stretcher frame. Paint losses were filled, levelled and textured, matching the paint surface texture of the original. With regards to the

pictorial integration, major paint losses were retouched in puntini (fine dots) or tratteggio (fine vertical hatching) as specified by conservation ethics. Varnishing was affected with a non-yellowing resin so that it remained reversible without posing damage to the original paint layer.

The conservation report, included visual and textual documentation, as well as detailed information on the painting's manufacturing technique, the past interventions and multispectral imaging, scientific analysis were carried out and conservation and restoration intervention explaining and justifying the materials used and treatment methodology.

The polychrome Papier-mâché Crucifix

Photographic documentation was compiled and on site first-aid consolidation treatments were affected. The project entailed the packing and transportation of the Crucifix, from Qrendi Parish Church to the conservation laboratory, and its return to the church after the restoration process was completed. A valuation of the artifact and an insurance cover was made whilst the Holy Crucifix was in the conservation laboratory. The valuation of the artifact was presented to Qrendi Local Council and to the insurance company prior to the initiation of conservation works.

A full photographic documentation and further non-invasive analysis using diffuse light, raking light, ultraviolet fluorescence (UVF); and X-Radiography were required. Documentation was presented to the Qrendi Local Council on completion of the restoration project.

The restoration and conservation treatment of the polychrome papier-mâché crucifix included in situ first aid consolidation treatments to prevent further paint loss during handling and transportation. scientific analysis and sample taking were necessary as full documentation determined that there was the need to further analyze the constituent materials of the Papier-mâché statue to help determine the manufacturing technique, past restoration materials and the causes of deterioration, the local re-adhesion and consolidation to stabilise the various strata comprising the polychrome Papier-mâché statue, the re-attachment of broken parts of the polychrome statue, the surface cleaning to remove dust, grime and foreign deposits, the removal of varnish and non-original paint, the removal of past interventions was required, infilling and levelling of losses according to the original texture, undulations of the polychrome Papier-mâché statue using suitable conservation fillers according to the stratum being integrated, retouching of infilled losses using reversible conservation grade colours as specified by conservation ethics, the application of a conservation grade, non-yellowing protective coating that remains reversible without posing damage to the original constituent material and

- the compilation of a conservation report, that included visual and textual documentation, as well as detailed information on:

(a) the painting's manufacturing technique;

(b) past interventions;

(c) multispectral imaging / scientific analysis carried out and

(d) conservation and restoration intervention,

clearly explaining and justifying the materials used and treatment methodology. The report was presented to the Qrendi Local Council on completion of the restoration project. The Wooden Cross onto which the papier-mâché crucifix was mounted, was treated, documented, consolidated and integrated in the original canvas painting.

All documentation was presented to the Qrendi Local Council on completion of the restoration project during the inauguration of the restoration project during the launch night that was convened in Tal Hniena Sanctuary where the picture is housed to adorn this jewel in the midst of the Qrendi countryside.

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- the Minister for Cultural Heritage, Arts and Local Government,

for supporting our initiative documented also in a publication by Mr George Cassar entitled *The Church of Our Lady of Mercy, il-Qrendi* which was also launched on the 26 April 2024 with the restoration of the Canvas painting by Suor de Domenici and the polychrome Papier-mâché Crucifix



AMY SCIBERRAS RESTORATION & CONSERVATION OF FINE ARTS



