# all about leonardo da vinci

All About Leonardo da Vinci: The Renaissance Genius Who Changed the World

**all about leonardo da vinci** is a journey into the life and mind of one of history's most extraordinary figures. Leonardo da Vinci, often hailed as the quintessential Renaissance man, was not just a painter but also a scientist, inventor, engineer, anatomist, and visionary. His unparalleled curiosity and insatiable quest for knowledge propelled him beyond the boundaries of art and science, leaving a legacy that continues to inspire centuries later.

If you've ever wondered what made Leonardo da Vinci such a unique figure in world history, this article will take you through the fascinating details of his life, his groundbreaking works, and the lasting impact he made on various fields.

## The Early Life of Leonardo da Vinci

Born on April 15, 1452, in the small town of Vinci, Italy, Leonardo was the illegitimate son of Ser Piero, a notary, and a peasant woman named Caterina. Despite this humble beginning, he showed an early interest in the natural world and art. Growing up in the Tuscan countryside, he explored nature, sketching plants, animals, and landscapes—an early sign of his observational genius.

### **Apprenticeship and Artistic Beginnings**

Leonardo's formal artistic education began when he apprenticed under Andrea del Verrocchio in Florence at about the age of 14. Verrocchio was a master painter and sculptor, and his workshop was a hub for aspiring artists. It was here that Leonardo honed his skills in painting, sculpture, and technical arts. Remarkably, some of Leonardo's earliest works, like the "Baptism of Christ," show his distinctive style, even as a young apprentice.

### Leonardo da Vinci: The Master Painter

When people think about Leonardo da Vinci, his paintings often come to mind first. His innovative techniques and mastery of human anatomy revolutionized Renaissance art.

### The Mona Lisa: An Icon Beyond Time

Arguably the most famous painting in the world, the Mona Lisa, showcases Leonardo's ability to capture subtle emotions and complex human expressions. Painted between 1503 and 1506, the portrait's enigmatic smile has fascinated art lovers and scholars alike for centuries. Leonardo's use of sfumato—a technique of blending colors and tones—gave the painting a lifelike softness that was unprecedented.

### The Last Supper and Its Symbolism

Another masterpiece, The Last Supper, painted on the wall of the Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan, demonstrates Leonardo's storytelling through composition. This work captures the moment Jesus announces the betrayal among his disciples, full of dramatic gestures and emotional tension. Besides its artistic brilliance, the painting reveals Leonardo's deep understanding of perspective and human psychology.

### The Scientific Mind of Leonardo da Vinci

Leonardo da Vinci was not just an artist; he was a scientist centuries ahead of his time. His notebooks reveal a mind constantly exploring anatomy, physics, engineering, and even flight.

### **Anatomy and the Human Body**

One of the most fascinating aspects of Leonardo's genius was his detailed anatomical drawings. He dissected human corpses to study muscles, bones, and organs, producing sketches that were both scientifically accurate and artistically beautiful. His Vitruvian Man, symbolizing ideal human proportions, remains a powerful icon blending art and science.

### **Inventions and Engineering Feats**

Leonardo's notebooks contain designs for flying machines, armored vehicles, bridges, and various mechanical devices. Although many of these inventions were never built during his lifetime, they showed an intuitive grasp of engineering principles. His conceptual helicopter, parachute, and even a rudimentary robot highlight his visionary thinking.

## Leonardo da Vinci's Legacy in Art and Science

The influence of Leonardo da Vinci extends far beyond his era. His approach to blending observation with creativity has shaped countless generations of artists and scientists.

## **Impact on Renaissance and Modern Art**

Leonardo's techniques influenced contemporaries like Michelangelo and Raphael, setting new standards for realism and emotional depth in art. The use of light, shadow, and composition that he perfected became foundational to Western painting.

### **Contributions to Scientific Methodology**

Leonardo advocated for empirical observation and experimentation, principles that underpin modern science. His interdisciplinary approach—combining art, anatomy, and mechanics—helped pave the way for scientific inquiry during the Renaissance and beyond.

# Exploring Leonardo da Vinci's Notebooks: A Treasure Trove of Ideas

One of the best ways to understand all about Leonardo da Vinci is through his voluminous notebooks, which contain sketches, scientific diagrams, and reflections.

#### **Content and Themes in the Notebooks**

These manuscripts cover a wide range of topics:

- Studies of human anatomy and musculature
- Engineering projects like water pumps and flying machines
- Botanical observations and natural phenomena
- · Philosophical musings on art, science, and life

### Why the Notebooks Matter Today

Leonardo's notebooks reveal his thought process and relentless curiosity. They continue to captivate historians, scientists, and artists, offering insights into the mind of a true Renaissance genius. Many of his sketches anticipated technologies that only became reality centuries later.

