

Renaissance Art

1: Medieval Art

In the Middle Ages, the period before the Renaissance, most art in Europe featured heavenly figures devoted to the worship of Christ. Because the people in Medieval paintings were citizens of heaven and the artists painting these pictures had never actually seen heaven, the background was left to the imagination and the teachings of the church. Gold backgrounds were very common, as the air in heaven surely must be precious.

During the Middle Ages, saints in paintings wore halos around their heads. Artists also used *hieratic scale* in paintings during the Middle Ages, making saints or members of the family of God larger in scale than ordinary or less important figures.

General characteristics of Medieval Art:

- Flat and lifeless
- Cartoon-like in color and form
- Religious theme



Vocabulary:

hieratic scale: representing the sizes of things according to their importance, rather than how they would appear in the real world.

2: Renaissance Art

At the start of the 14th century, Europeans became less interested in thinking about God, heaven and the saints, and more interested in thinking about themselves and their everyday lives. Part of this change was influenced by the study of ancient Greek and Roman writings on science, government, philosophy, and art. When scholars began to study these writings, their interests turned away from traditional areas of study such as religion, medicine and the law. People now studied mathematics, engineering, and architecture. Artists, writers, musicians and composers began creating work outside of the church.

The rise of Humanism can be seen in paintings created by Renaissance artists. As Humanism became more popular during the Renaissance, ordinary people grew to be the same size as saints in paintings and saints began to look more like ordinary people. For example, halos became fainter and eventually disappeared during the Renaissance.

Artists began to use oil paints for the first time during the Renaissance. In the Middle Ages, egg tempera was used most widely. Mixing egg yolks with pigments made egg tempera and artists made their own paints. Egg tempera dried quickly and created a flat, rough surface. Oil paint was invented in the early 15th century and created great excitement among Renaissance artists. Oil paint dried slowly, and was translucent, meaning light could shine through the paint. The characteristics of oil paint allowed artists to build layers of color and create paintings with the appearance of greater depth. Fresco painting also became popular at this time (a fresco is when an artists paints into wet plaster.)

Key Aspects of Renaissance Art:

1. Perspective- shows dimensions—foreground & background
2. Realism- more realistic colors & figures
3. Classicalism- subjects from Greek and Roman times
4. Anatomy- more realistic details of the human body/proportional
5. Humanism- art focus on man's achievements (**humanist**: A scholar of the Renaissance who pursued the study and understanding of the ancient Greek and Roman empires. A person with a strong concern for human interests, values, and dignity.)
6. Shadows & light- played with the way light hits objects and creates shadows (could be used to draw the viewer's eye to a particular point in the painting)
7. Emotion- artists wanted the viewer to feel something while looking at their work, to have an emotional experience

3: Perspective

In the Renaissance, painters needed to be able to translate the three-dimensional world around them onto the two-dimensional surface of a painting, called the "picture plane." During the Renaissance, the use of mathematical perspective to represent space in paintings was invented. Earlier attempts at representing space often resulted in furniture or buildings that look just a little "off."

Using mathematical formulas, instead of just the human eye, gave artists new tools to represent three-dimensional space in a convincing way. Renaissance paintings began to give the impression that the frame around the painting was a window frame, and looking at the painting was like looking through a window. By the principles of perspective, all horizontal structures running into the distance away from the plane of the picture should project to a single central **vanishing point**. The discovery of perspective is attributed to the architect Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446), who suggested a system that explained how objects shrink in size according to their position and distance from the eye.

Example of Perspective & Vanishing Point



Masolino's
St. Peter Healing a Cripple and the Raising of Tabitha (1425)



Medieval or Renaissance Quiz

Look over the definitions of each form of art. Examine each of the next 5 images and decide as a group if they are Medieval or Renaissance.

1st piece: *The Last Supper* by Di Nerio



2nd piece: *Venus and Adonis* by Titan



3rd piece: *Primavera (Allegory of Spring)* by Sandro Botticelli



4th piece: *Madonna and Child* by Giotto

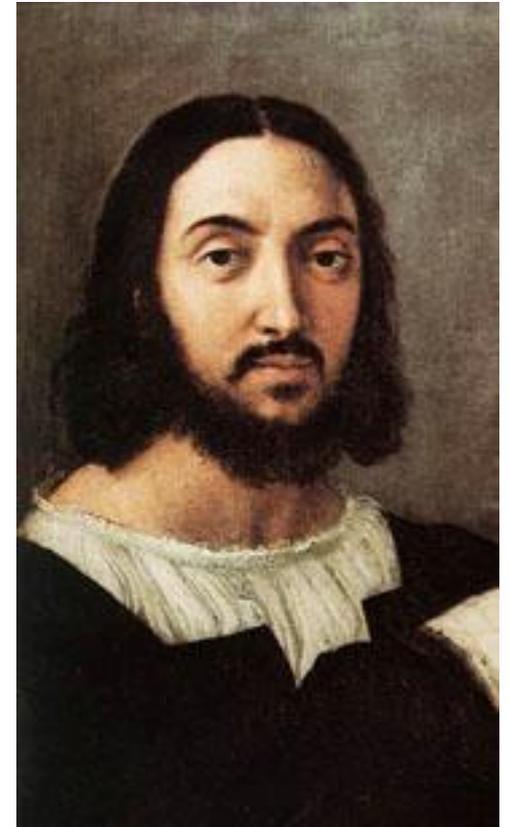


5th piece: Perugino's scene of *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter*



4: Raphael (1483-1520)

- (Raffaello Sanzio) Painter, architect
- Attractive, talented, and had many female companions
- 1504—moved to Florence and studied work of da Vinci & Michelangelo— they were his principle teachers there
- 1508 (25 years old)—moved to Rome—commissioned by Pope Julius II to paint his palace in Vatican
- Died at age 37, buried in Pantheon in Rome
- **Famous Works:**
 - *The School of Athens, Sistine Madonna*



