

RAPHAEL

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## Exhibition Facts

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## RAPHAEL

29 September 2017 – 7 January 2018

Together with Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, Raphael completes the triumvirate of Italian Renaissance artists. Moreover, the world-famous drawings of this prematurely deceased master (1483–1520) make him one of art history's great draftsmen. The Albertina Museum is now paying tribute to Raphael with a major exhibition of 150 paintings and drawings.

Starting from the Albertina Museum's own significant holdings and rounded out by the most beautiful and important drawings from prominent museums such as the Uffizi, the Royal Collection of the British Royal Family, the British Museum, the Louvre, the Vatican Museums, and the Ashmolean Museum, this monographic presentation places Raphael's thinking and conceptual process front and center: featured works range from initial spontaneous artist's impressions to virtuosic detail studies, compositional studies, and the completed paintings themselves.

### Harmony and Ideal

As a painter who worked in Umbria, Florence, and Rome and could count princes and popes among his patrons, Raphael was a true universal genius of the High Renaissance who constantly sought to strike a balance between naturalist imitation and idealization. This exhibition shows around 130 drawings and 18 paintings that amount to a representative survey encompassing all of the artist's important projects: from his early Umbrian period (up to 1504) to his years in Florence (1504–1508) and on to his time in Rome (1508/1509–1520), during which he dealt closely with antiquity, the impressive selection covers Raphael's entire artistic career.

In a way that is truly universal, Raphael expresses the quintessentially human aspects of his figures: their character, their nature, their feelings, and the motivating forces behind their actions. Even if he does observe them with great accuracy, he also idealizes them and lends them universal meaning. Through their actions, his figures enter a web of relationships in which contradictions and tensions are clarified, reconciled, and joined together in a wonderful compositional unity.

Raphael is a master of beauty and of harmony, and his works are filled with an auspicious message that remains just as pertinent today as it was at the time. More than either Leonardo or Michelangelo, Raphael comes to terms with the art of his contemporaries and predecessors, adopts it, adapts it, and ultimately arrives at solutions that are entirely his own.

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One of the basic pillars of his artistic viewpoint is the observation of nature and the study of the human model, in reference to which he examined each movement and every posture of his figures. What's more, Raphael's examination of the ideals of antiquity lent his creations monumentality, dignity, and grandeur, for which reason he became known as one of the most important history painters in the grand classical style.

## A Busy Master

Raphael's drawings provide the most immediate insight into his spontaneous thoughts and intentions. The viewer has the feeling of looking over the artist's shoulder as he quickly draws a line, adds hatching in black or red chalk, or corrects one of his motifs.

Raphael's drawings were made strictly for specific purposes that were always related to the final execution of an artwork. He conceived his projects in a series of individual design steps, from the *primo pensiero* [first thought] to studies of individual figures and groups, overall compositional designs, studies of (often nude) live models, and on to the *modello* and cartoon. This systematic and procedural character of Raphael's approach to designing his works testifies to the great care with which he prepared them.

Especially in his later career, Raphael was positively overwhelmed with commissions: he worked on the painted decoration of the individual *Stanze* in the Vatican, created designs for the tapestry series in the Sistine Chapel and the Vatican loggias, and also worked at Villa Farnesina.

Finally, after the death of Bramante in 1514, he was put in charge of the construction of St. Peter's Basilica and appointed as architect for the Vatican Palace. His archaeological research culminated in the project to draw a map with the buildings of ancient Rome. Alongside the papal commissions for frescos and panel paintings, Raphael also worked extensively for a variety of ecclesiastical and secular patrons, of whom the wealthy banker and entrepreneur Agostino Chigi (1466–1520) was the most important. In order to fulfill all these obligations, Raphael availed himself of pupils and assistants. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, researchers have attempted to attribute drawings from this late phase to the people in his employ, but most of them have since been shown to indeed be works by Raphael—for which reason some of the works in this exhibition have now been reattributed to the master himself.

