

RAPHAEL AND THE REDEFINITION OF ART IN RENAISSANCE ITALY



Raphael was one of the most important artists of the Italian Renaissance and one of the most important and influential in the entire history of art. His practice of “synthetic” or “critical” imitation became a model of creative method; his engagement with the principle of decorum revealed its deeper expressive and philosophical significance, and the operation of his workshop helped to redefine the nature of the work that artists do. Robert Williams draws upon the history of literature, philosophy, and religion, as well as upon economic history, to support his detailed and illuminating accounts of Raphael’s major works. His analyses serve as the foundation for a set of hypotheses about the aims and aspirations of Italian Renaissance art in general and the nature of art-historical inquiry.

Robert Williams is Professor of the History of Art at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He received his Ph.D. at Princeton, under the supervision of John Shearman, and is the author of *Art, Theory, and Culture in Sixteenth-Century Italy: From Techné to Metatechné* (Cambridge, 1997) and *Art Theory: An Historical Introduction*, which has been translated into Chinese and Korean. Among his recent publications is *Michael Baxandall, Vision, and the Work of Words*, co-edited with Peter Mack of the University of Warwick.

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ROBERT WILLIAMS



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To the memory of my father
Robert W. Williams
1932–2008
and my sister
Donna J. Williams
1957–2012

and should some why completely weep
my father's fingers brought her sleep:
vainly no smallest voice might cry
for he could feel the mountains grow.

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