

**INTERVIEW WITH ARTIST****ARTIST: MARTINI****MEDIUM: GOLD LEAF GILDING****ART WORK: THE ANNUNCIATION**

**Interviewer:** What influenced you to use Gold Leaf Gilding as your medium for your work The Annunciation?

**Martini:** This work was created to be a large alter piece for Ansano Star in the Siena Cathedral meaning a lot of people will see my work and it could also be placed in a very holy and very prestigious place, I chose Gold Leaf Gilding as it is one of the most expensive and laborious art mediums yet is also one of the most beautiful and gold leaf was very popular in Siena where people liked rich expensive art in the cathedral and fine details like in byzantine art. Choosing this medium with its expense in mind shows that I have given respect to anyone that would look at my work and I have also given respect to the cathedral as I have put in the effort and money to create this masterpiece. Guiding is a very laborious process as the gold needs to be flattened to around 1/280,000 inch (0.00009millimetre) and was done by hand. As the work was to be placed in a cathedral a place where light plays a huge roll with many windows and natural light flowing in during the day and candle light used at night, the gold used in my piece was in recognition of this light leaving the gold to reflect the light in many different ways, as the sun sets and rises and the flickering of the candles, using textured gold allowed the light to bounce off my work and scatter yet as the light changed as would how the light reflected off the work meaning the work would be constantly different. As the light would always be cast differently onto the painting it created an illusion that every time a person would walk into the cathedral and see my work the scene would look slightly different, this then gave the illusion that the religious scene depicted in the painting was ongoing and wasn't a still image, but rather a story that ones entering the cathedral could follow along. As the gilding in the work made it be seen as an ongoing and moving work it gives light to the Christian faith that is depicted in the work as it creates a scene that followers of the Christian faith can see and believe rather than having still images in their head of how they would imagine things to be in the bible, it also allows for the many illiterate people who would enter the cathedral to see the image and feel a connection to the work. The gold also shows how holy the work and scene depicted is showing that a work this holy and divine deserves gold, this is able to be communicated to the literate and illiterate showing the literate the pure intensity of the scene, also giving them a work to worship and look up towards and for the illiterate showing how holy and divine the Christian faith is it also allows for the illiterate people of the town to know what they are worshipping as they would not have been able to read the bible.

**Interviewer: How did Gold Leaf effect the composition of the work?**

**Martini:** To paint my figures I used tempera paints to give the figures full detail. Using tempera allowed me to create many fine details on the work this was due to the fast drying nature of the paints and the small brushes that were used, tempura also can be built on top of each other to create overlapping and opaque details rather than if I was to use fresco paint which would have had to be done in sections and wouldn't have dried with the intensity that tempera paints have. The use of tempera also allowed me to blend the colours of the gold and pigment together as when the tempera paint dries it leaves ashine on top of the surface

due to the egg white and egg oil, not only does this shine add a protective layer but also blends with the shine of gold creating the overall work to have a shine and reflect the light rather than having a gold shining background with matte figures which would not create the beautiful shadows cast by the light. As I used flat gold leaf placing the gold in a large sheet rising from the floor of the work to the top of the work and has been textured to reflect and scatter the light. Using flat areas of gold does result in the work looking flat as no shading or shadows can be used, to get around this I textured the gold in such a way that meant when the light hit the work it would create a natural shadow rather than a painted one. In my work I used a process called sgraffio meaning I placed the gold down and scratched away some parts of the gold to leave the under layer exposed and create a pattern, I used this technique in creating Gabriel's mantle which I had modelled off a fabric, doing this allowed for my work to be more realistic rather than flat and to show he is not ordinary.

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I do find that Jesus and God are usually directed or symbolised by a beam of bright light or gold and even though my work does not depict a scene containing Jesus or the lord himself the use of gold for glowing light symbolises his being, and this presence in the work and around the cathedral.

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