

Norton Simon Museum For Immediate Release

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Norton Simon Museum Marks the 500th Anniversary of Raphael's Death with a Spotlight on *Madonna and Child with Book*

A special installation and program series highlight this important artwork

Pasadena, CA— Few artists have been as widely admired as Raphael (April 6, 1483–April 6, 1520), whose innovations in fresco decoration, altarpieces, portraits and devotional paintings represent the zenith of Italian art in the 16th century. His work influenced generations of artists, including Guido Reni and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. This winter and spring, the Norton Simon Museum joins institutions around the world in observing the 500th anniversary of the artist's death. A special display and a series of programs focus on the artist's *Madonna and Child with Book*, from around 1502–3. One of the treasures of the Museum's early Renaissance galleries, *Madonna and Child with Book* also has the distinction of being the only painting by Raphael in a public collection west of the Mississippi.



Madonna and Child with Book, c. 1502–3, Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio) (Italian, 1483–1520), oil on panel, 21-3/4 x 15-3/4 in. (55.2 x 40 cm), Norton Simon Art Foundation

The Museum celebrates “Raphael 2020” from January 15 through May 18, 2020. The painting then travels to Dresden, Germany, for an exhibition at the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister as part of a masterpiece exchange program between the two institutions.

About Raphael and His *Madonna and Child with Book*

Raphael was born in Urbino in central Italy, the son of Giovanni Santi, a painter in the service of the Court of Urbino. Orphaned by age 11 and placed in the care of his uncle Bartolomeo, a priest, Raphael

achieved fame and with it important religious commissions well before his 20th birthday. In the course of just two decades (the artist died at the age of 37), he gained the respect and admiration of Urbino's Ducal Court and artistic circles in Florence and Rome, as well as the patronage of two powerful popes. He is buried in the Pantheon in Rome.

Madonna and Child with Book, 1502–3, was painted by Raphael when he was just 19 years old. Seated before a distant landscape, the Madonna cradles the robust Christ Child with one hand as she supports a breviary or prayer book with the other. The book is open to the Ninth Hour, which concerns the Passion and Death of Christ. To focus attention on this intimate exchange of thoughts between mother and child, Raphael frames them within the triangular silhouette of the Madonna's blue mantle. Their tender interaction is emphasized by their touching hands and loving gazes. In the landscape, the cloudless sky is beginning to darken and shadows appear on the hill, all to underscore the ninth hour after sunrise and their knowledge of the Child's fate. The scale of this exquisite and highly finished panel suggests that it was displayed in a private home to help the devout visualize the lives of the Madonna and Child, and to imagine their joys and sorrows. While Raphael's painting was meant to encourage meditation and prayer, his subtle psychological depiction of this maternal relationship demonstrates the master's humanistic and modern view of art.

Norton Simon acquired *Madonna and Child with Book* in 1972 from Wildenstein & Company. Upon its purchase, the painting was lent to several museums, including the Princeton University Art Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. In 1975, it joined other masterpieces purchased by Norton Simon and his foundations at the newly opened Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena, becoming one of the icons of its Renaissance wing. Since that time, it has been on near constant view at the Museum.

Special Events

The Museum is organizing a series of events in celebration of Raphael 2020. All events listed are included with Museum admission. Details can be found at nortonsimon.org.

For Adults:

Lectures

Raphael: The Making of a Master

Davide Gasparotto, Senior Curator of Paintings and Chair, Curatorial Affairs, The J. Paul Getty Museum
Saturday, April 25, 4:00–5:00 p.m.

Over the course of his short but unprecedented career, Raphael painted the image of the Virgin and Child many times and in different iterations, including the masterpiece today at the Norton Simon Museum. In this lecture Davide Gasparotto illustrates how Raphael was able to infuse new life into a

traditional subject, exploring the artist's creative process and his intense dialogue with contemporary painters, from Perugino to Leonardo da Vinci.

Raphael 2020: A Conversation on the Artist

Tracy Cosgriff, Assistant Professor of Art and Art History, College of Wooster, and Lisa Pon, Professor of Art History, University of Southern California

Saturday, May 9, 4:00–5:00 p.m.

