

DE-Frankfurt a.M.

Raphael Colloquium

The 48 drawings comprising the exhibition 'Raphael: Drawings' (November 7th, 2012 - February 3rd, 2013) on view at the Städel Museum in Frankfurt am Main were the subject of intense scholarly discussion over the weekend of January 19th - 21st at a colloquium organized by the exhibition's curators, *Joachim Jacoby* and *Martin Sonnabend*. The first instance in Germany of such a thorough and focused examination of the significance of drawing in Raphael's oeuvre, the exhibition offered a rare opportunity to see such a large number of works, 11 of which belong to the Städel, together.

The occasion of this exhibition and colloquium, and their contributions to current scholarship in the field of drawing as a medium, has its beginnings in the 19th century with the collecting and scholarly expertise of Johann David Passavant, Inspector of the Städel Museum from 1840-1861, who acquired 10 of the 11 Raphael drawings owned by the museum. Within the context of the displayed works, the colloquium served as an international forum for scholars to share their latest research findings, addressing the most intriguing and unresolved questions surrounding the history and significance of Raphael's drawings. The interdisciplinary nature of the colloquium, which drew upon the expertise of art conservators and art historians, made evident the advantages of close collaboration between these disciplines. The examination and determination of materials and techniques by conservators in concert with the knowledge of the art historian lead to a better, more precise understanding of the individual artworks.

The colloquium began on Friday evening with a welcome address by *Max Hollein*, Director of the museum, followed by a lecture by *Werner Busch*, Professor Emeritus

of Art History, Freie Universität, Berlin. His lecture, 'Unklassische Werkprozesse. Zeichnung und Sinnstiftung' set the tone for the following two days of discussion.

Werner Busch placed the extremely focused look at Raphael's work undertaken by the colloquium within the larger context of drawing, a medium in which a single line autonomously creates meaning. Through examination of selected drawings of three other artists—*Jacopo Tintoretto*, *Rembrandt van Rijn* and *Giovanni Battista Tiepolo*—he approached drawing not as a prototype for the image in its final form, but rather as an intermediary conception of what the final image may become. These intermediary images do not follow fixed laws of design; instead, they represent experimental stages in the inventive process of the artist which extend well into the execution of the final work of art.

The following two days were filled with papers that examined in sharp focus the techniques and working methods of the artist as well as later alterations to the drawings throughout their life in different collections, the development of the artist's style over time and the reciprocal relationship of inspiration and influence with Raphael's contemporaries in Florence and Rome. While each talk presented current research and questions regarding our understanding of these drawings, a few in particular exemplify well the investigatory nature of the colloquium.

The first session of the colloquium consisted of four presentations by conservators specializing in the preservation of works on paper and who are currently investigating drawings by Raphael. The first talk, given by *Ariane de La Chapelle*, Conservator at the Louvre Museum in charge of research in the applied sciences, presented the recent discovery that a drawing by Raphael in the Louvre's collection had been split in thickness by a collector in the 18th

or 19th century, and later sold as two separate drawings. Scientific technical analysis, along with shadows of ink on the recto and verso of the separated drawings which match each other, were strong evidence of this finding.

Kimberly Schenk, Head of Paper Conservation at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., presented her findings based on the technical analysis of the Gallery's collection of Raphael drawings. She presented detailed findings on one work in particular, the cartoon for the painting 'La Belle Jardinière.' Her material analysis of the materials and tools used, in tandem with considerations of what may or may not be original to this particular artwork, served as an excellent font of information for the audience, as Ms. Schenk's talk was followed by a presentation by *Carmen Bambach*, Curator of Drawings and Prints at the Metropolitan Museum in New York that focused further on the material and stylistic evidence present in 'La Belle Jardinière' as signaling a connection between Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci in Florence. The final presentation by a conservator was given by *Karin Westrand*, Conservator for Art on Paper at the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm. The drawing 'Adoration of the Magi' housed in this collection has the potential to shed much light on our understanding of Raphael's artistic development, however, as *Karin Westrand* highlighted in her talk, interventions by diverse collectors in the 500 year history of the artwork often make the task of investigation challenging: cutting down of the edges, mounting and remounting on various types of backings and the addition of decorative framing elements, have obscured the artwork and risk erasing essential clues to understanding its original state.

This fascinating morning was followed by one-and-a-half days of further enlightenment, supplied by the art historians. *Eun-Sung Juliana Kang*, Rush H. Kress Fellow

at Villa I Tatti, Florence, provided another important addition to the scholarship. Through careful measurement of the blind stylus lines present in a selection of Raphael's drawings that serve as a plan for the composition of the image using the rules of perspective, a statistical analysis was presented which clearly documents which rules were applied by the artist, how often and to what degree.

Naoko Takabatake, Assistant Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, looked specifically at chiaro-scuro woodcuts after Raphael's inventions, again underscoring the cooperation between conservator and historian in determining how these works were created, a technical

approach that is essential to understanding of these prints. The final talk of the weekend, a last-minute addition due to schedule changes, was presented by *Marzia Faietti*, director of the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe at the Uffizi Galleries in Florence. She presented her latest research into the relationship between Raphael's design process, his use of perspective in the drawing 'Donna alla finestra' in the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, in comparison with the drawing 'Eva' by Correggio, as it appears in the Städel Museum in Frankfurt am Main. Her work investigates the two artists' approaches to the demands of the quadrangolo Albertiano: how they work within the rules of linear perspective, seeking to 'transgress its

ontological boundaries' (oltrepassare i confini ontologici).

As pointed out by *Marzia Faietti*, the colloquium began in German, was carried out in English and was closed by a presentation in Italian. The use of the three languages, and the nuances of meaning that they brought to the meeting speak to the importance of international collaboration in furthering our understanding of Raphael's oeuvre. Over 200 people attended the two-day meeting and around 40 of those guests were art conservators, augmenting the interdisciplinary nature of the colloquium.

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