

Art History and Artists

Michelangelo

- **Occupation:** Sculptor, Painter, Architect
- **Born:** March 6, 1475 in Caprese, Italy
- **Died:** February 18, 1564 in Rome, Italy
- **Famous works:** *David*, the *Pieta*, and paintings on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel
- **Style/Period:** [Renaissance](#)

Biography:

Where did Michelangelo grow up?

Michelangelo Buonarroti was born in Caprese, Italy on March 6, 1475. He was still young when his family moved to Florence where Michelangelo grew up. His mother died when he was only six years old.

Growing up in Florence during the [Italian Renaissance](#) was the perfect environment for young Michelangelo. Even as a child all he wanted to do was paint and be an artist. His father, a local government official, wanted Michelangelo to go to school, but he had little interest in school. At the age of thirteen he was apprenticed to Domenico Ghirlandaio, a painter and artist.

Training to be an Artist

Michelangelo's talents became apparent as he worked for Ghirlandaio. Within a year or so he was sent to the powerful [Medici family](#) to continue his training under the sculptor Bertoldo di Giovanni. Michelangelo was able to work with some of the finest artists and philosophers of the time.

Over the next few years Michelangelo produced many sculptures including *Madonna of the Steps*, *Battle of the Centaurs*, and *Bacchus*.

The Pieta

in 1496 Michelangelo moved to Rome. A year later he received a commission to make a sculpture called the *Pieta*. It would become one of the masterpieces of [Renaissance art](#). The sculpture shows Jesus after he was crucified lying on the lap of his mother Mary. Today this sculpture sits in St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. It is the only piece of art that Michelangelo signed.



The Pieta

Statue of David

Michelangelo's fame as a great artist began to grow. He returned to Florence and received another commission to create a large statue of *David*. It took him a couple of years to finish the giant statue. The piece of marble he began with was very tall and thin. Many people didn't think he could do much with it. He worked in secrecy, not letting anyone see it until it was finished.



Michelangelo's David

David became Michelangelo's most famous work of art. It is thirteen feet tall and was the largest statue made since Ancient Rome. It is considered by many experts in art to be a near perfect sculpture. Today the statue resides at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence, Italy.

Sistine Chapel

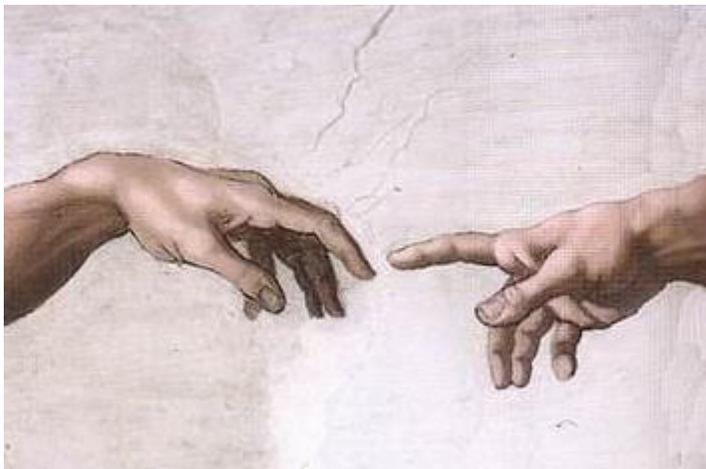
in 1505 Michelangelo returned to Rome. He was commissioned by the Pope in 1508 to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Michelangelo considered himself to be a sculptor,

but agreed to paint the Sistine Chapel for the Pope. He worked for four years, painting upside down on a scaffold in order to finish the painting. The painting was huge (141 feet long by 43 feet wide). It contained nine scenes from the Bible down its center and over 300 people.



A part of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel

The most famous of all the scenes is *The Creation of Adam*. At the center of the scene, God's hand and Adam's hand nearly touch. This is one of the most recreated scenes in all of art and, along with the *Mona Lisa*, is one of the most famous paintings in history.



The Hands of God and Adam



The Face of God

Architect

Michelangelo was a brilliant man of many talents. He also worked as an architect. In this way he was a true "Renaissance Man" along the lines of [Leonardo da Vinci](#). He worked on the Medici Chapel, the Laurentian Library, and even the military fortifications of the city of Florence. Perhaps his most famous work was St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Interesting Facts about Michelangelo

- His full name was Michelangelo di Ludovico Buonarroti Simoni.
- When he was seventeen he was hit on the nose by fellow artist Pietro Torrigiano in an argument. His nose was severely broken as can be seen in the portraits we have of Michelangelo.
- He thought that the painter Rafael convinced the Pope to have him paint the Sistine Chapel out of jealousy over his sculptures.
- He also painted *The Last Judgment*, a famous painting on the wall of the Sistine Chapel.
- No two of the 300 people painted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel look alike.
- He was also a poet who wrote over 300 poems.