The present selection of impressive drawings demonstrates all of the techniques and materials used by the artist including pen-and-ink, chalk, charcoal, metal- and silverpoint, white heightening, and wash, and the great number of paintings affords the exhibition's visitors a unique opportunity to experience Raphael's multifaceted artistic personality as a painter and a draftsman.

## Wall Texts

### The Young Raphael

Raphael received his earliest education from his father, the painter Giovanni Santi, who was in the employ of the duke of Urbino, Guidobaldo Montefeltro. Because the young, highly talented artist soon sought to learn more, he went to Perugia around 1494/95 to take up an apprenticeship with Pietro Perugino, whom his father had regarded, along with Leonardo, as one of the shining lights of art. No works by Raphael, however, are known to us from before 1500. In that year, he was already an independent master receiving his first commissions. In the following years he created various works in Umbria, including *The Coronation of the Virgin Mary* in San Francesco in Perugia, which was still strongly influenced by Perugino. The predella paintings along with the preliminary drawings are presented in this exhibition. In addition to Perugino, Raphael was inspired by the Tuscan painter Luca Signorelli and by Bernardo Pinturicchio.

Pinturicchio soon recognized the brilliant ability of the young artist, almost thirty years his junior, to render new spatial concepts and complex actions, and asked Raphael to provide drawings for his frescoes in the Libreria Piccolomini in Siena. They depict scenes from the life of the Humanist Enea Silvio Piccolomini, the later Pope Pius II. For the cultivated princely court of Urbino, Raphael probably created the exquisite painting of the *Dream of Scipio*.

### Raphael in Florence

In September 1504 Raphael was still in Urbino, where he received a letter of recommendation written by Giovanna della Rovere, the duke's sister, to the Florentine gonfalonier, the highest member of the city government of Florence. In this letter, the authenticity of which has occasionally been questioned, Giovanna praised the young painter's talent and wrote to support his further education in Florence. Raphael wanted to see with his own eyes the two large battle paintings that were being created by Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo at the time: *The Battle of Anghiari* and *The Battle of Cascina*. In this city of the arts, he could also model his drawings on the sculptures of Michelangelo, whose powerful, heroic figure ideal deeply impressed him. Raphael particularly studied Leonardo's paintings and drawings and finally succeeded in creating completely new and absolutely autonomous pictorial concepts. He also appreciated Fra Bartolommeo's harmoniously balanced compositions with their monumental, dignified figures. According to Giorgio Vasari, Raphael tried to imitate the style of his friend, who, in turn, taught him the laws of perspective. During his stay in Florence, Raphael did not receive any commissions for large fresco decorations, but he created a series of important portraits and Madonna paintings.

## The Entombment

Between 1504 and 1508, Raphael interrupted his stay in Florence several times to return to his hometown of Urbino and to Perugia. In 1507 he painted the *Entombment* (now in the Galleria Borghese), which Atalanta Baglioni had commissioned for her family chapel in memory of her son Grifonetto, who had been killed during a family feud in the summer of 1500.

While Raphael made the first drafts all the way to the final cartoon in Florence, he finished the painting itself in Perugia. The artist had initially intended a Lamentation scene, based on a composition by his teacher Perugino, in which the Saviour's dead body is lying on the ground and supported by the kneeling Marys. Under the impression of works by Luca Signorelli, Mantegna and an ancient sarcophagus, however, Raphael changed the composition to make it far more dynamic. Here the body of Christ is carried to the grave in a kind of procession, moving from the right side to the left. The motifs of the bearers, which the artist studied on nude models, are inspired by figures by Michelangelo in the same way as the group of the Three Marys around the Mother of God, who has fallen faint.

The three predella grisaille paintings, which depict the theological virtues, are presented in this exhibition. *Charity* in the centre refers to Atalanta Baglioni's love for her murdered son and to the virtuous sincerity with which she condemned him for his own bloody deed in this feud.