To commemorate the 500th anniversary of Raphael's death, art historians Tracy Cosgriff and Lisa Pon discuss the artist's life, practice and paintings. Exploring themes connected to the Norton Simon Museum's elegant *Madonna and Child with Book*—the only painting by the artist on the West Coast—the conversation delves into how Raphael's relationships with poets, scholars and erudite patrons, such as Pope Julius II later in his career, shaped the artist's approach to religious painting.

Afternoon Salon

Raphael in Context

Sunday, April 5, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

In commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Raphael's death in April 1520, take a closer look at his masterpiece *Madonna and Child with Book* and learn more about this iconic Renaissance master and his time.

Mindful Looking

Madonna and Child with Book

Thursday, April 16, 1:30–2:30 p.m.

Join Head of Education Michelle Brenner for a period of extended looking and conversation about Raphael's *Madonna and Child with Book*.

Guided Tours

Raphael, Renaissance Master

Saturday, March 28, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

On the 500th anniversary of Raphael's death, examine his *Madonna and Child with Book* and its predecessors. Then explore Raphael's influence on such artists as Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun and Rembrandt van Rijn.

Art of the Book

Saturday, April 11, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

Discover how artists like Raphael have taken inspiration from the printed word, and explore the relationship between books and artists from 12th-century Tibet to 20th-century Europe.

Raphael and the Madonna

Saturday, April 25, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

Explore Raphael's innovations alongside other artists' depictions of this iconic subject.

Please note that space is limited for Afternoon Salons, Mindful Looking programs and Guided Tours. Sign up at the Information Desk. For lectures, stickers are required for ensured seating and are distributed starting one hour prior to the event. Members enjoy early seating, subject to availability.

For Children & Families:

Art Adventures Tour

Mother's Day at the Norton Simon Museum

Sunday, May 10, 1:30–2:30 p.m.

Celebrate Mother's Day by exploring Raphael's *Madonna and Child with Book* and other works that touch on love and family. At the end of the tour, write a note to your mom or a loved one in a booklet to start an exchange of messages to each other for days to come. This interactive tour is recommended for families with children ages 7–11. Please note that space is limited; sign up at the Information Desk.

About the Norton Simon Museum

The Norton Simon Museum is known around the world as one of the most remarkable private art collections ever assembled. Over a 30-year period, industrialist Norton Simon (1907–1993) amassed an astonishing collection of European art from the Renaissance to the 20th century, and a stellar collection of South and Southeast Asian art spanning 2,000 years. Modern and Contemporary Art from Europe and the United States, acquired by the former Pasadena Art Museum, also occupies an important place in the Museum's collections. The Museum houses more than 12,000 objects, roughly 1,000 of which are on view in the galleries and gardens. Two temporary exhibition spaces feature rotating installations of artworks not on permanent display.

Location: The Norton Simon Museum is located at 411 W. Colorado Blvd. at Orange Grove Boulevard in Pasadena, Calif., at the intersection of the Foothill (210) and Ventura (134) freeways. For general Museum information, please call (626) 449-6840 or visit nortonsimon.org. **Hours:** The Museum is open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from noon to 5 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is closed on Tuesday. **Admission:** General admission is \$15 for adults and \$12 for seniors. Members, students with I.D., and patrons age 18 and under are admitted free of charge. Admission is free for everyone on the first Friday of every month from 5 to 8 p.m. All public programs, unless stated otherwise, are free with admission. The Museum is wheelchair accessible. **Parking:** Parking is free but limited, and no reservations are necessary. **Public Transportation:** Pasadena Transit stops directly in front of the Museum. Please visit <http://pasadenatransit.net> for schedules. The MTA bus line #180/181 stops in front of the Museum. The Memorial Park Station on the MTA Gold Line, the closest Metro Rail station to the Museum, is located at 125 E. Holly St. at Arroyo Parkway. Please visit www.metro.net for schedules.