

**Dr Ben Thomas**

**Curating Raphael: Invention and Eloquence**

*Part of the Making Space for Art series, organised by the Centre for Visual Cultures and Royal Holloway Picture Gallery.*

**Professor Eric Robertson:** Hi, everyone. Thanks for coming along in such numbers. It's an absolute pleasure to introduce you to today's speaker, who's Dr Ben Thomas from the University of Kent where he is a Senior Lecturer in Art History. He has a very extensive body of work, which I can only really sketch out for you very briefly today because it would take far too long to do more than pay a bit of a lip service to Ben's extensive portfolio, but I'll just tell you a few things about him that relate to the context of this series.

He convenes the MA, at Kent, in Curating. Indeed, he was the founding curator of their Studio 3 Gallery from 2010 till 2015. He has curated a number of exhibitions besides the one about which he will be talking today. He curated *The Paradox of Mezzotint* at the UCL gallery in 2008, and *Alfred Dewey and The New Sculpture* at the Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery in Leeds, in 2014. He also founded the Kent Print Collection, which is a collection of prints where only undergraduate students can make acquisitions for the university. I think, when I visited Kent last December, I saw the pop art and contributions that were adorning the walls of one of the buildings, a fascinating initiative.

Recently he has co-curated two exhibitions, the first of which ended just in January there. It ran last autumn. That was *Drawing Together*, which some of you may have seen at the Courtauld Gallery. That was an exploration of the nature of drawing, and built on the Courtauld's own collection as well as works by contemporary artists, including Stephen Farthing, *Color-Free Ocean*, and Jenny Saville. As you know, because you're here, Ben also co-curated the hugely successful and highly-acclaimed exhibition, *Raphael: The Drawings* at the Ashmolean Museum, which was reviewed in numerous high-profile places, including *The Guardian*, where it was described as a magnificent mind-opening exhibition. We're all very much looking forward to hearing about that, but let me just flag up a forthcoming book that Ben has been working on, and that should make it into print in 2019. That is on the fascinating figure, Edgar Wind. It's called *Edgar Wind and Modern Art: In Defense of Marginal Anarchy*. I think we'll have to invite you back to tell us all about that in due course. Let's hand over to Ben to talk to us on the subject of *Curating Raphael: Eloquence, and*— I can't remember the other part of your title, but eloquence is definitely—

**Dr Ben Thomas:** Eloquence is definitely in there. Certainly, yes.

[laughter]

**Eric Robertson:** *Curating Raphael* will do.

**Ben Thomas:** Thank you, Eric. It's a great pleasure to be here and to be able to reciprocate however inadequately Eric's wonderful talk that you gave at the University of Kent on the Art Exhibition that we all enjoyed in Margate in one of its iterations. Great pleasure to be here today. The talk I'm going to give to you is in two halves and the first half is loosely based on a research paper I gave at the conference in Vienna in November last year. That was part of our partners in this exhibition, the Albertina, and the events that they organised. The second half is a more discursive account of how we came to curate the exhibition and what we were doing alongside it because we were lucky enough to get a Leverhulme research grant that's allowed us to run a series of interdisciplinary workshops alongside the curating of the exhibition.

Putting 120 drawings by Raphael in one room guarantees you a great exhibition. That was the starting point for Catherine and I. Catherine is the Keeper of Western Art at the Ashmolean Museum. She was the person who initiated the project with the help of Achim Gnann at the Albertina in Vienna. Those two collections have the two greatest collections of Raphael drawings in existence. The Ashmolean's is the biggest in the world and then the Albertina. When two organizations like that agree to collaborate you've already got a surefire hit on your hands. Really, living up to the potential of that was a big challenge for Catherine and me. And also, these are fragile and very precious documents of the creative process of one of the great artists in the European tradition. And so, you need to have a very good reason to ask for them to be put into a box and sent to where you're hoping to show them to the public. Developing that reason, that research justification for the loan request, was a big part of what we were doing.

Thankfully, I didn't think about government indemnity [chuckles] while we were doing this. We only actually discovered the day the exhibition opened that it was indemnified for £3 billion. I think I would've probably not been able to concentrate if I'd have [chuckles] known that before we began to work on it. Without further ado, I'm going to sketch out for you the research justifications, first off, for asking for the equivalent of two government deals with the **Ulster** [?] politicians.

[laughter]

'Invention, disposition, and demonstration' was the title of my paper in Vienna and it was trying to flush out the working title of the eloquence of drawing. That's what we had in mind when we were developing the exhibition. The final title is of course *Raphael: The drawings* and that was decided by the two directors of the museum. You learn quite a lot about museum politics doing one of these things.