## Raphael in Rome – The Stanza della Segnatura

In the second half of 1508 Raphael went to Rome, where great tasks awaited him. In November of the previous year, Pope Julius II had moved into an apartment on the top floor of the Vatican Palace because he did not want to live in the chambers of his predecessor, the Borgia Pope Alexander VI, whom he hated. The decoration of the most magnificent parts of the new rooms, for which various artists including Luca Signorelli, Lorenzo Lotto, Bramantino, Sodoma and Perugino were employed, began in late 1508. Raphael was also commissioned with the creation of a fresco, with which the pope was allegedly so impressed that he had the works by all the other masters removed and entrusted the young artist with the entire decoration of the Stanze (cf. model).

Raphael's work began in the middle one of the three rooms, which housed Julius II's private library and where the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura met during the reign of Paul III to hear matters of clemency.

The themes of the four large mural paintings are defined by the traditional arrangement of the books in accordance with the four university faculties. The fresco of the *Disputa* refers to the subject of theology, the *School of Athens* to philosophy, the *Parnassus* to poetry, and the wall with the three cardinal virtues and the two scenes with the presentation of historical writings on law to jurisprudence.

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To the vaulted ceiling previously decorated by Sodoma, Raphael added tondi with female allegorical figures and square scenes in the corners that also refer to the theme of the faculties. The paintings in the Stanza della Segnatura are Raphael's most famous frescoes and key works of High-Renaissance art.

## The Massacre of the Innocents

The genesis of Raphael's master engraving of *The Massacre of the Innocents* can be retraced nearly seamlessly on the basis of the extant preliminary drawings. The point of departure is his study for *The Judgement of Solomon* from which he adopted the executioner and the woman with a child in her arms. Following further elaboration of the scene, the exceptional red-chalk drawing in Windsor Castle depicts the almost final dramatic positioning of the soldiers, who are mercilessly pursuing the women to wrest their children from them. Still blank is the place occupied by a fleeing woman on the left side of the engraving. In the red-chalk drawing in the Albertina, Raphael studied this mother, along with the executioner, on male models. The pen-and-ink drawing in Budapest is the final, finely executed study, which served Marcantonio Raimondi as a model for his engraving. For the background with the Roman Ponte dei Quattro Capi, the artist probably made a separate, now lost, drawing.

Raphael created *The Massacre of the Innocents*, the first major work of his collaboration with Raimondi, especially for reproduction in the form of an engraving. The centre is occupied by a horrified, mother rushing forward, who represents the fear and unfathomable suffering of all the mothers. The figural pairs arranged around her form a circular movement, rotating anticlockwise up-and-down with increasing momentum.

## Commissions for Agostino Chigi

In addition to the pope, Raphael's most important client in Rome was the banker and merchant Agostino Chigi (1466-1520), one of the richest men of the Renaissance. Raphael's first large commission was the decoration of the Chigi Chapel in Santa Maria della Pace. The frescoes in the upper zone depict four prophets, which were probably painted by Raphael's childhood friend, Timoteo Viti, based on drafts by the master. Adorning the front side of the lower zone above the altar niche are Raphael's famous sibyls, accompanied by angels. Four of the most beautiful preliminary drawings for them are presented in this exhibition. All of them are executed in red chalk, with which Raphael modelled the forms in precisely drawn lines that intersect in the shadowy areas. Red chalk lends the drawing colour and radiance. Although most scholars have pointed out the influence of the frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, there are also principal differences between Michelangelo's contemplative and isolated figures and Raphael's joyful, lively linked sibyls, who are inspired by the angels. While Julius II was away from Rome for several months, Raphael seems to have devoted his time to the drawings for the Chigi Chapel in addition to his work in the *Stanza della Segnatura*.

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For the altar in the chapel he planned a Resurrection of Christ. The pen-and-ink drawings in Lille and Frankfurt are probably early ideas for this painting, which, however, was never executed.

