art & man

September - October 1984 Vol. 15, No. 1
Published by Scholastic under the direction of
the National Gallery of Art ISSN 0004-3052

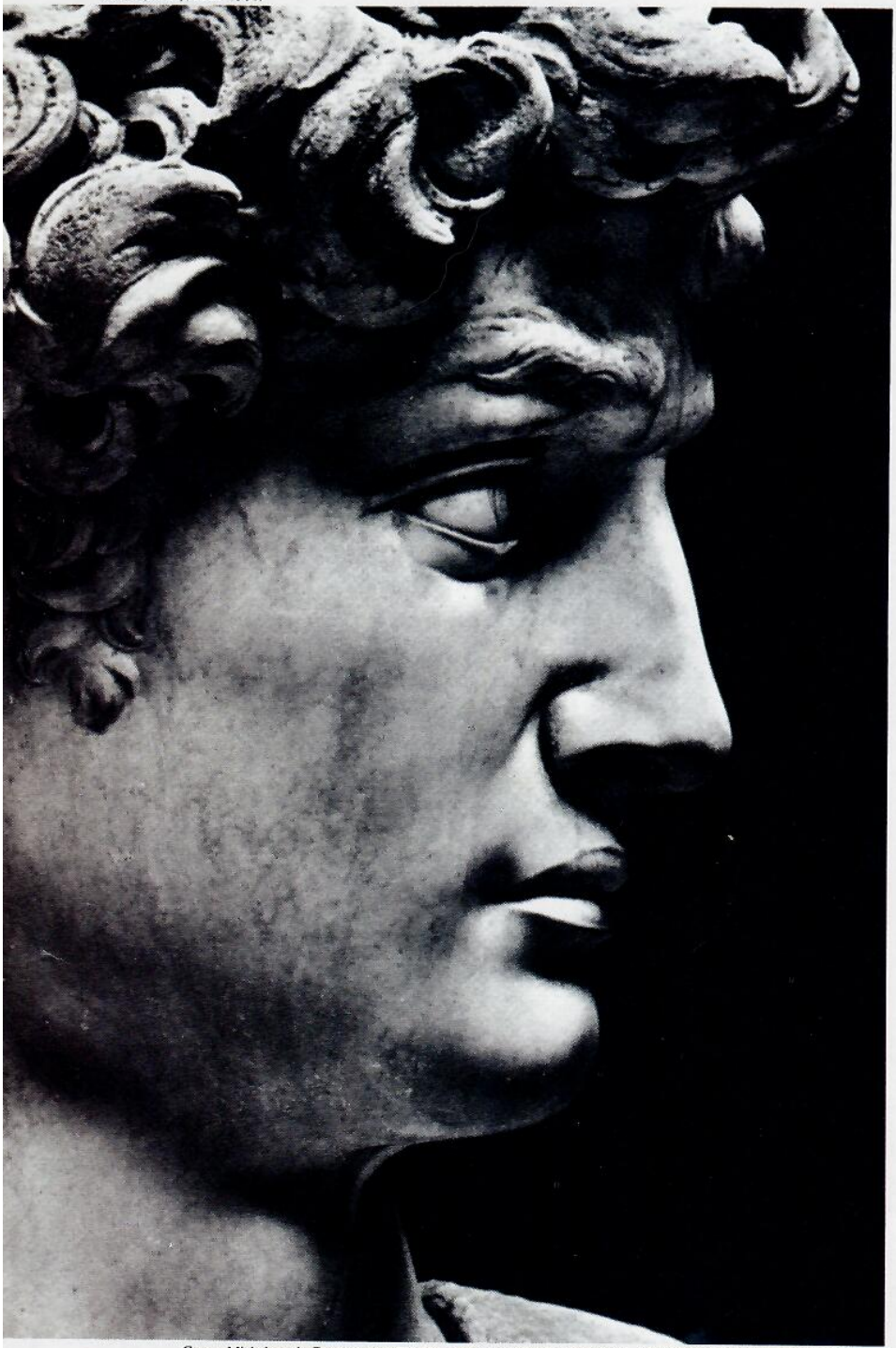
MICHELANGELO

WORKING WITH THE FIGURE

A WORLD

Famous Renaissance artist Michelangelo created a race of people that had never been seen before.

David (detail), 1501-1504.



EVERY ONCE IN A GREAT while, an artist appears who is so extraordinary that he or she changes the way the entire world looks at things. The great Italian sculptor, painter, and architect Michelangelo was one of these special creators. The brooding faces shown here reflect the artist's own intense personality. Michelangelo used the human body to express an *idea* rather than tell a story. He sculpted and painted only figures, but no matter how complex they became, many of his figures were based on people who were important in his own life.

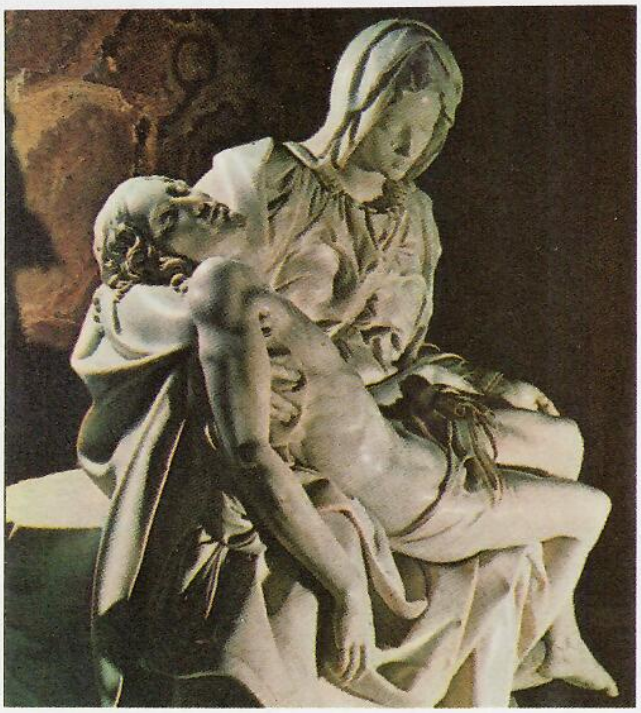
Michelangelo was born in 1475 in the city of Florence in northern Italy. His mother died when he was six, and he was brought up by a stonecutter's family. At 13, Michelangelo left school and studied in an artist's workshop. There were many workshops to choose from because, during this time known as the Renaissance, there was a renewed interest in classical realism, and Florence was the art center of Europe. A powerful family, the Medici, saw the teenager's talent and invited him to study in their palace for three years.

