

# Mysteries behind Leonardo Da Vinci

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**Rezime**

Leonardo Da Vinci je jedan od najvećih umetnika koji su ikad živeli. Rodjen je u Italiji pre oko 500 god. Stvorio je dela zadivljujuće lepote uključujući i *Mona Lizu*, najpoznatiju sliku na svetu. U isto vreme dizajnirao je zastrašujuće ratne masine koje su donose smrt i razaranje. 300 god. pre nego što je to konačno urađeno, predložio je načine spuštanja čoveka na dno mora. Izumeo je vrstu paraglajdera neverovatnih 490 god. pre njegovog uspešnog, ponovnog kreiranja. Ali vekovima je njegova vizija ležala zaboravljena, opisana kao fantazija i nikada nije testirana. On je takođe bio izvanredan inženjer, pronalazac, koji se bavio i medicinom. Bio je prva osoba koja je nacrtala razvoj ljudskog embriona i otkrila načine funkcionisanja ljudskog tela, koji neće biti duplirani sve do dvadesetog veka. Čak i danas neki od njegovih pronalazaka i slika ostaju misterija za nas.

**Ključne reci:** Leonardo, renesansa, umetnik, pronalazac, inženjer, Mona Liza, misterija

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**Summary**

Leonardo Da Vinci is one of the greatest artists who has ever lived. Leonardo was born in Italy over 500 years ago and he created works of astonishing beauty including the *Mona Lisa*, the most famous painting in the world. At the same time he designed terrifying war machines which spread death and destruction. 300 years before it was eventually done, he had suggested ways of taking man to the bottom of the sea. He invented a type of hand glider a stunning 490 years before its successful reinvention, but for centuries his vision laid forgotten, written off as fantasy and never put to the test. He was also an extraordinary engineer, inventor and medical pioneer. He was the first person to draw the developing human embryo and made discoveries about the ways a human body functions that would not be duplicated till the 20th century. Even today some of his inventions and paintings remain a mystery for us.

**Key words:** Leonardo, renaissance, artist, inventor, engineer, Mona Lisa, mystery

## Early childhood

Leonardo was born in 1452 just outside the village of Vinci in Italy. His name means Leonardo of Vinci. He was born illegitimate and this shaped his life. Being a bastard, he was barred from learning Greek and Latin languages that all books at the time were written, but he turned this to his advantage. Leonardo had no use for The Greeks and the Romans and was very poorly educated in their philosophies and said that it's only by observation that we can find out the truth and the Greeks and the Romans may have been wrong in some of their formulations. Despite his curiosity and sharp mind, Leonardo did not like school. He often neglected his reading and mathematics lessons. He preferred to learn in his own way, by observing the world around him. He tried to find answers to things that puzzled him. This is why we call him the *first Modern Mind in History*. His dreams certainly suggest he had a strong empathy with birds. Throughout his life he watched and obsessively drew birds in flight and he began to establish the principles of aerodynamics. His obsession with birds led to one of the greatest obsessions of his life—to make a machine that would enable man to fly. We know what was in his mind thanks to his writings. He left behind 6000 pages of drawings and notes some of which have been collected into notebooks.

One of the most unusual and fascinating things about young Leonardo was his “mirror writing.” He was never corrected, so he wrote left handed and rather mysteriously backwards, this could be an early sign of just how secretive he would turn out to be. Throughout his life, he worried about the possibility of others stealing his ideas. The observations in his notebooks were written in such a way that they could only be read by holding the books up to a mirror. He wrote his notes from right to left, and he also formed each letter in reverse.

Leonardo grew up exploring the countryside around Vinci, he was endlessly curious about the natural world, examining it, studying it. He became obsessed by the movement of water, the cycles of growth in plants, the behaviour of living creatures and most of all—the wonder of flight.