Quintilian in his *Institutio Oratoria* of around 95 A.D. says at one point, "Do we not see that the best friend's spear is the one that was launched with the most grace and that the truer the archer's aim with the bow the more graceful is the position of his body." He adds after this: "The composition therefore as it seems to me plays the part of a sort of throwing strap or bowstring in giving direction and force to our thoughts." Here the ancient orator produces one of his more graceful analogies between effective oratory and physical attitudes. It's a fairly frequent analogy that we find in the rhetorical literature.

This fundamental analogy in rhetoric got me thinking that Raphael's drawings are figural in a double sense. Based predominantly on the human form and so one of the things we were arguing was that although he's a great master of perspective, Raphael's drawings are gestural initially in the space that they create. It's the pursuit of a physical gesture through the gesture of drawing that creates the space, that initiates the encounter on the blank piece of paper. They are also figural in a rhetorical sense, in the sense that Raphael was seeking ever more expressive solutions through deviating from normal or common usage. As Quintilian puts it, "The rhetorical figures are innovative forms of expression produced by art." So when you deviate from the normal process that's a figure. To what extent was Raphael aware of rhetorical figures? Here we can see him illustrating two of them. It's not showing up very well, but this is one of the beautiful very drawings that I was keen that we have for the exhibition but in the end, we couldn't have. In fact, I'm going to show you quite a lot of drawings that we couldn't have. Probably a lingering regret but this was because this particular drawing seemed to epitomise the theme of the exhibition. It shows St Paul rending his garments when he gets to Lystra. It's a study of metalpoint for this figure here in the cartoon for the tapestries that's now in the V&A.

St Paul's emotional response to the blasphemy of the people of Lystra in sacrificing to him when they mistook him for Mercury, the God of eloquence – there's Mercury in the background hovering over the scene that Raphael has devised – could be said to be the opposite of invention in rhetoric, or *inventio* or finding what to say, and rather evacuates invention with a surpassing gesture, *actio* or hide the crisis, so this sort of gesture is like "I haven't got words to express what I feel".

Raphael's drawing, however, understood by analogy with the art of rhetoric is an invention. The sureness with which he handles the metalpoint in the Getty drawing does not dissemble. What he discovers here through drawing is the image of mute eloquence. Strictly speaking, this is a visual realization of *adynaton* or the inexpressibility trip. That's like, "I've got no words to express for what I have to say. Words fail me. I'm tearing my gowns at the magnitude of your blasphemy." Incidentally, one of the few books that we know that Raphael read are *The Letters of St Paul* because he does refer to them in a poem that he writes.

Here's another example of a rhetorical figure in the work of Raphael. This is an engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi, a famous engraver that Raphael collaborated with, illustrating a series of scenes from Virgil's *Aeneid* and there are drawings at Chatsworth for some of these marginal scenes, but the main scene is *Neptune Stilling the Storm*, and this has given the print its title, *Quos Ego*, where Neptune begins speaking and then breaks off.

This is the figure of *aposiopesis* or breaking off a sentence leaving the sense incomplete. The reason why orators [audio cut] is that. It brings you back to the attention, so when you break up the normal sequence of things, you play with the expectations of your audience. It refocuses. It's interesting that we see Raphael doing this on two occasions where words fail, and the physical gesture takes over. This is a sort of awkward transition really between rhetoric and physical gesture that we were trying to chart through our research. Not everybody got it. One or two reviews both published and more informal were quite critical of this.

What we weren't arguing was that Raphael was necessarily highly rhetorically trained but that he was part of a rhetorically infused culture, that he would have been aware through his friendships with writers – he was a friend of Bembo, Castiglione, [unintelligible 00:09:56] some of the great figures of renaissance poetry. Through being briefed by his patrons to produce works like the *Quos Ego*, he clearly was familiar if not a scholar, he was familiar with some of these things. But that he was also working in a way which was analogous with rhetoric. This is where I come to the idea of invention in rhetoric as a way of trying to rethink Raphael's drawing process.

I'm giving a very unfair sketch of traditional Raphael's scholarship now, but there tends to be what I call a tendency to think of drawings in terms of the teleological fallacy. That's what Catherine and I came to call it, which is that you have your end product, which is the painting, and that the drawings are stages in a process that lead to the painting and that you can explain the drawing by connecting with the painting.