When he was 23, Michelangelo went to Rome and received a commission for a *Pieta* — a sculpture of Mary, Christ's mother, holding the body of her son. The beauty of Michelangelo's sculpture (above

The towering figure of* David *was supposed to be an idealized version of the sculptor himself.

Cover: Michelangelo Buonarotti (1475-1564). *The Sistine Ceiling* (detail). Figure above Jeremiah, 1508-12. Rome. Art Resource (Editorial Photocolor Archives).

OF GIANTS



Pieta, c. 1499. Fratelli Fabbri.

The face of Mary was said to resemble that of Michelangelo's own mother.

Moses, c. 1513-1515. Fratelli Fabbri.

This giant sculpture of* Moses *looked like the artist's patron, Pope Julius II.

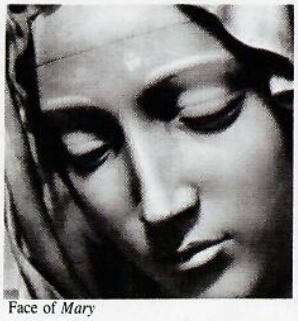
left) with every fold of cloth and lock of hair perfectly carved out of marble, made Michelangelo the most celebrated sculptor in Rome.

Michelangelo returned home to Florence a few years later to create a monument for the city — reworking a huge block of marble that had been ruined by another sculptor 35 years before. He worked steadily and secretly for four years in a shed with a high fence around it. When the David (left) was unveiled, the Florentines, used to small, delicate sculpture, were stunned. A huge figure stands waiting, his eyes flashing, his sling ready to defend the city. Michelangelo had proved himself the greatest sculptor in all Italy.

In 1505, Michelangelo began work on a great tomb for Pope Julius II. The central figure was Moses, a powerful figure (above right) listening intently for God's message, so he can deliver it to his people. Moses' face was said to resemble that of Julius II, who was very important in the artist's life. He commissioned Michelangelo to create what is probably his most famous work, a great painting for the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (see pages 8-11).

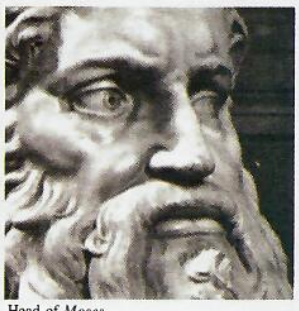
Michelangelo lived nearly 90 years, devoting his later years to architecture and poetry as well as sculpture. When he died, a critic said, "Nothing like Michelangelo has ever appeared before or ever will again." In this issue you'll see more of this great artist's work and also discover how young American artists are working with the figure in new ways. Finally, you'll learn a Renaissance technique that will help you do figure drawings of your own.

Every tiny detail in each of Michelangelo's huge figures was carved out of solid marble.



Face of *Mary*

Hand of *David*



Head of *Moses*

VISIONS OF HELL

How did Michelangelo create one of his greatest and most terrifying paintings?

IN 1534, MICHELANGELO WAS commissioned to paint the end wall of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. As with every project, once Michelangelo made up his mind to do it, he became completely involved.

Now that he was nearly 60, he decided to express his own fears of death in paint. He would create his version of the *Last Judgement* — the day the earth is destroyed, when the good are rewarded and the wicked punished. In the center of a sea of bodies, an angry Christ raises his right hand and lifts those who spent their lives well up to heaven. With his left, he drives the wicked down to the eternal fires of hell. Below, angels blow trumpets calling the dead to life. Skeletons rise from opened graves and, bottom right, demons push the wicked into the flames.

The creation of this gigantic vision took Michelangelo five years and required many drawings. He did quick sketches from models (inset, below right) capturing the *action* of the pose. Then he did *modeled* drawings, depicting the lights and shadows, making the figures look three-dimensional (above right). Another way to make a figure look real is *foreshortening*. The feet in the drawing, above right, appear to be coming out at the viewer. Michelangelo has created this effect by making the feet larger and darker, while the head and arm are smaller and lighter.

Kneeling figure for *Last Judgement*. Casa Buonarroti, Florence.

Each figure in the giant painting (right) began as a quick sketch (see inset, right), then became a finished drawing (above).

