Did Michelangelo Include a Hidden Caricature of Himself in One of His Famous Sketches?

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A new Clinical Anatomy article presents evidence that Michelangelo inserted his self-portrait into a sketch of his close friend, Vittoria Colonna, which is currently in the collection of the British Museum in London, England. This self-caricature of Michelangelo may serve as a tool for analysing the artist's probable bodily dimensions and even his state of health at the time.

In the portrait of Michelangelo’s friend, a small figure can be seen standing in the area immediately in front of her abdomen and between the lines that form part of her dress. The caricature is leaning forward at an acute angle, as if he himself were drawing the portrait.

The caricature may have been a signature of sorts, according to lead author Dr. Deivis de Campos, of the Federal University of Health Sciences of Porto Alegre, in Brazil. During Michelangelo’s time, there were many restrictions on artists and their work, perhaps the main one being that artists were not allowed to sign their works.

Additional Information


About Journal

CLINICAL ANATOMY is the Official Journal of the American Association of Clinical Anatomists and the British Association of Clinical Anatomists.

The goal of CLINICAL ANATOMY is to provide a medium for the exchange of current information between anatomists and clinicians. This journal embraces anatomy in all its aspects as applied to medical practice. Furthermore, the journal assists physicians and other health care providers in keeping abreast of new methodologies for patient management and informs educators of new developments in clinical anatomy and teaching techniques.

CLINICAL ANATOMY publishes original and review articles of scientific, clinical, and educational interest. Papers covering the application of anatomic principles to the solution of clinical problems and/or the application of clinical observations to expand anatomic knowledge are welcomed.

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