## The Stanza di Eliodoro

Upon completion of his frescoes in the Stanza della Segnatura, Raphael started working on the decoration of the Stanza di Eliodoro, which adjoined it on the west and probably served as a papal audience chamber. Created between 1511 and 1514, these large wall paintings are not allegories but rather illustrate specific scenes from the Old Testament, the Acts of the Apostles and early Christian and medieval events. In the latter, the Church struggled with external and internal enemies and emerged victorious through the miraculous intervention of the Almighty over his adversaries. The scenes could serve as examples of God's support of a threatened papacy. We repeatedly find references to actual events that occurred during the reign of Pope Julius II, whom Raphael added in the form of portraits in some of the wall paintings.

The studies are related to a fresco, in which Raphael, following the account in The Second Book of the Maccabees (3:23–40), rendered the story of how the chancellor Heliodorus tried to steal the treasure set aside by widows and orphans in the Temple in Jerusalem. A fearsome heavenly horseman, who suddenly appeared in the company of two young men, prevented the theft.

In these preliminary drawings, Raphael used black chalk, which is extremely variable with regard to the width, transparency and tonal intensity of the lines. In contrast to the strictly linear studies for the *School of Athens*, Raphael's lines now possess a lively modelling power, adapting themselves to the flow of the body. This becomes particularly obvious in the case of the horse's head on the fragment of the cartoon from which the artist transferred the composition onto the wall.

## The Chigi Chapels

In 1507 Pope Julius II had granted permission to Agostino Chigi to acquire a chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo and turn it into a mausoleum for himself and his relatives. Raphael probably did not begin work on the reconstruction of the chapel until after 1511. It was not finished in his lifetime but only later, when Pope Alexander VII commissioned Gian Lorenzo Bernini to complete it. Nonetheless the chapel, which was inspired by Bramante's crossing in Saint Peter's Basilica and the entrance area of the Pantheon, completely reflects Raphael's architectural intentions. With his decoration, consisting of multi-coloured marble ornamentation *all'antica*, paintings, sculptures, gilded stucco and shining mosaics, Raphael created a unique *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

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While *The Annunciation* in the Albertina may be an early idea for a painting in one of the lunettes, the two red-chalk drawings in Oxford are studies for the cupola mosaics, which were executed by Luigi de Pace in 1516 and feature God the Father in the central oculus and the seven planetary gods and fixed stars in the side fields.

During that period, Raphael occupied himself once again with the projects for the *Resurrection of Christ* altarpiece in the Chigi Chapel in Santa Maria della Pace. The prophets and sibyls announce this event with the texts written on their tablets and scrolls, and the bronze tondi, which were to be installed on the sides of the chapel, also refer to the theme of the altarpiece. In addition to compositional studies, a series of significant black-chalk drawings of the individual soldiers has been preserved for the *Resurrection of Christ*, which, however, was never executed as a painting.

## Raphael's Madonnas

Throughout his entire creative period, Raphael occupied himself with the theme of the Mother of God and the Divine Child, who is obviously immersed in play. This is a surprising motif because, according to Christian doctrine, God never acts without cause, even if we can understand his motives only incompletely or not at all: being God is a serious matter. Raphael's perception of "Deus ludens", the playful God, often amusing himself with symbols of the Passion, hardly fits this concept. Raphael's portrayal of the profound basic human need for unconcern in these Mother-and-Child depictions is an expression of the new Humanism in Italy.

These compositions frequently take the most simple form: the familiar gathering of Mother and Child, sometimes joined by the Infant Saint John the Baptist. With the inclusion of Saint Joseph they form a Holy Family, and with the addition of other saints, they result in a *sacra conversazione* rich in figures.

In Raphael's early Umbrian period, the Madonna often appears prominently as a half-length figure. In Florence, his pictorial formats become larger, and the saints are also depicted full-length in a vast, living landscape that no longer merely serves as a backdrop. Often, the compositions are structured in accordance with the triangular or pyramidal scheme popular in Florence at the time. In Rome, the figure ideal of the Madonna changed once again, with remnants of antique buildings, reliefs or sculptures often enlivening the background.