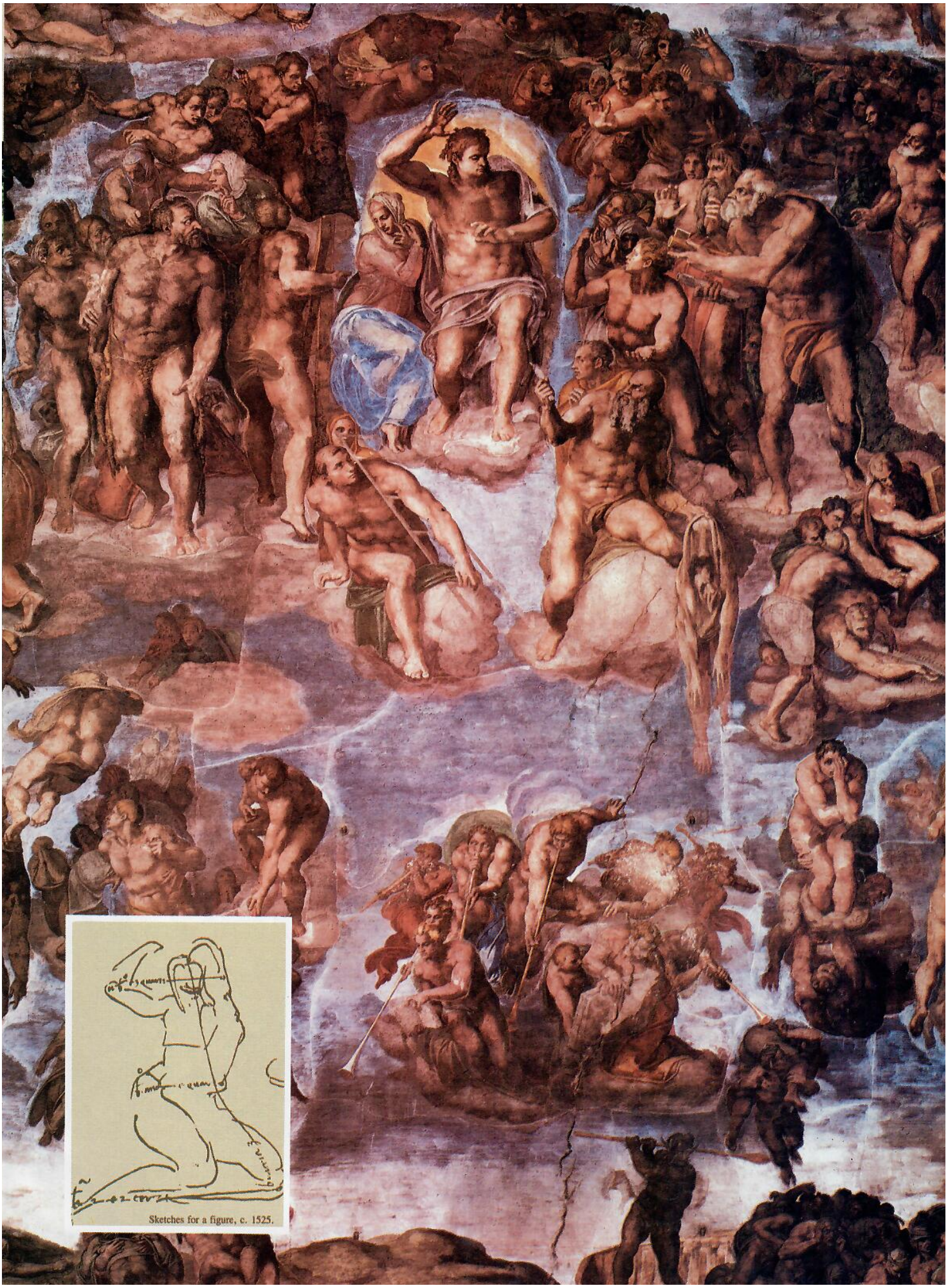
How are Christ's left arm and leg foreshortened? Can you find any other example of foreshortening in the painting?

Michelangelo included his own self portrait in the *Last Judgement*. One of his enemies (the gray-bearded man below Christ) holds what appears to be a rag. But if you look closely, he is holding up a human skin with Michelangelo's features on it. Does Michelangelo see himself as a limp skin? Is he saying evil triumphs over good, or that he, himself, is evil? In this work, as in others, Michelangelo was as mysterious as ever.

Maurice R. Robinson, Founder of Scholastic Inc., 1895-1982. For the National Gallery of Art: J. Carter Brown, Director; Ruth Perlin, Director of Extension Services. For Scholastic Inc.: Richard Robinson, President, Chief Executive Officer, and Chairman of the Board; Steven C. Swett, Publisher; Margaret Howlett, Editor; Janet Soderberg, Associate Editor; Dale Moyer, Editorial Design Director; Lisa Francella, Art Director; James Sarfati, Art Editor; J. G. Brownell, Editorial Director, Administration; Jane Fliegel, Production Director; Eve Sennett, Composition Manager; Sharon Blumenthal, Systems Manager; Roz Sohnen, Photo Research. **ART & MAN ADVISORY BOARD:** Monte De Graw, Curriculum Consultant for Art Education, San Diego City Schools. Dr. Beverly Heinle, Curriculum Specialist in Art, Fairfax County Schools, Falls Church, VA. Ned J. Nesti, Jr., Morrison Jr. High School, Morrison, IL. Evva Istas, Paducah Tilghman High School, Paducah, KY. Ken Kuemmerlein, Specialist in Art & Design, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

ART & MAN (ISSN 0004-3052) is published six times during the school year, Sept./Oct., Nov., Dec./Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr./May, by Scholastic Inc., 730 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-9538 for $4.50 each per school year, for 10 or more subscriptions to the same address. 1-9 subscriptions, each: $9.00 student, $19.00 Teachers' Edition, per school year. Single copy: $1.50 student, $3.25 Teachers'; special issue: $2.00 student, $5.00 Teachers'; Second-class postage paid at Monroe, OH 45050-2700 and at additional mailing offices. **Postmasters: Send address changes to Office of Publication, ART & MAN, 351 Garver Rd., Box 2700, Monroe, OH 45050-2700.** Communications relating to subscriptions should be addressed to ART & MAN, P.O. Box 644, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071-9985. Canadian address: Scholastic-Tab Publications, Ltd., Richmond Hill, Ontario L4C 3G5. Available on microfilm through Xerox University Microfilms, Inc., 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Also available on microfiche through Bell & Howell Micro Photo Division, Old Mansfield Rd., Wooster, OH 44691. Printed in U.S.A. Copyright © 1984 by Scholastic Inc. All Rights Reserved. **Material in this issue may not be reproduced in whole or in part in any form or format without special permission from the publisher.**