That was a very important part of this exhibition for us since we didn't include any of the paintings because we didn't want people to go, "Oh, yes, look, that's, in fact, just what I did previously. There you go. That one goes there. That leads to that." It doesn't necessarily. Invention is an interesting way of thinking about this process. It allows us to rethink it. Inventing in rhetoric, or the discovery of ideas, is an extractive process drawing out of the *res*, or subject matter, the points that the orator will then marshal as persuasive speech. The search for ideas is a process that leads the mind back to what is already well-known. To the *loci, topoi* or in English, we often refer to it as the 'commonplaces', frequented by memory. Not everything thrown up by this exploration will be appropriate to the matter in hand and so discretion or judgment guided by the rules of art and the notion of decorum or appropriateness arranges the disposition or composition of ideas, or inventions pertinent to the subject.

Therefore, the finding of ideas and their placement in an ordered argument are closely related activities. Invention and composition mutually inform each other so that the rearrangement of what is already known can open up unforeseen avenues of exploration, where novel thoughts can be pursued. What motivates innovation in a figure like Raphael is the desire to persuade, to move, to effectively and vividly demonstrate the truth of the case to the audience as if it was happening before their very eyes. To summarise, invention and disposition lead to demonstration. Again, *enargeia* would be the rhetorical term for this. We can see the analogous process at work in Raphael's drawings. If we go back to this, sorry, it's so grainy, but the figure is of...

**Speaker 1:** [unintelligible 00:13:22]

**Ben Thomas:** Yes, that would be great if you could.

**Speaker 1:** Oh, sorry.

**Speaker 2:** Is that too dark?

**Ben Thomas:** Well, that's fine by me if it's okay with you. Yes. Anyway, you have this figure, who's tearing at his clothes. In inventing that figure of St Paul, and extracting the idea from the subject matter of the incident from the *Acts of the Apostles*, Raphael has gone back to the commonplaces in his memory to a figure in one of the earliest drawings that he made. It's one of the earliest surviving drawings. This is a figure of an angel for an altarpiece in a drawing in Lille. A very interesting drawing because you can see different types of drawing, drawing from the model, schematic drawings like this one, all occurring on the same sheet. Here we can see this same sort of figure, where these looping folds of cloth around the pivot of the knee are quite similar, if you could see it, to the later figure in the Getty drawing. Raphael has gone back to a commonplace and then he's adapted it to the new purpose.

We find him pushing decorum to its limits in order to maximise expressivity. A drawing like this one for a soldier in the resurrection, this is an altarpiece commission that Raphael never completed, where he was working for Agostino Chigi, a banker in Rome, the Pope's banker, for an altarpiece for his funerary chapel. This is a figure of one of the guards by the tomb of Christ, who is startled by the eruption of Christ out of the tomb with the resurrection. Again, we can make a comparison with Quintillian, who says, "What is so contorted and elaborately wrought as Myron's famous Discobolus? But would not any critic who disapproved of it because it was not upright showing how far he was from understanding its art in which the very novelty and difficulty of the pose are what most deserve praise?" Novelty and difficulty are things that Raphael aims for in developing more expressive, more effective means of conveying emotion through motion.

Now, I wouldn't recommend Raphael yoga, in which you attempt to adopt poses you find in Raphael's drawings. This one was extremely uncomfortable and could only possibly have been held by the most flexible model for a matter of minutes. I think that although he's working from a model, it's probably done in two halves. In fact, it's around the loincloth we have the slightly awkward area where Raphael's tendency to bisect figures is shown. This is something that we notice working on Raphael, that he thinks in terms of units, often recombining units, often motivated by contrast, antithesis is something that he's very interested in.

In terms of a single figure that you might come across is *contrapposto*, or pushing *contrapposto* to its limits, as is the case here. There's some debate about whether the left arm is by Raphael at all. That's another debate that you get involved in. How far do we allow great artists to be bad? [laughter] I'm quite relaxed about this. I'm happy for not every line to be perfect. I started out this project not caring much about attribution. That was a bit of a pose that I had, "I don't care about attributions." Now I've become obsessed with them, which is what happens to you when you work on Raphael.

The other thing that we started to notice with this external patching, it's not a shadow. This is a shadow, kind of a shadow that anchors the figure in space. But this, and above the shelter, these are not shadows. He does it over and over again, I started to think of it almost like a post-it note, where he's making a mental note. This is the salient contour here. This is the stress point, this is what I'm going to carry forward to the next drawing.

One of the ways in which this sorting through your memory bank, visiting the commonplaces, reworking them, it can also involve the tricky process of influence. Now, Michael Baxandall wrote probably the two best pages ever written on influence, which points out that it's not something that happens to an artist. It's something that an artist does to the work of other artists. Raphael chooses to be influenced by Leonardo when he copies from the workshop *The Leda and the Swan*, which is a document of the proximity of these two artists, Leonardo about 30 years old and than Raphael. But it's clear that he gives Raphael access to his workshop and shows him his drawings. But also we can see Raphael beginning to work – and again, if the slide was better, the underdrawing shows that the feet are slightly longer. Raphael's drawings are very layered. He often works with what we call the blind stylus or with a light, black chalk, and then he'll go over with pen and ink.

