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Western Civilization
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Art Guide Assignment - Moses (Michelangelo)

Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni, known as Michelangelo, was an Italian Renaissance sculptor, painter, architect, and poet. Michelangelo was born on March 6th, 1475, in the Republic of Florence. His work influenced the development of Western art, specifically regarding the Renaissance conceptions of humanism. Michelangelo's mother died when he was six years old and lived with his father, a nanny, and a stonecutter. Michelangelo's father owned a marble quarry, which is where he discovered his passion for marble. At only fourteen Michelangelo was a part of a commissioned team of artists to paint the Sistine Chapel. Michelangelo went to Platonic Academy which was a humanist academy where he learned from some of the grandest artists at the time. Before the age of thirty, he sculpted the Pietà and David, two of his most well-known masterpieces. Michelangelo was one of the greatest artists of the sixteenth century, and many scholars have acclaimed him as the most accomplished artist of his time, based on the vast number of his reminiscences. Michelangelo died on February 18th, 1564, at the age of 88. Michelangelo delivered an outstanding legacy to the world.

Moses sits in the center of Pope Julius II's tomb, measuring close to eight feet or one hundred inches in height. Pope Julius II was a visionary, commissioning Michaelangelo to create a mausoleum unlike any other. The grave of Pope Julius II can be found in St. Peter's Basilica in Chains, Rome, and is a popular tourist destination. The majority of visitors come to the church solely to view Moses. Under the humanistic focus, Michaelangelo sculpted Moses. Michaelangelo, a humanist, used learning, art, and concepts from the classic period and applied them to better understand Moses. The way Michelangelo sculpted Moses, showed under the surface of the human form was out of humanism. Additionally, Michelangelo glorified Moses and showed balance and harmony which is an amazing example of humanism and the humanistic approach. To demonstrate individualism Moses was sculpted to display his human attributes, which were what he accomplished, his strength, knowledge, and leadership. Moses was created with a gigantic head and his muscularity cannot be exaggerated; Moses radiates power. Furthermore, Michelangelo designed Moses's hands and head to be larger than proportional to glorify his strength and power. Moses was not sculpted to show his religious significance, and it is nearly hard to detect his religion without context just by looking at the sculpture. Despite the fact that Moses is a religious figure, Michelangelo sculpted him in such a way that he does not appear to be a religious figure. It is seen that under the humanistic focus, Michelangelo sculpted Moses by incorporating humanism, individualism, and secularism.

Jerónimo de Estridóno who translated the Bible at the request of the Pope translated it incorrectly. In Exodus 34:29-35, It describes Moses' descent from Mount Sinai and how his head shone with light rays, however, instead he translated it as Moses had horns. Michaelangelo did not know the correct term as this was what it said in the bible at the time, the horns were not there representing a negative comment on Moses and it was not to be anti-Semitic either.