



David

Michelangelo Buonarroti

1504

Marble Sculpture

Galleria dell' Accademia, Florence.

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564) was a Florentine Sculptor, painter, poet, and architect. Based in Florence he started out as painter at the age of thirteen, apprenticed to Domenico Ghirlandaio, the leading fresco wall painter in Florence. But eventually his ambitions led to sculpture. Michelangelo had an ideal based on the physical expressiveness of the male nude.¹

Michelangelo sculpted in a Naturalistic style, its main characteristic being the depiction of subjects in a realistic manner. His sculptures, like David, often depict the mastery of anatomy; this can be shown by the structure of every muscle and sinew in the sculptures. For David, Michelangelo had taken up the theme Donatello and Andrea del Verrocchio had used successfully in their David sculptures; Michelangelo's version was from a political point of view.²

David is the largest free standing marble statue since classical times. The narrative derived about this sculpture speaks of the shepherd boy who defeated the giant Goliath. Michelangelo has transformed David into an ancient hero of unrivaled grace and beauty. Interestingly David's sling is barely visible which may tell us his strength is derived from

¹ Alison Cole. (1994). *The Renaissance*. London: Dorling Kindersley Limited.

² Christin J. Mamiya, & Fred S. Kleiner. (2005). *Gardners Art Through The Ages, Twelfth Edition*. USA: Wadsworth / Thompson learning.

his moral courage. The hands of David also are shown exceptionally large signifying a sense of power. David stood as a symbol of Florence's supremacy.³

David was constructed in 1501 but not completed until 1504, and towered over the people at the entrance to the Palazzo Vecchio. Now it stands at the Galleria dell' Accademia, Florence. This sculpture was an influence to other sculptor's of the Renaissance because of how Michelangelo pushed the boundaries and artistic ideals of his generation to their physical and stylistic extremes.

David is a large sculpture, measuring 13' 5" high, and is a sculpture of marble. Michelangelo's sculptures were often larger than life.⁴

[300 words]

³ Alison Cole. (1994). *The Renaissance*. London: Dorling Kindersley Limited.

⁴ Christin J. Mamiya, & Fred S. Kleiner. (2005). *Gardners Art Through The Ages, Twelfth Edition*. USA: Wadsworth / Thompson learning.