

Mastering the Naturalism of Carlo Crivelli Museum Workshop



Summary

Working during the period of transition between the Italian Gothic era and the Renaissance, Carlo Crivelli displayed his skills in gilding backgrounds and rendering naturalistic figures, still life objects, costumes, and illusionistic architectural settings. Learn how to manipulate historic materials used in the fifteenth century to achieve a variety of gilded effects, create lifelike marble, metallic, and cloth textures, and utilize shading and cross-hatching to create the illusion of volume. This workshop is recommended for curators and art historians interested in Italian painting who would like to try their hand at gilding and tempera painting.

Objectives

Through lectures, demonstrations, and activities, participants will:

- Discuss the art historical context of Carlo Crivelli and his oeuvre
- Gain an overview of technical art history of Crivelli paintings
- Observe demonstrations on gilding, creating painted textures, and volumetric shading
- Experiment freely with a variety of techniques and materials

Workshop Outline

- Gallery tour highlighting the transition from the Italian Gothic to the Italian Renaissance, with an emphasis on changes in method and technique
- Powerpoint introduction to Italian Gothic workshop practices of gilding and painting and techniques employed by Carlo Crivelli
- Demonstrations of naturalistic painting techniques
- Activities based on demonstrations

Demonstrations and Activities

- Gilding: Practice applying gold leaf in large swathes using water gilding methods or suggest divine intervention and detailed brocades with mordant gilding and scraffitto.
- Marbling: Create lifelike marble and other stone patterns by layering tempera paint and mixing oil-based and aqueous media.
- Textures: Combine highlights, midtones, and shadows in different proportions and sequences to create the illusion of shiny beads and jewels, rippling cloth, and cascading hair.
- Volume: Learn how to use hatching and cross hatching to suggest advancing and receding planes and cast shadows.

Materials

Prepared panels
Gold leaf
Gilding brush
Boiled oil
Paintbrushes
Tempera paint
Paper palettes
Paper towels

Resources

Internet Resources:

["Carlo Crivelli Historical Reconstruction" on the Kress Reconstruction Website](#)

["Gilding" on the Kress Reconstruction Website](#)

["Egg Tempera" on the Kress Reconstruction Website](#)

["Oil Paint" on the Kress Reconstruction Website](#)

Books and Literature:

Bomford, David, and Rachel Billinge. *Underdrawings in Renaissance Paintings*. London: National Gallery Co.; Distributed by Yale University Press, 2002.

Bewer, Francesca G. *A Laboratory for Art: Harvard's Fogg Museum and the Emergence of Conservation in America, 1900-1950*. Cambridge, Mass.; New Haven: Harvard Art Museum; Yale University Press, 2010, 110-11, fig. 3.16.

Casavecchia, Barbara. "La tecnica di Carlo Crivelli." *Kermes: La Rivista del Restauro* 10, no. 30 (1997): 12–19.

Dunkerton, Jill. "Artist/Conservator Materials: The Restoration of Crivelli's *The Dead Christ Supported by Two Angels*." In *Early Italian Paintings: Approaches to Conservation: Proceedings of a Symposium at the Yale University Art Gallery, April 2002*, edited by Patricia Sherwin Garland, 238–246. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2003.

Dunkerton, Jill, and Raymond White. "The Discovery and Identification of an Original Varnish on a Panel by Carlo Crivelli." *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 21 (2000): 70–76.

Dunkerton, Jill, Susan Foister, Dillian Gordon, and Nicholas Penny. *Giotto to Dürer: Early Renaissance Painting in The National Gallery*. New Haven: Yale University Press in association with National Gallery Publications, 1991, 174, 184, 201, 332-335.

Lightbown, Ronald W. *Carlo Crivelli*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004, 419-435.