“The School of Athens” by Raphael





Plato and Aristotle



vanishing point



Da Vinci

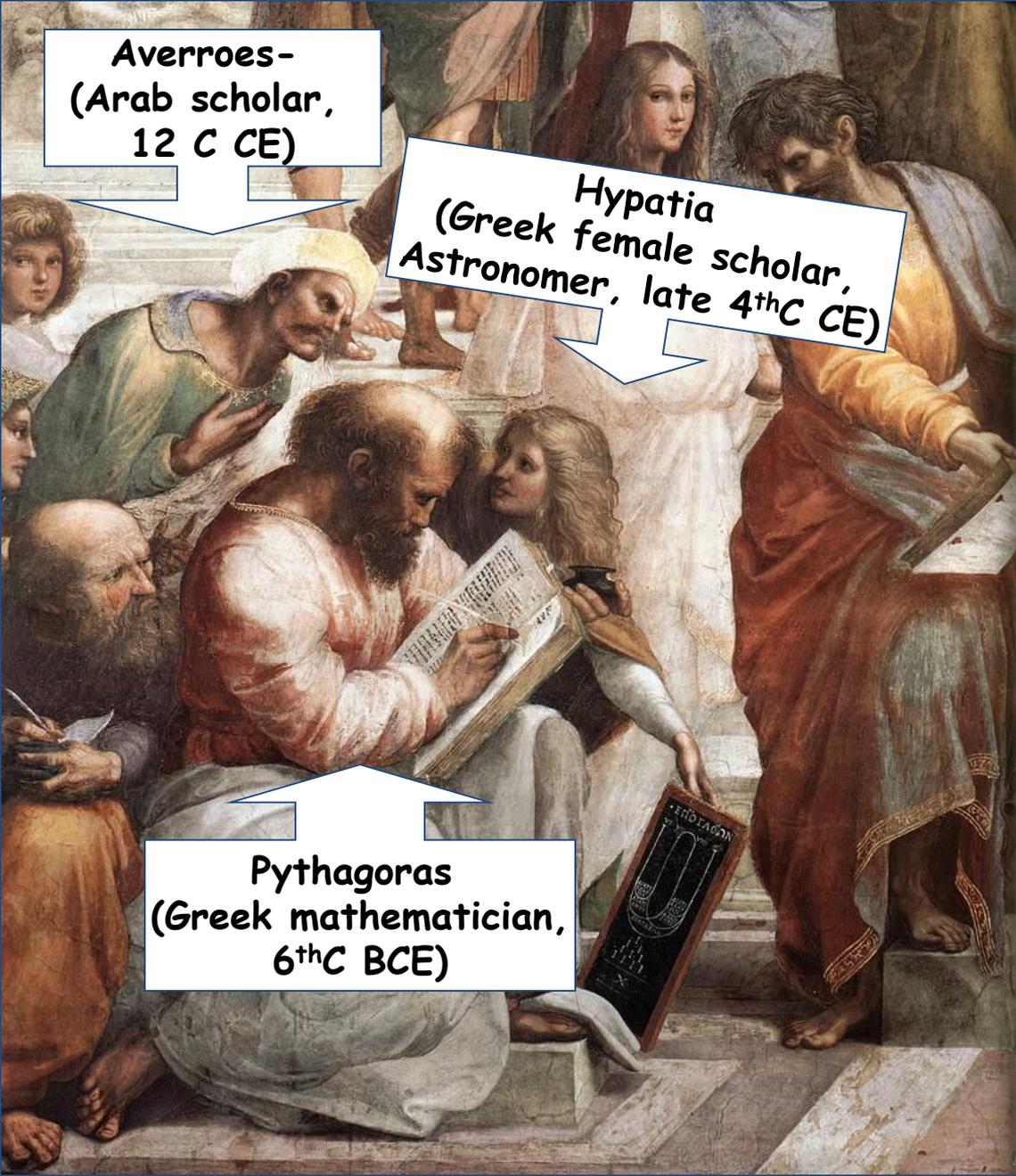


Raphael



Michelangelo





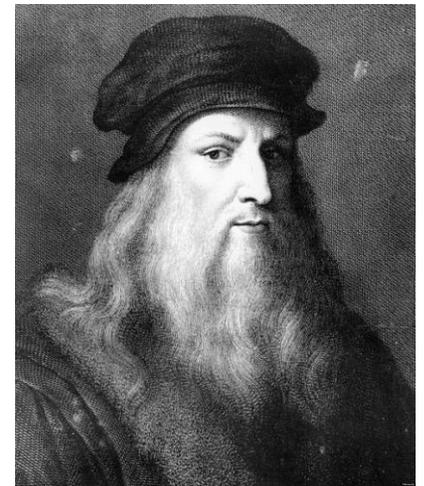
Averroes-
(Arab scholar,
12 C CE)

Hypatia
(Greek female scholar,
Astronomer, late 4thC CE)

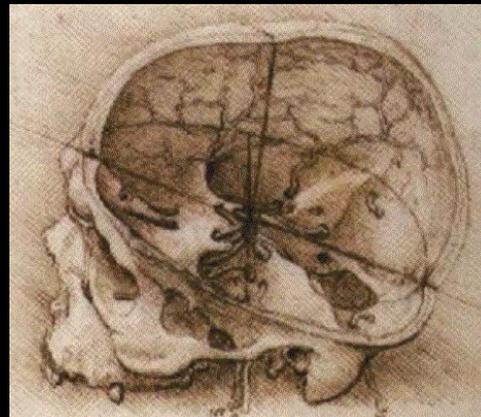
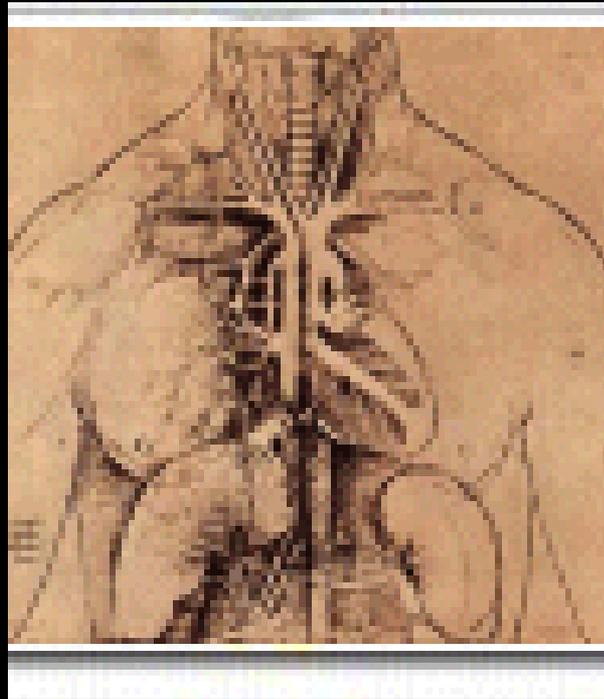
Pythagoras
(Greek mathematician,
6thC BCE)

5: Leonardo da Vinci

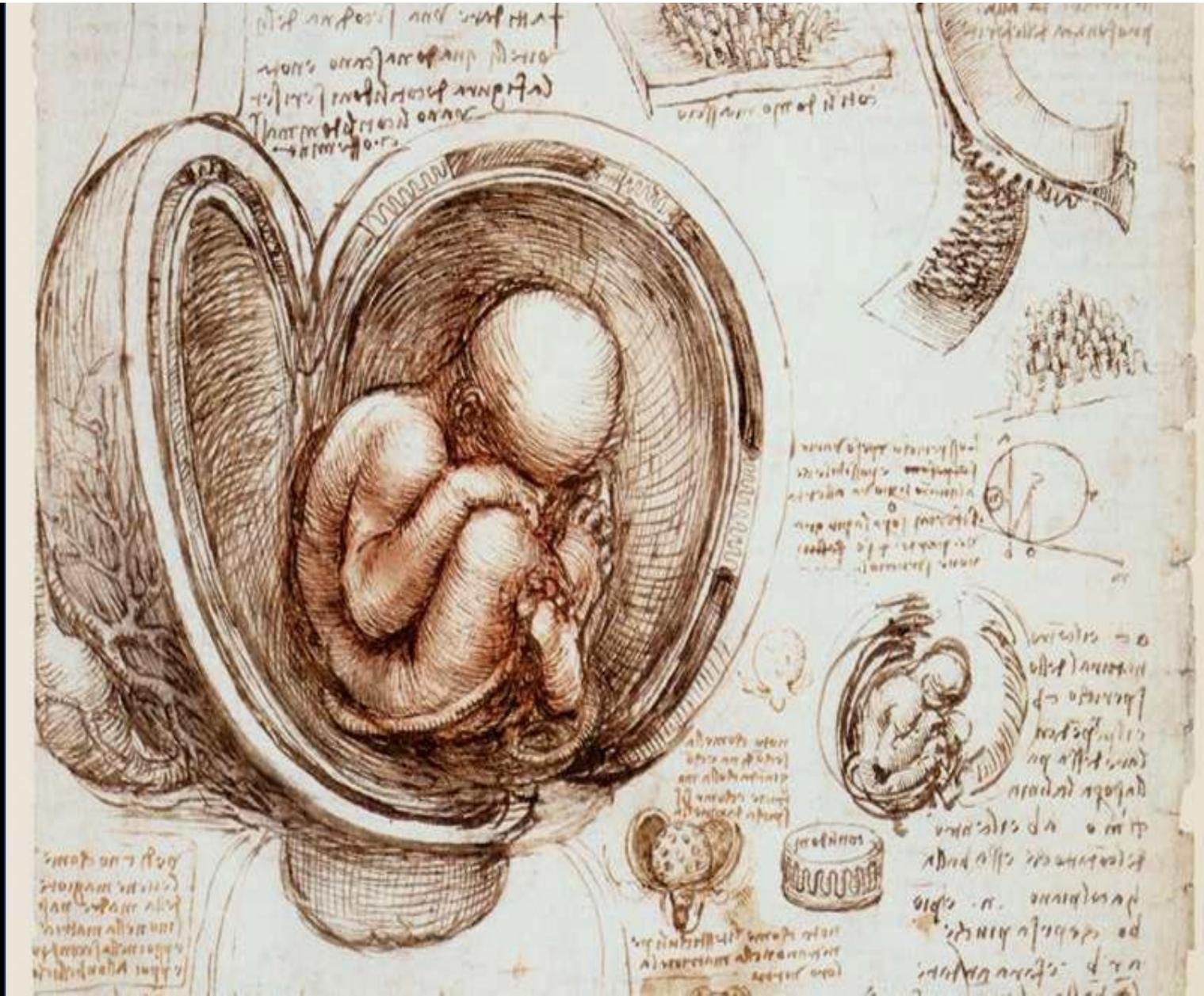
- Polymath = he was a painter, sculptor, inventor, poet, engineer (The ultimate “Renaissance Man”)
- Seen as a pervert because he attended autopsies and arrested for digging up corpses to study for his drawings of the human anatomy
- Sketches of: helicopters, planes, parachutes, human fetuses, dissected arms, submarines
 - Bill Gates bought Sketches for \$30.8 million in 1994
- Random Facts: Illegitimate child, left-handed, wrote backwards, loved riddles, invented scissors, proud of ability to bend iron with his bare hands, could write with one hand & draw with other at same time
- **Famous Works:**
 - Notebooks/Sketchbook, *Mona Lisa*, *the Last Supper*



Da Vinci's Study of Anatomy

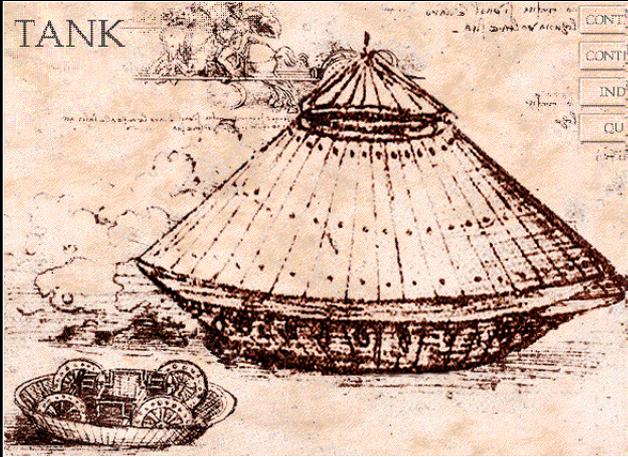


Sketches of fetus so accurate they could teach embryology to medical students today!

