

MICHELANGELO

b. March 6, 1475

d. February 18, 1564

“The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short, but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark.”

Michelangelo is one of the greatest artists of all time. His Sistine Chapel paintings are the most magnificent art of the Roman Catholic Church.

Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni is considered one of the greatest artists of all time. His art typified the High Renaissance style with use of naturalistic light, depiction of realistic figures and emphasis on the beauty of nature. One of the true “Renaissance men,” his talent encompassed fine art, architecture and poetry. He was referred to as “Il Divino” (“The Divine One”).

Michelangelo was born in the Tuscany region of Italy. At age 13, he started an apprenticeship in Florence with Domenic Ghirlandaio, from whom he learned fresco painting.

He moved to Rome and received a commission from the French ambassador to the Holy See, the central government of the Catholic Church. In 1497, he completed one of Christendom’s most significant artworks, the “Pietà.” The lifelike marble sculpture depicts Mary cradling the body of Christ after the Crucifixion.

His colossal marble statue “David” is considered the masterpiece of High Renaissance sculpture. Completed in 1501, the sculpture is 17 feet tall and is exhibited in the Gallerie dell’Accademia in Florence.

Michelangelo was a primary architect of St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican and the sole designer of its dome. From 1508 to 1512, he painted what would become his most famous work, the ceiling frescoes of the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City. The frescoes include “The Creation of Adam,” in which God’s finger stretches out to give Adam life. These murals are considered the most magnificent and spiritual art of the Roman Catholic Church.

A lover of male beauty, Michelangelo’s lyrical poetry described his same sex-affection. He wrote:

The flesh now earth, and here my bones,
Bereft of handsome eyes, and jaunty air,
Still loyal are to him I joyed in bed,
Whom I embraced, in whom my soul now lives.

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