

Guide to the tactile exploration of the Book: Raphael. The Woman with a Veil

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Introduction

The text that follows is a guide to the tactile exploration of the book "Raphael. Woman with a Veil" (in Italian "Raffaello Sanzio. La Velata") with pages in Braille and relief images. The book is published in two languages, Italian and English. The Italian texts are in the upper section of each page and end with a horizontal relief dashed line, and the English text follows in the lower part of each page. Page numbers can be found at the beginning of each language version, while numbers are in the upper left of pages that only have tactile images. Braille texts and tactile graphics in the book are printed with relief transparent ink on top of the visible texts and colour images of the painting. The complete portrait has been divided into detailed sections to enable tactile exploration. The book is in thick paper and measures 22 by 28 cm vertically positioned. The first 12 pages contain the Braille texts and the relief images and has a cover printed in the same paper. The back of the cover page has a flap with credits and the publishing information. Part 2 is the back of the first 12 pages and does not allow for tactile reading: it has large highly readable characters and close ups of some of the details of the picture, to make reading easier for partly sighted and visually impaired visitors to read more easily. Pages 1 to 3 have the introduction in Braille. Page 4 has the complete picture and the pages that follow offer a detailed study of the most interesting parts of the painting and of its position in the Pitti Palace's famous Palatine Gallery (in Italian "Galleria Palatina") with the description in Braille on the left of the page, and the relief drawing on the right. [Back to menu](#)

Cover

The cover image is the face of the Woman with a Veil (in Italian *La Velata*), a young woman wearing a veil on her head. This tactile drawing reproduces a three quarter view of the face, contoured by a large veil falling from the woman's head. The dashed line frames the drawing, as you can feel by exploring it downwards from the top. Moving downwards, you can follow the flowing veil to the neckline. Moving upwards with your fingers you will come across the oval sections of the necklace fastened around the woman's neck. Feeling it upwards towards the centre of her face, you will identify her hair with a central parting carefully gathered under the veil. To the right of the parting, a precious pendant with two rectangular-shaped stones and a pearl rests on the shock of her hair (see detailed description on pages 11 and 12). Further down a curly wisp escapes and slides down rightwards along the woman's temple. Moving fingers to the left at the end of the wisp, you will feel her carefully outlined eyebrows and eyes above. Given it is a three quarter portrait, a downward sloping line hints to her nose outlining her profile to the nostril, painted as arched trait. Further down, two undulated lines with a relief for the slightly parted lips and lastly the chin line outlines the oval of the face and joins the veil at the side of her cheeks. [Back to the menu](#)

Page 1: Index

The Index in Braille is on the page after the book cover: the upper half of the page is in Italian, the lower section beneath the dashed line in English. [Back to the menu](#)

Page 2: QR codes

A short Braille text followed by three aligned QR codes below for each language both in the Italian and English versions on this page. Each code is framed by a relief square contour. The codes link to a section of the Uffizi Gallery webpage on further details and to this guide in Italian and English. The codes to the left will link you to Raphael's biography, the centre ones to the description of the painting and the ones on the right to the tactile exploration of the book. We suggest you listen to the audio-guide before tactile exploration of the relief tables.

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Page 3: Introducing The Painting

A brief introduction in highly visible characters and in Braille. Use the QR codes on the previous page to link you to a more detailed description. [Back to the menu](#)

Page 4: The Complete Portrait

This table is the image of the complete portrait. You may start exploring from the upper part: the highest point is the tip of the woman's head covered by a veil. The surface of the veil is in relief dots, enabling you to follow the progress of the veil from top to bottom giving an idea of the space the woman's figure takes up in the portrait. Trace your way back to the tip of the head with your fingers, and then start exploring the face of the figure that you will have seen enlarged and thus

