

MICHELANGELO LOVE AND DEATH

A note from Executive Producer and Co-Writer Phil Grabsky

I was surprised recently to see in a poll of who is considered the greatest artist of all time that it wasn't Monet, Leonardo or Van Gogh but Michelangelo. I remember watching 'Agony & Ecstasy' as a kid and loving both the documentary start to the film (bizarre by Hollywood standards but great) and the core story of Michelangelo and Pope Julius II. But I didn't feel he was the greatest artist. Nor when I actually visited the Sistine Chapel did I feel that. The endless queues and crowds took the edge off it as, to be frank, did the overwhelming and therefore rather underwhelming paintings on the ceiling and wall – I couldn't focus, couldn't appreciate. But I also went to see the Pietá in St. Peter's. For me, that *was* one of those breath-taking moments; literally where I forget to breathe so overawed am I by the extraordinary nature of the art I am witnessing. It left me wanting, one day, to make a Michelangelo film for the cinema. That's what we have now done. This film is not based on any exhibition - we simply wanted to make a broad biographical film. To show you as much of his art as possible – and explain the whys, whens and whos.

I think I have always fallen in to the Leonardo camp when weighing up who was the greater of these Renaissance masters. But this film – directed by my good friend and colleague David Bickerstaff – gave me the opportunity to look again at familiar works like the Sistine Chapel, David, the Pietá and also lesser known works like the Crouching Boy or even the Laurentian Library and its amazing staircase. My conclusion – having worked on this film, having watched this film many times, is that, actually, maybe Michelangelo does indeed deserve to be considered the greatest artist of all time. You can make your own mind up – and certainly let us know via Facebook, Instagram or Twitter – but one thing I dare to bet on is that there will be at least one, hopefully more than one, moment where you are so stunned by the quality of his art that you might just, for a second, forget to breathe.



David (1504), Michelangelo, Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence



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RECOMMENDED READING

Love of the Artists by Jonathan Jones

MICHELANGELO: His Epic Life by Martin Gayford

Michelangelo's Note Books: The Poetry, Letters and Art of the Great Master, edited by Carolyn Vaughan

The Poetry of Michelangelo, annotated translation by James M. Saslo

Giorgio Vasari: The Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects, translated by Gaston C. De Vere

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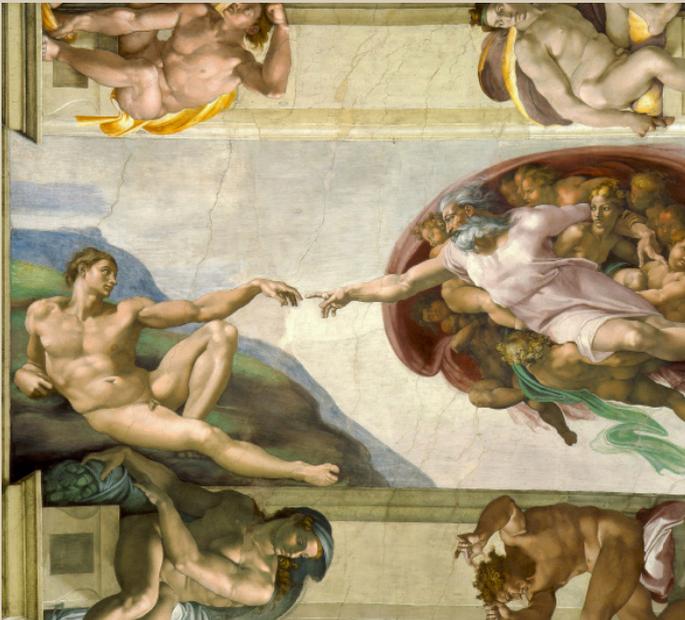
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The Creation of Adam, c.1511



FEATURED WORKS

SCULPTURE

The Madonna of the Stairs, c. 1490

Battle of the Centaurs, c. 1492

Wooden Crucifix, 1492

Bacchus, 1496-97

The Pietà, 1498-99

David Apollo, 1530

David, 1501-04

Tomb of Pope Julius II, 1505-45

Crouching Boy, 1530

PAINTINGS

The Entombment, 1500-01

Sistine Chapel ceiling, 1508-12

The Last Judgement, 1535-41

DRAWINGS

The Fall of Phaeton, c. 1533

Punishment of Tityus, 1533



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