

The Holy Family with the Infant Saint John the Baptist (recto); Amorous Putti at Play; Head of a Bird (verso)



Main Image

Not currently on view

Alternate Views



Object Overall



Verso

Object Details

Title:

The Holy Family with the Infant Saint John the Baptist (recto); Amorous Putti at Play; Head of a Bird (verso)

Artist/Maker:

[Michelangelo Buonarroti \(/art/collection/artists/3265/michelangelo-buonarroti-italian-1475-1564/\)](/art/collection/artists/3265/michelangelo-buonarroti-italian-1475-1564/) (Italian, 1475 - 1564)

Culture:

Italian

Place:

Italy (Place created)

Date:

about 1530

Medium:

Black and red chalk with pen and brown ink over stylus (recto); Pen and black and brown ink (verso)

Object Number:

93.GB.51

Dimensions:

27.9 × 39.4 cm (11 × 15 1/2 in.)

Markings:

Watermark: crossed arrows (cf. Briquet 6276)

Inscription:

"Tempo verra ancor" (verso), in pen and ink

Alternate Titles:

The Holy Family with Two Angels (recto); Amorous Putti at Play, Head of a Bird, and Various Doodles (verso)  
(Published Title)

Object Type:

Drawing

Although Michelangelo Buonarroti used the theme of the Madonna and Child many times during his life, here he chose to represent a variant of the motif, one not specifically related in the Bible but commonly depicted by artists in the 1400s and 1500s. The infant Saint John the Baptist and two angels join the Holy Family on an interlude in their flight into Egypt to escape Herod's massacre of Jewish male newborns. To the right, a lightly drawn donkey grazes; the angels are barely discernible at the top left. The focus of attention, however, is the central group of the Virgin and the two children.

Michelangelo achieved a solid, sculptural effect by using a combination of different media drawn on top of each other: underdrawing with a stylus, black and then red chalk, followed by pen and brown ink. Finely modulated hatching and cross-hatching enhances the figures' sense of three-dimensionality. Changes reflecting Michelangelo's creative working methods are visible in the head of the Virgin, which is positioned simultaneously looking downwards to the left and upwards to the right.

**Provenance** ■ **Exhibitions** ■ **Related Media** ■

Drawings from the J. Paul Getty Museum (October 29, 1993 to January 23, 1994) (recto)

- Royal Academy of Arts (London), October 29, 1993 to January 23, 1994

Michelangelo's Holy Family with the Infant Saint John the Baptist Seen in Context (January 10 to March 26, 1995)

- The J. Paul Getty Museum (Malibu), January 10 to March 26, 1995

Figural Compositional Drawings from the 16th to the 19th Century (August 31 to December 8, 1996) (recto)

- The J. Paul Getty Museum (Malibu), August 31 to December 8, 1996

Master Drawings from the J. Paul Getty Museum (December 16, 1997 to February 22, 1998) (recto)

- The J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center (Los Angeles), December 16, 1997 to February 22, 1998

The Body Beautiful: Artists Draw the Nude (1440 - 1880) (December 14, 1999 to February 27, 2000) (recto)

- The J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center (Los Angeles), December 14, 1999 to February 27, 2000

Michelangelo to Vasari: Drawing the Figure in Renaissance Florence (July 15 to October 19, 2003) (recto)

- The J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center (Los Angeles), July 15 to October 19, 2003

A Light Touch: Exploring Humor in Drawing (September 23 to December 7, 2008) (verso)

- The J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center (Los Angeles), September 23 to December 7, 2008

Drawing the Classical Figure (December 23, 2008 to March 8, 2009) (recto)

- The J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center (Los Angeles), December 23, 2008 to March 8, 2009


Michelangelo: Divine Draftsman and Designer (working title) (November 6, 2017 to February 12, 2018) (recto)


- The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), November 6, 2017 to February 12, 2018




Audio: The Holy Family with Infant  
Saint John Baptist

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