



Michelangelo Buonarroti(1475–1564)
The Risen Christ, c.1532
 Black chalk

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Michelangelo was primarily responsible for reviving the tradition in post-classical art that conceives of the body (and especially the male nude) as the physical manifestation of emotional and spiritual states. A lot of his figures are very heavy but this one – the risen Christ – seems to spring athletically from the tomb: his limbs cover the whole composition and, with a small head, the eye focuses on the torso.

Michelangelo used tiny stippled strokes of chalk to build up the body, which stands out in the implied relief from the plane of the paper, emphasised by the flattened decorative swirl of the shroud.

The care taken in doing this drawing suggests that it was probably meant to be a final work rather than part of a plan for something else.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

A painter on panel and in fresco, a sculptor, architect, and poet, Michelangelo Buonarroti was the first artist recognized by contemporaries as a genius. He was born in Florence in 1475 and trained first as a painter with Domenico Ghirlandaio and then as a sculptor under the patronage of Lorenzo de' Medici.

In 1496, Michelangelo went to Rome where he carved the *Pietà* for St. Peter's. The theme of the dead Christ recurs throughout his work, and is the subject of his early *Entombment*.

Back in Florence in 1501, he began work on many sculptural and painterly projects, most of which were left unfinished in 1505 when he was summoned to Rome to begin work on a sculpted tomb for Pope Julius II.

From 1508 to 1512, he painted the vault of the Sistine Chapel with scenes from the Old Testament. Immediately celebrated, the Sistine Chapel ceiling, with its innumerable figures in complex, twisting poses and its exuberant use of colour, is the chief source of the Mannerist style.

STUDENT FOCUS QUESTIONS

- How has Michelangelo suggested movement in this drawing?
- This work is considered to be a 'presentation drawing' – a complete work of art. Why do you think this might be the case?
- How have the proportions of the body been used to focus the viewer?

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

<http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/michelangelo/>

<http://www.michelangelo.com/buonarroti.html>

<http://www.michelangelo.com/buon/bio-index2.html>