

## Michelangelo

spent many long years in Florence and left an immense legacy of artworks, as well as many others that

he produced elsewhere and were brought here later. This pamphlet is a little invitation to go “beyond the David” and discover these masterpieces and the famous, or less known but splendid settings where they are found.

### MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI 1475-1564

The Buonarroti family had its roots in Florence and lived on the Santa Croce district. Michelangelo himself was born at Caprese, near Arezzo, where his father was the “podestà” or chief magistrate. The family moved back to Florence shortly after the boy's birth. When he was thirteen he was apprenticed to Ghirlandajo's flourishing workshop (scholars have

said that he worked on the choir frescoes in the church of Santa Maria Novella), and studied the great masters of Tuscan painting, Giotto and Masaccio. Shortly thereafter he entered what was known as the Garden of San Marco: an academy founded by Lorenzo the Magnificent and directed by one of Donatello's pupils (Bertoldo di Giovanni), where ancient sculptures were kept partly for teaching purposes. Lorenzo the Magnificent quickly recognized the young

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[www.uffizi.firenze.it](http://www.uffizi.firenze.it)

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### 1 MADONNA OF THE STAIRS

Michelangelo carved this bas-relief of the *Virgin and Child* against a background of steep stairs (hence the name) when he was 15 and was attending the garden of San Marco. Even though it reveals explicit references to Donatello, especially the staccato or “flattened” style, the sculpture clearly heralds the artist's new, revolutionary language.

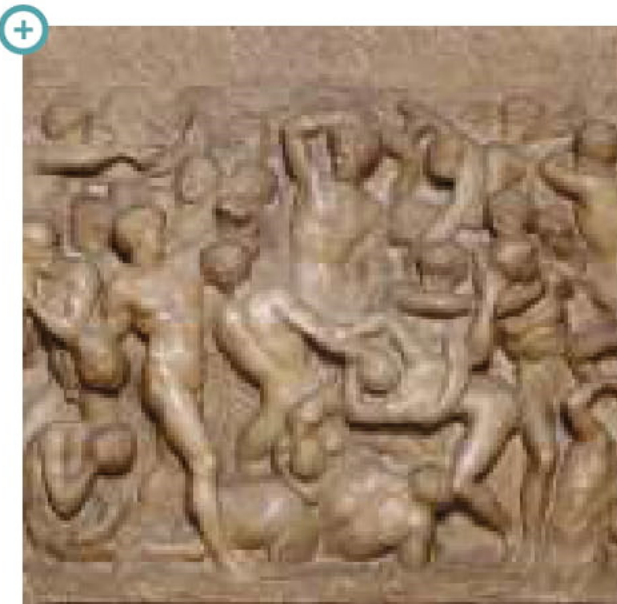
### 1 CASA BUONARROTI MUSEUM

**Via Ghibellina 70**  
**tel. 055 241752**  
This building is actually the result of a seventeenth century “merger” of three houses that Michelangelo had purchased some time around 1510 (and he had lived in one of them for several years). It was his great-grandson, Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger (1568-1647), who made decorate the rooms with scenes celebrating the glories of the “divine artist” and his family, making it something of a “shrine to his memory”. In addition to being the permanent home of a large collection of letters, models (including the wooden model for the façade of San Lorenzo and of the *River God*) and original drawings, which are displayed on a rotating basis, the museum periodically hosts exhibits focusing on Michelangelo's world, his life and the family's collections.

[www.casabuonarroti.it](http://www.casabuonarroti.it)

### 2 THE BATTLE OF THE CENTAURS

This sculpture also dates from Michelangelo's youth and it was Agnolo Poliziano, the famous poet of the Medici entourage, who suggested the subject. Based on an episode from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, it portrays a lively melee of “heroic nudes” in a great variety of poses and expressions. Michelangelo drew the inspiration for this test of skill from antique sarcophagi depicting similar themes.