You can see him correcting. And he shortens the legs and he makes the juxtapositions of the knees tauter, as if it's moving from a graceful static *contrapposto* pose, into a walking pose. He's starting to think about incorporating the standalone figure of Leonardo into a composition. He's doing something to Leonardo's invention through revisiting it through memory. This for me is one of the more exciting of Raphael's drawings because you can see this process happening in a literal example of cut and paste.

This is a metalpoint drawing, somewhat later than the drawing that he made in France after Leonardo, probably at the time he's working in the Vatican, on the School of Athens. I say this because there are other metalpoint drawings that are also lit from right to left. The direction of lighting shows him changing his mind about things, in a way which is very interesting. If you see here, there are a few quick, decisive snips of those scissors that have removed the original legs, which might have been crouching, or completely different. We can see the remainder of the line there. And he stuck on a new pair of legs, legs that he's sort of taken but reversed from *The Leda*, from Leonardo.

Thinking again, in terms of bisecting figures, units of form that can be recombined. And what that does is it slightly distracts you from the fact that this is a female nude, who's holding a child. There is the head of the child there, can you all see that? She is holding a child, but the legs have been cut off here. There is some more of that external hatching and so he's changed his mind completely. It's gone from a child-bearing figure to a standing nude. Marcantonio uses this for *An Engraving of Venus*, and so people say this is a drawing for the Venus. I think it's more accurate to say, it results in the *Engraving of the Venus*. It's part of the process of invention.

Another drawing that shows this process and this leads us on to how we discovered Raphael composing additively on the same sheet. You can't see this very well, but there is a lot of under-drawing in blind stylus. The most heavily worked areas are the torso here and this figure down here, where working with the metalpoint stylus on unprepared paper leads to furrows being put into the paper. They're almost invisible. You get used to looking at them in raking light, forgetting that you're holding a £50 million-worth piece of paper.

Building up from those areas, we see Raphael developing this figure first. Again, thinking in two halves, so torso and then legs and then he's put this figure in. We can see the overlap here, this bird figure overlaps so reading the way in which they overlap over each other, we

can see the figures added additively. Then thinking in terms of contrast, we get the expressive back that he's thinking about Michelangelo, who has done in *The Battle of Cascina*, lots of expressive backs.

Now, is this a drawing for anything? It's certainly used in the School of Athens, here, but we can't see one of the best inventions, which is the reclining nude. I tend to think of drawings like this as Raphael working through his variations and he mines this drawing for all its worth, subsequently but I think it was just that he was so proud of it, that he smuggled it into the School of Athens.

Here is poetry, a drawing for the figure of poetry on the ceiling of the School of Athens of the *Stanza della Segnatura*, where it has a title, *Numine Afflatur*, the inspiration of the poet. This isn't an inspired piece of work because it's built up of layers and layers of drawing. Even here, you can see some of the under-drawing shine through the chalk hatching, and then the grid that's been placed over the top of it in order to think through the process of coming up with the drawing.

In this respect, Raphael is less of an idealist than he is someone who is inventing in a more workman-like way. His friends, Pietro Bembo, and [Giovanni Francesco Pico] the nephew of the famous philosopher, Pico della Mirandola, had a debate about imitation, literary imitation. How do you come up with the best style for writing poetry, or writing Latin prose? One school of thought says that like a bee in the meadow, you fly from flower to flower taking what's best and then you produce an eclectic synthesis. Theoretically, the big problem with that is, well, how do you know what's good? What is it that guides your selection? Why do you know that this type of prose style is better than this one? Why is this author more imitable than that one?

Pico said that this is because we have an innate idea in our mind of what's beautiful and we use this to gauge and judge what's good. Bembo said, "I don't have any innate idea in my mind, or at least, I'm not aware of it so I just work with established models that are commonly held to be excellent and it's through long, hard labour, that I come up with something good."

Now, traditionally, Raphael is seen as closer to the eclectic idealists, particularly after people like Valori [?] in the 17th century recruit him to the idealist position but for looking at his drawings, I see him more closely related to the Bembo camp in this respect. My catalogue essay 'Raphael and the Idea of Drawing' was actually meant to be ironic because it was meant to say that he wasn't an idealist but again, that was slightly misunderstood. Spell it out clearly! [laughs]

Another thing that's caused me some problems was – and I have got to write a paper now on this – is how would Raphael have known about the concept of ideas? The one text that we know that he read was Vitruvius. We know he read Vitruvius because it was translated for him in 1514 by a scholar called Fabio Calvo, and Calvo's autographed manuscript of Vitruvius exists and there are Raphael annotations in the margins. Raphael refers to Vitruvius and Vitruvian terminology in another letter he wrote on the villa, and he seems to do in a letter that he co-wrote with Castiglione.

