



Raphael, in celebration

a pilgrimage from Urbino to Rome

23–29 September 2024 (MK 437)

7 days • £3,760

Lecturer: Dr Michael Douglas-Scott

An in-depth exploration of the life and work of the Renaissance master, placing his art in cultural, historical and geographical context.

A journey to the places he lived and worked: his birthplace, Urbino; Florence; and Rome, where he died.

Private after hours visit to the Vatican to view Raphael's frescoes and the Sistine Chapel.

Raphael's birthplace was a small, hilltop fastness remote from the main Italian centres of culture and power. Nevertheless, Urbino was famous for the sophistication of its court, humanist learning and enlightened artistic patronage. The ducal palace remains the most graceful of all Renaissance secular buildings.

The son of the court painter to the dukes of Urbino, Raphael would have imbibed the beauty of the environment and the basics of his trade from an early age. He stayed in Le Marche and Umbria for a few years as an independent master before moving to Florence. From 1508 he lived in Rome where he was acclaimed as the greatest painter since ancient times even before his untimely death in 1520. He also practised as an architect and was renowned as an antiquarian.

This tour celebrates Raphael's life and work five centuries after his death. By following in his footsteps, travelling through the landscapes he painted, one can gain an insight into the artistic development of this most impressionable, adaptable and experimental of artists. His art will be placed in the context of the culture of the time, while analysis of preparation and design and explication of narrative will bring it to life. The immensity of his talent and his soaring intellect will become evident.

Itinerary

Day 1: Urbino. Fly at c. 8.00am (British Airways) from London Heathrow to Bologna. Begin the tour in Urbino, the small city state where Raphael was born, and one of the loveliest hill towns in Italy. Visit the House of Raphael this evening. Overnight Urbino.

Day 2: Urbino, Florence. The Palazzo Ducale, a masterpiece of architecture built by the



Lithograph c. 1850 after Raphael's *Madonna della Seggiola*.

Montefeltro dynasty over several decades, is perhaps the finest secular building of its period. Raphael was among those who passed through its exquisite halls, and the fine art gallery here holds his portrait of a young woman, *La Muta*. See also the beautiful *studiolo* of Federico da Montefeltro and the rest of the excellent picture collection. After lunch, travel by coach to Florence. First of two nights in Florence.

Day 3: Florence. It was in Florence that Raphael learned from Leonardo and Michelangelo. Visit the redoubtable Palazzo Pitti, which houses several museums including the Galleria Palatina, outstanding particularly for High Renaissance and Baroque paintings; see a selection of Raphael's portraits here, including *Woman with a Veil*. In the afternoon, visit the Uffizi for several of his major works, including *Madonna of the Goldfinch*. The Uffizi also holds masterpieces by every major Florentine painter, as well as international Old Masters.

Day 4: Florence, Rome. Continue by high-speed rail to Rome arriving by lunchtime. The Palazzo Barberini is a great palace which became Rome's National Gallery, with paintings by most of the Italian Old Masters, including Raphael's *La Fornarina*. First of three nights in Rome.

Day 5: Rome. Rise early for a private visit to the Vatican to see (in peace) the most precious assemblage of painting in the western world; including Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel and Raphael's frescoes in the adjacent *Stanze*. Breakfast follows in the Cortile della Pigna and a visit to the Vatican Pinacoteca. In the afternoon, the double portrait of Andrea Navagero and Agostino Beazzano is housed in the Palazzo Doria Pamphilj, a famous picture collection.

Day 6: Rome. The delightful Villa La Farnesina has frescoes by Raphael, and Palazzo Corsini holds a copy of *La Fornarina*. After lunch, visit S. Agostino and S. Maria del Popolo where the Chigi Chapel and mosaics were designed by Raphael. S. Maria della Pace contains his *Sibyls* fresco.

Day 7: Rome. The Galleria Borghese is Rome's finest collection of painting and sculpture and has works by Raphael. Before departure, visit the Pantheon, the best preserved of ancient Roman monuments, and home to Raphael's tomb. Fly from Rome Fiumicino, arriving at London Heathrow at c. 7.45pm.

Raphael
continued

Lecturer

Dr Michael Douglas-Scott. Art historian who mixes scholarship with accessible discourse, wit with reasoned opinion, and is a highly sought-after art history lecturer. He has lectured for New York University (London campus) and Birkbeck College, University of London, specialising primarily in 16th-century Italian art and architecture. He studied at the Courtauld and Birkbeck College and lived in Rome for several years. He has written articles for *Arte Veneta*, *Burlington Magazine* and the *Journal of the Warburg & Courtauld Institutes*.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £3,760 or £3,480 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £4,390 or £4,110 without flights.

Included: flights (Euro Traveller) with British Airways (Airbus 320); travel by rail between Florence and Rome; travel by private coach or minibus; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts; 1 lunch and 4 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer.

Accommodation: Hotel San Domenico, Urbino (viphotels.it): a 4-star hotel converted from a monastery building and the best to be found right in the centre of the city.

Hotel Santa Maria Novella, Florence (hotelsantamarianovella.it): a delightful 4-star hotel in a very central location. **Donna Camilla Savelli** (<https://vretreats.com/donna-camilla-savelli>): A pleasingly restored former baroque monastery, now 4-star hotel, set at the foot of the Janiculum hill in Trastevere. *Single rooms throughout are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? The tour involves a lot of walking in town centres where coach access is restricted, and a lot of standing in museums and churches. Uneven ground and irregular paving are standard. A good level of fitness is essential. Unless you enjoy entirely unimpaired mobility, cope with everyday walking and stair-climbing without difficulty and are reliably sure-footed, this tour is not for you. Some days involve a lot of driving – average distance by coach per day: 39 miles.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.