### CRUCIFIX

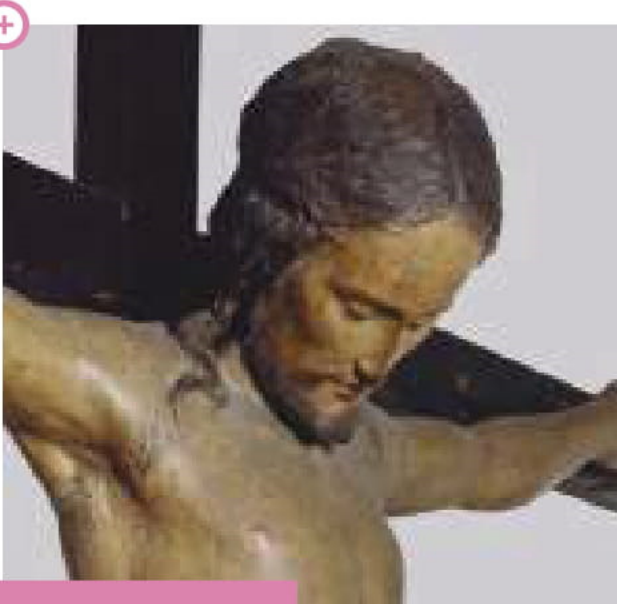
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Michelangelo's talents and took him to live in his palace on Via Larga (that is now known as Palazzo Medici-Riccardi, where Michelangelo would later design the “kneeling windows” to enclose the loggia designed by Michelozzo). In the Medici palace the young artist was exposed to the humanistic environment of the Medici cultural circle (Poliziano, Ficino, Pico della Mirandola), and this had a great impact on his development. It was in this context that he carved his earliest masterpieces.

### 2 CHURCH OF SANTO SPIRITO

**Piazza S. Spirito**  
**tel. 055 210030**  
The distinctive façade of the church is the backdrop for the lively, typically Florentine piazza of the same name. The church, that also houses works by Perugino, Filippo Lippi and Andrea Sansovino, was designed by Brunelleschi (1432) and can be considered the apex of his artistic career. Michelangelo's crucifix is in the sacristy designed by Giuliano da Sangallo.

[www.santo-spirito.it](http://www.santo-spirito.it)



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the *Battle of the Centaurs* and the *Madonna of the Stairs*, both of which are conserved in the Casa Buonarroti Museum. Shortly thereafter he carved the wooden *Crucifix* for the Prior of Santo Spirito, following the death of his first patron, Lorenzo the Magnificent, and perhaps partly because of it, Michelangelo embarked on a series of travels that would take him to Rome (1498). There, contact with the classical world had an

### PITTI TONDO

Michelangelo carved this round, marble bas-relief for Bartolomeo Pitti around 1505. It is contemporary to his other “tondi” (*the Doni Tondo* in the Uffizi and the *Taddei Tondo* in London). The Virgin Mary, with her intent expression, seems to herald one of the Sibyls in the Sistine Chapel; in the unfinished background we can see the figure of the Young Saint John.



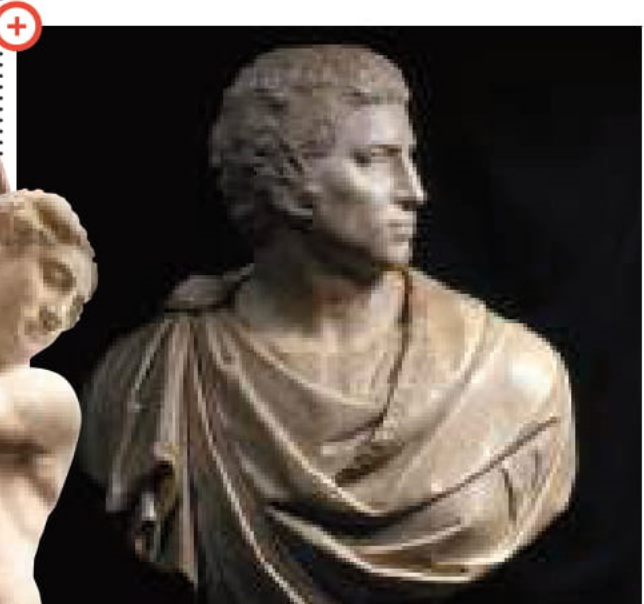
### DAVID/APOLLO

The dual name of this statue is due to the uncertainties in the interpretation of the subject. At the end of the siege of 1530 (that sanctioned the return of the Medici to Florence) Michelangelo was practically forced to carve this statue for Baccio Valori, papal governor of Florence as a condition to regain the favour of the Medici.

