

IVORY FIGURE OF CHRIST
~ *CHRISTUS TRIUMPHANS* ~

Material: ivory

Height: 14.5 cm

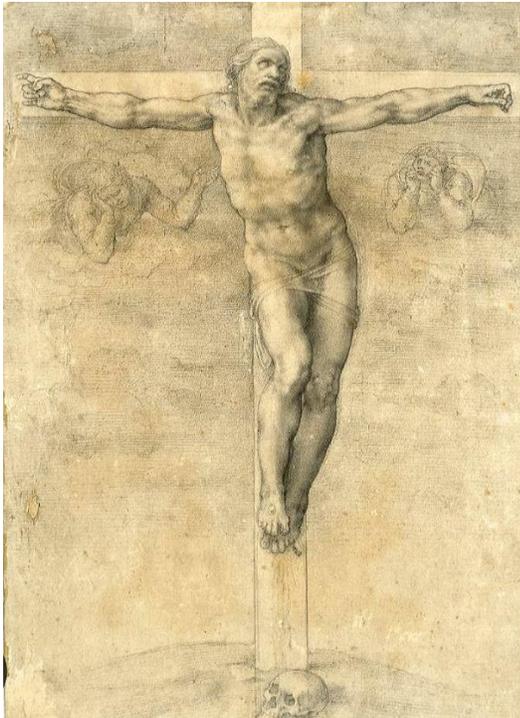
Origin: Italy

Period: late 18th – early 19th century



This is the finely carved ivory figure of Christ which originally was fixed to the wooden cross in a representation of Crucifixion. The posture of the Christ's body is rendered in contrapposto position, resulting in a slight curvature of the torso and a tilting of the pelvis and shoulders in opposite directions. The head of Christ is raised to the sky and crowned with the crown of thorns. His eyes are wide opened gazing upward. The highly personalized facial features, as well as hair and beard are rendered in great detail. He has rope-tied draped loincloth known as *perizonium* around his hips, which is rendered with many meticulously treated folds, while the minute treatment of the rope is especially fascinating. His feet are set one upon another, and his arms are raised in a diagonal position, two fingers on his hands are folded. As usual, the arms are carved separately and then joined at shoulder height. The subtle modelling of Christ's elongated limbs, the accurate body anatomy, the virtuoso carving of his facial features, hair and crown of thorns, and the realism of the perizonium material point to the hand of an accomplished sculptor.

The type of this Christ figure is the *Christus Triumphans*, where he is represented still alive, with open eyes and raised head, recommending his spirit to God the Father. The iconography of the living Christ crucified on the cross is retrieved from early medieval models, and it was among the most prevalent Christ representations during the Baroque époque in Europe. The Baroque iconography was anticipated by Michelangelo in his famous drawing of Christ on the cross flanked by two lamenting angels, which he made for his spiritual confidant Vittoria Colonna (today the drawing is in the collection of British Museum, London). Capturing the most significant and dramatic moment of the Crucifixion, this representation perfectly met the intense religious sentiment typical of the 17th century, and it remained widespread into the 19th century.



Left: Christ on the Cross, flanked by two lamenting angels, drawing by Michelangelo for Vittoria Colonna, 1538 – 1541, British Museum



Right: Crucifixion for Vittoria Colonna, after Michelangelo, engraving by Giulio Bonasone, circa 1540

According to the stylistic features and the artistic treatment of the material this particular ivory figure of Christ could be ascribed to an Italian workshop, possibly in Milan, and could be dated at the late 18th or early 19th century.

For „Antique Art“

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