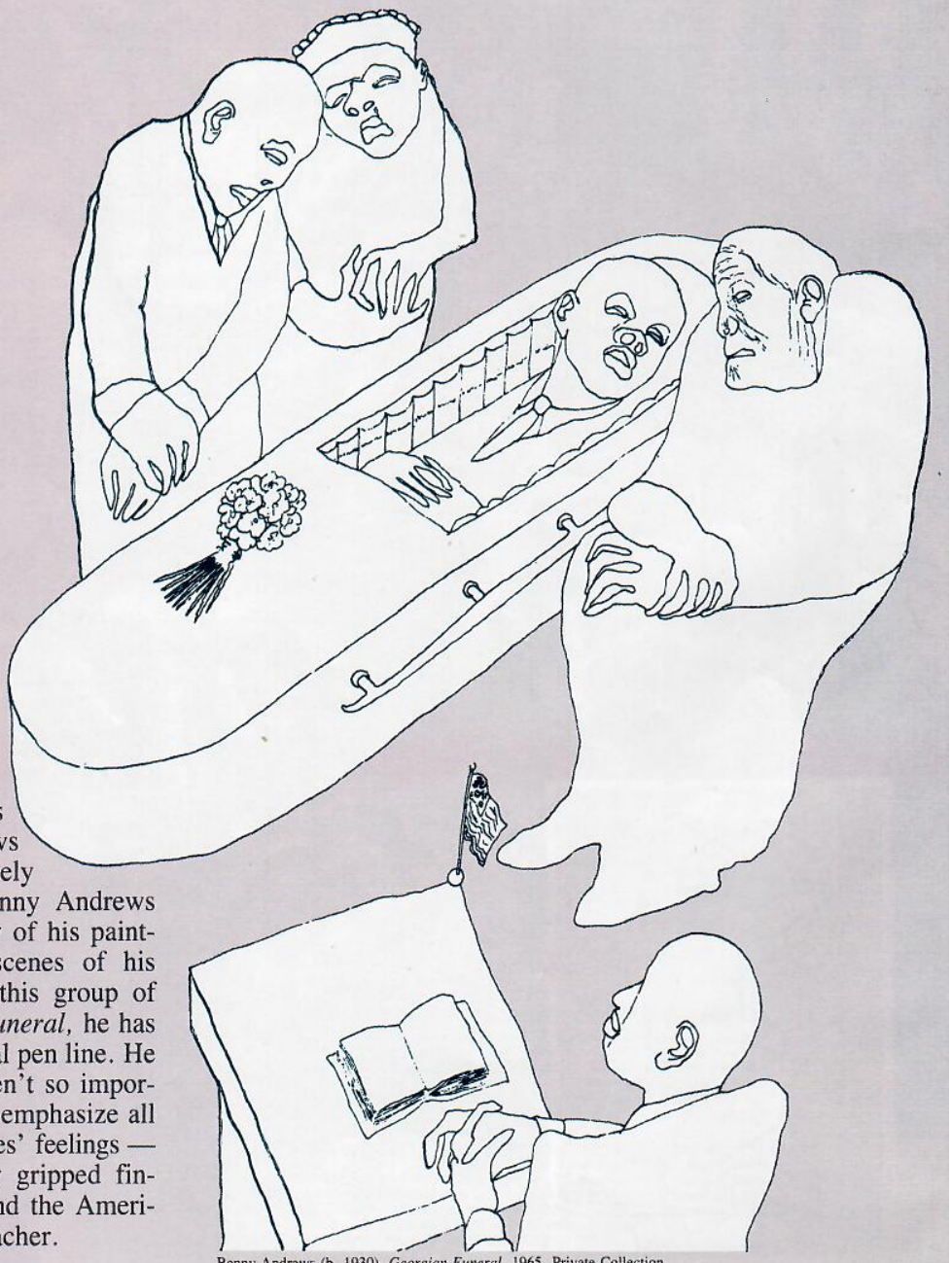
Last Judgement, 1536-1541, Vatican, Rome. Fratelli Fabbri.



Sketches for a figure, c. 1525.

Find out how contemporary American artists are working with the figure today.

DRAWING PEOPLE



Benny Andrews (b. 1930). *Georgian Funeral*, 1965. Private Collection.

LINES OF SORROW

Have you ever done *contour* drawings in your art class? You just follow the outline of the figure with your pencil, never taking your eyes off the model. (You will learn about this technique on pages 14-15.) Contour drawing allows you to see the figure in an entirely new way. American artist Benny Andrews was born in Georgia and many of his paintings and drawings describe scenes of his southern childhood. To draw this group of figures attending a *Georgian Funeral,* he has used a simple but very emotional pen line. He *outlines* the large areas that aren't so important, but uses a *contour* line to emphasize all the details that convey the figures' feelings — the wrinkled faces, the tightly gripped fingers, the flowers, the Bible, and the American flag waving beside the preacher.