[www.uffizi.firenze.it](http://www.uffizi.firenze.it)

### BRUTUS

This bust, clearly inspired by classical statuary, was carved in Rome around 1540 on the advice of Donato Giannotti, a Florentine who had been exiled to Rome and with whom Michelangelo shared his republican ideals. According to some hypothesis this statue would be a portrait of Lorenzino de' Medici (the “Lorenzaccio” who killed the Duke Alessandro de' Medici in 1537), and a tribute to the man who did away with the tyrant.



### BARGELLO MUSEUM

**Via del Proconsolo 4**  
**Tel. 055 2388606**  
This museum is located in the former Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo (XIII century), and it is one of the major sculpture museums in Italy. It conserves works by the greatest artists starting from the fifteenth century: from Donatello (two statues of *David*, *Saint George* and the *Marzocco*) of the Della Robbia family, from Ghiberti and Brunelleschi (the two panels of famous competition, held in 1401, for the doors of the Baptistery) to Verrocchio, from Cellini to Giambologna to Bernini. A rich and very fine grouping of weapons, small bronzes, majolica items, ivory completes the museum's collection.

[www.uffizi.firenze.it](http://www.uffizi.firenze.it)



### BACCHUS

This statue, commissioned by Cardinal Riario in 1496, dates from Michelangelo's first stay in Rome. It reveals an extraordinary emulation, and reinterpretation, of classical sculpture. The god of wine, unsteady on his feet, is raising a goblet, while a little satyr is stealing a bunch of grapes. The naturalistic treatment of the shapes and details is astonishing. Francesco I de' Medici purchased the statue and had it placed in the Uffizi Gallery.

important influence on his future works. He obtained important commissions from cardinals such as the classical *Bacchus*, that is now in the Bargello Museum, and the famous *Pietà* in Saint Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. During this period he also made the first of many trips to the marble quarries at Carrara to choose the material for his statues. In 1501, back in Florence, within a few years he created two of his greatest masterpieces: the *David* in the Academy Gallery and the



### DAVID

This statue was originally commissioned by the Opera del Duomo in 1501 and was completed three years later. Out of a block of marble that another artist had begun carving and abandoned, Michelangelo created a revolutionary interpretation of the biblical hero as well as the archetype of the Renaissance ideal of beauty. The statue, immediately rechristened as “the giant” was placed in front of the Palazzo Vecchio in Piazza della Signoria and became the symbol of the proud Florentine Republic. The original was moved to this museum in 1873.

*Doni Tondo*, a painting in the Uffizi Gallery, as well as the *Pitti Tondo* in the Bargello and the *Saint Matthew* in the Academy Gallery. It was during this period, that was also the era of the first Florentine Republic (1494-1512), that Michelangelo came into contact with Leonardo da Vinci. The two artists were commissioned to paint two grandiose frescoes in the Sala del Gran Consiglio in Palazzo Vecchio. Neither of these frescoes have



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The official Tourism website of the City & Metropolitan Area of Florence  
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[www.firenzeturismo.it](http://www.firenzeturismo.it)

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turismo3@comune.fi.it

Via Cavour 1 r  
+39 055 290832  
infoturismo@provincia.fi.it

Aeroporto A. Vespucci  
+39 055 315874



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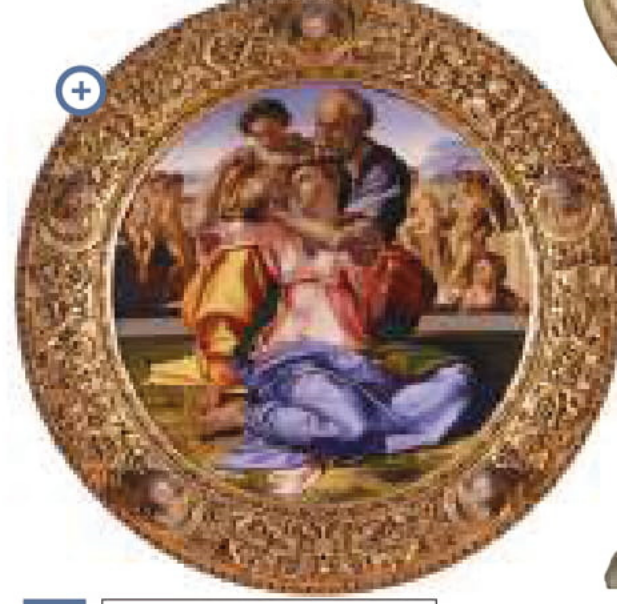
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### 5 DONI TONDO

