

## A QUICK INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition presents thirty-seven drawings made by Raphaël and preserved at the Palais des Beaux-Arts of Lille. They were part of the 1834 painter's Jean-Baptiste Wicar donation to the city of Lille, his hometown. You are invited to take the time to observe them for a better understanding of the evolution of Raphaël's style and of his major projects.

Let's follow Raphaël's steps through three Italian cities: Perugia, Florence and Rome. In Perugia, Raphaël completed his apprenticeship with the Peruginò's studio and received his first commission. Then, he moved to Florence, where he refined his style mainly influenced by Leonardo da Vinci. Finally in 1508, he was called to Rome by the Pope to paint frescoes in his private apartments. To produce such a number of commissions, he founded a vast workshop. He died in 1520 in Rome, at only 37 years old, at the top of his fame.

Highly respected in his lifetime, Raphaël's reputation lasted long after his premature death. In the 19th century, he was considered as an ideal of true moral and aesthetic perfection, and many artists, such as Ingres and Degas, took him as a role model. The height of this admiration came in 1833 when his body was exhumed as if he were a saint and casts of several parts of his skeleton, including his skull, were made.

This document briefly reviews some key artworks in the exhibition, to guide you on your tour.

Enjoy your visit!



Raphaël, Etudes pour le retable de Saint-Nicolas de Tolentino © Grand Palais/SHM (PBA, Lille), Adrien Dufour - conception, C. Masset, PBA, 2024.

# EXPÉRIENCE RAPHAËL

## PALAIS BEAUX-ARTS LILLE

# EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS

## RAPHAËL (1483–1520)



- 1** Study for *Saint Nicholas of Tolentino fighting the demon (Pala Baronci)*, 1500

At only 17 years old, Raphaël received his first commission: an altarpiece that is now partially destroyed. A digital reconstruction of the painting was produced based on a thorough examination of the remains and sketches.



- 2** Digital reconstruction of the *Coronation of the Virgin*, circa 1502-1503

Throughout the exhibition, the digital reconstructions of Raphaël's paintings allow us to understand his creative process through the meticulous observation of his drawings.



- 3** Study for the *Holly Family with a grenade (Alfani's Holly Family)*, circa 1507-1508

The squared grid pattern on the sketch, also known as "squaring up the drawing", helps the artist to enlarge the composition, following the grid for reference. Domenico Alfani, Raphaël's collaborator, painted the final piece.



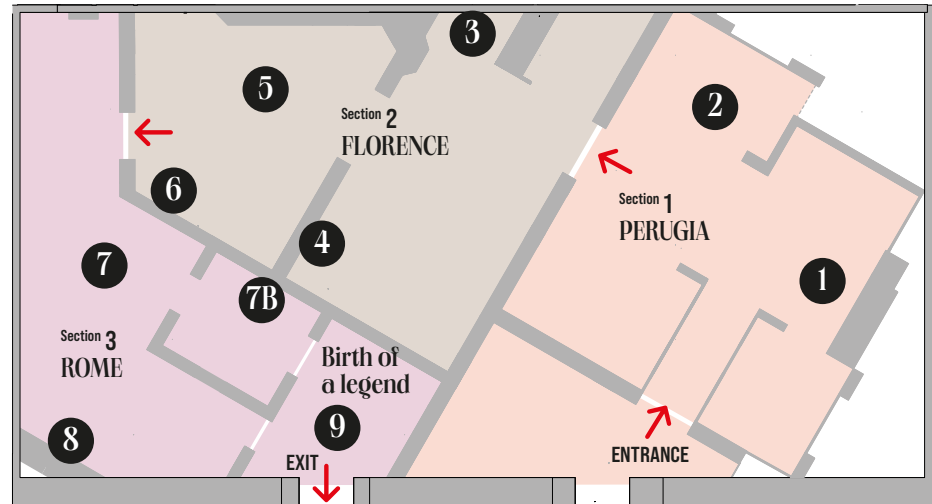
- 4** *Bust portrait of a young woman*, circa 1505-1506

The posture of this young woman, her three-quarter face and the lightweight veil over her hair suggest the influence of the Mona Lisa. Raphaël may have seen the painting in Leonardo da Vinci's workshop while they both resided in Florence.



- 9** Unknown, *Casting of Raphaël's skull*, 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Admired during his lifetime, Raphaël becomes an almost god-like figure after his death. In 1833, casts of his skull were made and exhibited, like relics of a saint's body.



- 5** Study for the *Madonna of Alba* and for the *Madonna of the Chair*, 1511-1512

On this drawing, Raphaël worked with red chalk, identifiable by its red/orange colour. The rather sketchy style gets more precise at the back of the sheet to study the Virgin Mary's posture using a male model from the workshop, according to the era's sense of decency.



- 8** *Self-portrait with a friend (Giulio Romano)*, circa 1519

This is the last self-portrait of Raphaël. He represents himself accompanied by a friend and student, who is turned towards him. In 1865, Degas drew inspiration from this painting for his own self-portrait with a fellow painter.



- 7** Study for the drapery of the *Christ in the fresco The Dispute of the Holy Sacrament*, circa 1510

Preparatory drawings for frescoes of The Signature Room (7B), in the Vatican Palace, are also displayed in a half-scale digital reconstruction of this monumental project.



- 6** Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *The Virgin adoring the Host*, 1854

Many artists have admired Raphaël's work throughout the centuries, particularly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Ingres imitates Raphaël's style here, especially in the depiction of faces and the use of the round-shaped canvas known as a tondo.