Unfortunately, he doesn't comment on this passage, but this is where the word "idea" crops up in Vitruvius, where it says that the forms of disposition, which in Greek are called "ideas" are these: *iconographia*, *autographia*, and *scenographia*, which is plan, elevation, and section, roughly speaking, in architecture. I was arguing that Raphael knew about invention and disposition and composition from reading Vitruvius. The architectural historians said, "Well, no. This is just referring to plan, elevation, and section drawings." But I'm going to argue that there's a gloss in the Italian translation, which is [Italian language] in other words, forms or figures. That actually, we can because of that extended it by analogy to inventions in other areas than architecture.

This is Raphael reworking that passage from Vitruvius, so he was certainly aware of it. Though he does change the names of the three types of drawings. Vitruvius is also a good source for a distinction that I like to make when looking at Raphael's drawings between cogitation and invention. Vitruvius talks about these as two different types of invention one which is careful study of something and the other is sort of very facile and quick sketchiness. We can see these two things on one sheet here, this figure here of a pensive young man whose thought processes are supported by this static right arm with this weight-bearing hand is juxtaposed on the same sheet with a very fluid series of sketches. It's almost as if having carefully drawn from the life the figure of the young man, Raphael's hand needed to free itself with some spontaneous invention, so we get these two modes of invention on the same sheet. Again, we can play the game of linking the figure to the finished work, and he is in fact a preparatory study for this attendant of Euclid.

Euclid is demonstrating one of his theorems in the School of Athens and we get a sequence of different moments in the process of understanding and comprehending something. Comprehension is very much the *res* here, the subject matter that Raphael is exploring. It was nice to be able to work with say cognitive psychologists in the interdisciplinary workshop when we came to look at some of the **[unintelligible 00:31:56]**

The other little sketch, and you're going to have to take my word for it, that this is the head of one child and here is another and an arm here and then there are three heads for probably a mother figure. Again, we could say this is a drawing *for* the Aldobrandini Madonna in London. It's a drawing I would argue that *results* in the Aldobrandini Madonna along with other Madonnas because this very, very fertile little sketch, and there aren't many of these that survive, is packed full of inventions that inform many other works by Raphael. And are then carried on in related drawings where we can see him working through the most basic composition of all which is Madonna and child.

As the child moves so it subtly shifts the implied framework of reactions between the mother and the child. Again, the overlapping forms he's drawing over here, he's turned the sheet sideways these are architectural drawings for the School of Athens and then he starts with this drawing, goes out to the side ones and then this overlapping here is the last one which then goes on to another sheet. But here we lose the head of the child altogether. All he's interested in is that thrusting leg of the child and what that does.

Another way in which this very fertile little sketch develops is that one of the heads here is looking backwards and this looking backwards head we find here in this drawing of a



progressive [aggressive?] man attacking a woman protecting a child. It's one of his commonplaces, the looking backwards head, repeated over and over again in different contexts. One of the things that his hands almost like automatically will draw.

Here the figures are related to drawings for *The Judgment of Solomon* on the Ceiling of the *Stanza Della Segnatura* but where the lighting of those is from right to left, here the figures are lit from left to right. He's changed his mind about the use. We also see him thinking in terms of the two halves of the figure again. This drawing eventually through a process of invention results in the design for Marcantonio's engraving of the *Massacre of the Innocents*.

I think it's with this that I'll draw to a close the first half of my comments about the eloquence of drawing because this is a case of Raphael actually owning the idea of invention because there is the inscription in which it says "Raphael [Italian language]", invented this, so he's actually drawing attention to the fact that he's an inventor. It's also very odd work. We're so familiar with this print that we've lost something of the oddness of it.

The idea of a *Massacre of the Innocents* in which all of the soldiers are nude is strange, iconographically speaking. You tend not to take your clothes off when you are out killing babies. It's like a composition that brings together two of his overriding concerns in the period in which he'd been looking at the work of Leonardo and the work of Michelangelo in Florence which is the heroic male nude and the Madonna and child idea. They've been brought together.

The other thing is that it's completely superfluous artwork. People who like to think of Raphael doing things to order and working to project, well, this is something that had no order. It's an autonomous work of art that he came up with himself simply because he had so many ideas that he wanted to share them. It's like a supplementary work of art. I'm tempted to go all **[unintelligible 00:36:42]** with you and talk about the supplement there, but it is a gratuitous artwork in a sense, so I think very important in that respect.

