



Eni brings Raphael to Milan: *La Madonna di Foligno* is brought to the Palazzo Marino from the Vatican Museums

Exhibition from November 28, 2013 to January 12, 2014

Milan, Palazzo Marino, Sala Alessi

Milano, November 27, 2013 – For the sixth consecutive year, Eni is giving an exceptional Christmas gift to the people of Milan. With the Municipality of Milan and the Vatican Museums, Eni continues the tradition of displaying a masterpiece at the Palazzo Marino, at no extra cost.

After the positive reception of the *Amore e Psiche*, which was the most visited exhibition in Italy in 2012, this year, it will be possible to view Raphael's *La Madonna di Foligno* for the first time in Milan from the Vatican Museums. The masterpiece will be on display from November 28, 2013 to January 12, 2014.

The exhibition aims to give visitors the possibility of deepening their understanding of this extraordinary work and has been integrated with a range of educational and participation-based activities in the room, as well as through accompanying events and free online resources.

“Through bringing Raphael to Milan, Eni is reiterating the value of culture as a key element of the Company's interaction with the area,” stated Paolo Scaroni, Eni's CEO. “Our exhibitions have enabled these masterpieces the necessary environment for visitors to fully appreciate such works of art. The long queues of people patiently

waiting in line over these five years indicate the public appreciation of these events and the cultural enrichment they provide.”

“This work is one of the apex of universal painting,” commented Antonio Paolucci, Director of the Vatican Museums. “It documents a historic moment (c.1511-13) in which Raphael meets Venetian color and you can’t get any better than this! It’s not possible to go beyond this in terms of representation of beauty as I’m sure the guests of the Palazzo Marino will understand.”

“It’s always emotional receiving works of art of such cultural value at the Palazzo Marino and being able to offer them to the city. Thanks to the collaboration with Eni and the great museums around the world, this meeting with culture is renewed for the sixth consecutive year,” commented Giuliano Pisapia, Mayor of Milan. “Citizens, tourists, scholars and young people can admire Raphael’s *La Madonna di Foligno*, made available by the Vatican Gallery at no extra cost. The work will remain on display in the Sala Alessi for more than a month in order to make it possible for visitors to come into contact with one of the greatest masterpieces of Raphael, one of the most celebrated painters in history.”

Masterpieces from previous editions were: *La Conversione di Saulo* by Caravaggio (from the Odescalchi collection), *San Giovanni Battista* by Leonardo da Vinci (in 2009), Tiziano’s *Donna allo specchio* (2010), *Adorazione dei pastori* and *San Giuseppe falegname* by Georges de La Tour (2011), and *Amore e Psiche stanti* by Antonio Canova and *Psyché et l’Amour* by François Gérard (2012) (from the Louvre).

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Analysis 1: The Painting

The painting *La Madonna di Foligno* was commissioned by Sigismondo de' Conti, the Secretary of Pope Julius II, as a winged altarpiece at the Church of Santa Marina in Aracoeli, Rome. The work was transferred to the Convent of St. Anna and Francesco in Foligno in 1565 and was later acquired and brought to Paris by the French in 1799. The paint layers were here transferred from wood panel to canvas.

The Madonna with Child appears in a large golden halo surrounded by a crown of cherubs that take the form of a cloud. St. John the Baptist, St. Francis of Assisi, the patron, and St. Girolamo are present at the bottom of the piece. In the center, a little angel holds out a *tabula ansata* without any writing. In the background is a small settlement and a luminous element that falls on a single house, which has long interested scholars who have tried to identify the town and have hypothesized that it is an allusion to a heavenly phenomenon.

The set-up exalts the richness of form and color in the painting in contrast with the rough essential nature of the wall. Inspired by the dominant color of the skies that governs the scene, and by the suggestive hypothesis of a falling meteorite, linked to the patronage of the piece, the explanatory path winds between the apse in black stone that contains the work and the backdrop of clouds that metaphorically “hug”

visitors, inviting them to linger on illustration. The consonance and the balance contained in the *Madonna di Foligno* demonstrate the “harmony of beauty” so indicative of all of Raphael’s works.

This year the background music has been carefully selected to include a range of musicians dating back to the Medieval era right up to present day.

Analysis 2: Process of Involvement and Innovation

The exhibit also offers a variety of supporting videos, aimed at providing a deeper understanding of the topic for the public.

This year visitors can also discover many additional aspects that are not linked directly to the painting but that provide insights on different the personality of the artist and the many different techniques he used in his works. The exhibit, curated by Valeria Merlini and Daniela Storti, has a range of digital resources, including a website eni.cultura.com, online app “The painting of an era: *La Madonna di Foligno* of Raphael Sanzio,” and videos on Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, and Google+.

Details on artistic teaching can be found via the theatrical show “The Color of Clouds,” and from an interactive book for elementary school students, eBook for middle-school and high-school students, and via specific material on eni.com. Moreover, through collaboration with Wikipedia and the artistic high school of Brera, the section on *Madonna di Foligno* will be expanded on the web.

The catalogue is published by Il Sole 24 Ore Editore and curated by Valeria Merlini and Daniela Storti.

Guests from the world of culture and theater will discuss the theme “Angels and Clouds,” in *Encounters* moderated by Lella Costa (3, 10, and 17 December - with free entrance with a reservation) and organized by Eni at the Palazzo Reale conference center. At the public libraries, in collaboration with the Municipality of Milan, Eni will organize in-depth analysis, curated by art historians and prepared for visitors.