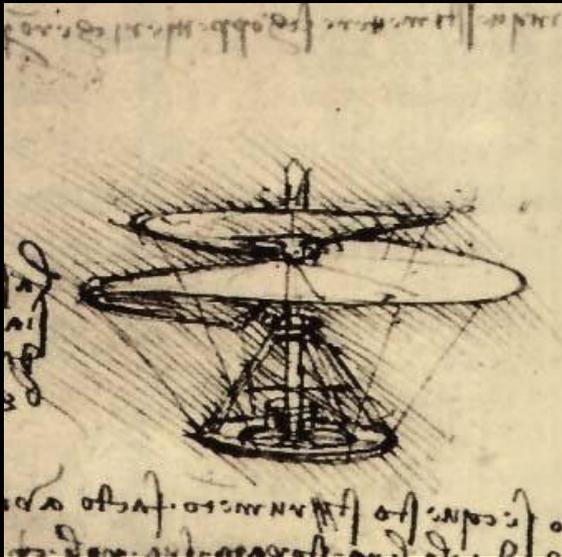


Shoes for Walking on Water

Tank



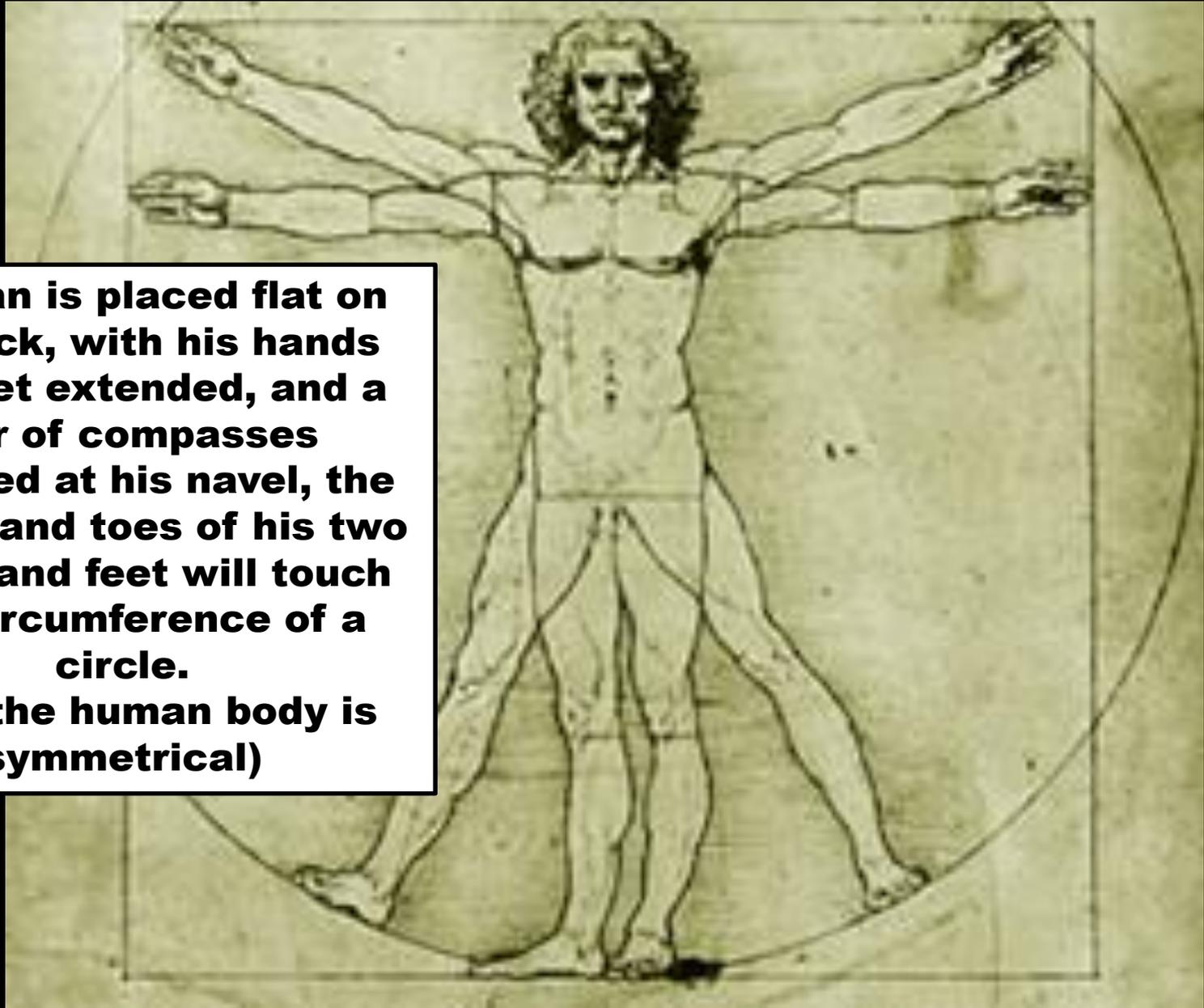
Helicopter



Flying Machine



Vitruvian Man



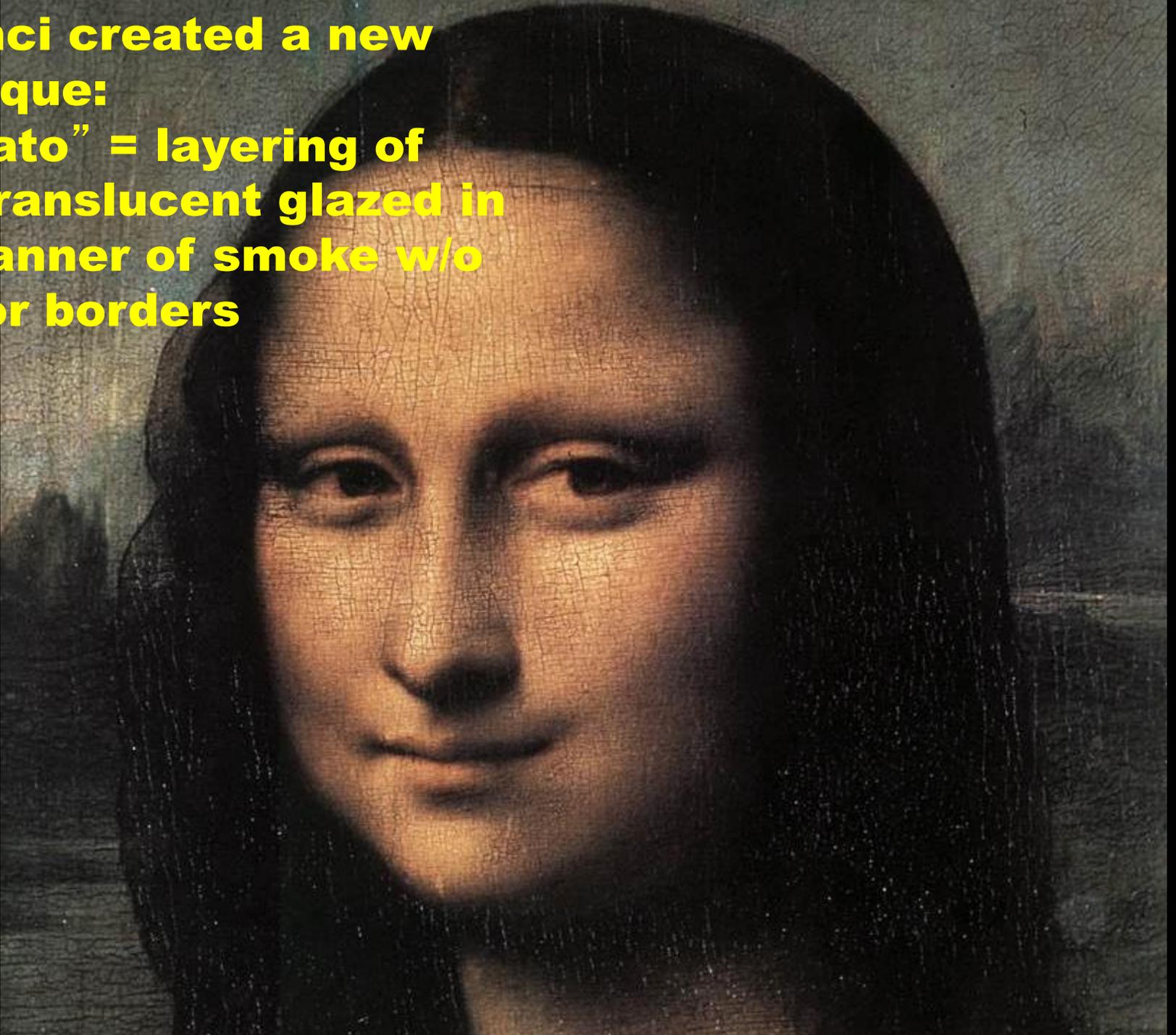
**If a man is placed flat on his back, with his hands and feet extended, and a pair of compasses centered at his navel, the fingers and toes of his two hands and feet will touch the circumference of a circle.
(i.e.—the human body is symmetrical)**

