

Aragon chapel at St John's gets a facelift



St Lawrence restored.

The beautiful and majestic chapel of Aragon at St John's Co-Cathedral, Valletta, has been given a deep facelift with the grime and soot of years cleared as part of a major restoration project.

The job, overseen by the St John's Co-Cathedral Foundation, included work on the dome, wall carvings, marble funerary monuments and lunette painting representing The Martyrdom of St Lawrence and the painting of St Francis Xavier, both by Mattia Preti.

Foundation CEO and curator Cynthia de Giorgio said that, like the rest of the church, the chapel had suffered from the ravages of time. The deterioration was mainly caused by rainwater that seeped in from the dome causing the irreparable loss of the gilding and erosion of some of the carvings.



Chapel of Aragon.

The lower part of the walls had lost most of their gilding because of the humidity and the remaining carvings and gilding, which had severely deteriorated, were covered with a thick layer of candle soot deposits, dust and grime.


The first stage of the restoration involved the careful removal of the thick layer of dust and candle soot and walls were prepared for regilding, using 24-carat gold leaf that was applied using the process adopted in the 17th century.

The restoration of The Martyrdom of St Lawrence, which depicts the saint burning on a red-hot gridiron, revealed the canvas had sustained severe damage and was torn in several pieces. In a previous restoration intervention, the painting was glued to a wooden support, heavily over-painted and given many layers of varnish, which had

discoloured and oxidised over the years. Ms de Giorgio explained the delicate restoration procedure involved detaching the canvas from the wooden support and removing the several layers of discoloured varnish.

The restoration was carried out through the sponsorship of Consorcio de Museos de la Comunidad Valencia, APS Bank, Din I-Art Helwa and Shireburn Software.

Comments

Reginald Borg(1 week, 1 day ago) 

A big thank you and prosit to all those involved in this beautiful restoration.
We should all be proud of it.