Raphael occupied himself with all the forms of representation of the Virgin Mary, that is, the type of the *Madonna Lactans* (nursing), the *Madonna Eleusa* (showing mercy) and the *Madonna dell'Umiltà* (sitting on the ground). During his time in Rome, he frequently used the motif of the Virgin Mary lifting the veil from the divine countenance of the Saviour, for example, in his *Madonna with the Blue Diadem*. Raphael transformed the traditional types into completely new pictorial concepts in which he expressed the close emotional bond between Mother and Child in virtually inexhaustible variations. At the same time, the purely human element always reflects the unique, wonderful and inviolable nature of the Son of God and his Mother.

## Tapestries for the Pope

In 1513 Giovanni de' Medici succeeded the late Julius II as Pope Leo X. Within his first year in office, he commissioned Raphael to create a tapestry series, depicting scenes from the lives of Peter and Paul as described in the Acts of the Apostles. The series consisted of ten monumental tapestries, which were hung on the lower walls of the Sistine Chapel on festive occasions. The four scenes from the life of Peter start with *Christ's Charge to Peter* and end with *The Death of Ananias*, while the six-part Pauline series begins with *The Stoning of Saint Stephen* and concludes with *Saint Paul Preaching in Athens*. Raphael painted large drafts on which the composition had to appear in mirror image as compared to the tapestries, which were woven in the workshop of Pieter van Aelst in Brussels based on these cartoons. Inspired by Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, Raphael created a new, great Apostolic ideal in these tapestries. It depicts Christ's first disciples in all their originality, dignified simplicity, strength and determination, and continues to shape our perception of their work down to the present day.

## The Stanza dell'Incendio

Upon completion of the Stanza di Eliodoro, Raphael occupied himself with the decoration of the Stanza dell'Incendio from 1514 to 1517. Pope Leo X used this room for meetings with cardinals, clerics and representatives of the nobility, and it served as a secret dining room as well as for ceremonies such as the consecration of bishops. The four large wall frescoes depict selected historical events that occurred during the lives of important namesakes of the pope, that is, Leo III and Leo IV. At the same time, they allude to political events discussed in the Fifth Lateran Council, which was convoked by Julius II and concluded by Leo X.

The frescoes were intended to express the claim to power of the newly strengthened papacy and the superiority of the Church over secular power. Raphael intensely occupied himself with the studies for the tapestry series for the Sistine Chapel and was appointed as director of the new building of Saint Peter's and the papal palace at the same time, and thus he was less involved in the decoration of the Stanza dell'Incendio than that of the other papal chambers. While he still painted the dramatic *Fire in the Borgo* himself, his pupils participated in the execution of the other frescoes. They had, of course, detailed drafts by the master to guide them.

The red-chalk drawings for the *Fire in the Borgo* illustrate the change of style that occurred in Raphael's work starting in 1514. Now his figures no longer seem to be driven externally but are aware of their bodies and their own strength, moving freely and autonomously within the space that their actions dominate.

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## Raphael's Loggias

The Vatican loggias are on the second floor of a four-storey wing, located at the front of the Vatican Palace. Bramante was originally entrusted with their design and execution, later continued by Raphael. The loggias consist of thirteen bays, the walls of which are adorned with antique-like decorations. The vaults contain frescoes with biblical scenes, from the Creation to the salvation through Christ. Biblical history and ornamentation *all'antica* complement one another in a marvellous manner in these loggias, which Raphael decorated between 1517 and 1519. Because he was too busy working on other commissions, the artist involved his workshop assistants and hired young painters on a short-term basis for this large project.

In his studies for the fifty-four vault scenes, the artist focused on creating the greatest possible clarity in his compositions so that the viewer would immediately understand their content when looking at them from a great distance. The central figures are emphasized by simplified movements and sweeping, pronounced gestures. Raphael rendered the bodies in generalizing terms, dispensing with anatomical precision.

In the past, the summary style of the loggia drawings, condensing the image of the event, has been considered to be incompatible with Raphael. The master, however, deliberately chose simplicity in order to make the complex events, including interpersonal relationships, immediately comprehensible.