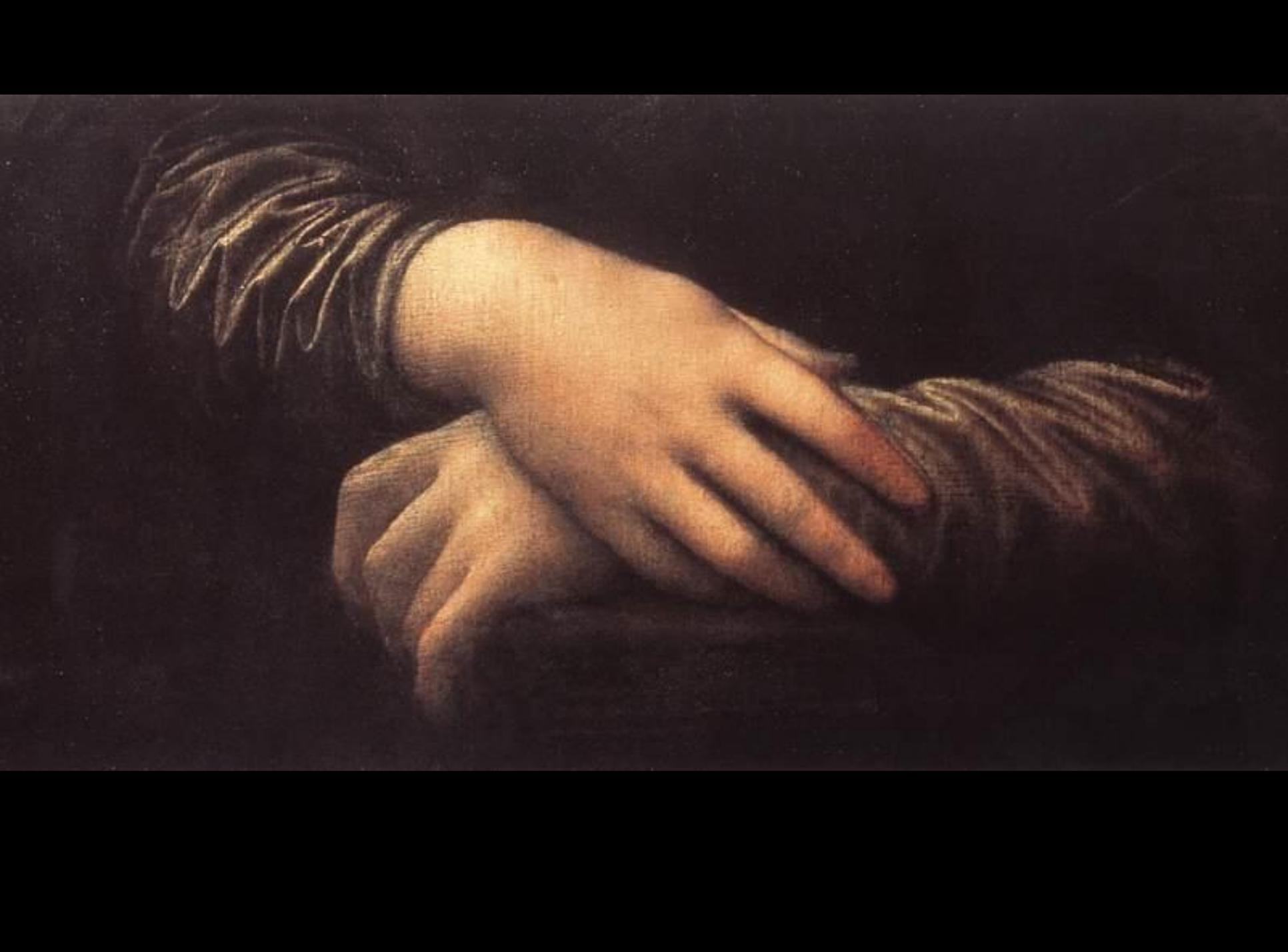


Mona Lisa

**by da
Vinci**

**Da Vinci created a new technique:
“sfumato” = layering of thin, translucent glazed in the manner of smoke w/o lines or borders**





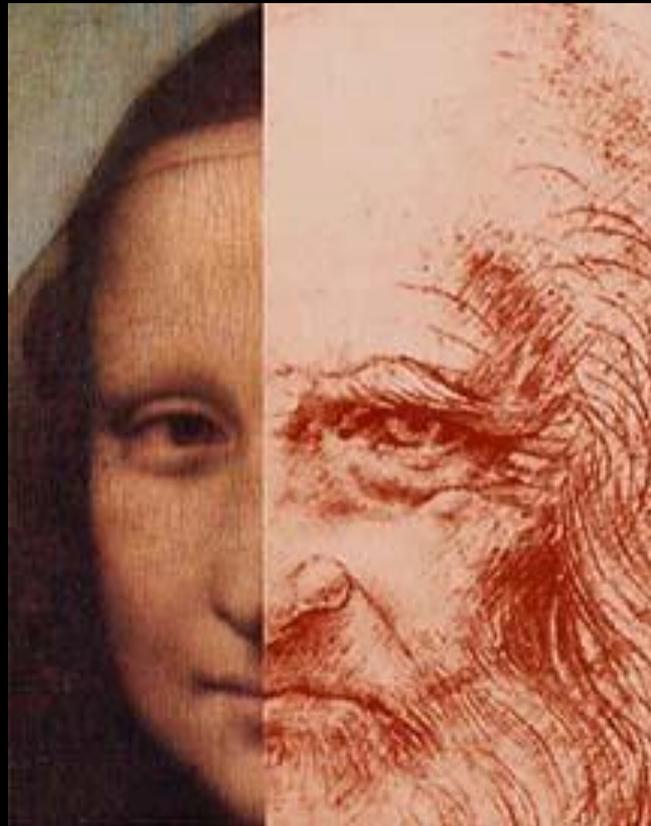
There is always a large crowd at the Louvre Museum in Paris to see the Mona Lisa.



***Mona Lisa* OR da Vinci??**

Some say that da Vinci was not really painting the wife of a wealthy banker, but instead was painting himself.

What do you think?



