The icons of Bose

icon painting

The icon laboratory of the monastery of Bose started its activity about twenty years ago. Nowadays a small group of brothers and sisters of the community share with many monks of the Christian East this ancient art of icon painting.

The **Byzantine iconographic tradition** was the starting point of our activity thanks to our friendship with Greek monks and nuns, who passed on to us the wisdom of their art. The Greek icon painter Emanuele Panselinos is the main reference for our models in the Byzantine style.

Since the '90s we turned our attention to the **Italian painting tradition**. Italian painters of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, such as Duccio di Boninsegna and Berlinghieri, are the main reference for our models in the Italic style.

The **Russian tradition**, and particularly the two great Russian icon painters Dionisij and A. Rublëv, is a source of inspiration for our models and technique.

In recent years we have widened our artistic horizons to include also the **Coptic tradition** and the **Ethiopian tradition**.

Bose, June 2006

Since June 2005 an **exhibition room** with a collection of our liturgical icons is open to the public (for visiting hours contact the monastery).

At the moment one picture for each iconographic style, some photographs of the exhibition room, and a full list of all the subjects (with available size) are published on this website.

A comprehensive photographic catalogue is available in the hall next to the reception room of the monastery.

To order icons and to ask for an estimate contact our laboratory.

Some of the icons are on display in the hall next to the reception room of the monastery.

All our icons are **entirely handmade.**

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Linden from the forests of Slovenia and Italian **oak**, aged naturally in the monastery's lumber yard, were used to make the wooden support on which the icon was painted. The linden panel was assembled according to medieval carpentry tradition, and a hollow was carved in the front of it to obtain the '**cradle**' in which the icon is painted. Two dovetail hollows on the back of the panel hold the oak crosspieces, which help prevent the panel from bending and ensure its ventilation when hung.

The panel was soaked in **Sinotar**, a systemic insecticide, to protect it from wood-eating insects.

the linden and oak panel••'s reverse side

A piece of raw linen was applied to the front of the panel using **animal glue**. About fourteen thin layers of a mixture of animal glue and **calcium carbonate** were painted over the **linen**.

The surface was carefully sanded, and the linden and oak were treated with two layers of **varnish**.

A **wrought iron hook** was affixed to the back of the panel, and the **'Atelier del Monastero di Bose' trademark was stamped on the panel's reverse side**.

A **line drawing** of the icon's subject was made on paper, and then transferred to the wood.

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Gold leaf of twenty-three and three-fourths carats was applied to the gold parts of the icon, and protected with **sealant**.

Dry egg tempera was the medium used to paint the icon, and the natural and chemical pigments were carefully chosen and pulverized.

The finished painting is protected with **Olifa**, linseed oil cooked in cobalt salts and spread generously on the panel, then wiped off. The process was repeated several times to obtain a smooth satin finish.

How to care for your icon: Simply wipe off the surface occasionally with a soft wool cloth, to remove dust that may accumulate over time. We recommend keeping the icon far from all heat sources, and in a well-ventilated room that is neither too dry nor too humid. The laboratory declines all responsibility in the event that these maintenance conditions are not respected.

For further information contact:

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