

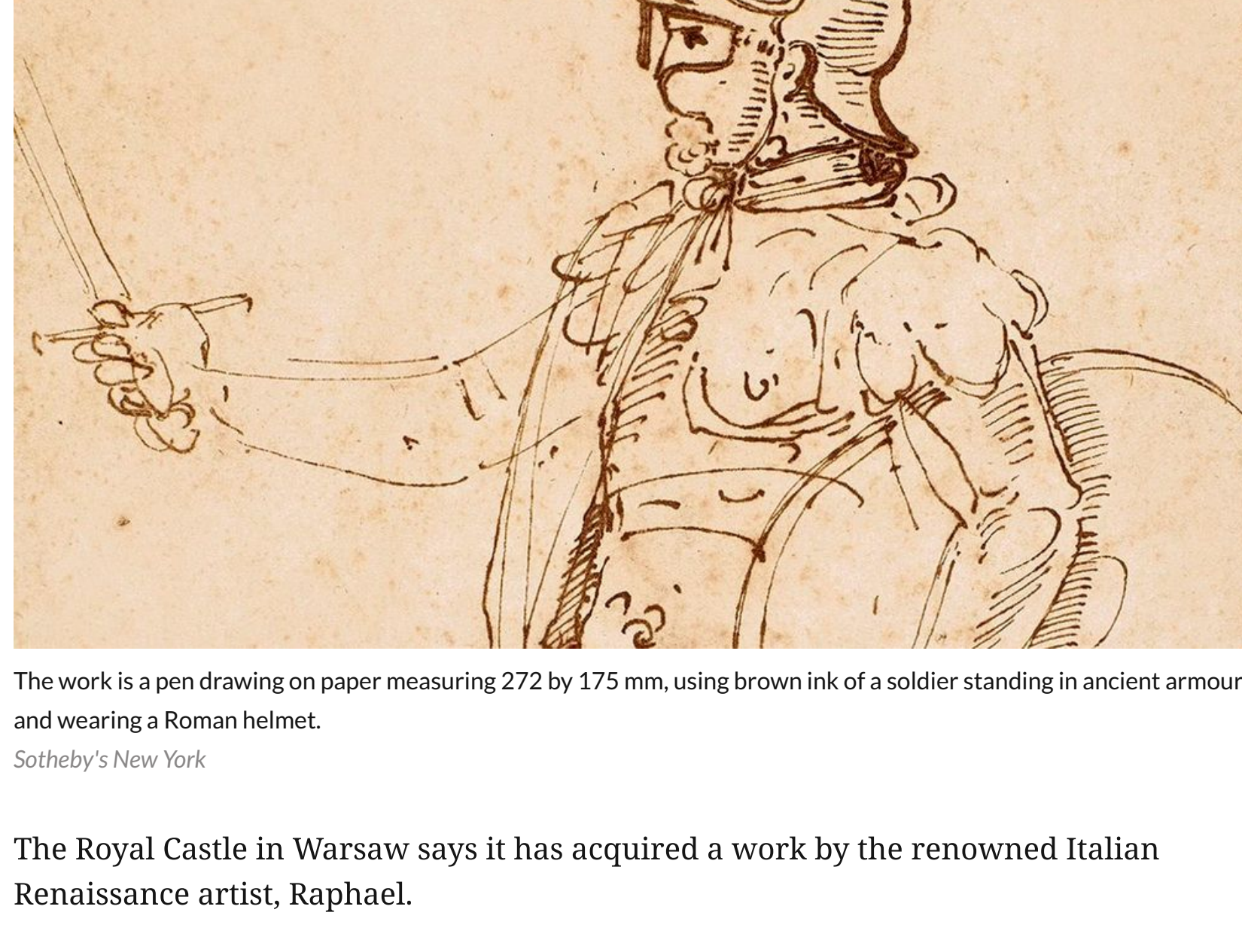
"I must have been inspired" Joseph Conrad

First Raphael in Polish collection since theft of 'Portrait of a Young Man' arrives in Warsaw

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STUART DOWELL JANUARY 08, 2024



The work is a pen drawing on paper measuring 272 by 175 mm, using brown ink of a soldier standing in ancient armour and wearing a Roman helmet. Sotheby's New York

The Royal Castle in Warsaw says it has acquired a work by the renowned Italian Renaissance artist, Raphael.