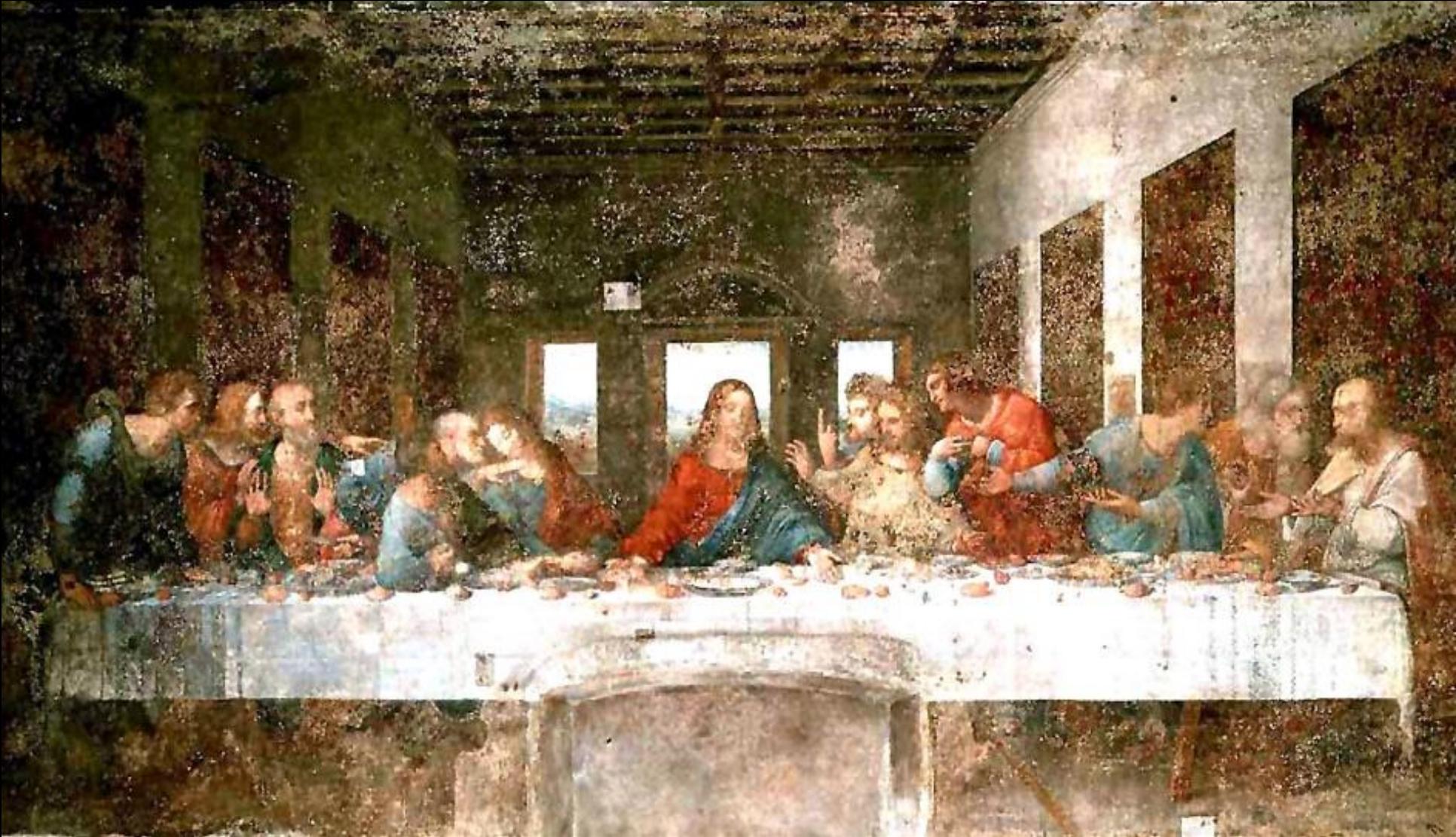


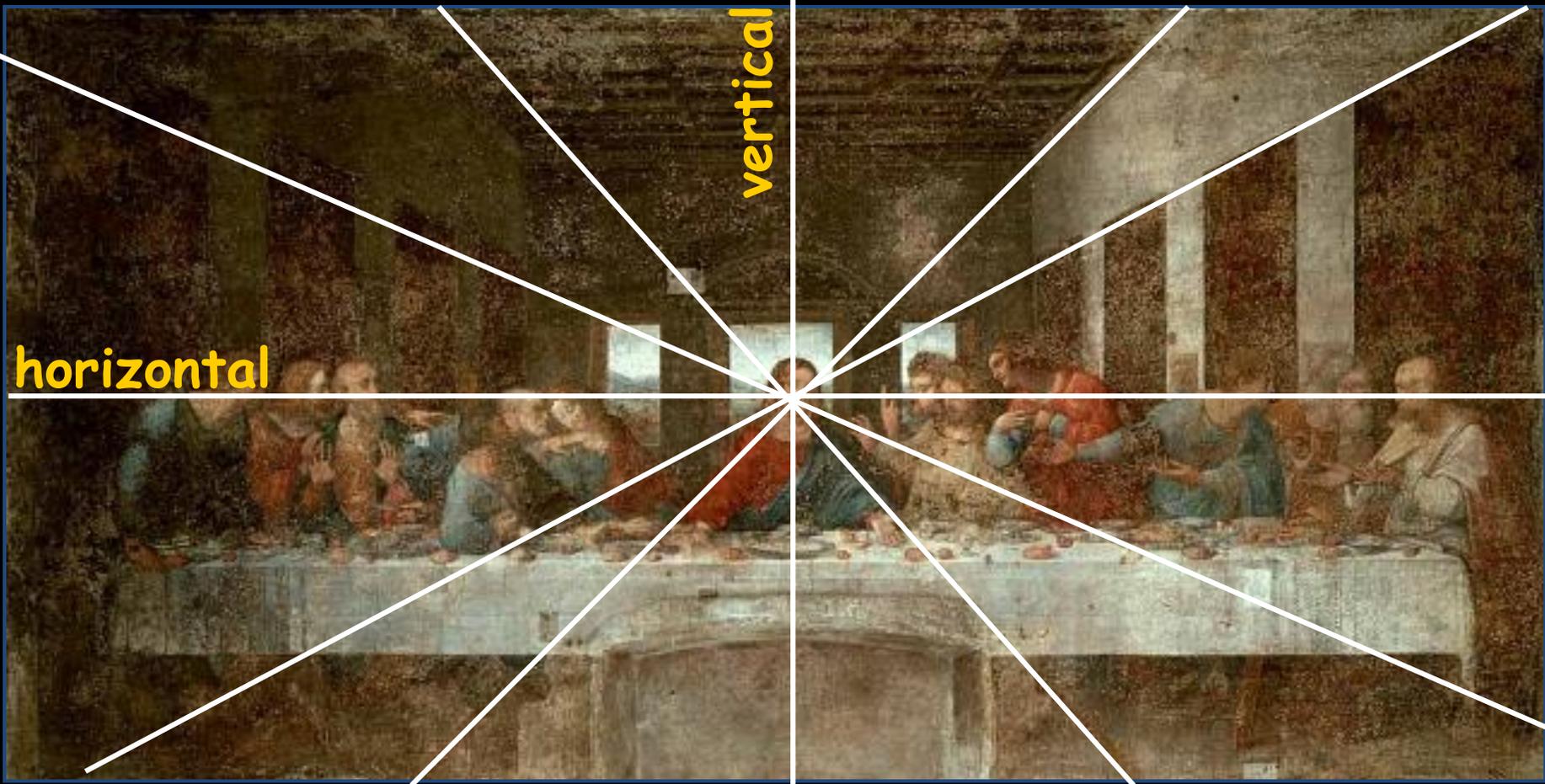
“The Last Supper”

**In the Convent of
Santa Maria delle
Grazie**

Milan, Italy

“The Last Supper” by da Vinci

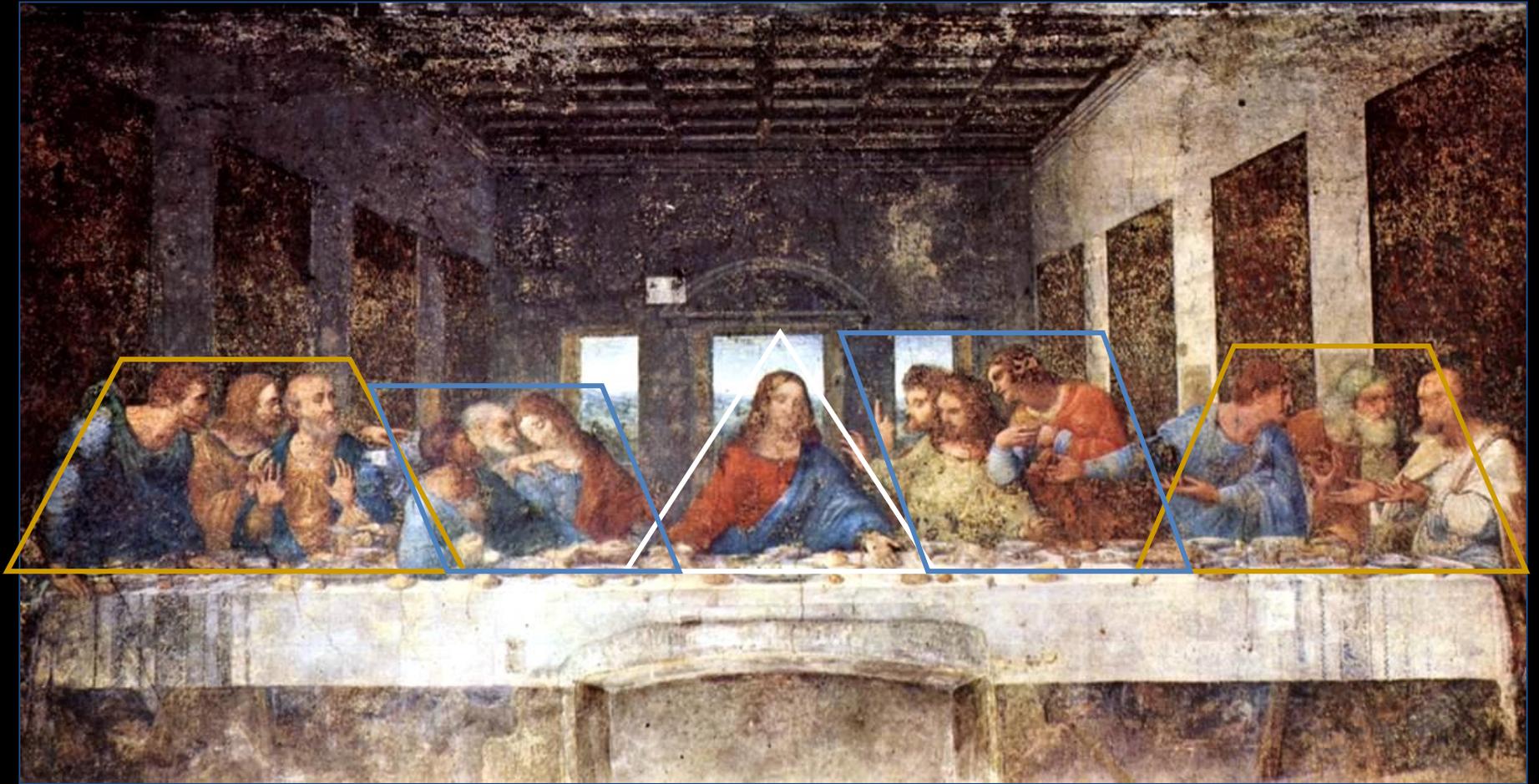




horizontal

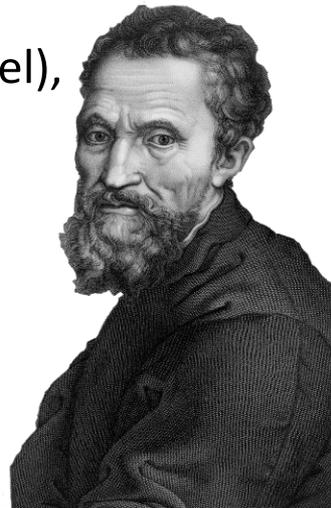
vertical

Geometry



6: Michelangelo (1475-1564)

