

**THE RELATION BETWEEN MICHAEL  
ANGELO AND TINTORET: SEVENTH  
OF THE COURSE OF LECTURES ON  
SCULPTURE DELIVERED AT  
OXFORD, 1870-71**

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The Relation Between Michael Angelo and Tintoret: Seventh of the Course of Lectures on Sculpture Delivered at Oxford, 1870-71 by John Ruskin

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**JOHN RUSKIN**

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THE RELATION  
BETWEEN  
MICHAEL ANGELO  
AND  
TINTORET,

SEVENTH OF THE COURSE OF  
LECTURES ON SCULPTURE

DELIVERED AT OXFORD, 1870-71,

BY  
JOHN RUSKIN,

HONORARY STUDENT OF CHRISTCHURCH, AND SLADE PROFESSOR OF FINE ART.

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I HAVE printed this Lecture separately, that strangers visiting the Galleries may be able to use it for reference to the drawings. But they must observe that its business is only to point out what is to be blamed in Michael Angelo, and that it assumes the facts of his power to be generally known. Mr. Tyrwhitt's statement of these, in his "Lectures on Christian Art," will put the reader into possession of all that may justly be alleged in honour of him.

*Corpus Christi College, 1st May, 1872.*

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THE RELATION  
BETWEEN  
MICHAEL ANGELO AND TINTORET.

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*The Seventh of the Course of Lectures on Sculpture  
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IN preceding lectures on sculpture I have included references to the art of painting, so far as it proposes to itself the same object as sculpture, (idealization of form) ; and I have chosen for the subject of our closing inquiry, the works of the two masters who accomplished or implied the unity of these arts. Tintoret entirely conceives his figures as solid statues : sees them in his mind on every side ; detaches each from the other by imagined air and light ; and foreshortens, interposes, or involves them, as if they were pieces of clay in his hand. On the contrary, Michael Angelo conceives his sculpture partly as if it were painted ; and using (as I told you formerly) his pen like a chisel, uses also his chisel like a pencil ; is sometimes as

picturesque as Rembrandt, and sometimes as soft as Correggio.

It is of him chiefly that I shall speak to-day ; both because it is part of my duty to the strangers here present to indicate for them some of the points of interest in the drawings forming part of the University collections ; but still more, because I must not allow the second year of my professorship to close, without some statement of the mode in which those collections may be useful or dangerous to my pupils. They seem at present little likely to be either ; for since I entered on my duties, no student has ever asked me a single question respecting these drawings, or, so far as I could see, taken the slightest interest in them.

There are several causes for this which might be obviated—there is one which cannot be. The collection, as exhibited at present, includes a number of copies which mimic in variously injurious ways the characters of Michael Angelo's own work ; and the series, except as material for reference, can be of no practical service until these are withdrawn, and placed by themselves. It includes, besides, a number of original drawings which are indeed of value to any laborious student of Michael Angelo's life and temper ; but which owe the greater part of this interest to their being executed in times of sickness or indolence, when the master, however strong, was failing in his

purpose, and, however diligent, tired of his work. It will be enough to name, as an example of this class, the sheet of studies for the Medici tombs, No. 45, in which the lowest figure is, strictly speaking, neither a study nor a working drawing, but has either been scrawled in the feverish languor of exhaustion, which cannot escape its subject of thought; or, at best, in idly experimental addition of part to part, beginning with the head, and fitting muscle after muscle, and bone after bone to it, thinking of their place only, not their proportion, till the head is only about one twentieth part of the height of the body: finally, something between a face and a mask is blotted in the upper left-hand corner of the paper, indicative, in the weakness and frightfulness of it, simply of mental disorder from overwork; and there are several others of this kind, among even the better drawings of the collection, which ought never to be exhibited to the general public.

It would be easy, however, to separate these, with the acknowledged copies, from the rest; and, doing the same with the drawings of Raphael, among which a larger number are of true value, to form a connected series of deep interest to artists, in illustration of the incipient and experimental methods of design practised by each master.

I say, to artists. Incipient methods of design are not, and ought not to be, subjects of earnest inquiry