The purchase is significant as, since the wartime disappearance of Raphael's 'Portrait of a Young Man,' Poland's museum collections have been devoid of any works by the painter, who is acknowledged as one of the three most exceptional artists of the Italian Renaissance.



The drawing has not yet been shown to the public and the Royal Castle in Warsaw has also not yet revealed details of the circumstances of its purchase or how much it paid. Sotheby's New York

Director of the Royal Castle in Warsaw Professor Wojciech Falkowski said: "We purchased a drawing by Raphael, depicting a warrior."

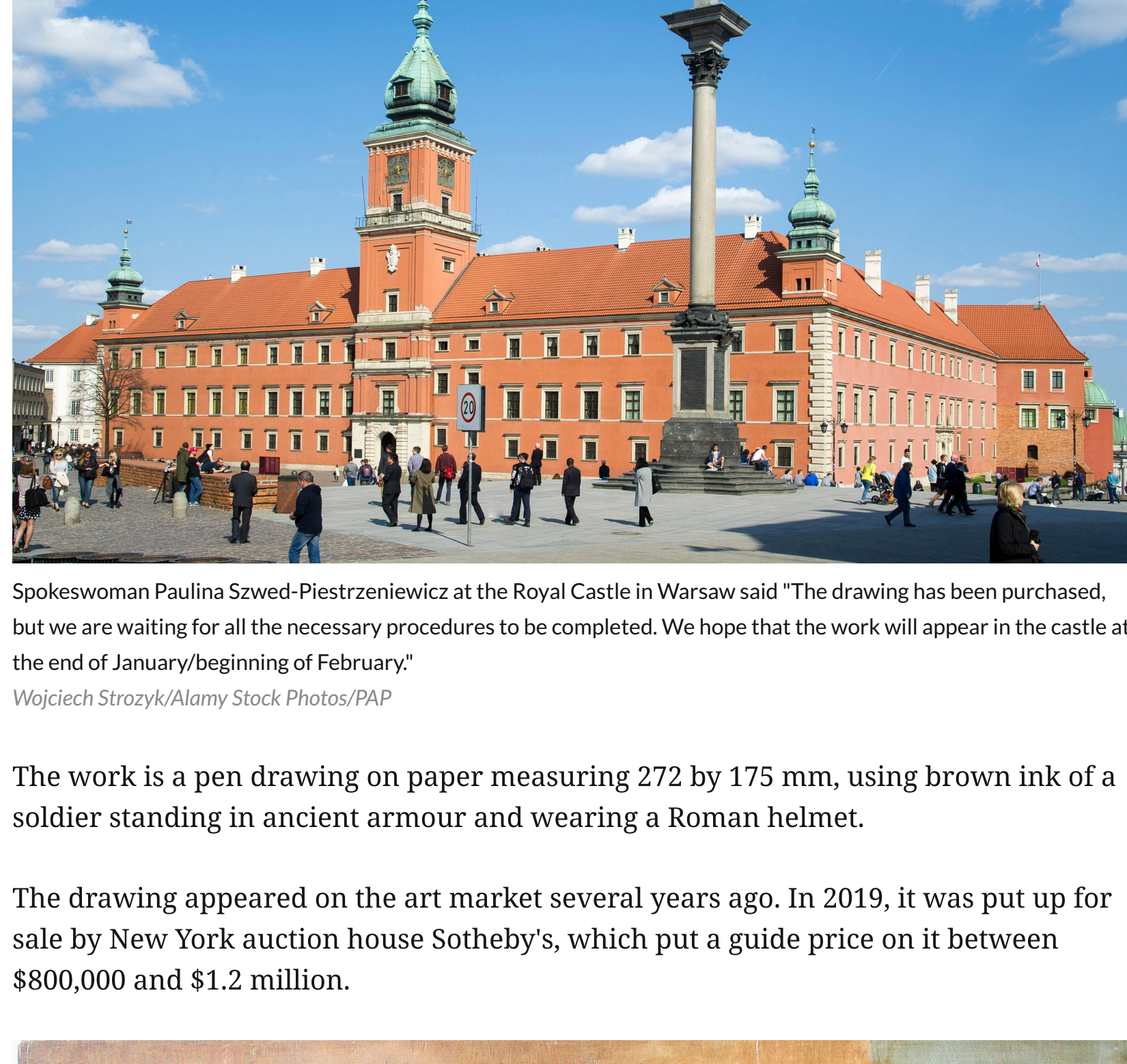
"A group of researchers has confirmed its authenticity beyond any doubt. This is the first work by Raphael in a Polish collection since the loss of "The Young Man".



