

Michelangelo - The Life of a Titan

Michelangelo - The Life of a Titan is a German-Swiss documentary film created by Curt Oertel from 1937 to 1940 about the life and work of the painter , sculptor , architect and poet Michelangelo Buonarroti .

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The life and work of Michelangelo, one of the most important artists of the High Renaissance , is presented by the German actor Mathias Wieman as narrator against the historical background of Michelangelo's time. It begins with the artist's early works and presents the artist's late fame, with the film containing detailed considerations of some of the artist's best-known works. His life's work is also illustrated by photographs of Italian landscapes and old engravings. The film's starting point is a sonnet by Vittoria Colonna, who created a lyrical monument to her contemporary and friend Michelangelo, which Curt Oertel translated into the film.

Production notes and trivia

In 1937, Curt Oertel began filming a short Michelangelo film on his own production and in collaboration with the Zurich production company Pandora-Film. The first 20-minute result was presented to an audience of art historians for the first time on October 16, 1938 in Zurich's Scala cinema. This version later won an award at the Venice Biennale . In view of the outstanding reactions, Oertel and Pandora-Film decided to produce a feature-length documentary about the Italian Renaissance genius in collaboration with Berlin's Tobis-Film. This film celebrated its world premiere on March 15, 1940 in Berlin under the title *Michelangelo - The Life of a Titan* . The Vienna premiere

	Movie
<u>title</u>	Michelangelo - The Life of a Titan
<u>Country of production</u>	<u>Germany</u> <u>Switzerland</u>
<u>original language</u>	<u>German</u>
<u>Years of publication</u>	1938/1940
<u>length</u>	20 (1938), 93 (1940) minutes
	<u>Rod</u>
<u>Direction</u>	<u>Curt Oertel</u>
<u>script</u>	Curt Oertel
<u>production</u>	Pandora film (Zurich), Tobis film (Berlin)
<u>Music</u>	<u>Alois Melichar</u>
<u>camera</u>	<u>Curt Oertel</u> <u>Harry Ringger</u>
	<u>occupation</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Mathias Wieman</u> : Speaker

was on June 4, 1940, the Zurich premiere on November 8, 1940. [1] The German television broadcast took place on April 12, 1954, and in Austria the documentary was shown again in cinemas on May 4, 1956.

The well-known actor Mathias Wieman speaks the accompanying text from the off.

In 1950, *Michelangelo - The Life of a Titan* was awarded the New York City College Prize for creative achievements in the field of documentary filmmaking. [2]

After the war, Robert J. Flaherty made a 70-minute US version of this film, shortened by 23 minutes, under the title *The Titan: Story of Michelangelo*. This version, which received the National Board of Review Award for best foreign language film in 1950, was awarded the Oscar for best documentary film at the 1951 Academy Awards.

Reviews

“... artistically and technically almost perfect film strip about Michelangelo, that film by Curt Oertel, which means something new, unique and special in the field of cultural film...”

– *Der Spiegel* from January 18, 1947

"Oertel's fame rests on the documentary film *Michelangelo* (1940), in which he traced the artist's life and work very vividly and vividly and presented his most important works with an insightful camera and in differentiated use of light."

– *Bucher's Encyclopedia of Film*, CJ Bucher publishing house, Lucerne and Frankfurt/M. 1977, p. 563

Paimann's film lists summarized: “A cross-section of the master's life and work is offered through works, without any acting embodiment; supplemented by maps and contemporary images, with a clairvoyant camera, in different lighting, ... symphonic music.” [3]

“Documentary film about the life and works of Michelangelo (1475–1564) created over several years of work: using drawings, paintings, sculptures, buildings. Due to the loss of the German copies, it could only be re-performed in a new version after the end of the war. The heroism of the film, which symphonically combines its materials and casts its objects in an expressive light, is already clear in the subtitle: 'The Life of a Titan'.”

– Lexicon of international film [4]

Individual evidence

1. Hervé Dumont: *The history of Swiss film. Feature films 1896–1965*. Lausanne 1987, p. 215
2. *Time*. September 28, 1950



Michelangelo monument in Florence



Michelangelo's *David* statue (Accademia di Belle Arti, Florence)

3. *Michelangelo* in Paimann's film lists (https://web.archive.org/web/20160913073946/http://old.filmarchiv.at/efg/filmarchiv/paimann/1956/Paimann_2204_1.jpg) (Memento of the original (https://redirector.toolforge.org/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fold.filmarchiv.at%2Fefg%2Ffilmarchiv%2Fpaimann%2F1956%2FPaimann_2204_1.jpg) from September 13, 2016 in the *Internet Archive*) **Info:** The archive link was inserted automatically and has not yet been checked. Please check the original and archive link according to the instructions and then remove this notice.)
4. *Michelangelo*. (<https://www.filmdienst.de/film/details/30809>) In: *Lexicon of international film* . *Film Service* , accessed February 8, 2018 .

Web links

- *Michelangelo: Life of a Titan* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0230524/>) at IMDb
 - *Michelangelo – The Life of a Titan* (<https://www.filmportal.de/56d1f663da714c5cb390a2aace1057c1>) at [filmportal.de](https://www.filmportal.de)
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