## Personal Traits That Defined Leonardo da Vinci

What set Leonardo apart was not just his talents but his personality and approach to learning.

### **Curiosity and Lifelong Learning**

Leonardo was famously insatiable in his desire to learn. He believed in observing the world directly,

never relying solely on accepted wisdom. This curiosity drove him to explore a variety of disciplines, making him a personification of Renaissance humanism.

#### Attention to Detail and Perseverance

Whether painting a portrait or sketching a mechanical device, Leonardo's meticulous attention to detail was extraordinary. He sometimes spent years refining a single work, driven by a perfectionist streak that contributed both to his successes and his unfinished projects.

## Visiting Leonardo da Vinci's Legacy Today

For those interested in diving deeper into the world of Leonardo da Vinci, there are several places and experiences that bring his story to life.

#### **Museums and Exhibitions**

- The Louvre Museum in Paris houses the Mona Lisa, drawing millions of visitors eager to see the masterpiece in person.
- The Vatican Museums and Uffizi Gallery in Florence display some of his early works and sketches.
- The Leonardo da Vinci Museum in Milan offers interactive exhibits on his inventions and scientific studies.

## **Exploring Vinci: The Hometown**

Visiting Vinci, Leonardo's birthplace, allows a glimpse into his early environment. The Leonardo Museum there showcases many of his inventions and offers a peaceful setting to appreciate the roots of his genius.

Leonardo da Vinci's life continues to be a testament to the power of curiosity, creativity, and interdisciplinary thinking. Understanding all about Leonardo da Vinci means appreciating not only his masterpieces but also his relentless pursuit of knowledge and innovation—a legacy that still shapes our world in countless ways.

## Frequently Asked Questions

#### Who was Leonardo da Vinci?

Leonardo da Vinci was an Italian polymath of the Renaissance period, known for his contributions to art, science, engineering, anatomy, and many other fields.

### What are some of Leonardo da Vinci's most famous artworks?

Some of Leonardo da Vinci's most famous artworks include the Mona Lisa, The Last Supper, and Vitruvian Man.

# What inventions and scientific studies is Leonardo da Vinci known for?

Leonardo da Vinci conceptualized inventions like flying machines, an armored vehicle, and various mechanical devices. He also made detailed studies of human anatomy, hydraulics, and geology.

# How did Leonardo da Vinci contribute to the study of human anatomy?

Leonardo da Vinci conducted extensive dissections of human bodies, creating detailed anatomical drawings that improved the understanding of human physiology and musculature.

### What techniques did Leonardo da Vinci use in his paintings?

Leonardo da Vinci used techniques such as sfumato, which creates a soft transition between colors and tones, and chiaroscuro, the use of strong contrasts between light and dark.

### Where and when was Leonardo da Vinci born?

Leonardo da Vinci was born on April 15, 1452, in Vinci, a town in the Republic of Florence, Italy.

# What impact did Leonardo da Vinci have on the Renaissance?

Leonardo da Vinci epitomized the Renaissance humanist ideal, blending art and science, inspiring advances in multiple disciplines and influencing countless artists and scientists.

# Are there any famous notebooks or writings by Leonardo da Vinci?

Yes, Leonardo da Vinci kept numerous notebooks filled with sketches, scientific diagrams, and writings on a variety of subjects, many of which have been studied for their insight into his genius.

### How is Leonardo da Vinci remembered today?

Leonardo da Vinci is remembered as one of history's greatest geniuses, celebrated for his artistic masterpieces and visionary scientific ideas that continue to inspire innovation.

### **Additional Resources**

\*\*All About Leonardo da Vinci: The Quintessential Renaissance Polymath\*\*

all about leonardo da vinci is a deep dive into the life, genius, and enduring legacy of one of history's most multifaceted figures. Leonardo da Vinci remains an emblem of the Renaissance ideal—a man whose curiosity, creativity, and intellect spanned art, science, engineering, anatomy, and more. This article explores his groundbreaking contributions, the context that shaped his work, and why his influence continues to resonate in both artistic and scientific realms.

### The Life and Times of Leonardo da Vinci

Born in 1452 in Vinci, Italy, Leonardo da Vinci emerged during a period of profound cultural and intellectual awakening. The Renaissance, a bridge between the Middle Ages and modernity, fostered innovation across disciplines. Leonardo's upbringing as an illegitimate son of a notary and peasant woman did not deter his ascent into the echelons of patrons and scholars. His apprenticeship with the renowned artist Andrea del Verrocchio in Florence exposed him to a rigorous artistic and technical education.

The environment of Florence, Milan, and later Rome and France, where Leonardo worked, was marked by political intrigue and artistic competition. These cities were fertile grounds for patronage by influential families and rulers keen to demonstrate power through culture. Leonardo's ability to navigate these courts, balancing art commissions with engineering projects, positioned him uniquely among his contemporaries.

