

DescriVedendo Duomo Museum

“Guide text for orientation on the visit to the Duomo Museum”

Introduction

Welcome to the guide text for orientation inside the Duomo Museum, specifically designed for people with visual impairment. In this file, we will provide some useful information for an independent visit or with a trusted companion.

Before starting the actual visit inside the museum, we would like to give you some brief, general information.

- This file, downloaded by accessing the initial QR code, already contains all the stages of the tour. You will therefore be able to manage independently with the commands on your device.
- The entire museum tour unfolds on a single ground floor, without elevations and steps, with certain stretches gently rising or falling. At the end of the tour, past the book shop, you will be back in the atrium where you entered the Museum.
- The lighting inside the rooms is dim, in order to better highlight the works on the display, which are all well-lit. For the same reason, you may have some difficulties in following the tour, giving that the setting does not provide a sharp contrast between the floor and the walls, all in shades of grey.
- At certain key points, arrows are positioned that indicate the direction to follow the tour inside the museum. If you have difficulties to get around without a companion, we invite you to follow the indications in this file as far as possible, which will tell you about appropriate changes of

direction. At any time, you may ask Museum personnel for assistance, who are present in almost every room.

- For certain selected works, you can listen to an accurate morphological description in this guide text created with the Descrivendo method, accompanied by some historical-artistic notes.
- Finally, we remind you that it is absolutely prohibited to bring and consume food and drink in the museum or take photographs with the use of a flash. Backpacks and bags must be carried in front to avoid accidentally bumping into the works exhibited. In order not to disturb other visitors, we also ask you to speak in a low voice and use headphones to hear the sounds and audio on your mobile phone.

First stage – From the entry in Palazzo Reale to the Duomo Museum's ticket office and then the entrance of the first room.

The Duomo Museum lies on the left immediately after the public entrance to Palazzo Reale. The Palazzo is very popular since it is usually the venue for various exhibitions with great appeal, for which reason we recommend that you use the courtyard entrance and remain on the left. In any event, you will find that the Museum entrance is clearly indicated by two large posters on the sides. Past the glass door that opens inwards, there is the ticket office foyer. It consists of a long counter located in front of you, under which some bright, slightly protruding panels remind you of the prohibitions to be observed inside the rooms.

After obtaining your ticket, move to the right of the counter, where you will find a small column to validate it. In the event of difficulties, a member of staff will always be on hand to help.

After passing through the turnstile, you will find yourself in front of the corridor that leads to the Museum's rooms.

Second stage – From the first Treasury room to the coat of arms of the Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo

After passing through the corridor, you will have reached the first of the rooms dedicated to treasure, which contains some precious objects, preserved within transparent display cases. Among these display cases, you will find one running along the wall on your left and one that begins longitudinally right in

front of the entrance to the room. The latter should therefore be kept to your right as you move through the room.

At the end of the display cases, you will find the entrance to the second room, the so-called "model room" because it houses a perfect reproduction in wood of the entire cathedral to a scale of 1:22.

It will be visible and well-lit in front of you. Watch out for the horizontal barriers, around 60 centimetres high, which you will find on the left of the tour at this point.

After passing through the "model room", turn right to enter the second room, also dedicated to treasure. At the centre, there is a row of glass display cases, containing precious liturgical objects placed at human height, which can be observed from both sides of each case.

After the row of these display cases, the opening that will allow you to continue the tour will be nearby. On the right, there are candelabras and, in front, a number of sculpted busts.

To continue further, first turn ninety degrees to the left, going around a display case, and then right, where the entry to the next room is found, which houses the archaeological remains of the two basilicas that existed before the current cathedral.

Third stage – From the coat of arms of the Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo to God the Father

From this point, the tour proceeds in historical-chronological order. At the entrance to this room, you will find a panel that displays two coats of arms of the *Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo*. Approach the one on the right and listen to the respective description by framing the QR Code placed at ground level, to the right of the caption.

On the right, behind the coat of arms just described, the next room opens up: the *Visconti-Sforza* room, where we invite you to immediately turn your attention to the right-hand wall. Here, God the Father is exhibited, a masterpiece of the goldsmith's art of the 15th century. Positioning yourself immediately behind the metal barrier around 60 centimetres high, frame the QR Code positioned on the extreme right of the plaque on it to listen to the description.

Fourth stage – From God the Father to the statue of Galeazzo Maria Sforza

Once the description has ended, we invite you to also observe the walls of this room with the *Palazzo Visconti* originals.

Opposite God the Father that you were able to observe, having moved to the left, a rather narrow opening made in the grey panel leads to the hall of the gargoyles, fantastical, monstrous creatures that adorn the facades and spires of the Duomo. They are exhibited in the upper left along the hall. After crossing this space, continue in the adjacent room that houses the statuettes of the capitals.

