

PRESS RELEASE

RAPHAEL TO TITIAN. ITALIAN DRAWINGS FROM THE STÄDEL MUSEUM

8 OCTOBER 2014 TO 11 JANUARY 2015

Press preview: Monday, 6 October 2014, 11 am

Städel Museum, exhibition gallery of the Department of Prints and Drawings

Frankfurt am Main, 3 September 2014. The Städel Museum's treasures comprise a comprehensive collection of Italian Renaissance drawings. This collection includes prized sheets by such outstanding artists as Michelangelo, Raphael, Correggio, or Titian, as well as drawings by anonymous masters of the fifteenth century and less known artists of the sixteenth century like Giulio Romano, Sebastiano del Piombo, or Taddeo Zuccari. "Raphael to Titian. Italian Drawings from the Städel Museum", on show in the exhibition gallery of the Department of Prints and Drawings from 8 October 2014 to 11 January 2015, offers an exemplary selection of these valuable holdings, most of which were part of Johann Friedrich Städel's foundation donation; in the mid-nineteenth century, these holdings were extended by Johann David Passavant to form a collection of the first order. The array of about ninety drawings visualizes the variety of an era which – with the discovery of America, conflicting confessions, and a new beginning in the natural sciences – was such a decisive period for Europe. The presentation centers around High-Renaissance works of the early sixteenth century as its art-historical pivot and not only ensures an experience of the utmost perfection in drawing. It also illustrates the various artistic movements of that epoch, the draftsmen's working methods, and the functions of drawings and sheds light on the history of collecting in the Städel.

The exhibition rounds off a long-term research project sponsored by Stiftung Gabriele Busch-Hauck, Frankfurt. Drawing on recent research, the Städel collections' Italian Renaissance drawings up to 1600 were thoroughly analyzed in the context of this project; more than a third of all exhibited works, now featured in the catalogue of the collection published to accompany the presentation, could be focused on for the first time.

"Embracing about a total of 450 works by Italian Renaissance masters, our holdings rank among the most outstanding collections in Germany. They inform the character of the institution they are connected with and essentially contribute to the Städel Museum's unmistakable identity. Striving to keep this identity alive, the museum's

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holdings have to be critically reassessed again and again and continuously made the subject of scientific research. The show 'Raphael to Titian' is a both important and impressive visualization of this core task of our museum, a task mostly pursued in obscurity," Max Hollein, Director of the Städel, points out.

"Drawings number among the most precious manifestations of artistic creativity. Their unique appeal lies in their potential to make us relive the masters' considerations and often even their first artistic impulses. The masterpieces assembled for this presentation offer incredibly intimate and informative insights into the Italian High Renaissance – one of the most significant and momentous epochs in art history," curator Dr. Joachim Jacoby describes one leitmotif of his exhibition.

The presentation in the exhibition gallery of the Department of Prints and Drawings confronts visitors with a representative selection of Italian drawings from between 1430 and 1600 that demonstrates the different artistic movements of this world-renowned era, the various drawing techniques and relevant functions, as well as specific aspects in the history of the Städel's collecting activities in a particularly vivid manner.

The show starts with a number of fifteenth-century drawings, not many of which have survived. The range of the fifteen examples on display spans from a drawing rendering four elegant Gothic standing figures from the circle of Pisanello (c. 1430) and the impressive sketches depicting a mourning scene by the Venice-based artist Marco Zoppo (c. 1470) to the drawing of a young man looking upwards (c. 1500) by an unknown Venetian master.

The second section highlights the achievements of artists whose work is regarded as belonging to the High Renaissance – a comparatively short period of time between 1500 and 1525, in which the art of Europe took a completely new direction and was already regarded as a phase of the "highest perfection" providing the foundation for future generations by Giorgio Vasari in the mid-sixteenth century. This epoch was decisively informed by the artists Fra Bartolommeo and Michelangelo in Florence, Raphael in Rome, Correggio in Parma, and Titian in Venice, all represented in the exhibition. Here, visitors will come upon such superb and fragile masterpieces as Michelangelo's *Grotesque Heads* (c. 1525), Raphael's *Design for the "Disputa"* (c. 1508/09), Correggio's *Seated prophet with book towards the right* (c. 1523), or Titian's unique *Study of St Sebastian for the high altarpiece in SS Nazaro e celso in Brescia* (c. 1519/20).

The further development until the end of the sixteenth century has been divided into two sections: one includes works from central Italy, the other works from the large

area between Genoa and Venice in the north of the country. The drawings of the first group are arranged chronologically according to the centers Florence and Rome and encompass works devoted to the demonstration of power and subjects of courtly representation – like Bronzino’s sketch for a ceiling fresco in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence (c. 1539/40) – and sheets used as essential instruments of planning or demonstrations such as those by Pontormo, Zuccari, or Poccetti.