## Multidisciplinary Genius: Art and Science Intertwined

Leonardo da Vinci epitomized the Renaissance man, seamlessly blending art with empirical observation. His approach was revolutionary: he did not separate artistic creation from scientific inquiry. This confluence is evident in his detailed anatomical sketches, which combined artistic skill with medical precision, and in his designs for machines that prefigured modern engineering concepts.

His notebooks, filled with mirror writing, diagrams, and observations, reveal a mind constantly questioning nature and mechanics. These codices cover topics from flight to hydraulics, anatomy to geometry. Unlike many artists of his time who primarily focused on aesthetics, Leonardo sought to understand the fundamental principles underlying the phenomena he depicted.

# Leonardo's Artistic Masterpieces and Innovations

Leonardo's paintings remain some of the most studied and celebrated works in art history. His use of sfumato—a technique that creates a smoky, blurred effect—allowed him to achieve unprecedented realism and emotional depth. The "Mona Lisa," arguably the most famous portrait ever painted, exemplifies this mastery. Beyond the enigmatic smile, the composition's subtle gradations of light and shadow set new standards for portraiture.

Another monumental work, "The Last Supper," demonstrates Leonardo's ability to capture narrative drama and psychological complexity. Painted on a refectory wall in Milan, the fresco's innovative composition breaks from traditional static depictions, instead portraying the apostles' varied

### **Comparison with Contemporaries**

While contemporaries like Michelangelo and Raphael also dominated Renaissance art, Leonardo's blend of artistic and scientific inquiry sets him apart. Michelangelo's focus was primarily on sculpture and monumental frescoes, emphasizing human anatomy with a more muscular, heroic ideal, whereas Raphael's work was characterized by clarity and harmonious composition. Leonardo's advantage lay in his interdisciplinary approach—his art informed by anatomy and engineering, his inventions inspired by natural observation.

# Contributions Beyond Painting: Engineering and Scientific Studies

Leonardo da Vinci's engineering sketches reveal a visionary mind decades, sometimes centuries, ahead of his time. He conceptualized flying machines resembling helicopters and gliders, armored vehicles, and advanced weaponry. Although many of these inventions were never built during his lifetime, they demonstrate a profound understanding of mechanics and physics.

His studies in anatomy, based on dissections he performed himself, contributed significantly to the understanding of the human body. Leonardo's detailed drawings of the skeleton, muscles, and organs were unparalleled in accuracy and artistic quality. These anatomical illustrations bridged art and medicine, influencing both fields.

### Leonardo's Scientific Methodology

Unlike many scholars of the era who relied on classical texts, Leonardo emphasized direct observation and experimentation. He meticulously recorded empirical data, tested hypotheses, and refined his ideas. This approach aligns closely with modern scientific methods, establishing him as a precursor to the empirical tradition that would later define the scientific revolution.

# The Enduring Legacy of Leonardo da Vinci

Leonardo da Vinci's legacy transcends his artworks and inventions. He symbolizes the limitless potential of human creativity when combined with rigorous inquiry. Museums worldwide house his paintings and manuscripts, attracting millions who seek to understand the man behind the genius.

The integration of art and science that characterizes Leonardo's work continues to inspire contemporary thinkers and creators. His life encourages interdisciplinary collaboration, reminding us that innovation often occurs at the intersection of diverse fields.

### **Modern Interpretations and Cultural Impact**

From blockbuster films to scholarly research, Leonardo remains a subject of fascination. Exhibitions showcasing his notebooks and replicas of his inventions highlight his relevance in modern technology and education. Furthermore, his image has become synonymous with intellectual curiosity, often invoked in discussions about creativity and innovation.

# Challenges in Studying Leonardo's Work

Despite the wealth of materials left behind, studying Leonardo da Vinci presents challenges. Many of his notebooks are fragmented, written in a cryptic script, and scattered across various collections. The lack of completed engineering projects limits a full assessment of his technical effectiveness. Additionally, the mythologizing of his persona sometimes obscures the factual details of his life and work.

- **Fragmented Documentation:** His scattered notebooks require painstaking reconstruction and interpretation.
- **Unrealized Designs:** Many inventions remained theoretical, complicating evaluations of practical impact.
- Myth vs. Reality: Popular culture sometimes exaggerates or distorts his achievements.

These factors necessitate a careful, scholarly approach to fully appreciate Leonardo's contributions without succumbing to hagiography.

Exploring **all about leonardo da vinci** reveals a complex figure whose curiosity and intellect traversed boundaries. His fusion of art and science challenges conventional categories and continues to inspire generations. Understanding Leonardo demands not only admiration for his masterpieces but also recognition of his relentless pursuit of knowledge that shaped the trajectory of Western art and science.