Very different from say, one of his teachers Perugino, so this is again just to summarise. If you were to look at the brief, if a document existed for what the patron asked for, you have representations of ideas of fortitude and some and then representatives of those ideas, even a self-portrait of the artist that Raphael comes up with through figural invention. This is the study for Diogenes in Frankfurt, the School of Athens. It's essentially the same idea on the ceiling, we have philosophy below the representatives of philosophy but it's active and it involves us in the process of thinking. It demonstrates to us, it moves us in thinking about those ideas.

How did we go about trying to develop these ideas in a way that would be accessible to a wider audience? Because not everybody coming to the exhibition had read Quintillian, certainly. We did have the opportunity to involve experts from a wide range of fields. Sadly not Tim Ingold himself, the social anthropologist Tim Ingold, but one of his students and we were reading widely outside the discipline the work of people influenced by cognitive psychology or social anthropology and this is just one example of how we try to think beyond the box in terms of Raphael drawings.

This is a nice example of Ingold's critique of what he calls hylomorphism, which is this concept that when we make something there's a blueprint in our mind, an idea and that we then we introduce that into matter, so making something is the introduction of the idea of into matter.

This is an experiment where he disproves the hylomorphic concept. He asked all of his students in Aberdeen to make the same basket. They were all trying to make exactly the same basket using traditional basket weaving techniques, but they all come out slightly differently because the knot that's tied to bring together the upward-pointing things through which you weave the horizontal parts of the basketwork, is going to be at a different height because each of the students has a different height. They also have different strengths and the tensile strength of the twigs were different for each one. Although they were trying to execute the same idea the baskets are all slightly different. Equally, an unforeseen factor was that there is a wind blowing, a strong wind, which slightly tilted all of the baskets. The process of making the basket was as much about the environment and the materials and the strength and gestures of the makers as it was about the blueprint that they'd all agreed on beforehand. This sort of eloquence we were also trying to look at in Raphael's drawing. Could we find traces of this type of process? Perhaps the most exciting drawing in this respect is this one where it I think survives mainly because it's on the back of a very beautiful study in black chalk of a nude male figure. Another one of these guards in the resurrection. Here we can see there must have been hundreds of these drawings originally. One of only a couple that survive now.

Rapid, very fast sketching with the pen. We called this a brainstorming drawing, and some people didn't like that term, but it also reminds me of an 18th-century game that artists play. You can try this yourself, which is that you put five dots on a piece of paper and then hand it to your friends and say, "come up with a figure". The five dots are feet, hands, and head for a figure, and artists used to swap these. Looking at the top, you can see that there is an idea for a figure there, the conception of a figure, with about 12 strokes with the pen. This is Raphael at his most economical.

The idea of Raphael's hand and the working of his hand was also a big part of what we did coming out of the workshops, and we're also helped by Albrecht Dürer writing on a drawing that Raphael sent him. At the end here Dürer writes that "Raphael sent me this **[unintelligible 00:42:05]** he sent me this to show me his hand". The working of his hand. Well, there were lots of delicate loan negotiations. This is a list of all of the lenders. Of course, when you start asking you sometimes can't get the things you want. We really wanted this drawing in the British Museum but it'd been shown in *Drawing in Silver and Gold* in 2015. You can only have an old master drawing for six months every five years, they're so delicate and they're so sensitive to light. If something had been shown within the last five years, we couldn't have it. We've probably ruined things for the people who want to celebrate Raphael's quincentenary in 2020 because that's 120 drawings that probably won't be loanable anymore.

Then these were the various workshops that we've had, working in the Ashmolean print room, wherever possible so the invited guests were talking with the drawing in front of them. It's very interesting to say, have a musicologist talk about interval and pace and

rhythm in a drawing or my friend Howard, a cognitive scientist who took that salience, what he could see as salience in the drawing. Or perhaps the most revealing of all contemporary artists, and what they brought to a drawing. An art historian might say, "It's this bit of the drawing that Raphael started with" and they go, "No, why do you think that? No, no, the drawing starts down here". Learning to look at drawings through the eyes of artists was very useful indeed.

Although people had... sorry about all this text. This is basically just some responses to the workshops. We had to collect all of these for the Leverhulme Trust. But basically, people found the workshops quite an enlightening process in spite of preconceptions they might've had. Finally, to talk you through the exhibition. We didn't want to make people think they were taking an exam when they went through the exhibition. One of the things we really wanted to do was emphasise the immediacy of drawing. The fact that drawings put you in a special place temporally. Unlike paintings, which are finished, drawings are part of an ongoing present.