## Renaissance

Leonardo's carefree childhood ended in the early 1460s, when his father took him from his home in Vinci and brought him to Florence. Florence was a vast construction site, extraordinary place for young Leonardo. It was one of the largest cities in Europe, the centre of the civilized world and at the heart of that great revolution in culture and science known as the **Renaissance**. During Leonardo's lifetime the first book would be published and Christopher Columbus would discover the new world. But the Renaissance was also a time of conflict and blood violence. Leonardo hated violence and wars, and yet he designed weapons and war machines for some of the worst tyrants of the times. Leonardo extolled the virtues of peace but he would help promote the art of war. But that all lies ahead, Leonardo's father brought him to Florence as a young boy to find work. Because he was illegitimate Leonardo was not able to become a lawyer or a doctor, instead Leonardo's father hoped that he'd become an artist.

Leonardo's father got him an apprenticeship with Andre Verockio a leading sculpture and craftsman of the period. Leonardo's apprenticeship lasted several years, he grew up in the studio. He was impatient from the start. He wanted to create masterpieces and in his early 20s he finally got his big chance. Verockio had won a major commission to paint a picture of Christ being baptised. He painted the main figures and left the minor characters to his assistants. Leonardo was given the figure of an angel in the left hand corner to paint. What he would do with it would stun his fellow students and the great master Verockio himself. The traditional method of painting at the time was to use egg tempera. This is how Leonardo would have been taught. But when he started his angel figure, the young Leonardo made a momentous decision. He decided to paint his figure in oils. It was an astonishing gamble for the young Leonardo to take at the time but it paid off. The whole effect is totally different. Leonardo's

contribution the angel on the left really stands out. And it's not just the oil paint of course, it's the way that Leonardo used it. We can see his genius in the angel's face. The impact of this painting on Leonardo's fellow artists was profound. Legend has it that his master Verrocchio was so moved that he told the other apprentices, that from now on Leonardo would paint all the faces and that he, Verrocchio, would never paint again.

## Scandal

But just as Leonardo's career was taking off, he found himself embroiled in a sex scandal one which would threaten his life.

He was obsessed with the ideal male form. It is repeated and drawn over again and again which doesn't compare to anything like the way in which the female form is represented. Leonardo's faces often seem to have some kind of sexual ambiguity. Leonardo was probably homosexual. He was certainly obsessed by the male nude and liked the company of beautiful young men. In fact the city of Florence was infamous for its homosexual culture, but it was strictly illegal. And the penalty if you were caught was death. You could even be burnt at the stake. Leonardo was accused and he spent weeks in a prison while the evidence against him was being collected.

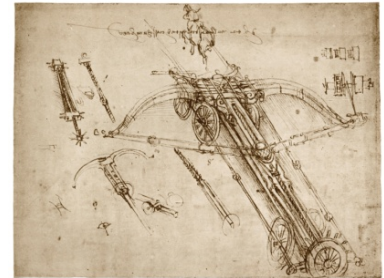
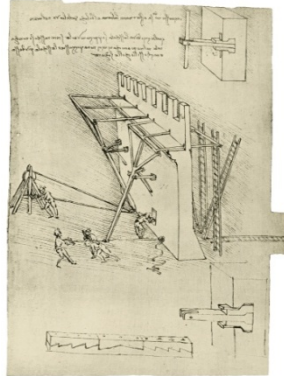
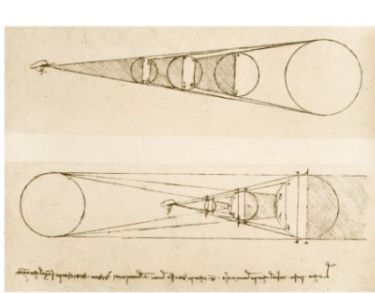
Fortunately one of Leonardo's companions was the son of a powerful noble man. And he helped him to get out. This must have been one of Leonardo's darkest moments. Before that, he was open and trusting, afterwards more suspicious and secretive. And as we'll see Leonardo's unwillingness to reveal to others what he's up to, would deprive the world of many of his great discoveries.

