



DUCCIO PROJECT

The Virgin and Child Enthroned in Majesty, commonly known as the Maestà, was painted by Duccio di Buoninsegna for the high altar of Siena Cathedral between 1308 and 1311, as documented both by the contract between the Opera della Metropolitana and the artist and by the report of the magnificent procession with which the people of Siena accompanied the great altarpiece from Duccio's workshop to the cathedral on 9 June 1311. In its original position, the Maestà was visible from both sides. On the front was the monumental figure of the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child and attended by angels and saints, and on the back were scenes from the Passion of Christ. Both sides of the great panel, which measured more than four meters in length, were completed by a predella and crown, all enclosed in an extraordinary gilt frame decorated with gables and spires.

The Maestà remained on the high altar until 1506, when the decision was made to replace it with the bronze ciborium by Vecchietta which is still there today. The painting was moved to a wall in the left transept until 1771, when it was dismantled. Its various parts were reunited almost completely only in 1878, when they were placed on display in the Museo dell'Opera.

For the recent Duccio exhibition, held in Siena from 4 October 2003 to 14 March 2004, the Soprintendenza per il Patrimonio Storico Artistico e Demoetnoantropologico per le province di Siena e Grosseto undertook the restoration, under the direction of Alessandro Bagnoli, of the following twelve of the small panels originally part of the crown and predella of the Maestà: Christ Appearing to the Disciples behind Closed Doors, The Incredulity of Saint Thomas, The Pentecost, Christ Appearing on the Sea of Galilee, Christ Appearing on the Mountain, Christ Appearing to the Disciples during Dinner (crown of the back of the altarpiece)

The Adoration of the Magi, The Presentation in the Temple, The Massacre of the Innocents, The Flight into Egypt, Christ among the Scholars in the Temple (front predella)

Christ Tempted on the Temple (back predella)

Restoration of the painted surface was done by Daniele Rossi, and of the wooden structure by Roberto Buda.

The restoration project was financed by ARPAI (Association for the Restoration of the Italian Art Heritage).