



# *Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali*

*Soprintendenza Speciale per il Patrimonio Storico, Artistico ed Etnoantropologico  
e per il Polo Museale della città di Firenze*

Florence, 28 February 2013

## PRESS RELEASE

# Raphael, an exhibition in Tokyo Acidini: "A unique, historic exhibition"

**"Raphael", a name... and a title. "Raphael", with no need for any further embellishment, is the name of an exhibition due to open in the rooms of Tokyo's National Museum of Western Art on 2 March and to run for three months thereafter. The first ever monographic exhibition of work by this artist from Urbino to be held in Japan, it is curated by Cristina Acidini, Director General of the Polo Museale Fiorentino, and by Maria Sframeli, the Director of the Museo degli Argenti in the Pitti Palace.**

The initiative was the brainchild, back in 2008, of the Tokyo museum itself and of leading daily *Yomiuri Shimbun*, the two partners that have shouldered the financial burden involved. The exhibition **will comprise 59 works of art, fully 24 of which are by Raphael himself**, from such major Italian and international cultural institutions as the Uffizi Gallery (and its Drawing and Print Cabinet), the Galleria Palatina in the Pitti Palace, the Horne Foundation and the Marucelliana Library in Florence, the Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte in Naples, the Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo in Brescia, the Picture Gallery of the Accademia Carrara in Bergamo, the Galleria Nazionale in Urbino, the Vatican Picture Gallery and Museums, the Galleria Nazionale in Perugia, the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest, the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London, the Musée du Louvre in Paris and the Museo del Prado in Madrid.

According to Director General Acidini, **"the exhibition devoted to Raphael and to the centres of the Renaissance in which he lived and worked has required an enormous amount of preparation in view of the importance of the paintings, of the drawings and of the artists involved. Thanks to Maria Sframeli, the curator, to her assistants and to the truly generous Italian and foreign lenders, the Tokyo National Museum of Western Art will be able to host an exhibition unique in the far from meagre history of Italian exhibitions in Japan. I am honoured that the sponsor, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, should have asked the Polo Museale Fiorentino to prepare the scientific programme and to coordinate both the exhibition and the catalogue, a trust born of lengthy cooperation and mutual esteem. Nor should we forget that Florence is the city with the highest number of moveable paintings by Raphael in the world".**

"Masterpieces by Raphael and celebrated works by the masters who influenced his painting or who drew their inspiration from his art set out to illustrate his artistic career from his early years in Urbino right up to his maturity in Rome," explained Maria Sframeli. "To this end the exhibition will be laid out in four sections which will allow the visitor to review the different stages in the artistic output of a painter who, as Vasari tells us, embodied in his person *'all the rarest qualities of the mind, accompanied by grace, industry, beauty, modesty, and excellence of character'*, words which appear to find an echo in the *Self-portrait* from the Uffizi on display at the beginning of the exhibition".

The exhibition opens with this famous painting and delves straight into the heart of its theme with a section entitled **The Formative Years**, focusing on the influence of the artistic environment at the court



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in Urbino and on a comparison with the art of Raphael's father, Giovanni Santi, who set him on the road to painting and whose workshop he inherited along with Evangelista da Pian di Mileto.

The second section, entitled **Raphael in Florence: The Encounter with the Work of Leonardo and Michelangelo**, sets out to explore Raphael's extraordinary intellectual and stylistic development as he came into contact with the stimulating Florentine environment of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, and his astonishing ability to master a broad range of influences. It was in Florence that Raphael chose to depict religious works, with a clear preference for a theme beloved of both Leonardo and Michelangelo, the *Madonna and Child*, in which he achieved a perfect and harmonious synthesis between Leonardo's pyramidal structure, Michelangelo's monumental treatment of volume and the grace and harmony that are such a feature of his own style. All of these elements are displayed in splendid fashion in the *Madonna del Granduca*, which belonged initially to Carlo Dolci and was subsequently purchased by Ferdinand III of Habsburg in 1799.

The third section, entitled **Raphael at the Papal Court**, is devoted to the artist's experience in Rome. Introduced to the papal court in 1508, he was chosen by Pope Julius II to decorate the Vatican *Stanze*, an opportunity which not only sanctioned his success by comparison with such universally esteemed and experienced artists as Perugino, Peruzzi, Sodoma, Bramantino and Lotto, who were relieved of the commission, but which offered Raphael, who had been working primarily for private patrons until then, an initial and extremely prestigious chance to display his talent in a public setting. A series of drawings by the artist and of copies of his frescoes in the Vatican, including the *Liberation of St. Peter from Prison* by Federico Zuccari loaned by the Gallerie Fiorentine, testify in the exhibition to Raphael's activity in the years that witnessed the realisation of Pope Julius II's mammoth decorative schemes.

The fourth and final section focuses on **Raphael's Legacy**, with a selection of works by his pupils and assistants chosen to explore the artist's influence on the work of the new generation, to whom he left not only his teaching and his example but also a number of major commissions left incomplete when he died at the peak of his career in 1520. The exhibition devoted to this artist from Urbino is brought to a close by the work of Giulio Romano, Raphael's favourite pupil, who worked alongside him on the decoration of the *Stanza* with the *Fire in the Borgo* and was commissioned by Pope Leo X to complete the scheme after his master's death.

## ATTENTION

**At this link <http://www.polomuseale.firenze.it/areastampa/accesso.php> there are the following photographs:**

Photo 1 – Raphael, *Self-portrait*, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Photo 2 – Raphael, *Madonna del Granduca*, Galleria Palatina, Pitti Palace, Florence.

Photo 3 – The exhibition poster photographed in the Ueno-koen Park which hosts Tokyo's National Museum of Western Art, the exhibition venue.

Photo 4 – Setting up the *Madonna del Granduca* in the exhibition room in Japan.

Photos 5-11 – Images of the exhibition in Tokyo.

With the approval of the Director General

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