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Europe, Art and Culture

Rome's Sistine Chapel has been photographed in groundbreaking new detail

Created by James Martin February 27, 2017 at 6:00 pm

The world-famous artwork that adorns the walls and ceilings of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican has been photographed and documented in unprecedented detail, with over 270,000 digital frames having been created.



Over 270,000 digital frames were created for the project. Image by [Benay Isaac](#) / CC BY 2.0

The project was completed over the course of five years, with very few people knowing about it. It used advanced digital [photography](#) to record Michelangelo's famous work in incredible detail, with the aim of creating a comprehensive reference for future restoration work. A collection of 220 life-sized prints has been created from the photographs, with elements of *The Last Judgement* and the *Creation of Adam* being showcased as well as wall frescoes that were painted by Perugino and Botticelli. Computer processing was used to stitch photographs together to create large, flowing work that encompasses large areas of detail, and special colour grading was used to give the work warm, intense hues.



Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam* has been photographed in stunning detail as part of the project. Image by [Kevin Gleason](#) / CC BY 2.0

The photographs are due to be included in a limited edition, three-volume set of publications featuring 870 pages. Created as a joint venture between the Vatican Museums and Italy's Scripta Maneant [art](#) publishers, the set will cost approximately €12,000. The frescoes of the Sistine Chapel were last photographed between 1980 and 1994, during restoration and cleaning work. The images from the project are being stored in a massive 30-terabyte server in the Vatican. Michelangelo finished the ceiling in 1512 before concentrating on the gigantic panel that depicts the Last Judgement from 1535 to 1541.



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