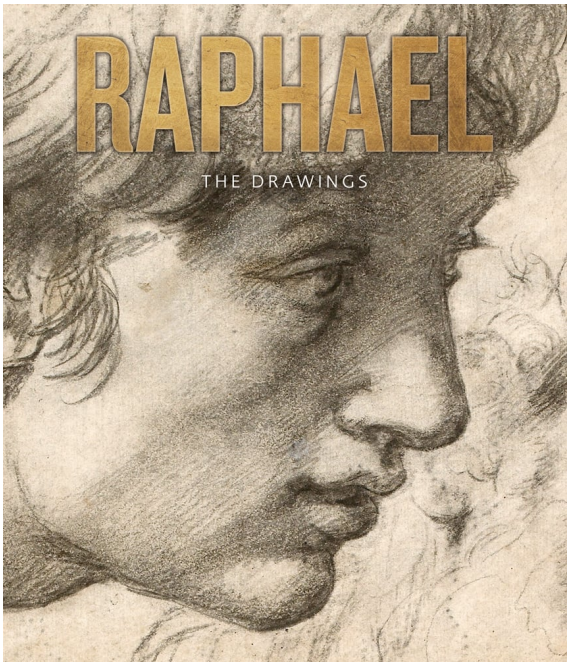
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Raphael

The Drawing

Catherine Whistler

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- This book accompanies a 'once in a generation' show, the like of which has not been seen for over 30 years

The Ashmolean Museum and the Albertina are collaborating on a two-part exhibition project that will examine anew the role and the significance of drawing in Raphael's career. The Ashmolean holds the greatest collection of Raphael drawings in the world, and the Albertina is the custodian of a major collection including some of the most beautiful and important of the artist's sketches. Taken together, the two collections provide extraordinary resources that, amplified by carefully-selected international loans, will allow us to transform our understanding of the art of Raphael.

The Oxford exhibition is based on new research by Dr Catherine Whistler of the Ashmolean Museum and Dr Ben Thomas from the University of Kent, in collaboration with Dr Achim Gnann of the Albertina. It will take Raphael's art of drawing as its focus, with the concept of eloquence as its underlying structure. Oratory runs as a linking thread in Raphael's drawings, which stand out for the importance given to the study of gestures, facial expressions, and drapery. Moreover, Raphael treated the expressive figure of the orator – poet, philosopher, muse, apostle, saint or sibyl – in fascinating and significant ways throughout his life.

This selection of drawings demonstrates how Raphael created a specific mode of visual invention and persuasive communication through drawing. He used drawing both as conceptual art (including brainstorming sheets) and as a practice based on attentive observation (such as drawing from the posed model). Yet Raphael's drawings also reveal how the process of drawing in itself, with its gestural rhythms and spontaneity, can be a form of thought, generating new ideas. The Oxford exhibition will present drawings that span Raphael's entire career, encompassing many of his major projects and exploring his visual language from inventive ideas to full compositions. The extraordinary range of drawings by Raphael in the Ashmolean and the Albertina, enhanced by appropriate loans, will enable this exhibition to cast new light on this familiar artist, transforming our understanding of Raphael's art.

This book preluded a major exhibition, which ran from 1 June to 3 October 2017, with a range of events happening throughout this time.

Catherine Whistler is the Keeper of Western Art at the Ashmolean Museum, and is a leading expert on Old Master Drawings.








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