## Leonardo in Milan

After his trial Leonardo became increasingly restless and in 1482 at the age of 30, he suddenly packed his bags, left Florence and headed for another major city-Milan. The ruler of Milan was Ludovico Sforza and he was one of the most feared and hated tyrants in all Italy. Leonardo came to his castle hoping to get a job. Ludovico was a snob who surrounded himself with genealogists and astrologers as well as the usual mix of artists and engineers. Like any Renaissance ruler the Duke's greatest interest was in war machines. Leonardo was put to work, but not as a military engineer. He was paid a low wage to design the drainage for the Duchesses bathroom and to install a form of central heating. He was given a number of odd jobs to do around the castle including organising Sforza's parties. For the Duke's famous parties Leonardo was inventor, stage manager and producer, all in one. He designed the elaborate costumes and masks and the mechanical novelties to delight the guests. These events were about prestige and power. But Leonardo had far greater ambitions than satisfying the trivial whims of the Duke.

In Milan and his entire life Leonardo worked also for himself. Pushing the boundaries of science and making discoveries over an astonishing range of subjects. More than any other single person before or since. The versatility that Leonardo demonstrated during the years in Milan is astonishing. He let his imagination run wild and he made some remarkable discoveries.

Leonardo was one of the first to investigate how our eyes see and realized we see because light penetrates the eye and informs the brain. He invented epic schemes of engineering and mechanics.



Machines to dredge and excavate huge tracks of land. He investigated new methods of agriculture and irrigation and a whole range of military machines. But the trouble was he hadn't been paid for much of his work. There was one project, however that really appealed to Sforza's enormous vanity. Leonardo proposed building him the largest statue of a horse ever to be cast in bronze. This offer would haunt Leonardo for the next 16 years. Meantime his notebooks reveal that his constant researches went on. He worked out that light reflecting from tiny particles in the atmosphere is why the sky is blue.

Leonardo had managed to complete a couple of major paintings. The hauntingly beautiful Virgin of the Rocks and a painting of Sforza's mistress, Chechillia Gallorani. It is one of the great portraits of the Renaissance.



Chechillia Gallorani



Virgin of the Rocks



Leonardo writes again and again of his hatred of violence but in his notebooks there are plans for inventive and fearsome war machines. Perhaps the most intriguing of all his designs is what appears to be a forerunner of a tank which wasn't invented until the 1st world war, 400 years after Leonardo.

## The Last supper



By 1495 Leonardo had been working for Ludavico Sforza for 13 years. Despite Leonardo's unreliability the Duke now decided to entrust him with a major commission. In the monastery of St. Maria De La Graci. He asked Leonardo to depict the last supper, Christ's last meal before crucifixion. It had been painted many times but Leonardo would do something very different. His idea was to capture the reaction of the



Disciples to the moment when Christ says “one of you will betray me“. It was a hugely ambitious idea that required a practical expertise in fresco painting that he simply didn't have. He decided not to do the fresco the usual way. Instead he invented the kind of plaster he could paint on when dry. The painting added to his growing reputation as one of the greatest painters of his time. Tragically the experimental technique of painting on dry plaster, which had allowed him the time to get the painting just right, almost lead to this masterpiece being lost forever. A few years after the work was finished a tiny, almost invisible cracks appeared under the surface of the paint. Deep in the plaster moisture was rising and doing damage. Since then there have been numerous attempts at restoration, some of which did more harm than good. But something of the power of the original still remains. It is a ghost but it's a magnificent ghost.

## Venice

Leonardo was the greatest genius of all time, there's nobody like Leonardo. There are so many areas to which he turned his attention and every one was so beautifully created, constructed and conceived of. In 1499 Leonardo Da Vinci was 38 years old and enjoying a golden period in his life.

But then at the moment of what must have seemed his greatest artistic triumph it all went terribly wrong. Leonardo was forced to leave Milan in search of work and money.

