



PRESS RELEASE

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FIVE CENTURIES, FIVE PENS: MONTEGRAPPA SALUTES RAPHAEL'S GENIUS

500 years have passed since Raphael painted his final brushstroke. To mark the anniversary, Italy's leading maker of luxury pens is using traditional high-craft to celebrate the master's extraordinary legacy.

This April marks the 500th anniversary of the death of Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino, better known as Raphael. He was only 37 when he died of exhaustion (allegedly the amorous kind) but Raphael's work remains a pinnacle of art and culture that once again comes under the microscope this year. Several major exhibitions are planned around the world in 2020, including the biggest ever mounted – at the Scuderie del Quirinale, in Rome, where the artist and architect spent the last decade of his life. *'Raphael'* (5 March – 2 June) will show more than 200 of his masterpieces.

Joining in on the celebrations is the Italian luxury company, Montegrappa, which is using the occasion to showcase its own artistic riches. A collection of fountain pens has just been released that uses precious materials and exquisite hand-painting to revisit a selection of Raphael's most recognised works and signature details. Named *Raffaello*, the five designs are among the most time-intensive products made in the company's 108-year history.



Though Montegrappa's designs often catch attention for their opulent craftsmanship, this is the first time that brush-painted finishing has featured on a pen made for public release. Reproducing a masterpiece on a shiny 16.5mm cylinder is a skill few can master, and the task of recreating Raphael's work has fallen to the steady hand of miniaturist and museum restorer, Alessandra Malesan. Each pen requires weeks to complete and, for this reason, only five examples of each have been made. Motifs include Self-Portrait and the Sistine Madonna.

The release represents the tenth and rarest instalment under the company's *Genio Creativo* imprint – a series that has previously paid tribute to figures like Stradivarius, Dalí and da Vinci. Like the vast majority of Montegrappa's limited editions, *Raffaello*, is exhaustively detailed. All metal fittings have been realised in sterling silver and feature friezes and stuccos reproduced from the Vatican's famous Raphael Rooms – arguably the artist's greatest triumph.

As a writing instrument, *Raffaello* offers the industry's highest levels of mechanical precision and writing pleasure, but it is of course its embodiment of Italian virtuosity that will appeal to most collectors and buyers.

Raffaello by Montegrappa is available now to pre-order at prestige writing dealers and the brand's online boutique.

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About Montegrappa:

Montegrappa has been manufacturing the world's most magical pens in the same artisanal factory for more than a century. Combining luxurious materials, high craftsmanship and unrivalled writing pleasure, the independent maker's quality and individualist flair make it a firm favourite of dignitaries, creatives and collectors.