STROKES OF ACTION

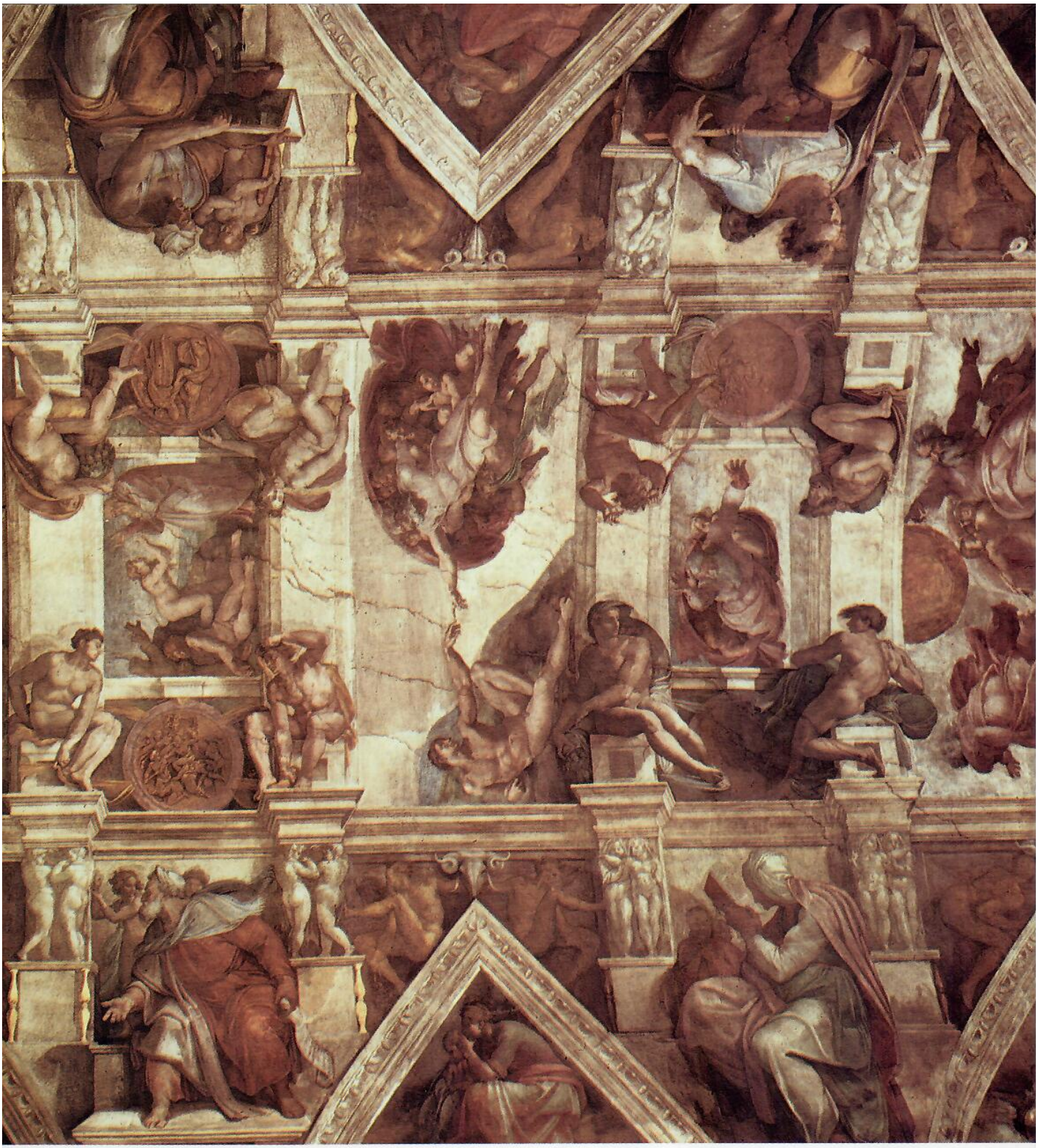
This figure painted by American artist Elaine de Kooning seems, at first glance, not to be very active. He sprawls in a chair with his feet stretched out in front of him. But de Kooning's loose, energetic brush strokes tell another story about her model. Unlike a contour drawing which captures the outline of a figure, a *gesture* drawing like this expresses the figure's action. It can almost be a scribble as long as it shows the person's movement in space. The diagonal of this man's pose, slashing from one corner of the canvas to the other, suggests his dynamic character. While the artist has painted him in a relaxed pose, the stretching of the legs and forward thrust of the head suggest a man ready to go into action at any moment.

Elaine de Kooning (b. 1920). *Harold Rosenberg*, 1950.

FRAGMENTED FIGURES

Have you ever seen a figure painting without figures? There are a lot of people in young American artist Robert Birmelin's painting, but how many can you actually see? A woman's shoulder is hurrying out of the left side of the picture. Another woman's nose and mouth can barely be seen in the upper right-hand corner. A third woman's arm is in the center, and behind her are the headless bodies of two men. We can only see the full figures of a few people in the distance, and they are quite far away. And what about the huge hand on the right? Is it going to suddenly grab us or perhaps make a fist? Have you ever walked down a busy street in a large city and had the feeling of people coming at you from all sides? Someone is always rushing by at the edge of our vision — either isolated in their own private world or threatening and dangerous. We walk along the sidewalk, not making eye contact with anyone, looking down at the garbage at our feet. The very realistic *modeling* of Birmelin's figures — the highlights and shading — adds to the sense of reality in this street scene.

Robert Birmelin (b. 1955). *The Street — A Gesture from a Stranger II*, 1980. Sherry French Gallery, Inc., NY, NY.



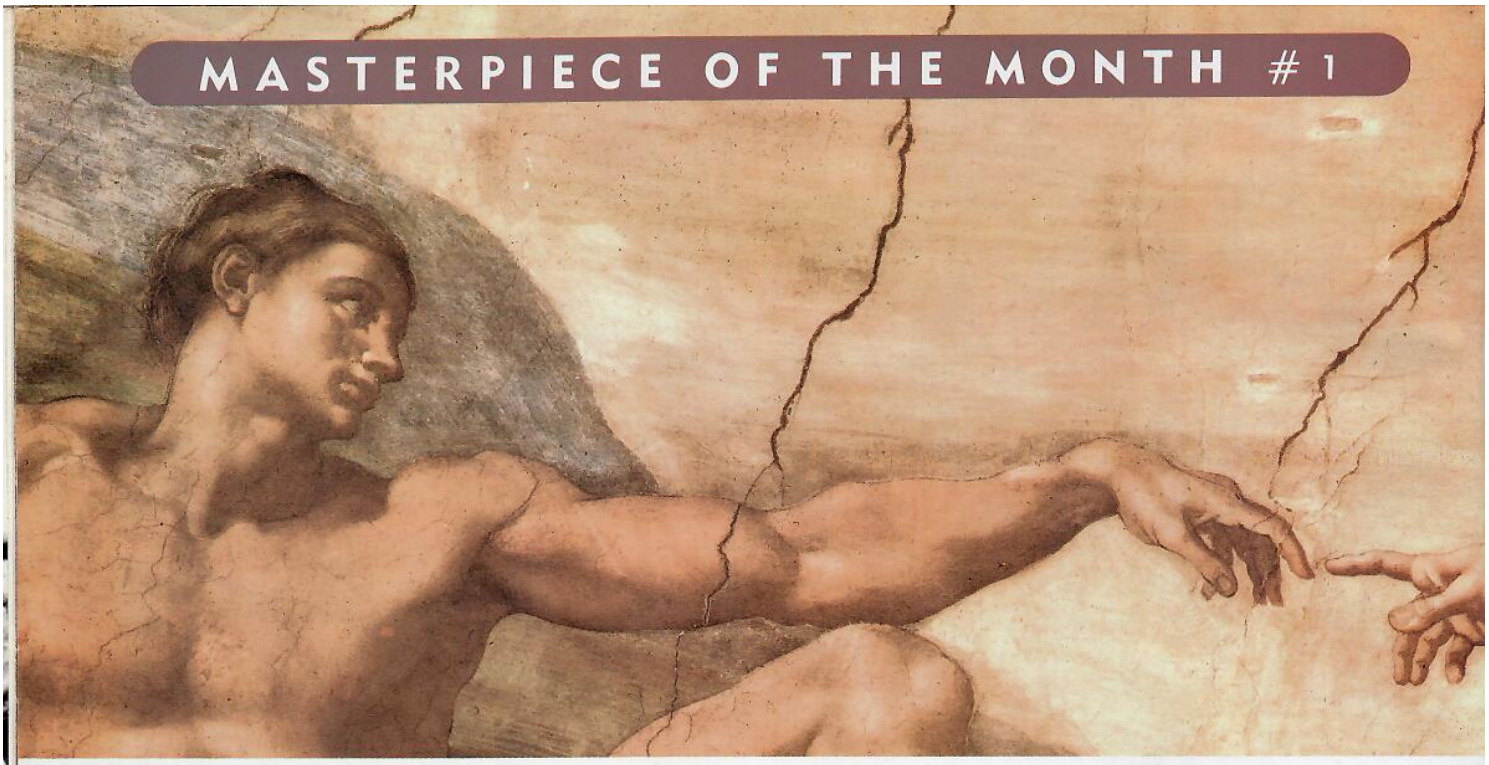
"When will this nightmare be over? I hate this place. Why am I here — I'm not even a painter."