Leonardo needed a financial backer, someone who would allow him to develop his extraordinary, even visionary ideas. So he decided to go to Venice. In 1500 Venice was one of the richest cities on earth, Venice's wealth was based on trade. But this wealth also attracted enemies like the Turks who were in the middle of an epic expansion. It seemed to Leonardo the perfect opportunity to find a buyer for a very unusual weapon. So he came to the council of Venice, not as a painter, but as an inventor. Leonardo suggested them to sink the Turkish fleet. That must have seemed the most bizarre idea they'd ever heard. Leonardo's idea of underwater divers was full of practical problems. But if it had been tried, might it just have worked. Could Leonardo have mastered the problems of underwater diving hundreds of years before anybody else?

As a weapon of war it wouldn't have been wildly practical, but as an early diving suit it is very impressive, particularly when you realise that no one else would get close to doing this until 300 years after Leonardo's death. Unfortunately for Leonardo, the suit was never built and his revolutionary plans were never tested.

In his notebooks, alongside the diving suit, are 100s of other ideas which seem to span outside his time. Catapults, printing presses, spring driven motors and windmills, artillery designs - more 19th century than 15th. His deadly looking fin missiles, look more like the high explosive shells of modern times

## Flying machines

His need to earn a living meant he often had to keep very strange company. Indeed, Leonardo frequently mentions his horror of war and man's inhumanity to man. But his ambition brought him in the winter of 1502 to the door of one of the most brutal tyrants ever known, a man whose ruthlessness and brilliant military cunning they all feared, Cesare Borgia.

Borgia made Leonardo his Chief Engineer, he gave him a unique level of power and his own personal protection. Leonardo carried out epic projects of civil engineering for him. The draining of huge tracks of land, the fortification of towns, he was even planning to re-route the river that goes through France. Leonardo envisaged a number of designs for flight including an ornithopter, a machine powered by man flapping great wings like a bird. Some of his designs even looked like a modern helicopter. And it seems Leonardo did have a fantasy of one day trying out these machines for himself. But perhaps the most achievable at the time was incredibly designed glider. Leonardo designed a practical flying machine hundreds of years before anyone else.

## Medicine

Now he would turn his attention to a whole new area of investigation and again it would require him to break the rules. It was at the hospital in the monastery of Santa Maria Nuovo in the early 1500s that Leonardo took the first steps towards a truly groundbreaking discovery. A discovery that medical research would only catch up with in the mid 20th century.

When he started studying anatomy it was only so that he could understand muscle and muscle movement but soon he became intrigued by what is deeper than the layers of the muscle. And became the very first person to dissect the organs of the body. At this time anatomical dissections were occasionally allowed by the church. They would make available the bodies of convicted criminals and these were dissected by surgeons who were watched by artists and students. The most important instrument was bare hands with long finger nails that were used to do a lot of the sharp dissecting. While Leonardo painted the Mona Lisa by day, at night he was here at the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova cutting up female corpses. His notes and ideas will become the foundation for a new science, Embryology. Leonardo da Vinci makes the first ever drawings of the human foetus in the womb. He was beginning to focus very intensively upon what life is, what creates life in the body, how it comes about and one of the things he was most interested in, in his anatomy, was this cycle of life, death and maturity.



At about the same time, by coincidence, he was dissecting the body of a 2-year old boy and an old man. He found out that the arteries are becoming closed off and obstructed in ages. In other words he discovered, in the early 16th century what we call hardening of the arteries, or arterial sclerosis. Tragically even his anatomy would be another heroic failure. Like so much of his work, it was never published. The documents lay undiscovered for centuries while the rest of the world caught up with Leonardo Da Vinci. His contribution has no significance because it was lost. It affected nobody and nothing and when it was rediscovered his contribution in anatomy, all of these things had been identified anyway.

## The first robot

His dissections were convincing him more and more that man is a wonderful piece of machinery. He could demonstrate exactly how we turned our arms and why we were able to turn our arms. This led him to his most extraordinary conclusion, that he could create an automated machine with a life of its own. Leonardo combined his fascination for anatomy with his passion for mechanics to create the world's first humanoid robot.

Perhaps the greatest testimony to Leonardo's vision is that his robot has made his mark on the space age. Some of the hi-tech robots used on NASA space stations today are indeed directly inspired by Leonardo's 500 year old drawings.

