



Leonardo da Vinci (Painters)

James Pearson

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LEONARDO DA VINCI Leonardo da Vinci's art is the apotheosis of Renaissance - and Western - art. He depicted angels, Madonnas and saints in ever-mysterious images. His sfumato paintings remain some of the most hypnotic in all of art. The sheer intensity of Leonardo's curiosity and his spectacular inventiveness in the fields of science, botany, geology, anatomy, medicine and warfare make him more than worthy of the name 'universal genius'. The most erotic artist of the Renaissance, the one who created the darkest and the strangest images, who created the most hypnotic smiles in art, who took Western painting to the highest point it has reached, was not Michelangelo Buonarroti, Andrea del Sarto, Fra Angelico, Sandro Botticelli, Piero della Francesca, Andrea Mantegna, Raphael, Titian or Masaccio, but Leonardo da Vinci. He is the creator of the Mona Lisa, and '[t]he Mona Lisa is without doubt the most famous work in the entire forty-thousand year history of the visual arts', writes Roy McMullen. Leonardo da Vinci is one of the most celebrated of artists. He is the artist-as-hero, the artist-as-genius - undisputed genius (like Shakespeare or Sophocles). Leonardo is exalted for his amazing mind, his scientific curiosity, his ideas on botany, anatomy, architecture, weaponry, engineering, etc. He wrote copiously, on art and painting, and philosophy; subjects studied in his notebooks include geology, optics, acoustics, music, mathematics, anatomy, hydraulics, ballistics, weight, movement, naval armaments, flight and so on. He 'invented', or rediscovered, the bicycle, an early form of military tank, the helicopter; he understood the principle of gravity before Newton, and explained why stars twinkled before Kepler; he prefigured Bacon, Galileo, Huygens, Cuvier and Halley, among others. Nothing is neglected in Leonardo's 'scientific' curiosity about the world. Artists have long studied all manner of things, despising the relatively recent notion of 'specialization'. The text has been revised for this edition. Illustrated, including new illustrations. Painters Series. Bibliography and notes. www.crmoon.com

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