Michelangelo — 1511 (Written while working on the Sistine Ceiling.)

Michelangelo Buonarotti (1475-1564). *The Sistine Ceiling* (detail), 1508-12. Vatican, Rome. Art Resource (Editorial Photocolor Archives).

ART & MAN MASTERPIECE OF THE MONTH # 1

THE SISTINE CEILING BY MICHELANGELO



CREATING A NEW UNIVERSE

The creation of life, a woman becoming a snake, a fish swallowing a man — does this sound like a new science fiction film? You can find it all in one painting — Michelangelo's Sistine chapel ceiling.

Have you ever tried to paint a ceiling high above your head? Was it easy? What if you then had to paint or draw a picture on it? And what if the ceiling were four stories high and as big as the school auditorium?

In 1508, Pope Julius II (see page 3) decided to have the ceiling of his most important chapel repainted. Naturally he wanted the best artist in Rome to do it, and he assigned the job to Michelangelo. The artist insisted that he was a sculptor and couldn't paint. But, as soon as another artist suggested he was probably not able to paint foreshortened figures, Michelangelo went to work. While a huge scaffold was being built, the artist began to draw and plan.

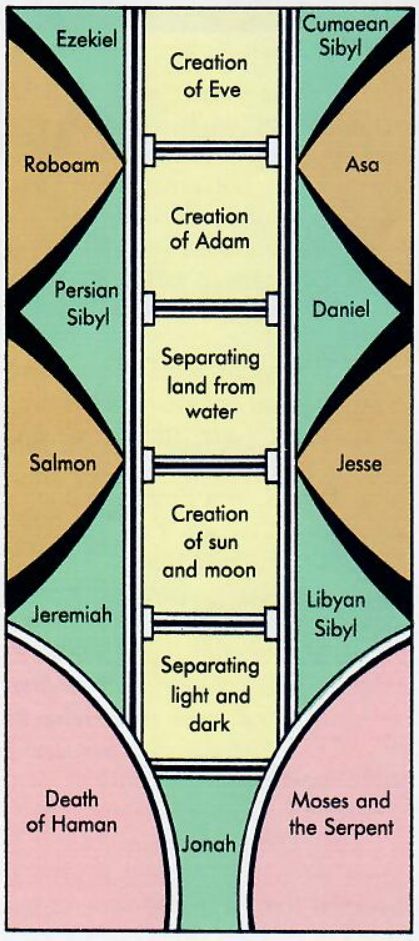
When you go into the Sistine Chapel (left), you'll see Michelangelo's ceiling, which shows the beginning of the world. His **Last Judgement**, *on the far wall, shows the world's end.*

Creation of Adam (detail of *Sistine Ceiling*). Fratelli Fabbri.

Michelangelo decided to use the human figure as a way to show the creation of the world. This story, surrounded by a frame filled with figures from the Bible, would be told in nine central panels (five are show on pages 8-9). These panels are set off from the outside figures by the blue sky in the background (almost giving the effect of a huge skylight in the middle of the ceiling). When you look at pages 8-9, turn the magazine so the central scenes are right side up, and you can "read" the story from bottom to top. The figure at the bottom is Jonah who, in the Bible, was swallowed by a big fish. Can you find the fish? Jonah is looking up at the first panel, in which God creates day and night. Above that, God (shown twice) makes the sun and moon; in the next, the oceans.

The next scene is probably Michelangelo's best known work. (see detail above). God, on the right, creates Adam, the first human being. The image of the two fingers touching has become one of the most famous in all art. Eve, the first woman, is created in the top panel, on page 8.

When he finished his plan and had sketched some of the figures, Michelangelo climbed the scaffold and began painting. He worked alone day and night, bent backwards, paint dripping in his face, hardly eating and sleeping only when he dropped. "Sometimes he kept his boots on for so long that when he drew them off, the skin came away too." During the four years it took the artist to finish the ceiling, the chapel was locked and only the Pope was allowed inside. In October 1512, the Sistine Chapel was opened and all Rome came to admire it. The sculptor Michelangelo, who said he couldn't paint, had created one of the greatest paintings in the world.



The Sistine Ceiling (right) is made up of three zones. Human beings from the Bible fill the triangles (brown). The prophets and sibyls (green) are superhuman. In the central zone of heaven (yellow), God creates the universe.

A Renaissance Artist of Today

Cecilia Juliano, 18, spends almost all her spare time drawing. "If I could," she says, "that's all I would do." Her big interest is fashion, but she also draws people she knows — like her sister, shown above left, and in the Scholastic Art Award-winning drawing, opposite page.