Turning left, you will arrive in the room of the *Sforza* period.

Various statues on plinths are exhibited in it, around which observers are free to move.

At the back of the room, there are two statues: the leftmost presumably depicts *Galeazzo Maria Sforza*. The work's caption is placed at the front, on the right, at ground level: frame the QR Code on the left to listen to the description.

Fifth stage – From Galeazzo Maria Sforza to the stained-glass windows room

Retracing your steps and taking care to keep a statue depicting the female figure of Saint Lucy to your right, continue along next to the brick wall on your left. Just before the end of the room, there is an opening on the left that leads to the next room; here you will have to go around a long, grey panel, keeping it to your left. Before you are five statues, three on the right and two on the left; the latter are particularly significant since the leftmost appears blackened by air pollution while the one further to the right of the two display cases bears the marks of bombing during the Second World War. Neither has been restored or cleaned.

From here, continuing forward, a short, straight and dark corridor is entered leading to the room dedicated to the Duomo's famous stained-glass windows: this is a circular-shaped setting where various backlit stained-glass windows are displayed on two levels. On entering, at the lower left there is a series of *antelli*, that is, sections of stained-glass windows; they are dedicated to three

episodes from The Book of Genesis: the last three in the row are the Creation of the Firmament, the Animals and Humans, the description of which can be heard by framing the QR Code at the lower left of each *antello*.

Sixth stage – From the stained-glass windows room to the courtyard with the copy of the Madonnina

Leaving this room, brighter than the others, on the side opposite the entrance, a corridor with a small, ascending ramp will lead you to a door on the right, by pushing which access is given, via a short, descending ramp with a handrail on the right, to a courtyard outside. In this open space, a copy of the statue of the *Madonnina*, located on the top of the cathedral's main spire, can be admired. It can be observed from every side. Positioning yourself in front of the statue, the QR Code to be framed in order to listen to the description can be found on the plinth in the right-hand corner.

Before leaving this courtyard, we inform you that there are toilets here for those with small children. It is usually kept closed but can be used by simply asking the staff.

Seventh stage – From the courtyard with the copy of the Madonnina to the painting of Saint Charles in procession

Returning inside the Museum from the courtyard, you will find yourself in a markedly less well-lit room compared to the outside. Be aware that, by immediately turning right, after a short corridor, you will find a long backless bench on the left where you can rest and allow your eyes to get used to the more subdued lighting in the interior.

You are at the entrance to the *Borromeoan rooms*, in a single large room, divided centrally by panels hung with works. You must proceed straight ahead, keeping these panels on the left until encountering a large statue that depicts "Mary Magdalene transported by the angels"; at this point, turn left and, after a few steps, with the wall in front of you, turn left again in order to go back along the corridor parallel to the one you just passed through where, on your right, there are some terracotta bas-reliefs displayed on the wall. On reaching the statue of Saint Agapitus, which is easily recognisable since it depicts a man upside down, you must turn right. In the new room, on the left wall, is the painting "Saint Charles in procession with the Holy Nail", the description of

which is available and can be heard by framing the QR Code at ground level to the right of the caption.

Eighth stage – From the painting of Saint Charles in procession to the exit

Turning first to the right and then to the left, where there is a short, descending ramp, you will reach the two rooms of tapestries, donated first by the Gonzaga dynasty to Saint Charles and then by Saint Charles to the Duomo. In both rooms, the tapestries are hung on three walls and protected by a metal barrier around 60 centimetres high; the ones in the second room are large and depict episodes from the life of Moses.

Moving on from these tapestries, you will pass through a short corridor, with a 60-centimetre-high barrier on the left, that leads to a room known as the *Camposanto*, on the walls of which many statues in plaster and terracotta are placed, reaching up to the ceiling. An opening on the left leads to a passage with a short, ascending ramp and an opening on the left that will take you to another room, where the original iron frame of the Madonnina stands out, dating from 1773 but later replaced with one in steel.

From here, there is an entrance on the left to a nineteenth-century room, which houses a structure around 1.7 metres tall in the middle on the left, with a row of statues above it.

When you have gone around it, at the bottom, turn right and then left and continue for some yards, keeping the bronze models of the façades on your right.

Note that toilets can be found along this wall on the left.

A short, descending ramp with a handrail on the left will lead you once again to the room that houses the large model of the Duomo, which can be observed this time from the opposite side. Keeping it on the left, you will pass under a pointed opening that introduces the last room containing the designs of the sculptors *Fontana* and *Minguzzi* for the creation of the fifth door of the Duomo.

Continuing beyond the room dedicated to the models, you will arrive in the bookshop, which is the last room before the museum exit onto the courtyard of *Palazzo Reale*.

You will then find the way out of the Palazzo on the right.

We hope that you found this audio useful and that you enjoyed your visit.



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.