## Villa Farnesina

In 1505 the immensely rich banker Agostino Chigi had commissioned Baldassare Peruzzi to build a Roman villa on the banks of the Tiber, for which he had subsequently hired various painters to decorate. Whenever possible, however, he sought to obtain works by Raphael. As early as 1512, the artist created *The Triumph of Galatea* in the building now known as Villa Farnesina.

A second decorative phase took place as a result of Chigi's marriage in August 1519 to Francesca Ordeaschi, whom Agostino had abducted from Venice in 1511 and placed in a convent in Rome. Raphael and his workshop painted the vaulted ceiling of the garden loggia, which served as an open banquet hall.

The frescoes illustrate events from the lives of Cupid and Psyche, based on the tale *The Golden Ass* by the antique author Apuleius. Their love affair caused Venus's anger, and Psyche had to pass a series of test before she was finally rewarded with immortality, and the couple with a wedding celebration on Mount Olympus.

The bedroom of the villa is decorated with scenes from the life of Alexander the Great. In Raphael's hand are the studies for *The Marriage of Alexander and Roxane*, which alludes to the misalliance between Agostino Chigi and Francesca Ordeaschi, who came from a humble background. The artist probably did not have time to paint the fresco himself, and thus Agostino hired the Sieneese painter Sodoma, who based his painting on Raphael's design.

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## The Transfiguration

The *Transfiguration* is Raphael's last great panel painting and his artistic legacy. It was commissioned around 1516/17 by Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, the later Pope Clement VII, for his episcopal church in Narbonne and created as part of an artistic contest, competing with Sebastiano del Piombo's *Raising of Lazarus* (now in the National Gallery, London), which the artist painted with the help of preliminary drawings by Michelangelo.

When Raphael died on 6 April 1520 at the young age of thirty-seven, the *Transfiguration* was finished. It was placed next to the coffin at the height of the artist's head, and "the sight of this living work of art next to the dead master filled everyone's soul with sorrow" (Giorgio Vasari).

The artist carefully prepared the painting and made various compositional and thematic changes in the course of the design process. Initially, he planned to depict only the Transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor, an idea documented by the sheet of a pupil in the Albertina.

In its final form the painting depicts two separate, yet successive events from the Gospels, the Transfiguration of Christ and the Healing of a Possessed Boy. Among Raphael's most magnificent drawings are the group of studies in which he rendered the heads of the Apostles in every detail. In them, he explored the expressive potential of black chalk to the full, vigorously sketching the shocks of hair and modelling the faces with soft lines and velvety, smudged hatching. Raphael paid particular attention to the shaded areas in order to ensure that the heads lost none of their liveliness. What is unique is the spontaneity and expressiveness of these deeply religious and at the same time emotionally bewildered and doubting Apostles, whose faith was not strong enough to achieve what only the healing power of the Saviour was able to do.

## The Coronation of Charlemagne and the Oath of Leo III

The frescoes on the western and eastern wall of the Stanza dell'Incendio depict the coronation of Charlemagne as emperor by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day 800 and an event that occurred two days earlier. At a synod convoked by Charlemagne, Leo III claimed that he was unjustly accused of crimes. When the clerics had confirmed that none of the gathered dignitaries had the right to judge the pope, Leo voluntarily swore an oath to affirm his innocence.

Both wall paintings symbolize the unconditional superiority of the Church over secular power and thus glorify the absolute power of the papacy. The depictions of *The Coronation of Charlemagne* and *The Oath of Leo III* are in keeping with the papal ceremony valid in the early sixteenth century and feature contemporaneous requisites and garments. In his studies, Raphael emphasizes the central moments of the action. The precious liturgical vestments lend the bishops and cardinals solemn dignity, and clear, sacred light fills the entire space with a unique, solemn atmosphere, lending the events greater moral and spiritual

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significance. The frescoes were executed largely with the assistance of pupils, who placed greater emphasis on the external display of splendour than on the uniform pictorial effect intended by Raphael.