The selection of drawings from northern Italy is grouped after geographical criteria, spanning from Liguria in the west to the Veneto in the east. The art centers of northern Italy did not constitute a unity in Renaissance times. The area was split up into different political territories some of which brought forth their own stylistic forms. This section includes *Venus Mourning the Death of Adonis* (c. 1560) by Luca Cambiaso of Genoa, the *Adoration of the Magi* (c. 1527/30) by the extremely influential Parmigianino of Parma, and the *Study of the head of Michelangelo’s “Giuliano de’ Medici”* (c. 1545/60?) executed by the Venice-based Tintoretto presumably after a cast of the sculpture in the Medici Chapel in Florence.

All in all, the exhibition not only conveys a wide-ranging survey of the various movements and regional variants of Italian Renaissance art. It also fathoms the numerous functions and techniques of the medium by means of sheets like the chalk drawing *Three Figures from the “School of Athens” (Stanza della Segnatura)* (c. 1510/12) made by Raphael and his workshop, a silverpoint study of a live model for a crucified figure from the fifteenth century, Jacopo Bassano’s *Study of a Reclining Figure* (c. 1567?) executed in differently colored chalks, which strikes us as nearly abstract, or Giuseppe Cesari’s black-pen depiction of a *Narcissus* (c. 1595/1600), an independent work standing for itself.

The Städel’s collection boasted significant holdings of old-master drawings even in the days of the foundation donation for the Städel’sche Kunstinstitut in 1815. These holdings were decisively extended and distinctively structured by Johann David Passavant (1787–1861) around the middle of the nineteenth century. Passavant, who was responsible for the Städel Museum’s collections as their “Inspektor” (curator) from 1840 until his death in 1861, pursued a strategy of deliberately acquiring “only outstanding” (as he said) individual works in order to provide visitors of the museum with a striking impression of the history of art and an intense experience of the art of “all times and schools.” Passavant had begun his career as a Nazarene painter and, based on his fascination for Raphael and Dürer, acquired a profound expertise in Italian and German Renaissance art. Consequently, the collection of drawings developed a number of focal points which are still quite evident in the institute’s holdings today. The Städel’s treasure of Italian Renaissance drawings highlighted by the presentation ranks – not least thanks to a number of later additions – among the

most important European collections in this field, and no other German collection is in the possession of more drawings by Raphael.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue written by Joachim Jacoby and published by Michael Imhof Verlag. Its texts thoroughly document each drawing (technical data, watermarks – if there are any, provenance, literature), exploring it in detail and relating it to the respective artist's oeuvre. The catalogue contains illustrations of all drawings (recto and verso plus watermarks, if necessary) and, including reproductions of numerous reference works for comparison (drawings, paintings, prints), ensures a high degree of visual understanding.

Following the presentation in the Städel, the exhibition will be shown in the Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt in Paris from 21 March to 21 June 2015.

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Curator: Dr. Joachim Jacoby

Project management: Dr. Martin Sonnabend, Städel Museum

Exhibition dates: 8 October 2014 to 11 January 2015

Press preview: Monday, 6 October 2014, 11 am

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Venue: Städel Museum, Schaumainkai 63, 60596 Frankfurt

Opening hours of the Städel Museum: Tue, Wed, Sat and Sun 10 am – 6 pm, Thu and Fri 10 am – 9 pm

Special opening hours of the Städel Museum: Wed, 24 December 2014: closed, Thu, 25 December 2014 and Fri, 26 December 2014: 10 am – 6 pm, Wed, 31 December 2014: closed; Thu, 1 January 2015: 11 am – 6 pm.

Opening hours of the Study Room of the Department of Prints and Drawings: Wed and Fri from 2 – 5 pm; Thu from 2 – 7 pm

Admission: 12 euros, reduced 10 euros, family ticket 20 euros; Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays 14 euros, reduced 12 euros, family ticket 24 euros; free admission for children up to twelve years of age; groups (min. 10 persons) 10 euros/person; Saturdays, Sundays and holidays 12 euros/person

Advance ticket sales online at: tickets.staedelmuseum.de

Catalogue: The exhibition will be accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue written by Joachim Jacoby and edited Dr. Jutta Schütt, Dr. Martin Sonnabend, and Max Hollein to be published by Michael Imhof Verlag. German, c. 300 pages, 34,90 euros.

General guided tours of the exhibition: Fridays 7 pm, Saturdays 3 pm

Special guided tours upon request at: please contact +49(0)69-605098-200; info@staedelmuseum.de.

For further events see www.staedelmuseum.de.

The research project, the exhibition and the catalogue were sponsored by the Stiftung Gabriele Busch-Hauck, Frankfurt am Main.

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