

The statue of david by michelangelo-a masterpiece

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The Renaissance was a European phenomenon in the world of art and letters, which was found operative at the beginning of the 16th century all over Europe. It was a sort of the revival of learning-a New Learning-and a renewed interest in art and letters. It had a venerable attachment to the golden literary and artistic past of classical antiquity and an enthusiastic fondness for creative, imaginative and emotive freshness. It had a tremendous impact on the European mind and quickened its liberation from medieval dogmatism and feudal tyranny.

The Renaissance brought about the liberation of human thoughts and feelings and opened a wide vista of emotional freedom, imaginative flights and philosophical speculations in the sphere of art and literature. The statue of David, made by Michelangelo between 1501 and 1504, is a masterpiece of the Renaissance art. It is a seventeen feet tall sculpture of the biblical hero David, which was a favored subject in the art of Florence. In 1501, Florence had just become independent from the Medici rule.

This statue was commissioned by the Florentine council to be a gigantic model of heroic youth which could seem to protect Florence from the aggressors. The statue of David was one of the first structures of the male nude. The statue of David was built out of a block of smooth marble purchased from the famous quarries in Cascara. It was initially commissioned to Stagnation did Disco in 1466. He did not manage to work too much on it, and the contract was later terminated.

Ten years after this, Antonio Reselling started working on it, but the contract was terminated again as no real progress was being made. The block thus

lay exposed to the elements for twenty years before Michelangelo started working on it. Although he was not very happy at having to work on a block of second-hand marble, the contract with the Guild of Wool Merchants of Florence mentioned that the block intended was "badly roughened out", stating that the block was too valuable a commodity to waste. The statue was intended to be placed on the top of the Florence Cathedral.

However, when it was finished, the beauty of the sculpture and its weight ruled out placing it at the top of the cathedral. It was too heavy to be lifted, and it was considered that people should have closer access to such a marvelous work of art. It was finally placed in the Piazza Della Signora outside the Palazzo Vecchio. Unlike the earlier sculptures of David by Verrocchio and Donatello, which showed David standing triumphant over the head of Goliath, the giant he had just slain, Michelangelo portrays David with a slingshot and stone.

He appears tense more in a mental than a physical sense, but not alarmed, and seems prepared for battle. His sling is small and not too emphasized, showing that the victory was not so much due to physical prowess as due to faith in oneself and desire to do the right thing. Michelangelo has depicted David at the moment when he showed the most courage-when he took up the challenge to fight Goliath. This decision was a crucial one, and reflected much more of his character than the moment when he finally killed Goliath.

Michelangelo shows David not as the victor, but at the point in time when he prefigured victory-the moment between conscious choice and conscious action, when he made the choice to fight Goliath to protect his people, even

though he had no armor and got ready with just a slingshot and five smooth stones. For the people of Florence, for whom freedom had been newly found and was under threat, the statue seemed to reflect the courage and determination of the brave who are determined to keep their city safe. The figure is menacing, but this is not fuelled by aggression. There is no tension in the arms or legs.

The statue is of a young but mature man with the knotted muscles of an athlete, a huge rib cage and a confident stance. It seems to be keeping watch over the city. A million visitors gather till today to see this awe-inspiring piece of work, but it was originally built with the political message of David ready to take on Goliath, symbolizing that the people of Florence were ready to face any challenge to keep their freedom. The statue's warning eyes were turned towards Rome, hoping to keep invaders at bay. The statue provides almost life-like details of the human body even though human anatomy was forbidden during this time.

Michelangelo was constrained by the second-hand marble he was using, but managed to carve a slim youth with a muscular build. His knowledge of the human form has recorded perfectly the shepherd lad with the strap of the slingshot across his back. However, on viewing the statue closely, it appears that the upper body is larger in proportion to the lower body. However, as Lois Fischer-Rather says in her book *Understanding Art*, "No longer does the figure remain still in a Classical contrapposto stance, but rather extends into the surrounding space away from a vertical axis."

This movement outward from a central core forces the viewer to take into account both the form and the space between and surrounding the forms? in order to appreciate the complete composition. " The hands also appear to be large in proportion to the body. The disproportion could probably have been due to the fact that Michelangelo had carved the statue keeping in mind that it was to be kept on the top of a cathedral. It could also be that the hands were purposely made too large to depict that man is naturally a violent and greedy creature.

When one walks around the statue of David, he would find the appearance changing dramatically. The right hand side of the statue appears calm and composed, but the left hand side is dramatically different. It is dynamic and active, as is evident from the posture of the stretched leg all the way to the disheveled hair. It could be that Michelangelo made the body parts disproportionate to achieve this effect. The eyes too vary greatly. From any given position, only one of his eyes are visible at one time.

When one approaches the statue from the left, the left eye appears to be staring at a point behind and above the viewer, as if focusing on Goliath. From this position, the right eye appears to be hidden behind the sling and is hence not visible. On approaching from the right side, the right eye is visible while the left eye disappears. David would have thrown the stone towards his left, hence the left eye moves in the direction of the body intended move. The right eye, when embodied with the rest of the body, reflects power, cunning and intelligence.

The statue of David was moved from Piazza Della Signora to Galleria
dialectical in 1873 to protect it from decay and keep it safe. A replica of the
original was placed in Piazza Della Signora. The Renaissance was the rebirth
of man's life on earth, when he was free from the shackles of authority and
free to understand the universe. Michelangelo David is the best expression of
this sense of life. David appeals to us so much as it is Michelangelo
projection of man at his very best-vigorous, healthy, dutiful, rational and
competent form.

It expresses a heroic view of man and a universal appeal to his success.
Today, when man is again viewed by intellectuals as an ugly, corrupt being,
trapped in an incomprehensible universe and lacking control over his own
destiny, man is no longer viewed as a serious subject for art. But this
magnificent sculpture of the bygone years instills in us a sense of faith, hope
and glory, and above all leads us to believe again that one man can indeed
make a difference, and man can control not only his destiny, but also that of
his clan.