**Sacred Art: Michelangelo**

Born March 6, 1475, in Caprese, in Tuscany, Italy, Michelangelo Buonaratti is one of history’s most renowned artists. He was an artist of many talents, working as a sculptor, painter, and architect, and even making forays into poetry. His talents and determination were recognized early on, and his beautiful and well-known sculpture, *The Pieta*, was completed in 1499, when he was only 25 years old.

In 1505, he began working for a series of popes, beginning with Julius II. This was a difficult period for Michelangelo, as his energies were often divided among various projects, commissioned works were put on hold, and some projects were left unfinished or completed on a significantly reduced scale. From 1508 – 1512, Michelangelo completed what is perhaps his most famous work: the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel. Interestingly, he did not want to take on the project; but, given his determination and high ideals as an artist, once he had taken it on, he worked with great effort to create one of the greatest works of art in the history of the world. And, amazingly, he completed the work almost entirely on his own!

Michelangelo also had great success as an architect, known for the tomb of Pope Julius II, the Medici Chapel, and Laurentian Library. And, perhaps most notably, in 1546 he was made the chief architect of Saint Peter’s Basilica. Michelangelo was well known during his lifetime, attaining fame and wealth. It was, however, not the fame and wealth that drove him most fundamentally, but rather his desire to create truly great art.

**Sources:**

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