

Press Release

**For Immediate Release**  
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**CHRISTIE'S**

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**A MASTERWORK BY A RENAISSANCE GENIUS:  
RAPHAEL DRAWING TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S  
IN DECEMBER 2009**



***Old Masters and 19<sup>th</sup> Century Art Evening Sale***

**Auction: Tuesday 8 December 2009 at 7pm**

**Exhibition: 4 to 8 December 2009**

**London** – Christie's will offer an exceptional drawing by Raphael (1483-1520) at the *Old Masters and 19th Century Art Evening Sale* on Tuesday 8 December 2009 in London. *Head of a Muse* was drawn by the artist as a study for a figure in *Parnassus*, one of the series of four frescoes in the Stanza della Segnatura in the Vatican which was commissioned by Pope Julius II and which was executed between 1508 and 1511. This series is widely considered to be the artist's greatest masterpiece. The drawing will be offered at public auction for the first time in over 150 years at Christie's in December and is expected to realise £12 million to £16 million.

The current record price for an old master drawing sold at auction is £8.1 million\* which was realised by Michelangelo's *The Risen Christ* at Christie's in July 2000, and by Leonardo da Vinci's *Horse and Rider*, also at Christie's, in July 2001.

The *Old Masters and 19th Century Art Evening Sale* on Tuesday 8 December 2009 will also offer *Portrait of a man, half-length, with his arms akimbo*, an important and authoritative portrait by Rembrandt (1606-1669) (estimate: £18 million to £25 million); and *Saint John the Evangelist* by Domenico Zampieri, called Il Domenichino (1581-1641), one of the most significant Baroque paintings to be presented at auction in a generation (estimate: £7 million to £10 million) (*separate press releases available*).

**Benjamin Peronnet, Director and International Head of Old Master and 19th Century Drawings, Christie's:** *"Raphael is universally recognised as one of the greatest artists in history, and we are extremely excited to be able to offer a beautiful drawing by his hand which played a major part in the execution of one of the masterpieces of European art. This truly exceptional drawing offers us a glimpse into the working mind of a genius; it presents us with the immediacy of his thoughts and ideas, capturing the precise moment at which the artist's hand and mind were applied to paper. The drawing is not only a work of genius in its own right but is also related to one of the artist's great frescoes in the Vatican and has come down to us in remarkable condition and with distinguished provenance having previously been owned by both Sir Thomas Lawrence and King William II of Holland."*

**Richard Knight, International co-Head of Old Masters and 19<sup>th</sup> Century Art at Christie's:** *"The auction in December will be a landmark sale for the art market, offering the Raphael alongside an important late portrait by Rembrandt and a monumental masterpiece by Domenichino. The market for Old Masters has shown stability over the last year as international collectors continue to seize opportunities to acquire works which rarely appear on the market. We look forward to exhibiting three particularly rare masterpieces to the public in London in December, and to welcoming collectors and institutions from around the world to what promises to be an historic auction on 8 December."*

Raffaello Sanzio, called Raphael (1483-1520) was one of the most influential and accomplished painters in European history. He lived in Florence from 1504 to 1508 where he absorbed the influence of his near contemporaries Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. In 1508 he was summoned to Rome by Pope Julius II and commissioned to paint frescoes in one of the Papal rooms in the Vatican. At the same time, Michelangelo was painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and the ensuing competition between the two Renaissance masters ensured that in the Stanza della Segnatura, which the Pope intended to use as his library, Raphael executed a series of four frescoes which are widely considered to be his greatest masterpiece. Sir Joshua Reynolds said of Raphael that *'His genius, however formed to blaze and to shine, might, like fire in combustible matter, for ever have lain dormant if it had not caught a spark by its contact with Michael Angelo.'*

The third of the frescoes in the Stanza della Segnatura was *Parnassus* which shows Apollo holding court on the mountain, surrounded by the muses. *Head of a Muse*, to be offered at Christie's in December, relates directly to the third muse to the right of Apollo. The drawing is an auxiliary cartoon for the head of the muse and measures 12 in. x 8 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (30.5 cm x 22.2 cm). Raphael's meticulous preparation for a fresco would see him sprinkle a dust of black chalk through pricked

outlines of the original drawn cartoon onto a fresh sheet of paper, leaving dotted lines which are clearly visible in the work to be offered at Christie's. These created a faint outline by means of which the artist could execute a highly finished and detailed study that would act as a reference tool during the painting of the fresco. The drawing to be offered at Christie's is an exceptional example of Raphael's draughtsmanship which shows the artist following the guiding dots as he draws with great freedom and confidence in his search for perfection. This is a record of Raphael's artistic vision at its final and most developed stage – and it is a particularly valuable record given that the fresco was later retouched, obscuring some of Raphael's own brushwork.

The drawing was first recorded in 1725 when it was engraved by Bernard Picart to be published in *Impostures Innocentes*. At the time it belonged to the celebrated Dutch collector Gosuinus Uilenbroeck (d.1741) who assembled one of the most important private libraries of the period, together with a number of splendid old master drawings. The drawing was subsequently in the collections of Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830), the distinguished painter who was also one of the most celebrated old master drawing collectors, and the future King William II of Holland (1792-1849) who assembled one of the finest art collections in Europe.

Raphael spent most of the rest of his life in Rome under the patronage of Pope Julius II and his successor, Leo X. According to his biographer Giorgio Vasari, Pope Leo X “*wept bitterly when he died*” in 1520, and had planned to make him a cardinal.

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**Images available on request**  
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*Raffaello, who stands in general foremost of the first painters, owes his reputation, as I have observed, to his excellence in the higher parts of the art... The excellency of this extraordinary man lay in the propriety, beauty, and majesty of his characters, his judicious contrivance of his composition, correctness of drawing, purity of taste, and the skilful accommodation of other men's conceptions to his own purpose. Nobody excelled him in that judgment.....*

**Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792)**

- The current world record price for any work by Raphael sold at auction was established when *Portrait of Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino* sold for £18,500,000 (\$37,277,500)\* at Christie's London on 5 July 2007.

\* - prices include premium