

## LOOKING AT MICHELANGELO



Fig. A.  
Michelangelo (1475-1564)  
*Christ on the Cross*  
c. 1555-60  
Black chalk on paper  
27.5 cm x 23.4 cm  
The Courtauld Gallery,  
London

A special display of rare Italian sixteenth century drawings and prints from The Courtauld Gallery's outstanding permanent collection will complement the exhibition *Michelangelo's Dream*, on view from **18 February to 16 May 2010**. Highlights of this rich group will be three autograph drawings by Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564), ranging from his early period in Florence to his very last years in Rome and covering both religious and pagan subjects.

Whilst the vigorously drawn early pen and ink study of *Christ before Pilate* shows Michelangelo's extraordinary powers as a narrator of dramatic scenes, his *Christ on the Cross* (fig. A) gives insight into the profound spirituality of the almost ninety year old master. This haunting black chalk drawing is one of a group of highly personal late works showing the Crucifixion and it powerfully communicates Michelangelo's profound reflection on Christ's death.

Michelangelo never had an organised workshop, preferring to work alone with just a few pupils and assistants. Nevertheless, his work was immensely influential in his own lifetime. The display explores how contemporary artists responded to Michelangelo's creations. Two drawings by the famous Venetian painter Jacopo Tintoretto (1519-1594) provide an example of an artist studying Michelangelo through direct copying, whereas Jacopo Pontormo's (1494-1557) great study of a seated youth (fig. B) shows the inspirational influence of Michelangelo in the development of an exceptional new work.

The display will also include a remarkable large composite print of Michelangelo's *Last Judgement*. Composed of ten separate numbered sheets of paper, the print is reassembled and displayed here for the first time.



Fig. B.  
Jacopo Pontormo (1494-1557)  
*Seated youth (recto)*, c. 1525  
Black chalk on paper  
40.4 x 28 cm  
The Courtauld Gallery, London

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