

## Descrivedendo Duomo Museum

# “The Creation of the Firmament”

“The Creation of the Firmament” was produced between 1549 and 1557 by the glassmaker Corrado de Mochis based on a preparatory cartoon by Giuseppe Arcimboldi.

It is around 120 centimetres high and 68 centimetres wide and so forms a rectangle, with the vertical being the longest side.

This is an “antello”, that is, a glass panel made up of various pieces of different shapes and sizes put together and joined with lead to form a stained-glass window. To paint the details, such as faces, buildings, the folds of clothes, and to create chiaroscuro, *grisaille* was used, a compound of iron oxides and earth mixed with silica or glass. To produce different shades of colour, a special enamel known as silver yellow could be used.

The style of the work is realistic: that is, the artist has reproduced proportions, shapes and colours in the same way as the human eye perceives them. It is part of a triptych centred on *episodes from the Old Testament*, exhibited in the Museum of the Duomo in the room dedicated to the glassmakers' art, where it appears along with "The Creation of the Animals" and "The Creation of Man" by the same artist.

“The Creation of the Firmament” is on the right of the two other panels.

The subject is God, depicted in profile at full length in the act of blessing Creation, in which the sun, moon, stars, some signs of the Zodiac and clouds can be recognised.

The figure of God occupies the left half of the work, reaching four-fifths of its height. God displays his right side and is portrayed standing, in profile.

He has the features of an old man, his face furrowed with wrinkles, surrounded by a shock of curly white hair that falls onto the forehead and a wavy beard so thick it entirely conceals his mouth. The concentrated expression and the gaze firmly fixed straight ahead lead to a knitting of the brows. A golden halo around the head gives off rays of light, like the corolla of a flower. The right arm is held out in front, the forearm raised and, with the fingers of his hand, he is intent on blessing Creation. The left arm is stretched out to take hold and raise the edge of a long blue cloak to his hips that God wears over a red tunic. Below, two bare feet emerge, the left in front of the right.

In the right part of the antello, various elements of the firmament can be seen. Featuring a starry blue sky, the scene is crossed by a semi-arch made up of small squares inside which some of the signs of the Zodiac are displayed, from Leo to Aquarius, on a light grey background; this semi-arch starts from behind God's head and continues its trajectory to the corner in the bottom right. Thick clouds can be seen around it, from which the heads of two *putti* that represent the winds emerge: the lower one in particular is depicted while blowing hard with puffed up cheeks. The scene is completed at the top with a crescent moon on the left and a large red sun on the right emanating yellow rays like the petals of a large flower.

The light source appears to come from the left, striking and illuminating the face of God. All the colours of the composition are vivid. Among them, the red and blue of God's robes stand out, along with the yellow of his halo, the sun's rays and the stars that sparkle in the blue background of the sky.



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The morphological description drawn up and validated between September and November 2023, **certified by DescriVedendo**, was created by Team DescriVedendo with the National Association of the Visually Impaired ETS, in collaboration with Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo di Milano.