The drawing appeared on the art market several years ago. In 2019, it was put up for sale by New York auction house Sotheby's, which put a guide price on it between \$800,000 and \$1.2 million. Sotheby's New York

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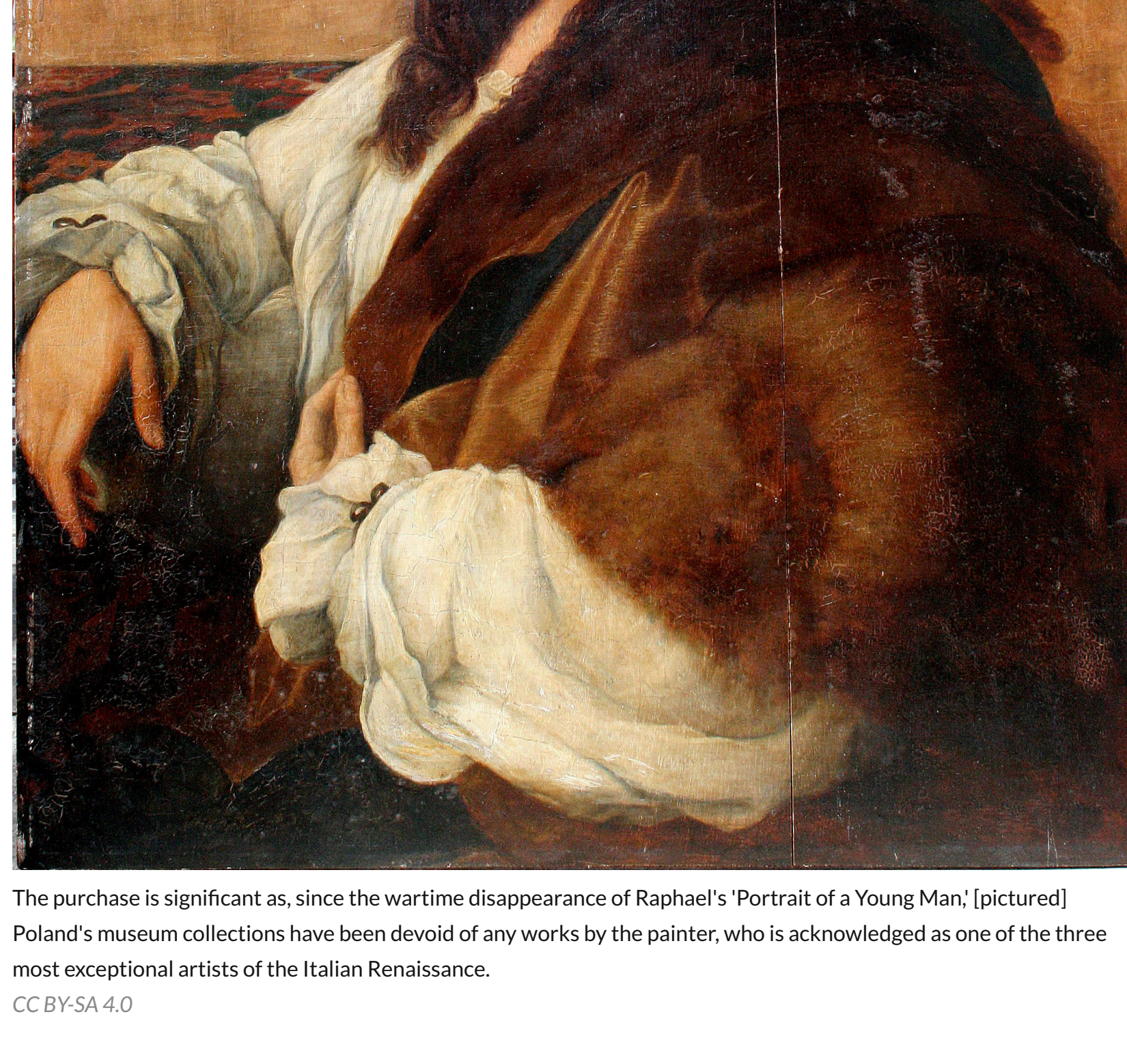
Castle spokeswoman Paulina Szwed-Piestrzeniewicz said "The drawing has been purchased, but we are waiting for all the necessary procedures to be completed. We hope that the work will appear in the castle at the end of January/beginning of February."



