

Pieta

Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni created the sculpture Pieta when he was only twenty four years old. This beautiful sculpture was created by a Florentine and was completed in 1499. It is considered a Renaissance sculpture and Michelangelo along with his competitor Leonardo da Vinci were considered then and now as the essence of a "renaissance man". This sculpture depicts the Virgin Mary holding her son Jesus Christ in her arms. Pieta literally translated from Italian means compassion and perhaps the idea behind the sculpture is to show Mary's compassion to her son Jesus. This sculpture is the only work ever signed by the master sculptor; he chiseled "Michaelangelus Bonarotus Florentinus Faciebat" (Michelangelo Buonarroti, Florentine Made This) across a sash on Mary's chest after another artist of the era tried to take credit for the work.

This statue was carved from a slab of marble and is currently located at St. Peters, Vatican in Rome. It is created in the Renaissance style and great attention is paid to the holy event taking place. One interesting thing about this sculpture is the Virgin's youth compared to an adult Jesus. When asked to explain this Michelangelo stated that the Virgin was so young because of her chastity. The detail is remarkable especially the anatomical details of Jesus Christ. Michelangelo seemed to capture the human form perfectly in what he would have thought Jesus would have looked like. You can make out muscle tone, ankles and even tendons in spots. The Virgin's cloak seems to be folded and creased in just the right spots to create realism. The lines are curved and are not stiff as in the art of the middle ages. Michelangelo's sculpture is full of beauty and emotion common to the Renaissance period.

The realism and beauty is what attracted me to this work. Michelangelo was the master of creating beautiful art and in my opinion no one has even come close to recreating the amount of beauty in art as Michelangelo has. Pieta's greatest aesthetic strength is its impact on the viewer. It is a spiritual piece that conveys Mary's love of her son and her love mankind. She looks at peace despite the fact that she is holding Jesus in her arms. She knows that he is the son of god, will be resurrected and will bring peace to all those who seek him. This piece has one aesthetic weakness and that is Michelangelo's signing of the Mary's sash. He did this in a moment of pride and anger when others thought someone other than him created the sculpture. Michelangelo later regretted it, and never signed another work after Pieta. The beauty and the meaning of this sculpture possess lasting value. It is a piece of art that had a lot of significance to Christians then and still does to this day. Culturally it represents the Roman Catholic Church of the period as it was commissioned by the Pope. It still over five hundred years after it was created has an important place at St. Peters in Rome.

References:

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