There is a data chart but you didn't have to know anything about Raphael as you approached the drawing exhibition. Then the first thing you see is Raphael himself, or possibly Raphael himself. Catherine and I disagree over this. She thinks this is a self-portrait. I think it's just a drawing of a boy. But for the purposes of the exhibition, this is Raphael greeting you. Then on one wall of this first drawing we have mainly Madonna and child studies, along the other mainly the heroic male nude. The first room, and again, this wasn't stressed to people going to the exhibition, is based on invention.

The three principal parts of speech – invention, composition, expression – were informing the three rooms. Then mediating between the walls, we placed double sided sheets and Catherine is brilliant at this, hanging things in a way where you can see visual rhymes across space so that one drawing leads to another. Such a privilege to work with a really experienced and brilliant curator in that respect.

This is looking back towards the entrance. This takes you through his early years and his training and his introduction to Leonardo and Michelangelo. Then we go into the second room and there's a space where these things to come together in the Marcantonio print of *The Massacre of The Innocents*. This is slightly out of chronological sequence, but it's a big statement about Raphael as a designer. It was the first opportunity ever to bring all of the drawings together for that particular engraving.

Then looking beyond this little space where the engraving was shown, the only non-drawing in the whole exhibition, we then look into a room which is dedicated to the composition of the frescoes in the Vatican, with a shine to the muses at the end. The drawing there is the one drawing that we got from an American collection, from a private collection. It's the last work to have been on the art market. I think it was 50 or \$60 million.

This room was a bit of a challenge because it's got such a high ceiling, means the lights are further away, light levels have to be low for a drawing to show and these double-sided walls, although they were very effective in moving from one side of the sheet to another

and linking walls across the space, it was hard to light them so some of them were quite dark. That was just a logistical problem that couldn't be overcome.

Behind the temple with the muses section, we had this section about various drawing techniques with examples of the different drawing tools and a desk to encourage people to do drawings themselves. Some visitors thought this should've come early on. We thought a lot about it. The idea here was that, again, not wanting to bog people down with, "Is this a metalpoint? Is this a pen and ink drawing?" That people would get halfway around the show and then be grateful to be shown the tools rather than be on their metal thinking that "I have to know this". But some people would have liked it at the beginning.

Then the final room where the colour scheme reflects the preponderance of red chalk drawings was dedicated to the expressiveness of drawing and is largely Raphael's late drawings culminating with the final painting that he did *The Transfiguration* where we brought together a group of *The Transfiguration* drawings. From Ashmolean's point of view, it was good that the exhibition started and ended with two Ashmolean drawings. It ended with a drawing that we... this is a view of the room. We deliberately chose drawings all the way through that were uncontroversial in terms of attribution. We didn't want it to be a show about attribution.

On the whole, everybody agreed that the drawings in the exhibition were all by Raphael but when you get to late Raphael it's one of, I suppose if you studied art history you might know, it's one of the most thought over and difficult questions and inevitably there were one or two that some people didn't agree with. This drawing is not universally felt to be by Raphael. He had a very accomplished young pupil called Giulio Romano part of a larger workshop, and it's often very difficult to tell what's Giulio and what's Raphael.

I took the view that this was Raphael because it's got the quality of invention that we've seen in the earlier parts of the talk. This is the **[unintelligible 00:51:02]** figure, that he's learned from Leonardo, twisted slightly. There's an additive process putting together different levels of finish. We have some of this external hatching, the only thing that's really difficult from an attributional point of view, is the left leg, which is horrible. Everybody agrees that's a really horrible left leg.

[laughter]

It's mainly because it isn't shaded, and it isn't shaded because Raphael wouldn't have had to have shown that in the final. This is sufficiently worked through that he's not concerned necessarily. The final workshop of all was one where we invited the Raphael scholars to go around the exhibition with us and that was quite scary – the people who spend their whole lives arguing over the attribution. I think Paul Joannides shifted from completely rejecting this as a Raphael drawing to accepting that the top half is by Raphael and the bottom half is by Giulio Romano.

Then the final work is the drawing from the transfiguration, which slightly cynically when talking to journalists, we just routinely call it the greatest drawing ever made. You repeat something often enough and it becomes a truth. It started being called the greatest drawing ever made but my challenge is to you is if there's a better one, please show it to me. There

it is. It also is a nice place to end the exhibition because it epitomised the eloquence, the two types of eloquence that we were talking about.

I tried to bring this out in the label that I wrote, so on the one hand, it exemplifies the mute eloquence talked about by poets, such as Dante. The visible speech that Dante talks about in *Purgatorio*. On the other hand it's also eloquent in terms of the different styles of mark-making and the control of the chalk and the way in which you have some areas of very, very finely shaded work. Then in the hair, for example, it's very free making of lines. Even things like the pounce mark here that shows him shifting the thumb. Just these very slight calibrations of detail that make again, always heightening the expressiveness.

