

# The school of athens by raphael essay

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The Italian Renaissance began the opening phase of the Renaissance, a period of great cultural change and advancement from the end of the 13th century to about 1600, marking the transition between Medieval and Early Modern Europe.

Raphael was an Italian painter and architect of the High Renaissance, celebrated for the perfection and grace of his paintings and drawings. Together with Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, he forms the traditional trinity of great masters of that period. He died at the age of 37. In 1508 Raphael, a native of Urbino, had been recommended to Julius II by Donato Bramante, the pope's architect, and also a native of Urbino. After Raphael had been welcomed by Pope Julius, he started to paint in the Stanza della Segnatura ("Room of the Signatura").

He started painting frescos, in which are portraits of all the sages of the world shown disputing amongst themselves in various ways. A fresco is done on plaster, on walls or ceilings; somewhat like a mural painting. The original name of this fresco is actually Causarum Cognitio (Knowledge of Causes) but it's called School of Athens, which came from a 17th century guidebook. The School of Athens was painted by Raphael Sanzio (or Raffaello Santi), who was 27 years old at the time, for Pope Julius II between 1510 and 1511. The pope was so enthusiastic when he saw the fresco that Raphael received the go-ahead to paint the entire papal suite. The Stanza della Segnatura was to be Julius' library, which would have a small collection of books intended for his personal use stored in it.

The fresco of Raphael's School of Athens is a masterpiece of art. However, we do not know all the identities of the persons who are depicted. Giorgio Vasari and others have suggested that nearly all Greek philosophers and ancient scientists can be found in the painting. Unfortunately Raphael did not leave any personal notes on his work, hence there is no way to be 100% sure who they all are.

But some of the persons in the fresco can be identified with confidence, such as Plato (Leonardo DaVinci), Aristotle, Michelangelo, and Ptolemy. The work shows that Raphael was an educated person, and had some knowledge of Greek philosophy and science. In the center of the piece is Plato on the left and Aristotle, his student, on the right. Both hold copies of their books in their left hands and are making gestures with their right. Being that they are both in the center, it seems that Raphael wanted to put emphasis on the two philosophers. There seems to be a transition from Philosophy to Science from left to right that also is represented by Apollo (god of the sun, law, philosophy, and the arts) and Athena (goddess of wisdom, peace, strategy and reason) sculptures on the left and right side.

We can consider "The School of Athens" as a "visualization of knowledge".