## The secret life of the Mona Lisa

In 1503 that Leonardo da Vinci began work on the portrait of a Florentine lady. It was to become the most personal and obsessive project of his career. He worked on the picture for over a decade, and kept it by his side until his death. He took her with him as he left Rome. She accompanied him for the next 15 years and she was beside him when he died.

She is known as the Mona Lisa, and she's become the most famous image in the history of art.

A good painter has to bring out 2 things, the physical appearance of the subject of his painting, but also what is in the mind, the intentions of the soul. Achieving the first is easy, the second very hard.

The Mona Lisa is the most famous work of art ever created by human hand, a painting so valuable it's impossible to put a price on it. In the Louvre Museum in Paris, it's simply known as 'Painting No. 779'. It's the portrait of an unknown Italian lady, who seems to be smiling. Her name, Mona Lisa, simply means Madonna, Lady Lisa. Yet, from the moment she was painted, 500 years ago, she has obsessed and intrigued the whole world. But who was this mysterious lady and how did she become the superstar she is today? And what is the secret of her smile?



Today the Mona Lisa has a special security. She is in humidified air-conditioned concrete box, protected by triple, bullet-proof glass, but it doesn't seem to deter over 6 million tourists every year. So what's the secret of her fascination? Why has this of all the images in the world, gripped the imagination of so many people for the past 500 years? Kings, Emperors and Presidents have all paid their respects to her. On her American tour in 1962, President Kennedy greeted her as the ultimate symbol of western civilisation.

For this painting is not only one of the towering achievements of the skill and the vision of art, but its creator embodied the central purpose of our civilisation. She's been exploited and replicated in so many forms, that it's easy to forget she was once a living, breathing person, her image and expression caught in one moment of time, and immortalised by the hand of the artist.

By 1530, the Mona Lisa found her way into the Royal Collection. Unfortunately King Francis decided she would look particularly good on the walls of his suite of bathrooms. She was kept there for many years what caused many damages on the picture. The original Mona Lisa stayed

locked away in the Royal Collection of Francis and his successors, until the people of France decided they didn't want a monarchy any more. Soon King Louis XVI and his Queen, Marie Antoinette, were executed. The royal collections were moved to the Palace of the Louvre which became a people's museum, where the Mona Lisa was put on public view for the first time. When Napoleon came to power and was crowned Emperor of France, one of the first demands he made was to have the Mona Lisa and placed in his private bedroom in the Tuileries. He kept her there for nearly a decade, and he called her Madam Lisa. His fascination with Leonardo continued, as he invaded Italy. And there he found Leonardo's drawings and notebooks. After the fall of Napoleon, the Mona Lisa returns to the Louvre, and starts its life as a major tourist attraction in the French capital.

Then 100 years later on August 21st, 1911, Mona Lisa was stolen. The theft made headline news around the world, a massive police hunt was launched and among those suspects brought in for questioning was a radical young Spanish artist, called Pablo Picasso. But by this time the Mona Lisa was a long way away. On November 11th, 1913, Alfredo Gerri, a Florentine antiques dealer, received a letter offering him the Mona Lisa. The price would be half a million lira, in today's terms about a million pounds. The letter was signed "Leonardo". A month later the mysterious Leonardo instructed Signor Gerri to meet him at this hotel in the Via Panzani. It confirmed that this was the real Mona Lisa. The smile of the Mona Lisa was again alive in Florence!

Leonardo the thief was also a Florentine, an unemployed house painter, whose real name was Vincenzo Peruggia. He claimed to be a patriot, who had stolen the Mona Lisa simply so she could be returned to her motherland. The Italian government was in a slightly embarrassing situation, Leonardo

was Italian, Mona Lisa was an Italian woman, so logically the picture belongs there. Unfortunately the French wanted their painting back. She was then taken back to Paris on the train and welcomed by a huge crowd at the train station. Other paintings had been stolen before, and they did not receive such publicity. So there was something about the Mona Lisa, but particularly something about Leonardo.

