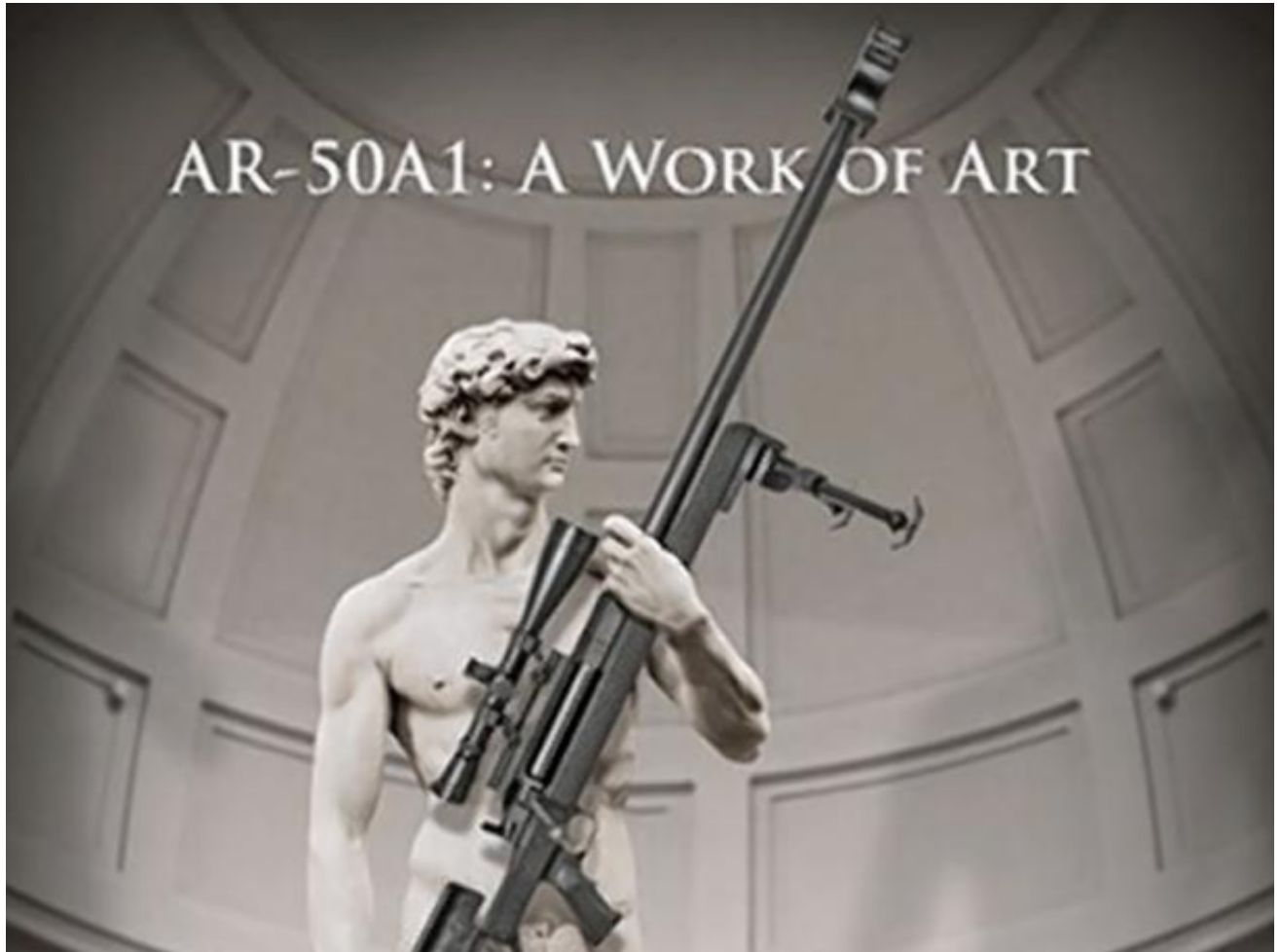




David & the Cheap Shot

Bianca Sorminis (March 09, 2014)



The Illinois based company Arma Lite latest advertisement depicting Michelangelo's David holding a bolt-action rifle, with a caption that describes it as 'A work of art', has prompted a bitter reaction from the Italian Culture Minister Franceschini, as he considers the image to be offensive and to be violating the law.

The director of Florence's Academy of Art, where the statue has been displayed since 1873, states that not only the Italian government has copyright on the commercial use of the image, but also that "The law says that the aesthetic value of the work cannot be distorted."

You need not be Italian, an art expert or a fierce opponent of gun culture to find the misuse of



Michelangelo's masterpiece image anachronistic and demeaning to say the least, if not even offensive and desecrating.

The David is not just a 'work of art' by an Italian sculptor, but unquestionably a universal masterpiece, which is part of everyone's timeless cultural heritage.

If anything, this ad is an offense to cultural dignity itself.

But let's take a look for a moment at what is behind this amazing work of art.

The Renaissance art of which the David is a majestic example, is the expression of the man's rebirth after Medieval art had depicted humanity as sinful and helpless, praying for salvation of the spirit, often trapped in deformed bodies, bent in passive resignation.

The Renaissance man is instead regarded as heroic, beautiful, conscious of his new potential, finally able to undertake nearly impossible challenges.

Michelangelo's David embodies both the aesthetics of Renaissance art, as well as Florence's political ideals at a time when the little city aimed at standing up to the big political powers.

Florence liked the idea of being represented by David, the young boy that defies the giant Goliath.

The sculpture was completed in three years, between 1501 and 1504, amongst enormous technical difficulties: the amount of labor needed, the quality of the marble that other sculptors before Michelangelo had considered flawed and tricky to work with being too tall and thin, therefore refusing to go ahead with the project, the objective transportation dilemmas ...

But the end result was astounding: Michelangelo gave birth to an immense statue tense with motion, animated by exceptional vitality, a young hero with a mature mind caught in the moment before attacking...loosely holding the stone in one hand and with the sling on his shoulder, strong but not threatening, he represented the highest ideal of a man whose inner strength dominates brutality.

What does all this have to do with a rifle... who knows?

But maybe Arma Lite itself does not know...they were probably just looking for a news breaking advertisement that would put them in the spotlight, and in doing this, more than a work art, produced a 'cheap shot' (yes, even us Italians can play on words).

What is apparent looking at this picture is that after more than 500 years, Michelangelo's David once again stands tall to set apart beauty and brutality, brightness and gloom, his stature undiminished.

Source URL: <http://www.iitaly.org/magazine/focus/op-eds/article/david-cheap-shot>

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