This painting, the only by Michelangelo in Florence, was done for the marriage of Agnolo Doni and Maddalena Strozzi, shortly before he embarked on the frescoes of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and we can see the same rich, bright Mannerist colors and style. The Holy Family is portrayed against a background with nudes, probably allusions to the pagan world, with the Young Saint John in a significant intermediate position.



### 5 UFFIZI GALLERY

**Piazzale degli Uffizi**  
**tel. 055 2388651**  
This is one of the most important museums in the world. It offers an extraordinary overview of Italian and European painting

from the XIII to the XVIII century. The museum's many rooms that open onto the splendid corridor that is decorated with paintings and ancient statuary, house over 1,600 works arranged by school and chronology. The museum was established in the middle of the sixteenth century with the Medici collections as its core, and then over the years was profoundly changed and enriched. The Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe (that has many drawings by Michelangelo) and the Vasari Corridor, with its amazing collection of self-portraits, linking the Uffizi to Palazzo Pitti complete the amazing museum offer of the Uffizi.

[www.uffizi.firenze.it](http://www.uffizi.firenze.it)

### 6 VICTORY

This allegorical statue stands in the Salone de' Cinquecento, the same room (then known as the Sala del Gran Consiglio) where Michelangelo was to have painted the *Battle of Cascina* – as the companion fresco to another battle scene by Leonardo. This statue, that has more than a few similarities to the *David*, was carved for one of the many versions of the tomb of Pope Julius II in Rome.

### 6 PALAZZO VECCHIO MUSEUM

**Piazza della Signoria**  
**tel. 055 2768325**  
This monument and symbol of the city was designed by Arnolfo di Cambio at the end of the 1200s, and is still the seat

of the city government. With the advent of Cosimo I de' Medici, who chose it as his residence (1540) a project was launched to decorate the interior – Vasari and his pupils centered the design on a celebration of the Medici House. In the oldest part of the building, where there are still decorations dating from the republican period, we can admire masterpieces such as *Judith and Holofernes* by Donatello and the *Puttino* by Verrocchio. You can also visit the Archaeological area (remains of the Roman Theatre) and climb the tower (great museum offer of the Uffizi).

[museiciviciflorentini.comune.fi.it](http://museiciviciflorentini.comune.fi.it)

### 7 THE SAN LORENZO COMPLEX

Is a group of monuments (1) the Basilica, (2) the Laurentian Library and (3) the Medici Chapels all erected around the site of the church and under the patronage of the Medici family. The original church of San Lorenzo dates from 393 A.D., and it was Brunelleschi who designed the splendid Renaissance interior (including the “Old Sacristy” which is the first nucleus of the Medici mausoleum). Here we can admire works by Donatello, Verrocchio, Filippo Lippi and Rosso Fiorentino. Michelangelo's wooden model for the façade that was never built – so the church still has its original rough stone exterior – is in the Casa Buonarroti Museum.

### MEDICI CHAPELS

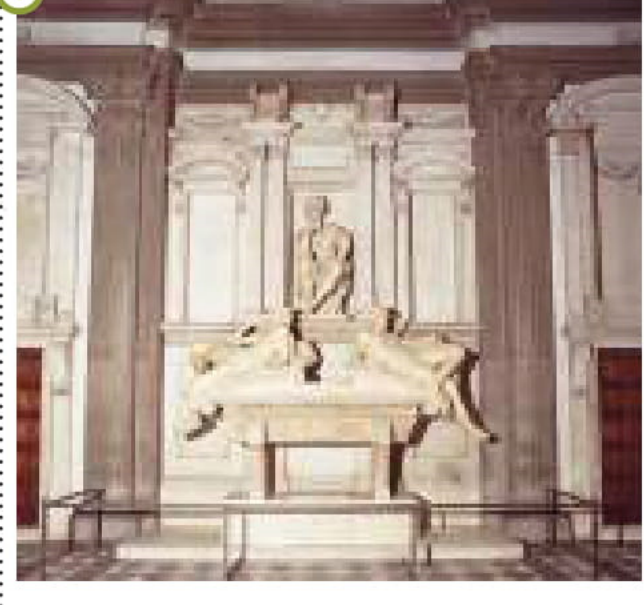
This is the dynasty's mausoleum and comprises several clearly separate areas: from the dark crypt one can reach the majestic Chapel of the Princes (built between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and sumptuously clad with semiprecious stone inlays by the famous *Opificio delle Pietre Dure*), that houses the tombs of the Medici Grand Dukes and leads into Michelangelo's Medici Chapel, also known as New Sacristy.

