

“A Masterpiece for Milan” 2023 | Stories of the Infancy of Christ by Fra Angelico



The Bracco Foundation is renewing its partnership with the Carlo Maria Martini Diocesan Museum on the occasion of the opening of “Un Capolavoro per Milano” [A Masterpiece for Milan], an annual public showing in Milan of a work of art of universal significance. This year’s exhibition, which runs from 28 October 2023 to 28 January 2024, celebrates one of the greatest masters in the history of Italian art, Fra Giovanni da Fiesole, better known as Fra Angelico or Beato Angelico, who ably combined the art of perspective of the fifteenth-century with elegant medieval canons to generate his own particular synthesis of purity of form and spirituality.

Specifically, the exhibition showcases one of Fra Angelico’s most complex and fascinating works, the extraordinary panel paintings on the door of the Armadio degli Argenti (“Wardrobe of the Silversmiths”) depicting scenes from the story of Christ’s childhood. The cycle of pictures are painted on nine panels, each of which depicts an episode from the life of Christ.

The Bracco Foundation is Main Sponsor of this major cultural event, which presents many of the distinctive traits typical of a Bracco Foundation cultural project, such as a multidisciplinary perspective, an emphasis on the divulgation of learning, partnerships with national institutions, and interest in exploring the relationship between science and

art.

In addition to supporting the exhibition as a whole, the Bracco Foundation is also offering two further contributions by, first, carrying out diagnostic analyses of the work and, second, setting up a complementary exhibition designed for display in a healthcare setting.

The diagnostic analyses

Under the auspices of the Bracco Foundation and with the collaboration of DeepTrace Technologies (a spin-off of IUSS-Pavia), the Milan Bicocca University, "La Statale" University of Milan, and a foundation for the preservation and restoration of the Palace of Venaria, a series of non-invasive diagnostic analyses were made of the door of the Armadio to examine its constituent materials and the manufacturing techniques used by its makers. The analysis therefore also offers a public demonstration of how science can be used to deepen our understanding of a work of art.

The analysis was carried out under the supervision of the San Marco Museum, which is lending out the work. It entailed the use of multiband and hyperspectral high-resolution imaging and spectroscopic techniques both of the visible and of the non-visible elements of the artwork. The imaging enabled experts to examine and characterize the material of which the work is composed, and the manufacturing techniques used in its production.

Culture and health: Photographic exhibition "Beato Angelico. L'arte nei luoghi di cura" [Fra Angelico: Art in healthcare settings]

The effects of culture on well-being is one of the Bracco Foundation's primary interests. Just as the penetrating gaze of science can reveal what is hidden in a canvas, so a parallel photographic exhibition called "Beato Angelico. L'arte nei luoghi di cura" [Fra Angelico: Art in healthcare settings] being held in the Via Saint Bon headquarters of Centro Diagnostico Italiano in Milan from 28/10/2023 to 28/01/2024 will investigate and magnify the narrative framework of the work. Each of the nine panels that make up the picture cycle was photographed at a very high resolution and printed on a large scale, accompanied by a second image showing a significant detail. The photographs immerse the viewer in an immortal story painted by an artist with heightened sensitivity in a state of mystical contemplation.

Since 2011, the Foundation has been promoting studies and conferences on the utility of introducing art and culture into healthcare settings. Further, with reference to scientific studies indicating that the simple presence of art improves life quality, the Foundation has also been supporting the staging of exhibitions on the premises of CDI-Centro Diagnostico Italiano, where works of art and culture can be enjoyed by staff and visitors.