## The Hall of Constantine

The decoration in the Hall of Constantine was Raphael's last and at the same time largest project in the Vatican Palace but essentially was not carried out until after his death in 1520 by his pupils Giulio Romano and Giovanni Francesco Penni. Adjacent to the pope's private chambers, the large hall served for festive banquets, ceremonies and official audiences and as a meeting room for congregations of cardinals.

The monumental wall paintings in the Sala depict four scenes from the life of Constantine that seem to be suspended like feigned tapestries between the niches, in which popes are seen enthroned.

While *The Battle of the Milvian Bridge* in the south and the *Adlocutio* in the east, including the adjoining papal groups, are still based on drafts by Raphael, *The Donation of Constantine* and *The Baptism of Constantine* were painted only later by his pupils and based on their own ideas.

The black-chalk studies for the soldiers in *The Battle of the Milvian Bridge* and the *Charity Group* presented here are among the most beautiful examples of Raphael's late drawing style. The artist drew the lines in an extremely economical manner, using hatching that he applied in varying degrees of thickness and often smudged, with parallel lines placed on top of it. The hatching fluidly merges and is accompanied by highlights that follow a dynamic course. As compared to the nude studies for the frescoes in the Stanza dell'Incendio, the musculature is no longer individually defined. Instead, the movements seem extremely organic, an effect further enhanced by the sweeping contours.

## Biography

Raffaello Santi is born in Urbino in **1483**.

Even during his lifetime Raffaello (English: Raphael) was known primarily by his first name. Today he is considered one of the greatest painters in art history. The most important collectors acquired his drawings and prized them as their greatest treasures, among them Duke Albert von Sachsen-Teschen, the founder of the Albertina, who during his life acquired more than 50 drawings by one of the greatest masters of the High Renaissance.

Raphael's father, Giovanni Santi, is also a painter. Raphael is eight years old in 1491 when his mother dies. He receives his first artistic training from his father. After the latter's death in 1494, Raphael enters the workshop of Pietro Perugino, in whose graceful figures he finds significant inspiration.

In **1500**, Raphael, who is already working as an independent master, receives his first commission for an altarpiece in Città di Castello. In the years that follow, the artist executes a number of paintings in Umbria, among them the celebrated *Pala Oddi* (Room 1).

Starting in 1502, Raphael begins collaborating with the painter Pinturicchio, who is also working in Umbria. Raphael creates preliminary drawings for various works of this artist, who is thirty years his senior. These include studies for frescoes in the library adjoining Siena Cathedral with scenes from the life of the Humanist Enea Silvio Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II) (Room 1).

In **1504** Raphael travels to Florence, where he studies works by Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, taking a special interest in their monumental battle scenes for the Palazzo della Signoria: *The Battle of Anghiari* and *The Battle of Cascina* (Room 2). He is also profoundly influenced by the art of the great Florentine sculptors and by the paintings of Fra Bartolommeo.

Raphael is not commissioned to paint monumental frescoes at this time, but he does create important pictures of the Madonna, in which he abandons the style of his Umbrian master, Perugino. Raphael adopts the latest Florentine style, which attempts to achieve complete harmony by using a balanced triangular compositional scheme, and he embeds his figures in the composition with great naturalness. Raphael does not always stay in the city on the Arno; commissions repeatedly take him back to Urbino and Perugia.

In **1508** Raphael moves to Rome, where Pope Julius II entrusts him with the decoration of his chambers after Raphael's first fresco is deemed to outshine those of all the competing artists. The decoration between 1509 and 1511 of the Stanza della Segnatura (Room 3) is followed by that of the Stanza di Eliodoro (Room 4), completed in 1514, and the Stanza dell'Incendio (Rooms 7 and 8), finished in 1517.

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Raphael's frescoes for the Stanza della Segnatura with the *Parnassus*, the *Disputa* and the *School of Athens* are still considered the absolute apogee of High Renaissance art, as are the drawings he made in preparation for these masterpieces (Rooms 3 and 4). In only a few years, Raphael's fame spreads throughout Europe.