What makes a person get serious about art? What kind of art training helps an artist develop his or her talents? We visited Cecilia at her New Jersey home to find out.

When did you first start drawing?

I have been drawing as long as I can remember. All little kids draw, but I just kept doing it — through junior high and high school. Both my parents drew, so art seemed very natural, like reading or writing.

When did you decide to become an artist?

Tenth grade. One day after art class my teacher said, "I think you have what it takes to be an artist." It was her support that made me really keep pushing.

How did you learn drawing?

First we did objects and still-life drawings, then people. I really got into gesture drawings (a quick sketch suggesting the feeling of a person's pose). Gesture drawing helps you a lot. It helps you to understand what it is you're trying to draw. Then once you have the whole thing on paper, it's easier to define it and add detail.

What do you like about drawing people?

Drawing people makes you feel closer to them, especially when you do their faces. It's like you're touching them, because you learn every line.

Usually I draw people close to me — my family or my friends. Or I draw fashion models. But I want to get away from that. I need to draw different kinds of people.

Do you ever have trouble getting people to model for you?

Sometimes. Like in this drawing, I had to practically put stones on my sister to make her stay in one place. But after awhile the position was so comfortable she almost fell asleep. She got more impatient on the second night. I kept telling her it wouldn't be much longer. For me the time goes fast. A couple of hours is like a minute.

Was this an assignment?

Yes, I had been drawing drapery and I needed more practice. So the idea was to draw my sister lying down so there would be a lot of wrinkles in her clothes.

What did you have to know about drawing a foreshortened *figure?*

You have to make positively sure of where a certain wrinkle or detail is. If you misplace one, the next won't be right and eventually the whole leg or arm will be out of proportion. That's why it's good to quickly sketch in the whole figure in the beginning. You're less likely to lose the sense of how everything relates.

How does the drawing look now?

I wish I could change it. The bed looks like it's floating. It should be more solid. Also I should have darkened more of the wrinkles in the clothes. You need darks and lights to make your eye travel around the drawing. I always thought the drawing should be different, even when I was working on it. Then I figured I'd better quit while I was ahead. You don't want to put in too much detail. It clutters it up. It can even be boring.

How do your parents feel about your going into art?

They support me — even though my father may not think it's the best choice. Parents are afraid of the arts. One of my teachers said, all the odds are against you, no matter how good you are. It's like walking on a tightrope. It's scary. But it's exciting too. I'm almost glad my parents have doubts. It makes me stronger and makes me want to show them I can do it.

What are your future plans?

Next fall I'll be going to the Rhode Island School of Design. I'll learn a lot, but I might not stay there for four years. It's too safe to stay in school. Maybe it would be better to work for a designer. I'd probably learn more.

Why do you keep doing art?

I think that everyone has a purpose on this earth. My purpose is to be an artist, and to show people things they can't see. You want to open people's minds a little bit more — even if you affect them in a negative way. At least, it's a reaction. At least it shows they're human. They haven't been so pushed into society that they've forgotten they have feelings.

Is there any advice you could offer to our readers?

To people serious about art, I'd say, remember that art is not a part of your life. It *is* your life. It's what you live *for*.

Create a drawing that almost reaches out of the page.

Larger than Life

MATERIALS

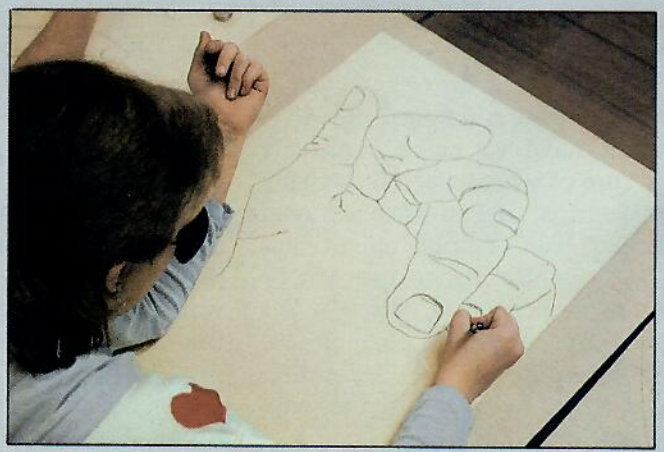
- Ebony pencil (soft lead)
- vinyl eraser
- 18 x 24″ manila paper (60-80 lb.)
- Paper towels
- Spray fixative (or hair spray)

As you have seen, Michelangelo wanted to create a new kind of figure, one that looked more "real" than those done by artists before him. To do this, he had to use new drawing methods so his creations would appear more lifelike. In this workshop, you'll learn several of this great artist's Renaissance techniques — contour drawing, foreshortening, and modeling. And you'll begin by drawing an object with which you are very familiar — your own hand.