Spokeswoman Paulina Szwed-Piestrzeniewicz at the Royal Castle in Warsaw said "The drawing has been purchased, but we are waiting for all the necessary procedures to be completed. We hope that the work will appear in the castle at the end of January/beginning of February." Wojciech Strozysk/Alamy Stock Photos/PAP

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The purchase is significant as, since the wartime disappearance of Raphael's 'Portrait of a Young Man,' [pictured] Poland's museum collections have been devoid of any works by the painter, who is acknowledged as one of the three most exceptional artists of the Italian Renaissance. CC BY-SA 4.0

The work was considered a discovery at the time, as it had not been known or exhibited before. It belonged to the large collection of Giuseppe Vallardi (1784-1863).

The sketch will be the first work by Raphael in a Polish museum collection since the disappearance of his Portrait of a Young Man.

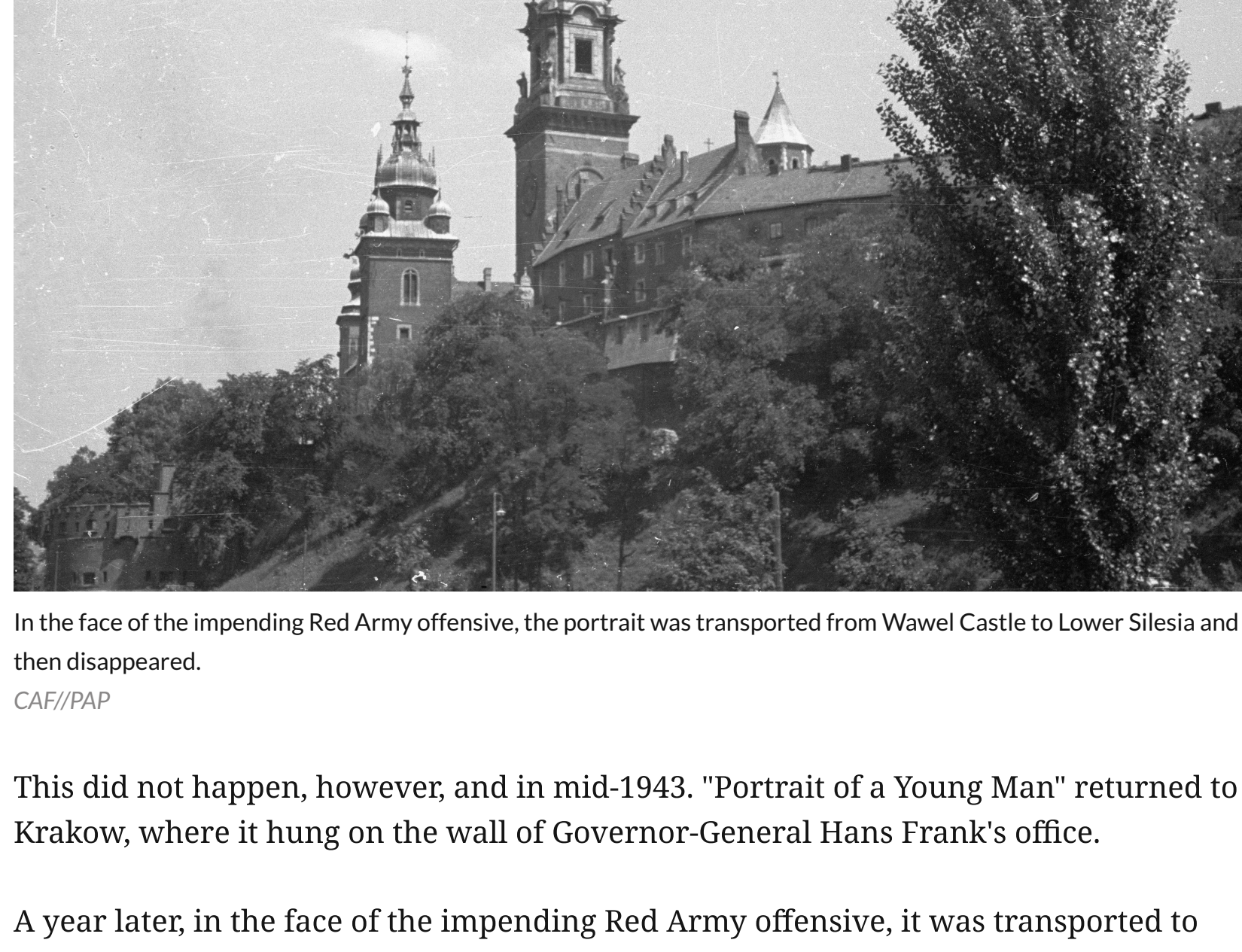
The portrait, widely believed to be of Raphael himself, is the most valuable work of art that disappeared from Polish museums during the Second World War. Since that time there have been no credible sightings of the painting.