Once you've done your work, you let the public in, and you wait with trepidation for their opinion. Here are some photographs from the Friend's Day of people going around the exhibition. These are all taken by the Ashmolean photographer and some of them are staged, it had to be admitted. This is a mother and child drawing a mother and child. Actually, it's somebody who works in the shop with a child that we just grabbed.

[laughter]

There you are. But people did look very closely at the drawings. That was one of the really nice things about the show. People did feel that they spoke to them in a... that was part of the feedback that we got. It's quite a challenge. It's quite recondite material in some respects. Many art historians would say, you need to study at this really 30 years before you'd be able to understand it, but we didn't believe that at all. We thought Raphael's drawings speak more eloquently than his paintings.

Now, this is not just vanity, this is to show you Catherine and also to point out this is taken on the opening and we are both extremely stressed at this point. I think if you can see that part of my mustache fell out, I was so stressed. This is another side of putting on a big exhibition. Thankfully people liked it and the reviews were very, very nice and, they were quite extensive as well. That's been useful in justifying to the Leverhulme the fact that they entrusted us with a lot of money to do this.

My favourite review wasn't the guardian one, but it was in a publication called *The Amarist*, which sadly is now folded, which is an erotic review. Which said that you certainly got some interesting ideas about the beauty of the male body coming out of this exhibition. I was introduced to all sorts of interesting reading matter I hadn't heard of before. Then of course, there's the museum's own process of reflecting on the impact of the exhibition. These are just a few slides from the very thorough analysis that went after it.

We exceeded the visitor targets and most people who visited, enjoyed the show. 93% had decided to visit the exhibition before arrival. That's important for the museum because it meant that these weren't people who had just walked through the door, they had decided in advance. When it was clear that it was going to be a hit, the Ashmolean spent a lot of money on posters in London train stations and underground stations, and that led to a spike in attendance as well. It was interesting.

Visitor survey findings on the demographics. Sorry. You can't see this at all but it sort of goes like this. Mostly it was young people below 20 and then retired people. Then the lowest fit is people like me who work all the time and don't have time to go to exhibitions. That's fairly common but it was a nice democratic spread as well. We expected it to be more people over 60 than in the 20s and 30s but it was good and visitor satisfaction is fine. People thought they got value for money.

Though there were some criticisms. Some people wanted to see the paintings next to the drawings. We knew that was going to be a controversial decision. The video should have been at the start of the exhibition. It was too dimly lit. Everyone says this about drawing shows. Nothing can be done about it. It's just the way it is but it is a challenge as a curator: how do you get around that? Long wordy explanations that some people felt were inaccessible. Well, that's fair enough. They were long and wordy.

One of the things we'd tried to do is descriptive analysis that would help people, guide them in looking at the drawing. Again, that was a calculated risk. Overcrowding. Successful exhibitions do tend to be overcrowded. The last couple of slides are about the opportunity that came up to curate a show at the Courtauld, and this *Drawing Together* show was an opportunity to explore some of the themes that we'd been working through with Raphael but with a much wider range, historically and stylistically, of drawings.

I was basically making visual pairings of drawings that superficially look similar but then you're being questioned as to, are these the same things? We see rapid sketching movements in a Romney drawing and a Hans Harton but where Harton is an abstract artist moving away from representation and story, Romney is moving towards it. Again, the idea of the rhythm of the hand is something that's there in those two drawings. I like this drawing because it's like an emotional balance. On the left, you have these looping lines. We did do a lot of drawing ourselves while we were curating. There are several drawings I did to try and understand this pattern. When you're doing the left-hand side, you feel quite pleasant. It's quite nice. It's like you're going for a walk. You're circling around. You do it long enough, you feel quite happy. The other one here, up and down, up and down. You start to feel very irritated and anxious and a bit aggressive and then there's this dying away where the looping comes back. The two are held together with the patch of yellow and the implied framing of the shoot.

To what extent is it anachronistic to try and make these visual connections with Raphael and Harton and Romney. That was the very playful nature of the Courtauld show which was meant to be the light-hearted accompaniment of the Raphael exhibition. We had a final workshop there and invited some wonderful people to take part. This is Howard the cognitive scientist and that's Paul Hills, a famous professor **[unintelligible 01:01:28]** and this is Humphrey Ocean, the artist. Also involving students as well, which was nice that we were able to do that.

I hope that gives you some sense of what we were trying to do with the Raphael show and the process of putting it together. I'm very happy to answer any questions you might have.

[applause]