

IV. MICHELANGELO (1475-1564)

Biographical and background information

1. Michelangelo Buonarroti born in Caprese, a village near Florence and a center of stone cutters; apprenticed in 1488 to Ghirlandaio; studied the collection of ancient sculpture in the Medici gardens; religious spirit affected by the preaching of Savonarola and by Neoplatonic philosophy.
2. Worked chiefly in Florence and Rome, where he frescoed the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (1508-12) and painted the Last Judgment on the altar wall (1535-41); he was as well an architect of St. Peter's.
3. Michelangelo always thought of himself primarily as a sculptor, and we focus on that aspect of his art.

Selected works

4. Early sculpture
 - a. *Bacchus*, 1496-97 (marble, 6'8", including base, Bargello Museum, Florence)
 - b. *Pietà*, 1498-99 (marble, 5'9", St. Peter's, Rome)
 - c. *David*, 1501-04 (marble, 14', Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence)
 - i. Comparisons:
 1. Donatello, *David*, c. 1425-30 (bronze, 5'2 1/4", Bargello Museum, Florence)
 2. Andrea del Verrocchio, *David*, c. 1476 (bronze, 4'13 3/4", Bargello Museum, Florence)
 - d. *Saint Matthew*, c. 1504 (marble, 8'10", Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence)
5. Sistine Chapel frescoes
 - a. *Creation of Adam*, Sistine Chapel ceiling, 1508-12
 - b. *Last Judgment*, Sistine Chapel altar wall, 1534-41
6. Funerary monuments
 - a. *Tomb of Julius II*, 1505-47 (marble, installed in modified state in San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome; separate sculptures in Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence, and Louvre Museum, Paris)
 - i. *Moses*, c. 1515 (8'4", San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome)
 1. Comparison: Donatello, *St. John the Evangelist*, c. 1408-15 (marble, 6'10", Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence)
 - ii. *Dying Slave*, c. 1515 (7'1", Louvre Museum, Paris)
 - iii. *Rebellious Slave*, c. 1515 (7'6", Louvre Museum, Paris)
 - iv. *Prisoner ("Atlas")*, c. 1520-23 (9'1", Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence)
 - b. Medici tombs in the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo, Florence, 1519-34 (marble)
 - i. *Giuliano de' Medici*, *Night and Day*

- ii. *Lorenzo de' Medici, Evening and Dawn*
- 7. Late works
 - a. *Deposition* ("Florentine Pietà"), 1547-55 (marble, 7'5", Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence)
 - b. *Rondanini Pietà*, 1555-64 (marble, 6'4", Castello Sforzesco, Milan)

Readings and web resources

Primary Source Reader

Michelangelo, selected poems

Contracts for the Pietà and David

Deliberations on the installation of the David

Giorgio Vasari, from *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*: "Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti"

Readings on Butler Reserve

Ludwig Goldscheider, *Michelangelo: Paintings, Sculpture, Architecture* (London, 1953)

Howard Hibbard, *Michelangelo* (New York, 1974)

Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York, 1972), chapter 6: "The Neoplatonic Movement and Michelangelo"

Web resources

QuickTime VR 360 degree view of Medici Chapel (New Sacristy) in San Lorenzo, Florence, available from Art Humanities website

Vatican Museum collection online at

http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/MV_Home.html

Local museum resources

MMA: Study for the Libyan Sibyl on the Sistine Chapel Ceiling, c. 1508-12 (red chalk, 11.4" x 8.4", acc. no. 24.197.2, recto)