In mid-1943, "Portrait of a Young Man" was hung on the wall of Nazi Governor-General Hans Frank's office. Bundesarchiv, Bild 121-0270 / CC-BY-SA 3.0

It belonged to the collection of the Princes Czartoryski Museum in Krakow, just like Leonardo da Vinci's "Lady with an Ermine" and Rembrandt's "Landscape with a Merciful Samaritan". Together, three works are known as the "Holy Trinity".

In Poland 1939, the Germans took it to Berlin together with other art treasures looted in Poland. They had planned to place the portrait in the Adolf Hitler Museum being created in Linz.



In the face of the impending Red Army offensive, the portrait was transported from Wawel Castle to Lower Silesia and then disappeared. CAF/PAP

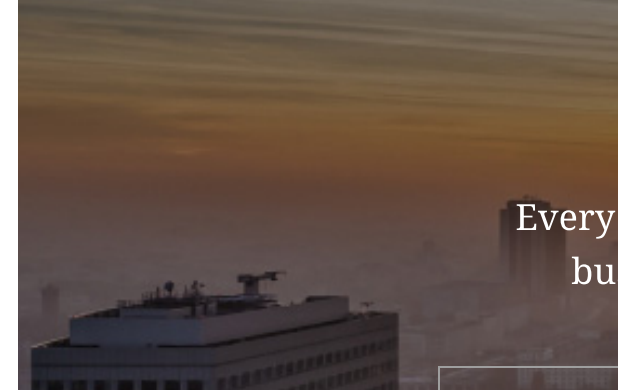
This did not happen, however, and in mid-1943, "Portrait of a Young Man" returned to Krakow, where it hung on the wall of Governor-General Hans Frank's office.

A year later, in the face of the impending Red Army offensive, it was transported to Lower Silesia. But in late 1944 and early 1945, all trace of the 'Portrait of a Young Man' disappeared. An empty frame in the Princes Czartoryski Museum remains a poignant reminder of it.