[www.uffizi.firenze.it](http://www.uffizi.firenze.it)

had also been active in the second Florentine Republic, he served as superintendent of the city's military fortifications (after long resistance the city capitulated to the imperial siege in 1530, and the emperor sanctioned the return of the Medici). The *David-Apollo* now in the Bargello dates from this period. In 1534 Michelangelo departed – this time definitively – for Rome where other great projects

### NEW SACRISTY

It is new in relation to the “old” sacristy designed by Brunelleschi on the opposite side of the transept of the Basilica of San Lorenzo. This extraordinary room, a sublime blend of sculpture and architecture, is particularly rich in symbolism. Michelangelo worked on it for 14 years during the period that coincided with the dramatic events of the siege of 1530. The tombs of Giuliano Duke of Nemours and Lorenzo Duke of Urbino (with their famous allegorical statues of *Day* and *Night*, *Dusk* and *Dawn*)



respectively) are completed. On the unfinished tomb of Lorenzo the Magnificent and Giuliano de' Medici, between the patron saints of the Medici dynasty (carved by pupils) is the sublime *Madonna and Child* by the master's hand.

were waiting: the *Last Judgment* in the *Sistine Chapel* (where more than in any other of his works he revealed a profound, and tormented religious spirit), the final version of the tomb of Julius II in the church of San Pietro in Vincoli (this project had been considerably downsized with respect to the original plans and includes the famous statue of *Moses*) and his final, great architectural achievement, the dome of Saint Peter's Basilica. His last two sculptures were

### LAURENTIAN LIBRARY

This collection of books, manuscripts and parchments, begun by Cosimo the Elder de' Medici with the assistance of renowned humanists is the only one of its kind in the world. In 1523 the Medici pope, Clement VII, commissioned Michelangelo to design the library, and he continued monitoring the work even after his definitive departure for Rome in 1534. The magnificent vestibule, “sculpted architecture”, is dominated by the tripartite staircase that leads into the main room – the reading room – which



was entirely decorated (from the walls to the design of the desks) according to precise instructions from the master. It is reachable through the main cloister of the Basilica.

[www.bml.firenze.sbn.it](http://www.bml.firenze.sbn.it)

the “Bandini” *Pietà* in the Opera del Duomo Museum and the “*Randanini Pietà*” (in Milan) that he was working on shortly before his death in 1564 at the age of 89. His body was brought back to Florence shortly after his death. After a lavish funeral Michelangelo was buried in the Basilica of Santa Croce, where a few years later the funeral monument designed by Vasari was erected.

### PIETÀ

This is a masterpiece of great dramatic intensity. Originally conceived for his own funerary monument in the church Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, the elderly artist carved the statue around 1550. Then, unsatisfied, he damaged it himself and it was restored and completed by one of his pupils. At the apex of the pyramidal composition is Nicodemus (that is actually a self-portrait) holding and contemplating the body of the dead Christ.



### 8 OPERA DEL DUOMO MUSEUM

**Piazza Duomo 9**  
**Tel. 055 230885**  
This museum features a group of important, original masterpieces that relate to the history of

the cathedral. From the sculptures for the original façade by Arnolfo di Cambio, to the choirs by Luca della Robbia and Donatello (as well as the latter's *Magdalena* and the *Prophets* carved for the bell tower) to Ghiberti's panels from the *Door of Paradise* of the Baptistery. Other sections of the museum are dedicated to reliquaries and Brunelleschi's dome.

[www.operaduomo.firenze.it](http://www.operaduomo.firenze.it)

# Michelangelo

in Florence

His works in his city

