

THE ECSTASY OF SAINT THERESA

BERNINI. 1645 - 1652.



Bernini was the first sculptor to release the dramatic potential of light in sculpture.

This sculpture is controversial due to the way Saint Theresa is displayed in such a sensual way.

The sculpture is made of marble.

The way the angel is smiling and holding is an arrow about to pierce the saint is said to symbolize the way the angel pierces Saint Theresa in a sensual way.

The way the marble flows effortlessly captivates the viewer.

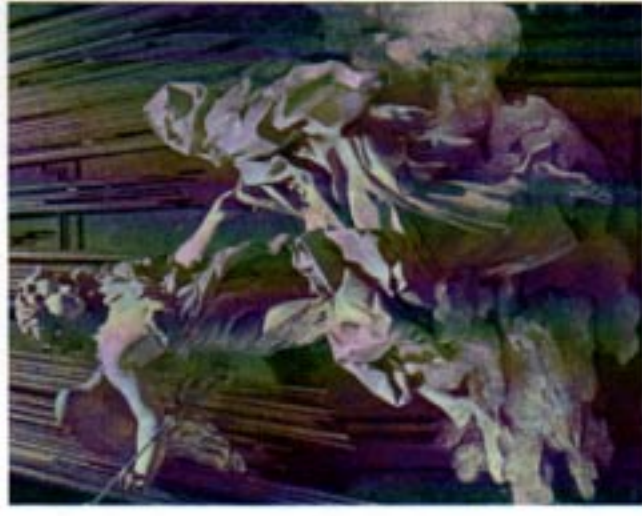
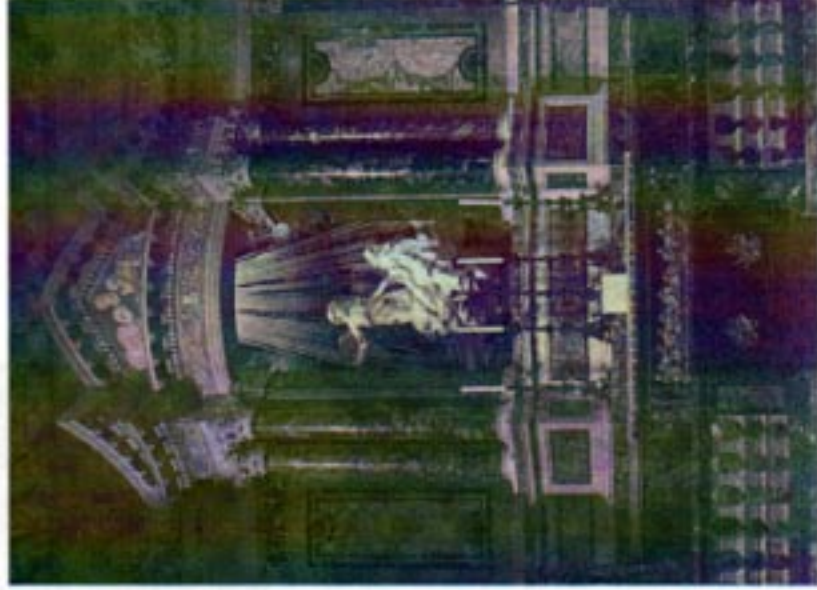
This sculpture seems so life-like, especially when the light is coming in at just the right time and illuminates through the marble of the nose in just the way the light would shine through real cartilage.

It is the central marble group of a sculpture complex designed and completed for the Cornaro Chapel of Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome.

It was completed for the sum of 12,000 scudi.

Made of marble.

Theresa is experiencing a transfiguring coma, the *Sleep of God*, described by mystics, in which a glimpse of glory is received.



The two focal sculptural figures derive from an episode described by Teresa of Avila in her autobiography, *The Life of Teresa of Jesus*. The chapter describes divine visions, including one where she saw a young, beautiful, and lambent angel standing aside her body:

It is one of the sculptural masterpieces of the Baroque era.

Bernini aimed to express the facial and body equivalents of a state of divine joy and not in a sensual way.