more detailed on the [cover page](#). Pass your fingers downwards until you find the hair lines, divided in two with a central parting and then you will come across a precious pendant with two gems and a pearl, described in detail on [pages 11 and 12](#). If you now move your fingers slightly downwards, you will come across the undulate line of a single wisp of hair escaping the carefully attired shock of hair and twists rightwards, along the woman's temple. Continuing and moving your fingers slightly rightwards, you will feel two curved lines, identifying the woman's ear. The other ear is not painted as it is a three quarter portrait. Slide your fingers leftwards, at the same level, you will feel the woman's eyes and nose. Further down, two relief lines design her slightly open lips. A curved line delineates the oval of her face. Position both hands to the sides of her face and you should identify two curved lines: they outline the woman's neck with an oval bead necklace half way, resting delicately on her neckline. As you follow the irregular profile of her blouse trim, at the end there are two bows (also known as "agugelli" or bows with metal points or reinforcements). Move downwards and her blouse spreads out in long regular lines that end tightening into the stiff V-necked corset. Shifting your fingers leftwards, the dots of the part of the veil to the side of the figure: here is the smooth surface of the woman's hand, and specifically her index which rests on the corset of her dress as if about to open up to indiscrete looks, you will identify the right vertical lines. Rightwards the complex play of the sleeve folds described on [pages 7 & 8](#). Undulated and markedly lines in relief illustrate the precious golden trimmings and the small curly graphic elements stand for the parts of the fabric. The sleeves end next to the dotted lower edge of the painting. Slide your fingers

towards the lower left corner of the table and feel the smooth surface of the other hand, separated by a stiff bracelet embellished by small oval precious stones. [Back to the menu](#)

Pages 5 & 6: The Palatine Gallery and the Woman with a Veil Room

These pages describe the rooms of the Pitti Palace Palatine Gallery, which has housed the painting since the nineteenth century. Page 5 has highly readable and Braille text, and illustrates the criterion used to position the paintings in the Gallery. Page 6 has a tactile table of wall in the so called Jupiter Room which houses the "Woman with a Veil". The initial exploration of the upper section of the table, starts with several lines of the stucco decorations; below the wall with seven paintings of different sizes. The relief attempts to convey the shape (square or rectangular) and the type of decorations of each painting's frames. If your fingers follow downwards you will easily find a large rectangular shape positioned horizontally. To the left, alongside the short side of the painting, there are two smaller pictures; below the base of large picture, moving your fingers from left to right, you will find a line of another four pictures. The "Woman with a Veil" is the fourth and last picture to the right, nearly on the edge of the dotted border the table. The relief does not only describe the complex decoration of the outer frame, but also the simplified profile of the woman in the painting, to make it easier to identify the masterpiece. In the lower left section, the dense dashed lines in relief represent the upholstery of an armchair with winding lines. Another comparable armchair is further to the left. [Back to the menu](#)

Pages 7 & 8: Details of the Sleeve

These pages contain the description and the tactile drawing of one of the details of the painting that has always attracted observers' attention: the sleeve of the dress. The detail is enlarged and the fact it is isolated from its background will help you understand its actual complexity.

You can start exploring it from the upper part of the sleeve: two horizontal relief lines with small dashes illustrate the trim of the golden fabric joining corset of the dress with the sleeve, also with a small gown cord illustrated by a small crescent shape dashed line. Moving your fingers downwards you will find the central part of the sleeve where thin curvy lines portray the folds of the sleeve, with small curly shaped graphic elements contoured by golden welt on both left and right, represented by small dashed stripes. Exploring further to the right, near to the dotted edge of the table, a series of thin slanted lines, describe the golden lining of the sleeve that is in a slit of the fabric. Continuing leftwards, in the lower left corner, the sleeve ends, allowing a small section of the blouse underneath to come out at the wrist. [Back to the menu](#)

Pages 9 & 10: The Jewels and their Meaning

Pages 9 & 10 have highly readable and Braille characters detailing the precious stones that make up the jewels worn by the Woman with a Veil's. Pages 11 & 12 detail the shape of the jewels and the various precious stones used. [Back to the menu](#)

Pages 11 & 12: Key and the Table of the Jewels

These pages make it possible to explore that shape and the setting of the three jewels the “Woman with a Veil” wears: the pendant on her head, the necklace and the bracelet. They are not easily identified in the painting because they are very small, as is the case of the pendant, or partly hidden as is the case of the bracelet. This is why they have been redrawn enlarged, with a front view, to make easier to explore. On page 11 you will find a Key listing the organization of the tactile page displaying the jewels and the setting of the precious stones (1- the pendant, 2- the necklace, 3- the bracelet); the precious stones of the pendant are identified with the letters of the alphabet *a*, *b* and *c*. [Back to the menu](#)