



Renaissance Rivals

Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael: the tumultuous trio

11–18 February 2025 (ML 624)

8 days • £3,960

Lecturer: Dr Michael Douglas-Scott

A fascinating exploration of the three greatest artists of the Italian High Renaissance.

Their stories, genius, output, placed in context.

Milan, Florence, Rome, with Italy's finest art galleries and visits by special arrangement.

Led by Dr Michael Douglas-Scott, specialist in 16th-century Italian art.

Competition was central to the Italian Renaissance. Artists competed with orators and humanists for positions at court or with each other for work. In Milan, Leonardo had to compete with other courtiers for the attention of the Duke, Ludovico "il Moro" Sforza, who commissioned him to paint *The Last Supper* and to make a giant equestrian statue of his father Francesco. The latter was never finished as in 1499 the Sforza regime fell and Leonardo returned to his homeland of Florence.

Here he ran into direct (and acrimonious) competition with another artist, his younger rival, the sculptor Michelangelo. They were both engaged in providing painted battle-scenes for the council room of the town hall for the republican regime that had replaced Medici control. Neither artist finished their task but a younger painter from Urbino, Raphael, arrived in town in 1505 just in time to learn from their heroic achievements and failures.

Raphael of course then took his own renewed style to Rome and here he, in his turn, entered into competition with the great Michelangelo under the patronage of Pope Julius II. As Raphael painted the *Stanza della Segnatura*, the Sistine Chapel ceiling was frescoed by Michelangelo. Raphael paid tribute to Michelangelo by including him in the *School of Athens* but his hero resented the younger rival's success, claiming that "everything he learned he learned from me". When Michelangelo was sent back to Florence by Pope Leo X to work on projects for the reinstated Medici, Raphael became the dominant figure in Rome until his premature death in 1520. Meanwhile the aged Leonardo had died in France in the service of Francis I.

This was not the full picture, however: in the years 1495–1520 these three artists between them had created the "High Renaissance", their rivalry providing the impetus in the creation of



The School of Athens (detail), copper engraving c. 1781, by Giovanni Volpato (1732–1803), after the fresco by Raphael in the Stanza della Segnatura.

this great pinnacle of European visual culture, setting aesthetic standards for centuries to come. Michelangelo continued to be active in both Florence and then Rome until his death in 1564.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 10.15am from London Heathrow to Milan Linate. In the afternoon the scene is set with a visit to the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, which has works by Raphael, Bramantino, Luini and other contemporaries and followers of Leonardo. First of two nights in Milan.

Day 2: Milan. In the morning see the Brera, one of Italy's finest art galleries with most of the greatest Italian artists represented. The afternoon focuses on the Renaissance church of Sta Maria delle Grazie, home to Leonardo's *Last Supper*.

Day 3: Milan, Florence. Take a morning train to Florence, where the next three nights are spent. On arrival, we begin by looking at Michelangelo's work undertaken for the Medici family, in the Cappelle Medicee and the Laurentian Library. In the afternoon see his *Slaves* in the Accademia.

Day 4: Florence. Avoid much of the daily crowd by heading early to the Uffizi, which hold key works by all three artists, as well as every other major Florentine painter. Continue to the Palazzo Pitti which houses several museums; the Galleria Palatina is particularly outstanding for High Renaissance and Baroque paintings. We see a selection of Raphael's portraits here including *Woman with a Veil*.

Day 5: Florence. Visit Casa Buonarroti, house of Michelangelo's family, which has models revealing his unprecedented knowledge of anatomy. The Bargello houses Florence's finest sculpture collection while the vast Franciscan church of Sta Croce, favoured burial place for leading Florentines, is abundantly furnished with sculpted tombs, altarpieces and frescoes. The afternoon is free.

Day 6: Florence, Rome. Travel by train to Rome and check into the hotel. The Galleria Borghese holds Rome's finest collection of painting and sculpture. First of two nights in Rome.

Day 7: 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

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Pigna and a visit to the Vatican Pinacoteca, home to the only painting by Leonardo da Vinci in Rome, *St Jerome in the Wilderness*. Here are also many of Raphael's paintings and frescoes, including the *Transfiguration*, his last great altarpiece. The Basilica of St Peter in the Vatican was the outcome of the greatest architects of several generations – Bramante, Raphael, Sangallo, Michelangelo – and contains major sculpture. Continue to the Chigi Chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo.

Day 8: Rome. Walk to the delightful Villa La Farnesina, which has frescoes by Raphael, before a walk which includes Piazza Navona, the Pantheon (for Raphael's tomb) and churches nearby housing works by Raphael and Michelangelo. before Return to London Heathrow, arriving at c. 7.00pm.

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: £3,960 or £3,820 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £4,510 or £4,370 without flights.

Included: flights (Euro Traveller) with British Airways (Airbus 320); travel by rail (business class) between Milan & Florence, and Florence & Rome; travel by private coach or minibus; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts (including one in the Vatican); 4 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Accommodation: Rosa Grand Hotel, Milan (starhotels.com/en/our-hotels/rosa-grand-milan): a smart 4-star hotel excellently located directly behind the Duomo. **Hotel Santa Maria Novella, Florence** (hotelsantamarianovella.it): a delightful 4-star hotel in a very central location. **Donna Camilla Savelli, Rome** (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? All three cities involve a lot of walking and coach access is restricted in the centres. There is also a lot of standing in museums and churches, and uneven ground and irregular paving are standard. You need to be able to lift your luggage on and off the trains and wheel it within stations. Unless you enjoy entirely unimpaired mobility, cope with everyday walking and stair-climbing without difficulty and are reliably sure-footed, this tour would prove difficult.

Group size: between 10 and 19 participants.