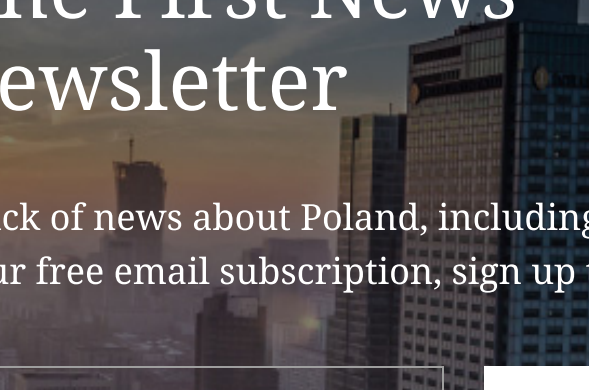
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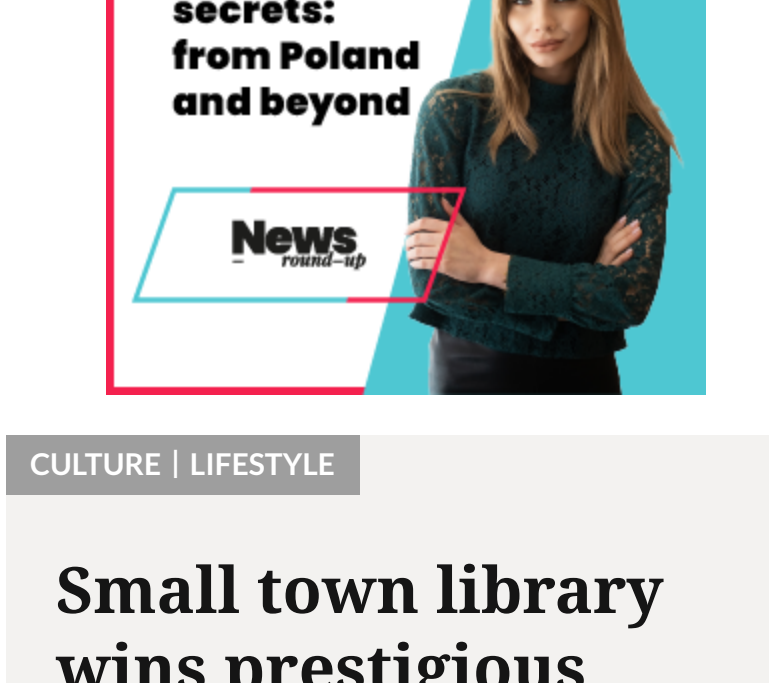
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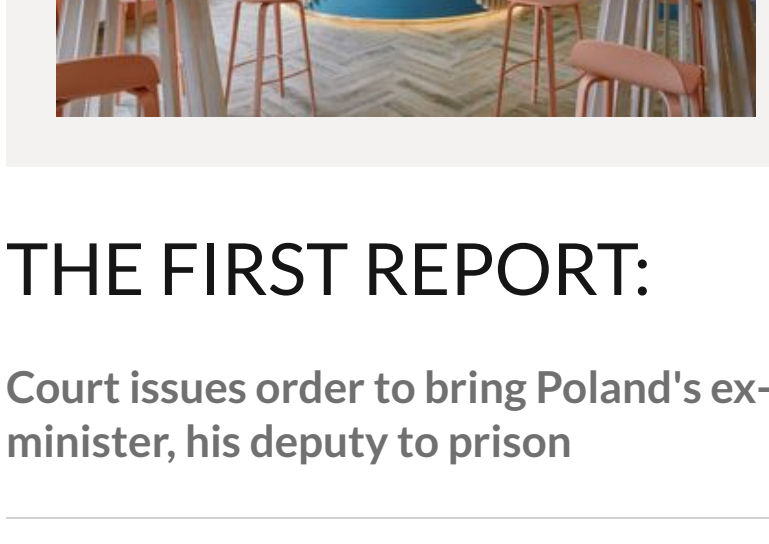
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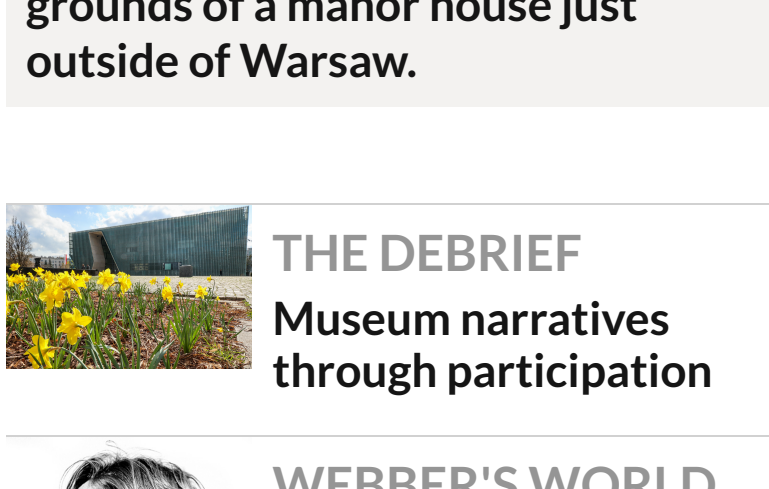
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