- Polymath = he was a painter, sculptor, architect, poet, engineer
- Age 14—moved into the Medici palace in Florence to study sculpture
 - Met prominent poets, scholars and humanists
 - Obtained Church's permission to study cadavers for insight into anatomy
- In his lifetime he was also often called *Il Divino* ("the divine one")
- Brilliant sculptor—preferred it to painting
- Hated painting, yet 2 of the most influential frescos are his—in the Sistine Chapel (the ceiling and the *Last Judgment*—on the wall behind the altar)
 - Other sculptors were jealous of his talent, so they convinced the pope to commission him to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. They believed it could never be completed. He finished it in 4 years.
- **Famous Works:**
 - *David, Pieta*, ceiling of Sistine Chapel, *Last Judgment* (in Sistine Chapel), architect of Saint Peter's Basilica





For a year after the ceiling was completed, Michelangelo had to have other people read to him because his vision had deteriorated so much.

The experience also nearly permanently altered his eating habits and made him habitually tired.

Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel

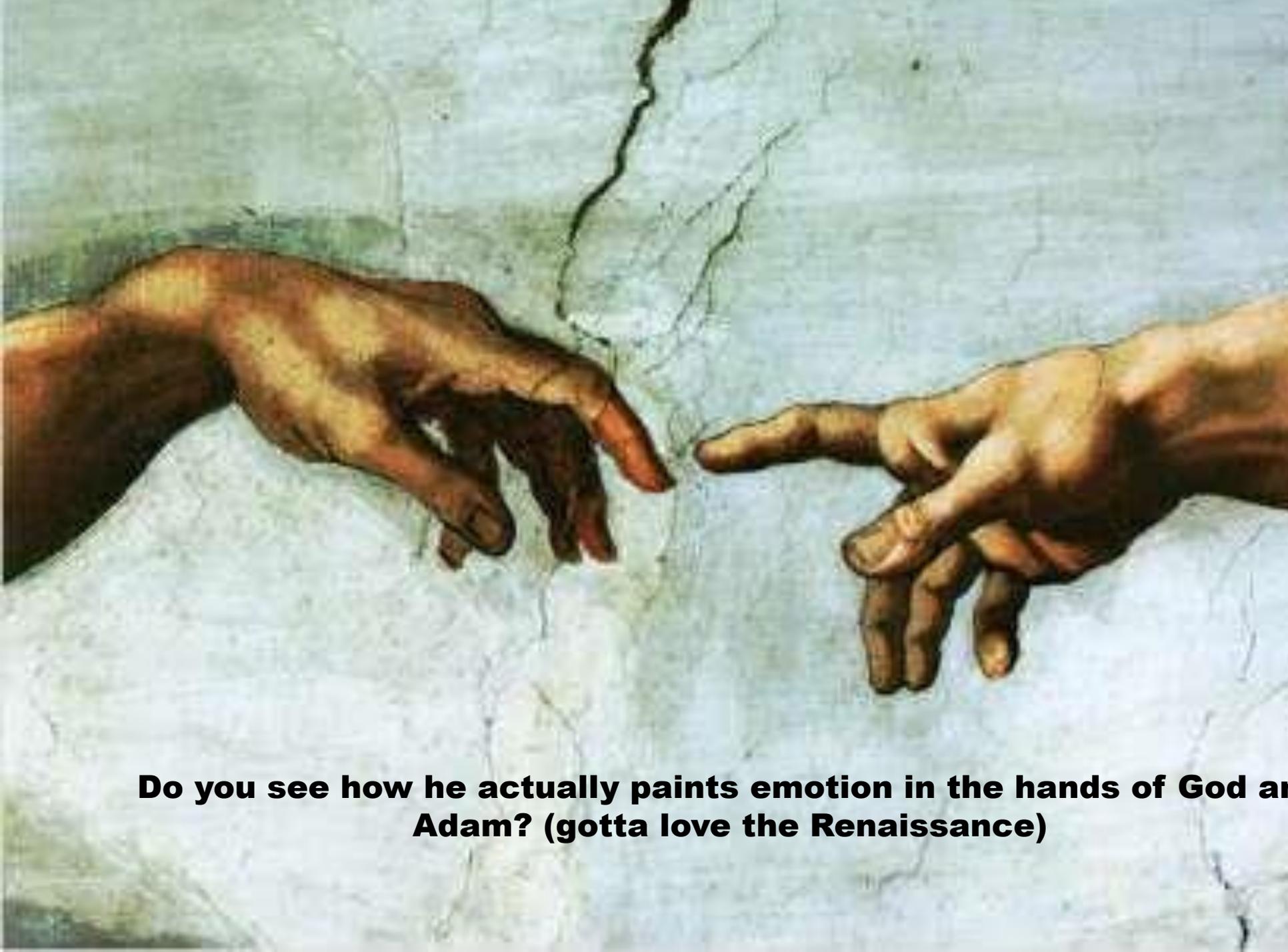


Originally, it was suppose to be the 12 apostles. He changed it and painted over 300 figures!

He designed his own scaffold to paint this. It was 68 feet above the floor.

**“Creation” on the ceiling of
the Sistine Chapel**



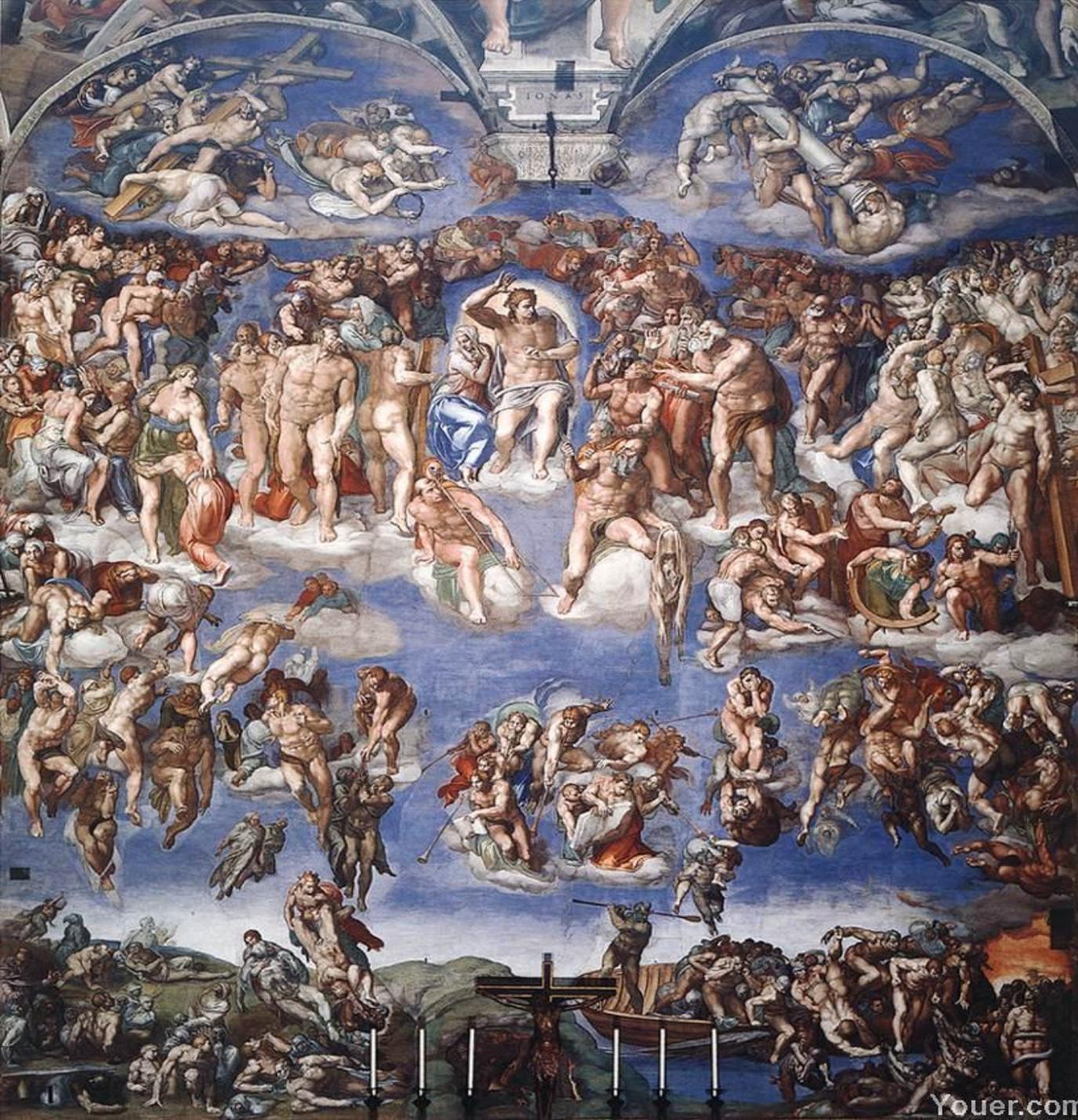


Do you see how he actually paints emotion in the hands of God and Adam? (gotta love the Renaissance)

