Richly gilded and ornately painted, the statue of the Madonna del Rosario was carved and decorated by Giovanni Battista Santacroce, a sculptor and artist active in Genoa in the early to mid 17th century. Composed of one central group, the Madonna and Child are surrounded by angels. Whilst originally housed in the Church of San Vincenzo, the statue is now found in N.S. della Consolazione to where it was moved in 1811, accompanied by a stucco base constructed by Pasquale Bocciardo (1705-1791).

The statue has been extensively overpainted in the past; the last overpaint campaign dates from 1931 when the chapel of N.S della Consolazione was restored.

The numerous repainted parts, together with the soot deposits from candles and a discolored oil-resin layer applied at an unknown date, have significantly darkened the polychromy of the artwork subsequently reducing its aesthetic appeal. Although the original 17th century paint surface has remained completely preserved on the reverse of the statue that faces the wall, it was discovered, during the cleaning of the front of the statue, that the front of the statue had been completely repainted during in the 18th century.

A team of conservation scientists, with the co-operation of conservators, conducted a series of diagnostic tests and analyses on the statue with the intention of ascertaining the different elements within the wooden structures of the statue. These were identified through the use of an optical microscope (OM) with which it was possible to determine the diverse wood species utilized (poplar, lindenwood, larch and fruit tree).

Conservators indicated sites which could be safely sampled to aid a better understanding of the stratigraphic build up of the polychromy layers found on the front of the statue. The analysis of the samples confirmed the absence of original paint layers. Additionally, it became obvious that the original 17th century base had been applied directly to the wooden support. These results further supported the conservators' initial hypothesis that the original polychromy had been completely lost on the front of the statue. Cross-sections were mounted and observed using an optical microscope (OM) by conservation scientists. Elemental analysis of the various pigments found in the layers was carried out using a scanning electron microscope with attached energy dispersed X-ray analytical capacities (SEM-EDS).

Conservation project: 2009-2010.

Finance: Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali
Director of works: Francesca De Cupis - Soprintendenza per i Beni Storici Artistici ed Etnoantropologici della Liguria
Conservator: Flavio Brunetti