

*Michelangelo*  
MICHELANGELO

Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni (Florence 1475 – 1564 Rome)

TONDO TADDEI

c 1504 – 1505



Diameter 42"

Medium: Cast Marble

Limited Edition of 100 plus 12 foundry proofs



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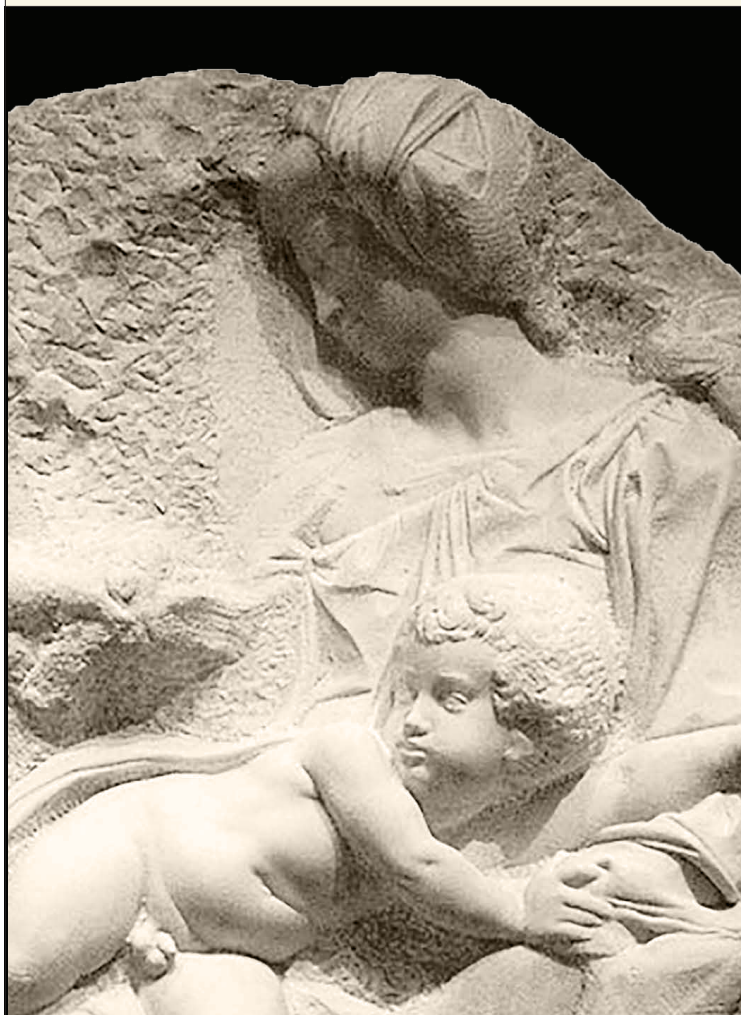
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The Tondo Taddei (at the Royal Academy, London), and the Tondo Pitti (at the National Museum of the Bargello, Florence) are the only two roundels (circular relief sculptures) carved by Michelangelo, produced when he was in his late twenties. Vasari asserted that Michelangelo created both tondos at about the same time as his lost bronze David and his St. Matthew. This posthumous Tondo Taddei is a precise 1:1 casting that is faithful to Michelangelo's original.



It is clear that the master left these two reliefs in a state of incompleteness. However, whether he intentionally preferred to leave them in a highly suggestive state, or whether his numerous engagements prevented him from carving them deeper and then finely polishing them, will forever remain unknown. We do know that he refused to work piecemeal in isolated areas; rather, he carefully followed his preparatory drawings and controlled his cutting layer by layer, from the first down to the second, and then third layers until the full composition emerged.

In consideration of the exquisite finishing of the surface of the Pieta of the Vatican, the Madonna at Bruges, the Bacchus, the David, and the Moses, some scholars are inclined to believe that, with enough time at his disposal, he would have fully finished these tondos in greater detail.

However, in the Tondo Taddei the roughness of the background serves to highlight the exquisitely modeled figures of the Madonna and the Christ Child as they emerge from the marble. To the left, the infant Saint John balances the composition but the lack of definition makes him appear to be emerging from a fog of stone, thus accentuating his role as a subordinate figure, as if half seen in a dream.



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