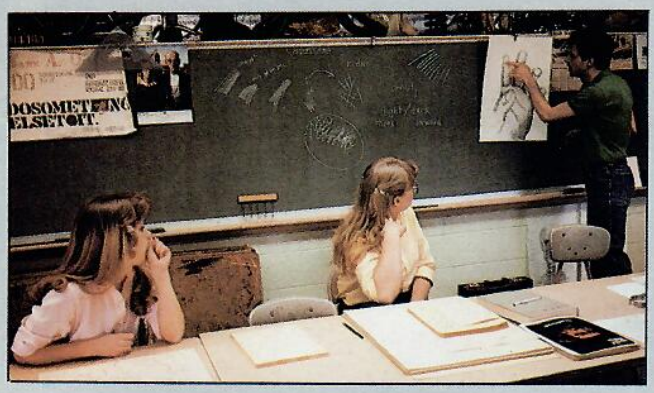
STARTING OUT

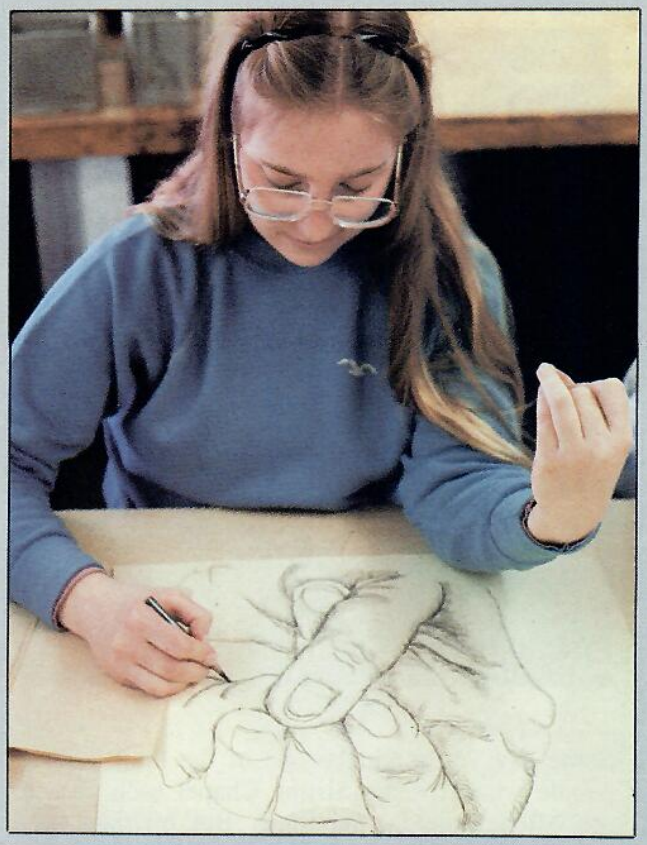
1 Do a five-minute blind *contour drawing* of your hand. Imagine your pencil is touching the edge of your hand. Without looking at the paper, imagine you are moving your pencil around your hand. Display and talk about the drawings.

2 Pose your hand so it is *foreshortened* (a part, such as a finger, is coming toward, or going away from you). Draw the *contours* you see — the closest parts will seem bigger and at an angle. Work large, so your drawing fills the whole page.



3 *Modeling* the light and dark areas by *crosshatching* will make your drawing seem more three-dimensional. Pick one of the crosshatching techniques you see on the board, and use only that technique, varying the length, width, and density of your line.



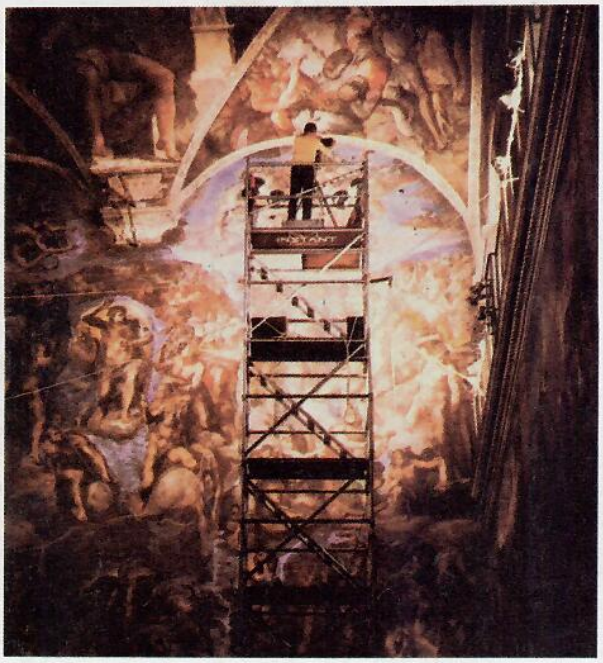


4 Generally, dark areas seem to come toward the viewer, while light ones seem to recede. Define details, but don't lose sight of large areas. ▶

SOME SOLUTIONS

Can you find a small, dark finger that appears to be pointing away from us? What about five very light fingers that seem to be reaching toward us — how does the dark modeled background behind the fingers add to this effect? Which two artists have created threatening fists, or claws, crammed into corners of the pages? Can you pick out a giant hand, so big that it goes right off the paper?

Prepared by Ned Nesti, Jr., Morrison High School, Morrison, IL. Photos by Janet Soderberg.



Michelangelo Buonarotti (1475-1564). *Seated Man*. The Albertina Collection, Vienna.

MICHELANGELO TODAY

Some day you might be one of the three million people who visit the Sistine Chapel each year to see Michelangelo's paintings. But by then, you may be seeing totally different works. By 1991, years of dirt and grime will have been removed from the paintings and, for the first time in three centuries, the Sistine Chapel will look just as it did in Michelangelo's time. One art historian, after seeing what the special restoration team has done so far, has said, "Now we can see the real Michelangelo. Soon it will be like reliving the moments of the creation of the Sistine Chapel."

MICHELANGELO IN THE U.S.

In this issue you've seen reproductions of some of Michelangelo's most famous works. If you live in the New York-Washington area, you may soon get a chance to see some of the actual works done by this great artist. A new show *Master Drawings from the Albertina* will feature studies by Michelangelo for the *Sistine Chapel* (above), as well as drawings by such artists as Rembrandt, Raphael, and Dürer. *Master Drawings* can be seen at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC. Oct. 28, 1984-Jan. 13, 1985. It will then travel to the Morgan Library in New York City, Mar. 8-May 26.

A 150th BIRTHDAY

Do you remember seeing the figure at the right in the news lately? She was on TV and in the newspapers a few months ago. This work by the French Impressionist artist Edgar Degas was featured last spring in the largest art sale ever held, and finally sold for two and a half million dollars. You'll be hearing much more about Degas in the coming year, which will be the 150th anniversary of his birth. Many museums will be celebrating this event, including the National Gallery of Art. A large show, *Degas: The Dancers,* will be held there in Washington, DC, Nov. 22, 1984–March 10, 1985. And in next month's *Art & Man,* you'll learn more about this great artist, discovering just what it is about this seemingly simple pastel drawing that makes it a great work of art worth millions.

Edgar Degas (1834-1917). *Mary Cassatt at the Louvre*, 1880.