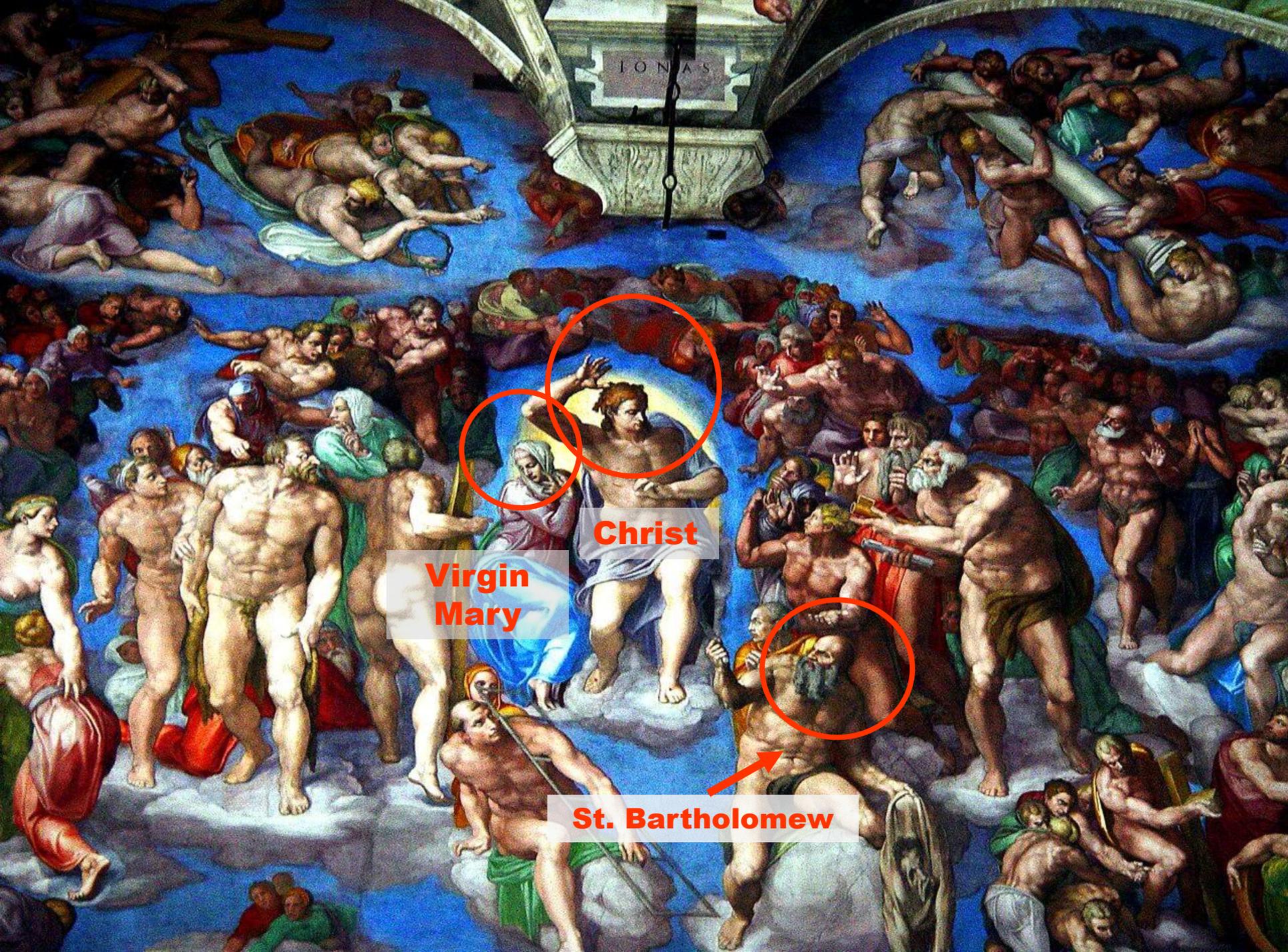


The Last Judgment

A depiction of the Second Coming of Christ and the final and eternal judgment by God of all humanity. The souls of humans rise and descend to their fates (either heaven or hell), as judged by Christ who is surrounded by prominent saints.



**"Lord, charge me not with my sins when thou shalt come on the Day of Judgment"
~Pope Paul III said at unveiling—he fell to his knees**



Christ

**Virgin
Mary**

St. Bartholomew



Saint Bartholomew holding his shed skin. (He was an apostle who was killed and then skinned.)

Michelangelo painted his face in the image of the shed skin.





St Peter holds a silver and a gold key, this is actually a portrait of Pope Paul III.

Michelangelo also painted himself here in the painting. (I guess Renaissance artists can do whatever they want. 😊)



Michelangelo



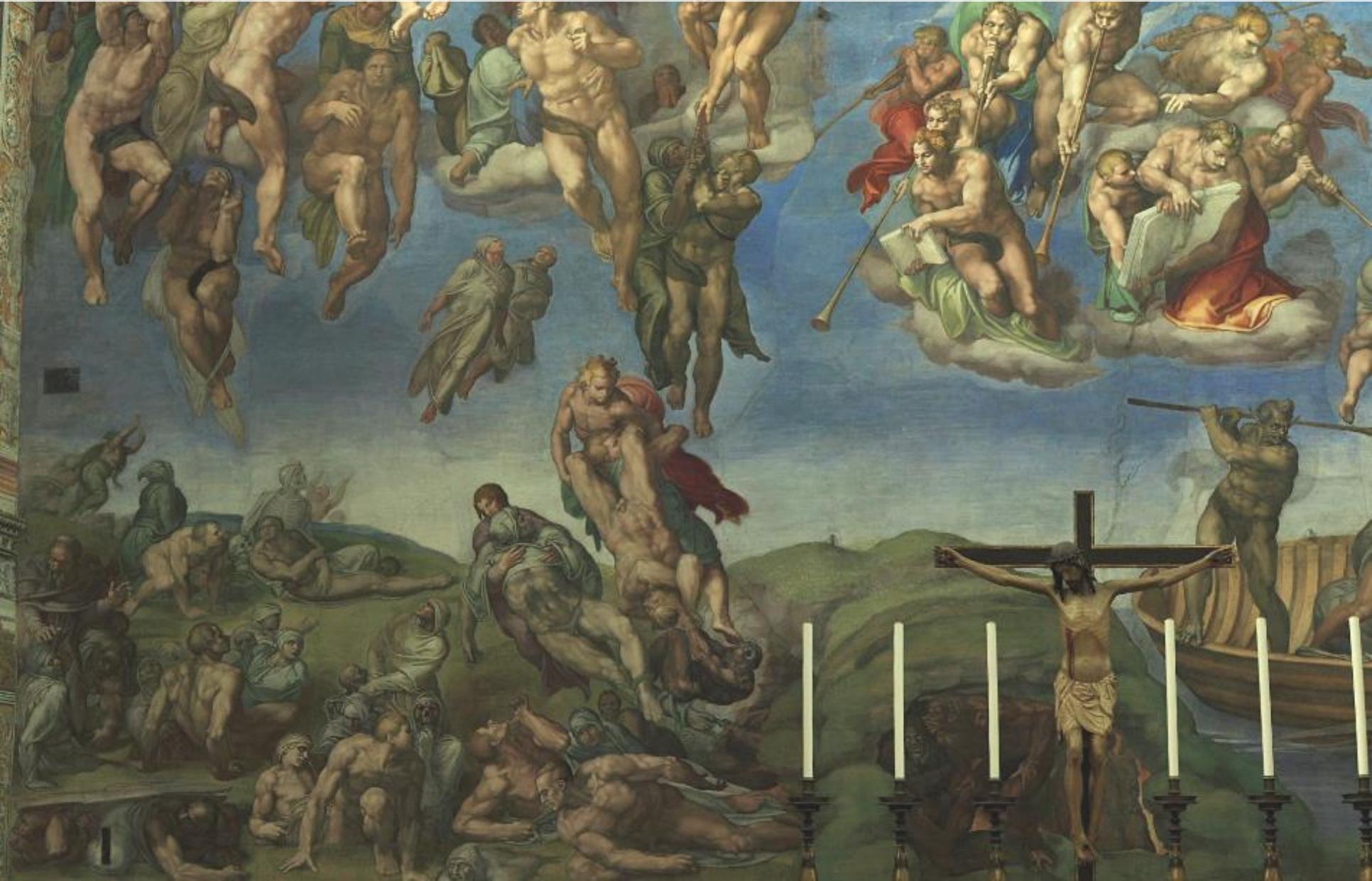
**Book of
Life—names
of those
going to
heaven**



**Book of
Death—
names of
those going
to Hades
(Hell)**



Resurrected Elect Going Toward Heaven





“It was most dishonest in such an honoured place to have painted so many nude figures who so dishonestly show their shame and that it was not a work for a Chapel of the Pope but for stoves and taverns.”