The story of the Mona Lisa began in 1503. Leonardo had returned to his native Florence, after 17 years in Milan. At that time he was just inventing and doing scientific experiments. He wasn't painting any more. Then in 1503, a woman arrived in his studio for him to paint her, and Leonardo agreed. He began work on the portrait, that would obsess him for the rest of his life. So what happened then, to make him change his mind? Why did he take on this commission, while turning down some of the wealthiest and most influential patrons of the day?

The remarkable thing about Leonardo is that more than anybody else at his time, he worked for himself, he did what interested him, he wanted to satisfy himself, his own intellectual curiosity. The most obvious thing patrons wanted from their portraits was to establish their identity, but in the case of the Mona Lisa, Leonardo avoided even this basic requirement. In his other portraits Leonardo usually left some clue or symbol, so that people could easily identify the sitter. But in the Mona Lisa, he left no clue in the picture at all, and there is no mention of her in any of his writings. She is simply a mysterious woman, sitting in a landscape. Leonardo may not have wanted to reveal her name, but his secret has inspired one of the greatest quests in the history of art, to discover the Mona Lisa's true identity.

One person who would have loved to have had her portrait painted in oil by Leonardo da Vinci, is Isabella d'Este. The Marchioness of Mantua. When he visited her in Mantua, he obviously did at least 2 charcoal sketches, brief, rapid, bravura performances there left one behind with her, and took the other on his travels down to Florence. For the next 2 years she was in constant negotiation, pleading with him to finish the portrait or send the sketch back, or send her something from his hand. But there are many other possibilities. The visitor to Leonardo's house in 1517 was Isabella Gualandini, the exotic mistress of his old patron Giuliano de' Medici. Another possibility is Constanza D'Avalos. There's an Italian poem naming her as the sitter, in a portrait by an artist called Vinci. Finally there's the Florentine housewife, Lisa Gherardini. After centuries of uncertainty, a vitally important piece of evidence has only just come to light in the Milan State Archive. Now La Gioconda or the Smiling One, turns out to be the married name of Leonardo's sitter, Lisa Gherardini. This is one of the most amazing discoveries.

Lisa lived in the Via della Stufa, with her husband Francesco, a prosperous silk merchant. She was the daughter of a middle class landowner, got married at 16, and was Francesco's 3rd wife. What she meant to Leonardo we'll probably never know. Contemporary portraits usually reflected a man's world, in which women were expected to be modest, chaste and virtuous. In the Mona Lisa, Leonardo decides to throw away the rule book, her dress is simple and timeless. Lisa is a married woman, but she wears no wedding ring - there's also no jewellery. Her hair, the curls falling sensually over her shoulders were also very strange for that time. And there's another radical innovation, her pose. Traditionally Renaissance paintings would be in profile.

But is she looking directly at us or through us? Is she even looking past us, over our shoulder at something we can't see? And then of course, there's the riddle of her smile. What is she smiling at? What does she have that we don't have? What does she know about our thoughts, that we don't know?

Leonardo was a man listening to voices unheard, a man who saw things we would never be able to see. The smile looks like she's saying us "I know things that you will never know. I understand you and the world in ways that you will never conceive of." It's his message to the world, it's essentially his message to himself at the same time. That's why this portrait is like biography and autobiography at the same time.

There is also a possibility that it was his mother who possessed the mysterious smile, the smile that he had lost and that fascinated him so much, he found it again in the Florentine lady. In Leonardo's later painting, "The Virgin and St Anne" Freud saw the same smile, the Mona Lisa smile, on both women, as he saw it, both mother figures (his mother and stepmother). And the smile again appears on his most androgynous figure, the Portrait of St John. He too seems to have some secret knowledge, some understanding of what lies hidden in the darkness. What of Lisa del Gioconda herself? While she sat for Leonardo, did she too have a secret? One that might explain the mystery of her smile.

