

SAULAN, BRIAN PAUL G.
BSOA-1F
ART APPRECIATION

The Raft of the Medusa by Théodore Géricault (1818–1819)



Medium: Oil on canvas, measuring 491 cm by 716 cm, making it an over-life-size painting.

Form: The painting depicts a chaotic yet structured scene of survivors clinging to a makeshift raft after the wreck of the French naval frigate "Méduse". Géricault used dramatic lighting, dynamic composition, and realistic anatomy to heighten its emotional impact.

Purpose: The work aimed to expose the incompetence of the French government, as the shipwreck was caused by an unqualified captain. It also sought to evoke empathy and horror in viewers by portraying the suffering and desperation of the survivors.

Historical Significance: This painting is a landmark of Romanticism, bridging Neoclassical precision with Romantic emotional intensity. It challenged traditional history painting by focusing on contemporary events and human suffering rather than heroic or mythological themes.

Moses by Michelangelo (c. 1513–1515)



Medium: Marble sculpture.

Form: The figure of Moses is seated but exudes latent energy, with detailed musculature and an intense gaze. He holds the tablets of the Ten Commandments and features small "horns," a result of a mistranslation in the Latin Vulgate Bible.

Purpose: Commissioned as part of Pope Julius II's tomb, *Moses* symbolizes divine authority and human emotion. It reflects Moses' struggle between righteous anger and restraint after witnessing idolatry among the Israelites.

Historical Significance: This sculpture is a masterpiece of High Renaissance art, showcasing Michelangelo's unparalleled skill in anatomy and emotional expression. It has become an enduring symbol of spiritual and artistic achievement.

Architectural Structure: The Leaning Tower of Pisa (1173–1372)



Medium: White marble and stone.

Form: A freestanding Romanesque bell tower with eight stories, including a hollow central cylinder. Its iconic tilt resulted from unstable alluvial soil beneath its foundation.

Purpose: Designed as the campanile (bell tower) for Pisa's cathedral complex, it was intended to amplify the sound of bells calling worshippers to prayer.

Historical Significance: The Leaning Tower is a hallmark of Romanesque architecture and a symbol of medieval engineering challenges. Despite its tilt, it reflects Pisa's ambition during its peak as a maritime power. Its unique design has made it one of the most recognizable landmarks in the world.

Conclusion

These three works—Géricault's *The Raft of the Medusa*, Michelangelo's *Moses*, and the Leaning Tower of Pisa—each exemplify how art and architecture can encapsulate human emotion, cultural values, and historical narratives. Through their respective mediums, they

demonstrate technical mastery while addressing themes of survival, spirituality, and ambition that continue to resonate across time.