

## What Are the Differences in Two Pietàs?

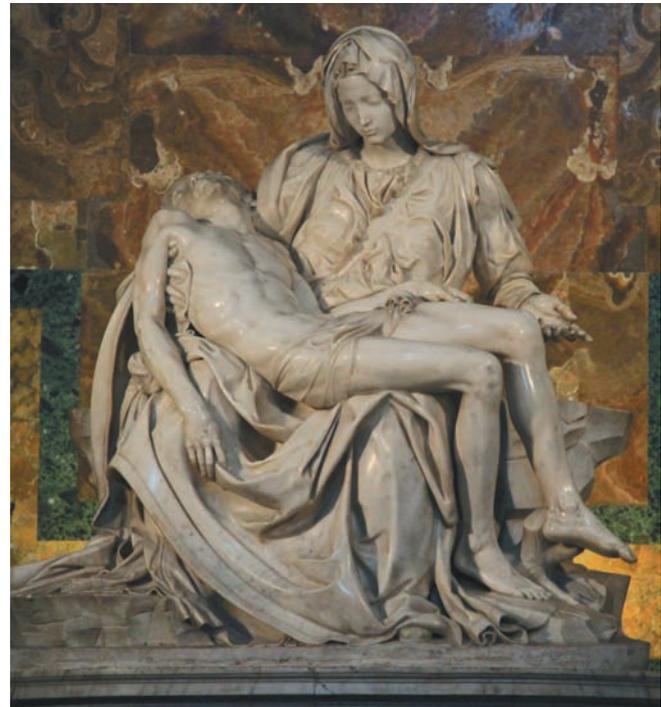
### Core Competency: Critical Thinking

Figures 10.35A and B depict two sculptures of the pietà (pee-ay-TAH), an image of the Virgin Mary holding and mourning her dead son, Jesus. The first is by an unknown fourteenth-century German sculptor and the other by Michelangelo, whose work was featured in Chapter 10 (figure 10.22). Compare the two pietàs, taking into consideration the images and caption and answering the following questions.

- How would you describe the differences in the masses of the sculptures, considering the overall size, bulk, compactness, rigidity, and form of each?
- How are the two materials (see caption) the artists used different in terms of durability, value, and appearance?
- How would you describe the type of sculpture each artist created? How do you know it is this type?
- How would you describe the carving techniques of the sculptors, considering the different surface qualities and approaches to projections?
- How would you describe the different expressions of the two sculptures, considering the feeling about this personal moment of mourning that each sculptor was trying to convey?
- How do the decisions that each sculptor made concerning mass, material, type, and technique help convey the meaning of the sculptures?



(A)



(B)

**FIGURE 10.35A AND B. (A) Roettgen Pietà.** c. 1300–25. Painted wood, height 2' 10 1/2". Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn, Germany; **(B) Michelangelo Buonarroti. Pietà.** 1498–99. Marble, height 5' 8 1/2". St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican, Rome.