In addition to Pope Julius II and his successor, Pope Leo X, Raphael also works in Rome for members of the papal court and secular clients. Among them is Agostino Chigi, the richest banker of his day. The artist carries out the decoration of the latter's chapels in Santa Maria della Pace and Santa Maria del Popolo (Rooms 4 and 5) and of Chigi's mansion on the Tiber, Villa Farnesina (Room 7).

Between 1514 and 1516 Raphael designs the famous cartoons (Room 5) for a series of Sistine Chapel tapestries, which are woven in the workshop of Pieter van Aelst in Brussels.

In 1514, Raphael is appointed Bramante's successor as architect of Saint Peter's Basilica. In addition to directing the construction of Saint Peter's and supervising Roman antiquities, Raphael is involved in numerous other projects as a painter and architect. Some of the later commissions – such as the decoration of the loggias in the Vatican Palace from 1516 to 1519 (Room 6) – were undertaken with the help of his workshop assistants, making Raphael's preliminary drawings in his own hand even more important to art history.

Around 1517, Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, the later Pope Clement VII, commissions Raphael to paint an altarpiece for his episcopal church in Narbonne: it is to be Raphael's final masterpiece in his own hand. The *Transfiguration* – the painting depicting Christ's Transfiguration itself and the healing of a boy possessed by demons – is Raphael's artistic legacy, and the studies for the Apostles in the monumental altar painting are among the most beautiful drawings of the Italian Renaissance (Room 8).

Raphael dies on 6 April 1520, at the age of only thirty-seven.

In accordance with his own request he is buried in an antique sarcophagus in the Pantheon in Rome. A Humanist writes an epitaph for Raphael's tomb: "*Nature feared his victory while he lived; but at his death feared she might die with him.*"

This epitaph sums up Raphael's aesthetics: his belief in an ideal of absolute beauty that can be found in nature only in imperfect and incomplete form.

Raphael's art united in complete harmony the ancient ideal of beauty with incredibly natural figures. Over the centuries that followed, this ideal, which represented the apogee of the High Renaissance, became the canon of classical art.

## Supporting Program

### Salon Albertina | Raphael Reinterpreted

For Halloween, the Albertina Museum will sweep the Viennese public away to the Renaissance era and reanimate the world of Raphael: a creative dress code, variety-packed programming, and a costume contest will all adhere to the theme of Raphael's Renaissance. This evening's highlight is a fashion show in the Habsburg State Rooms that will present Raphael-esque interpretations of contemporary fashion as tableaux vivants. Guests will be invited to emulate the models and share their portraits online with the hashtag #AlbertinaRaffael—prizes will be awarded for the best costumes and photos.

Tuesday, 31 October 2017 | 7 pm–midnight | Admission: EUR 15 | Tickets available in advance at the Albertina Museum and at the door on the evening of the event

#### Program

Guided tours | 7:30, 8:00, and 8:30 pm | Propter Homines Hall

Fashion Show | 9:00 pm | State Rooms

### Symposium: Raphael's Drawings

This scholarly event will revolve around Raphael's drawings and see internationally renowned specialists present new research findings. The invited speakers' contributions will deal with the history of research on drawings, new attributions to Raphael, the reception of antiquity, and methods of drawing, as well as with signatures on paintings, Raphael's design practice, the use of various materials for drawings, and Raphael's influence on other artists.

Specialist symposium featuring: 24 speakers from Austria, Germany, England, the USA, and Italy with 19 lectures (German/English/Italian).

Interested members of the public are welcome to attend!

Tuesday, 21 and Wednesday, 22 November 2017 | 9:00 am – 5:30 pm | Participation included in entrance fee | Albertina Museum, Hall of the Muses

*Raphael's Bindo Altoviti: The Life of a Portrait* (Jane van Nimmen, Vienna)

Evening lecture | Tuesday, 21 November 2017, 7:00 pm | Albertina Museum, Hall of the Muses

### Audio Guide

German, English, French, Italian, Spanish and Russian