The landscape behind Mona Lisa is also very strange- towering mountains behind, they look like they might fall down. The lakes are very full, it looks like they might come tumbling over the dam



and wash away the bridge. So what's going on here? How does the Mona Lisa connect with the strange primeval landscape behind her?

The Mona Lisa gives a very clear sense of time passing, I think particularly of the landscape in the background. There you have a clear depiction of the geological cycle. You have the river starting up in the mountains, these very jagged, unstable mountains. It wends its way down bringing the sediment with it, until it eventually gets to the sea and Leonardo had this idea that it then was taken back up to the mountains again, and would start again. So we have this continuity, this continual cycle of geological time for- forever really. The Mona Lisa was snapshot, of the mature Leonardo's mind, a distillation of all that he had discovered, through a lifetime's observation, into the secrets of nature. All his life Leonardo had wanted to control nature. Leonardo never delivered the portrait of Lisa del Giocondo, he carried it with him wherever he went for the last 16 years of his life even into exile.



## Leonardo's death

At the age of 61, Leonardo left Italy never to return. Younger and more fashionable artists like Raphael and Michaelangelo, were now the most glamorous painters. His journey ended, at the French town of Amboise in the Loire Valley. If he was under appreciated in his homeland, he was certainly welcomed by the French King. Francis I was determined to import the glories of the Renaissance to France. In recognition of Leonardo's unique status, he gave him a large manor house, right next door to the royal castle. Leonardo's last years were not easy. He suffered a stroke which meant he lost the use of his right hand. But his increasing infirmity didn't seem to matter to the French King, who treasured every moment he could spend with such a unique and wise

old man. Probably one of the great tragedies of his life that, by that point, he was really too burnt out, to engage in any new projects, which Francis I would probably have supported. Francis saw him as the great artist, but also a great scholar, a great man of wisdom. Leonardo tried to pull together thousands of pages of notes and drawings, into a grand encyclopaedia. But the task of compiling the observations of a lifetime, like so many of his ambitious schemes, remained unfinished. Leonardo died in his room on 2nd May, 1519. He was 67 years old. Leonardo died in the arms of the French King.

## Conclusion

After Leonardo's death the great architect Benvenuto Cellini, wrote this:

*"There had never been another man born in the world, who knew as much as Leonardo. Not so much about painting, sculpture, and architecture, as that he was a very great philosopher."*

It's taken 500 years to many of Leonardo's ideas to become a reality, even now we can only begin to understand his achievements. When he began his restless journey through life, painters weren't respected and appreciated. Leonardo changed all that, and in his one painting – the Mona Lisa, all the passions and preoccupations of a lifetime come together. The Mona Lisa is the first great psychological portrait. It's Leonardo's attempt to capture the energy, the essence of life itself, and eternity. Like a magician he made the invisible, visible. He showed us how to look into the soul of the paintings. Leonardo was one of the greatest minds in history, an incredible engineer, and inventor but overall painter who created masterpieces of astonishing beauty ( *The Mona Lisa, The Last Supper, The Virgin of the Rocks, Annunciation*), that display human psychology in intimate harmony and balance with the surrounding natural world, also his autoportraits and many drawings and sketches ....) And, after all the world had forgotten him, it would be the Mona Lisa who would cause him to be rediscovered. She would carry his name through the centuries to a new audience for whom curiosity was not a crime and where freethinking was applauded. It would be her inexplicable smile that Leonardo had uncovered in his search for everything.

*''Don't pity the humble painter, he can be lord of all things, whatever exists in the universe, he has first in his mind, and then in his hand. By his art he may be called the Grandchild of God.''*

*Leonardo da Vinci*

The eye embraces the beauty of the whole world. It is the window of the soul. It informs the arts. It is the foundation of science. It measures the distance of the stars. It discovers the elements. It is the inventor of architecture and the divine art of painting. Leonardo saw world like noone else. He could see things we would never be able to see. He knew things we would never be able to understand. Da Vinci, to this day, remains one of the greatest people to ever have shadowed this earth. He was a great man of the arts and the sciences. Leonardo da Vinci was a man of both worlds.



*Annunciation*

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