Biagio da Cesena (in 1564 most of covering were put on most of the figures to solve this controversy)

Angels & Demons Make Damned Go to Hell

Charon on river
Styx forces
damned out of
boat to Hades



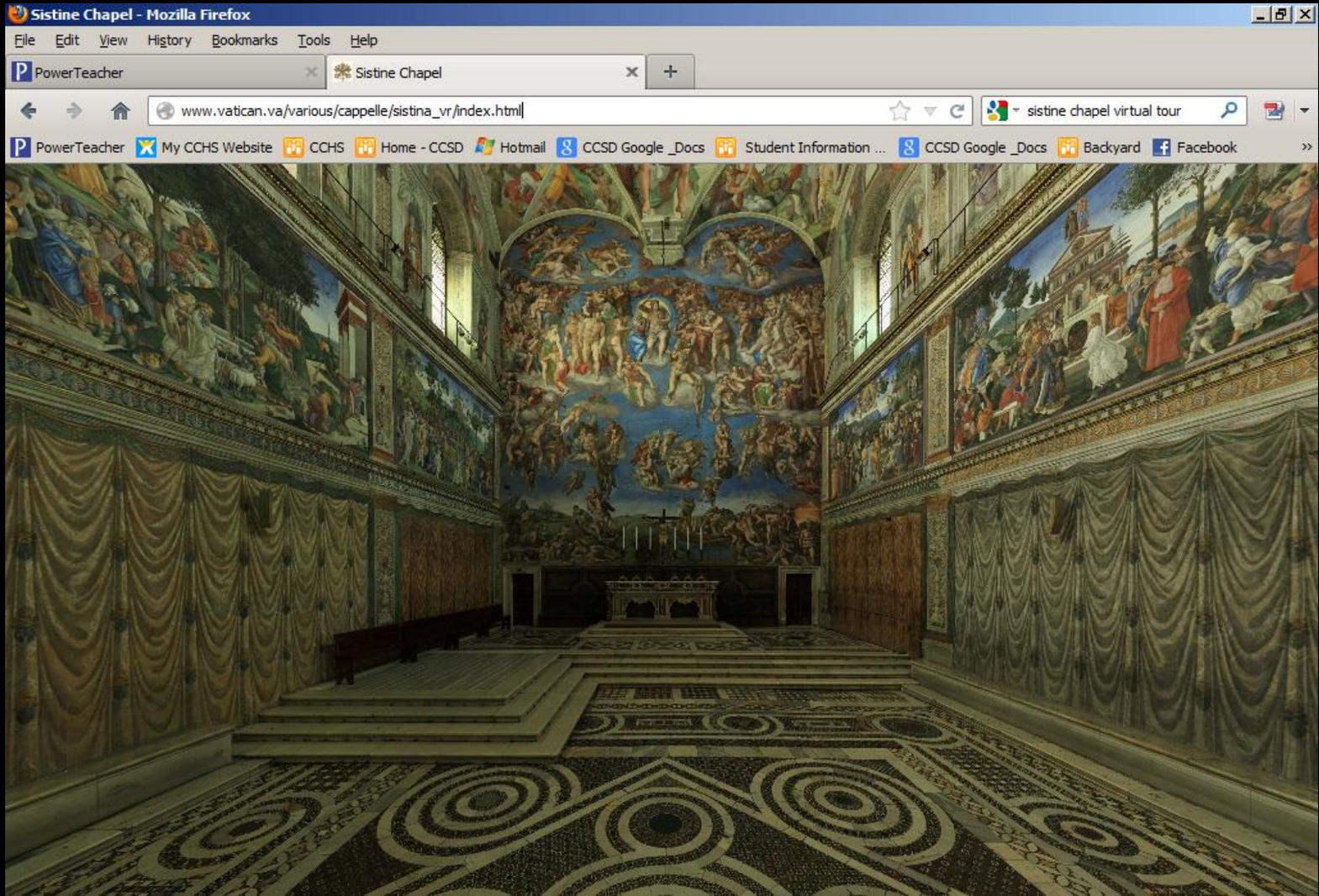




**Minos—Judge of
Underworld**
(the likeness of Cesena)



Sistine Chapel Virtual Tour



“Pieta” by Michelangelo

**Mary holding
the crucified
Christ**

**Michelangelo
spoke of
liberating the
form from the
stone.**



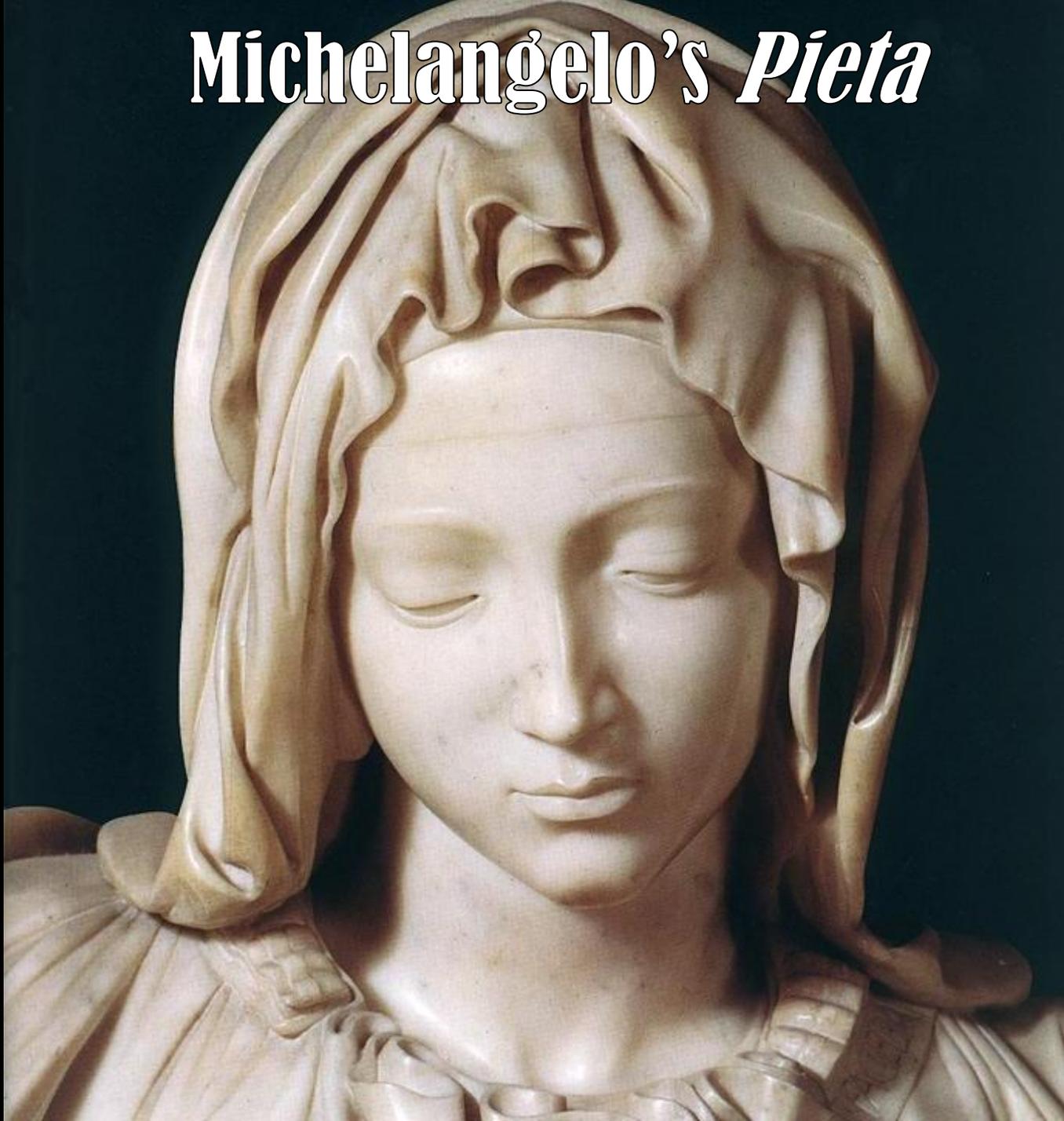


Pieta at Santa Croce, Florence (not by Michelangelo)

Pieta, The MET, NYC (not by Michelangelo)



Michelangelo's *Pieta*







“David” by Michelangelo

This is David (from the Bible) just before he slays Goliath.

He stands strong, yet relaxed, muscular yet graceful.

It was placed outside Florence’s Palazzo)



Notice how large the statue is.



Hand of David

Again, do you see emotion in it?

Discus Thrower by Myron (Greek)

**Greek figures had
perfect proportion
& strength, but
without mind or
spirit**





