

Michelangelo's creation of adam



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According to “ Ceiling.,” *The Creation of Adam* , painted by Michelangelo in 1511, is one of a series of Biblical images that illustrate important scenes from the Book of Genesis for the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Vatican, Rome. Perhaps, *The Creation of Adam* is the most famous paintings in the Sistine Ceiling today because it is the central work. Furthermore, as one of the best-known paintings in Renaissance, it is considered as the quintessential expression of Renaissance art. Therefore, this research page is an analysis of this masterpiece and compare it to another masterpiece, *The Birth of Venus* .

Located in Sistine Chapel, Vatican City, Italy, the *Creation of Adam* is the most famous section of the Sistine Chapel ceiling, which is located next to the *Creation of Eve* and the *Congregation of the Laters* (“ Ceiling.”).

Measuring roughly 10 feet by 19 feet, the painting is laid out in a rectangle and is known as the Genesis Fresco. In this scene, organic line can be seen on the body figure, tunic of God, earth, red drapery alike surrounding, angels, and God (“ Ceiling.”). The red drapery that servers as a background forms the shape of oval. Some stimulated texture can be found in the body, cloth, and scarf. This painting consists of warm and cold colors. The warm colors are red, brown, and yellow that are the background color of God and the skin tone of Adam. The cold colors are green and blue which are found on the earth and the mountain and a scarf from one of the angels.

The Principle of Organization, including balance, emphasize, unity, and line, is employed to Michelangelo's creation of Adam. The horizontal line implied by God and Adam's body figure and their hands illustrates balance.

Furthermore, using contrast colors in the background of each side, the blue

and green earth and the red drapery forms a balance in the painting.

Emphasize is achieved by the value of this painting; for example, the dark value in the background and the bright colors applied on God and Adam's skin tone form a contrast. Unity is achieved by similarity that the skin tone, the body figure, and figure proportion of God and Adam are almost the same. Beside that, the body figures and the hands of God and Adam form a implied line.

As a religious history painting, this Fresco painting portrays the very moment when God on the right is about to give life to the first on earth, Adam on the left. The two main characters are set in contrast. God is depicted as an elderly man with grey hair and a long beard, but he is muscular and well-formed. He is inside a floating nebulous form made up of drapery and other figures. He wears only a milky color tunic which leaves much of his arms and legs exposed, which is different from his traditional image. On the other side, Adam is a muscular, well-formed man but looks slightly lethargic. Both God and Adam are extending their hands, but the two hands are so close and do not quite connect, which creates tension and anticipation. More importantly, viewers can feel the spark of life coming from God's outstretched fingertip and passing to Adam, which is a masterstroke of this masterpiece.

As mentioned in "A Reflection and Analysis on the 'Creation of Adam' Sistine Chapel Fresco" by Roger Porter, Adam's response to God's touch represents that not only Adam but also all mankind receive life from God, which symbolized the birth of the human race. Furthermore, Adam's body forms a concave shape which echoes the form of God's body, which is in a convex posture inside the nebulous, floating form. This correspondence of <https://assignbuster.com/michelangelos-creation-of-adam/>

one form to the other reflect the idea that God created Man in his image and likeness (Porter). There are some claims about the figures and shapes surrounding the figure of God are similar to an exact drawing of the human brain. The frontal lobe, brain stem, and pituitary gland are detectable along with other parts of the brain (Porter). Also, the red cloth around God is alike the shape of a human uterus, and the green scarf signifies a newly cut umbilical cord, which might explain why Adam has a navel since he was supposed to be created by God (Porter).

This masterpiece not only has an important cultural meaning but also illustrates how the theory of anatomy greatly affected the development of art. As reported by Rzepińska, in the time of Michelangelo, he was commissioned by Pope Julius II to paint a series of ceiling frescos for the Sistine Chapel. As stated in “Biblical Concepts and Our World,” many people in that period could not read because only nobles were able to study; therefore, this series of paintings offered opportunities to these people to have a chance to understand more about the Bible since each Michelangelo's paintings is worth a thousand words. Furthermore, these paintings were a greatest gift to the Sistine Chapel. Michelangelo carried out numerous dissections of corpses that inspired him to hide an entire treatise on internal anatomy in this paintings, such as the human brain in the painting (Porter). This most admired works in the history of art has been the primary resource that inspires and benefits many artists to study anatomy and apply it to their drawings.

Michelangelo's Creation of Adam and Botticelli's Birth of Venus are an interesting topic to discuss the development of art. According to “The birth
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of Venus," *The Birth of Venus*, painted by Sandro Botticelli in 1480, is laid out in a rectangle, measuring roughly 10 feet by 19 feet. The medium of this painting is known as tempera ("The birth of Venus"). The painting was taken from the writings of the ancient poet, Homer and depicts the goddess Venus arrives at the shore after she was born. On the left, the figure of Zephyrus carries the nymph Chloris as he blows the wind to guide Venus. On the right, the Hora of Spring is about to hold out a rich dress to cover Venus when she reaches the shore. Obviously, the focal point of this painting is Venus, and she is slightly to the right of center and is isolated against the background, which is similar to the composition of Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*. Both focal points are in the center, and some figures are set in contrast to guide viewer's eye to focal points. Furthermore, the painting *Venus* consists of warm and cold colors; similarly, the cold colors are applied to the background while the warmer colors are used mainly in the figures, which makes it easier to see the figures' forms against the background.

The contrasts between these two masterpieces are also obvious. One of the visual components in both paintings, the poses, are two completely different styles although both artists applied the knowledge of anatomy. For the modeling of the figure, Botticelli turned to an Aphrodite statue, the Aphrodite of Cnidos, so his figures emphasize the rhythm and smoothness ("The birth of Venus"). However, Venus's body is anatomically improbable, such as her elongated neck. Furthermore, her pose is impossible because her weight is shifted too far over the left leg, which is impossible for her to balance herself. As we know, Michelangelo was, after all, a sculptor, and painting was not his primary area. Therefore, Michelangelo's paintings focus more on

the anatomy and empathize the form of the muscles, which is primary difference between Botticelli and Michelangelo's paintings.

There are four main reason that I selected this piece. First of all, Michelangelo is one of the most remarkable artists and sculptors, and his capabilities were also brilliant since he was able to complete this impossible commission in four years. Secondly, this painting is a landmark that consists the greatest artist's first-hand knowledge of human anatomy and a confidence in the artist's imaginative power. Furthermore, the cultural background and stories behind this paintings are another reason that I chose this piece. Lastly, the techniques and knowledges in this piece are the subjects that I always want to learn.

The Creation of Adam depicts a remarkable fresco painting forming an integral part of the Sistine Chapel ceiling and has become synonymous with the word “ masterpiece.” It illustrates the Biblical section of God giving life to Adam. The near-touching image of the outstretched hands of God and Adam has become the iconic of humanity. Michelangelo's knowledge of human anatomy is completely shown in the piece. *The Creation of Adam* assists the development of theological analytical skills within the context of the arts applying to individuals and communities, in the past, present, and future. The comparisons and the contrasts between *The Creation of Adam* and *The Brith of Venus* offer an insight into the development of art. Michelangelo, his masterpiece, his story, his knowledge and techniques, are the primary reasons that I chose to analyze this incredible artwork.

Works Cited

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