### All About Leonardo Da Vinci

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**all about leonardo da vinci:** <u>Leonardo Da Vinci</u> Leonardo (da Vinci), Simona Cremante, 2006 Book Description: This captivating book provides the reader with a unique insight into the life and work of one of history's most intriguing figures. All of Leonardo Da Vinci's work is presented in this

compact volume - from his paintings and frescos, to detailed reproductions of his remarkable encrypted notebooks. As well as featuring each individual artwork, sections of each are shown in isolation to reveal incredible details - for example, the different levels of perspective between the background sections of the Mona Lisa, and the disembodied hand in The Last Supper. 640 pages of colour artworks and photographs of Da Vinci's original notebooks, accompanied by fascinating biographical and historical details are here.

**all about leonardo da vinci:** <u>Biography and Early Art Criticism of Leonardo Da Vinci</u> Claire J. Farago, 1999 Contains early biographical information and art criticism of Leonardo da Vinci and his work.

all about leonardo da vinci: Leonardo Da Vinci Walter Isaacson, 2017-10-17 'To read this magnificent biography of Leonardo da Vinci is to take a tour through the life and works of one of the most extraordinary human beings of all time in the company of the most engaging, informed, and insightful guide imaginable. Walter Isaacson is at once a true scholar and a spellbinding writer. And what a wealth of lessons there are to be learned in these pages.' David McCullough Based on thousands of pages from Leonardo's astonishing notebooks and new discoveries about his life and work, Walter Isaacson weaves a narrative that connects his art to his science. He shows how Leonardo's genius was based on skills we can improve in ourselves, such as passionate curiosity, careful observation, and an imagination so playful that it flirted with fantasy. He produced the two most famous paintings in history, The Last Supper and the Mona Lisa. But in his own mind, he was just as much a man of science and technology. With a passion that sometimes became obsessive, he pursued innovative studies of anatomy, fossils, birds, the heart, flying machines, botany, geology, and weaponry. His ability to stand at the crossroads of the humanities and the sciences, made iconic by his drawing of Vitruvian Man, made him history's most creative genius. His creativity, like that of other great innovators, came from having wide-ranging passions. He peeled flesh off the faces of cadavers, drew the muscles that move the lips, and then painted history's most memorable smile. He explored the math of optics, showed how light rays strike the cornea, and produced illusions of changing perspectives in The Last Supper. Isaacson also describes how Leonardo's lifelong enthusiasm for staging theatrical productions informed his paintings and inventions. Leonardo's delight at combining diverse passions remains the ultimate recipe for creativity. So, too, does his ease at being a bit of a misfit: illegitimate, gay, vegetarian, left-handed, easily distracted, and at times heretical. His life should remind us of the importance of instilling, both in ourselves and our children, not just received knowledge but a willingness to question it—to be imaginative and, like talented misfits and rebels in any era, to think different.

all about leonardo da vinci: Leonardo da Vinci Hourly History, 2016-11-14 Creativity is in our bones. It is found in our very DNA, something not known to Leonardo da Vinci or anyone else who lived in his day and time. All he did was to uncover the hidden genius which lay within himself, and he used that inner genius to the very best of his abilities. Leonardo da Vinci is best known for some of the world's most masterful paintings, but he was so much more than merely another artist with paints and brushes. Born to a peasant woman in 1452, Leonardo would go on to astound the world he lived in with his artistry and his inventions. Inside you will read about... 

Early Beginnings and the Italian Renaissance 

Leonardo's Personal Life 

Leonardo's Artistic Beginnings 

Early Paintings 1480s-1490s 

Paintings of the 16th Century 

Scientific Studies and Anatomy 

Engineering Inventions 

Later Life and Old Age 

Facts about Leonardo da Vinci In this eBook, discover for yourself the brilliance of da Vinci. Uncover some of his best works of art, including the Mona Lisa, and see why he kept so many notebooks and observations about everything under the sun. See where his far-reaching talents led him, and how you can be more like Leonardo da Vinci than you ever thought possible.

all about leonardo da vinci: Leonardo Da Vinci: Biography, Art Work and Inventions Tom Brown, 2017-01-28 Leonardo da Vinci was a painter, sculptor, architect, musician, scientist, mathematician, engineer, inventor, anatomist, geologist, cartographer, botanist and writer. Leonardo has often been described as the archetype of the Renaissance man, a man whose

unquenchable curiosity was equaled only by his powers of invention. Coming from an illegitimate birth, he went through every obstacle life can present to him and became a great man. Witness his magnificent life story from the workshops of Florence to the narrow streets of Milan until you reach the mighty castles of France!Read what Leonardo did with his life until Leonardo gave his last breath in the arms of a French king. In this book you are going to find:\* Leonardo's biography\* Leonardo's friends, family, enemies and his relationships with them\* Great persons in the history whom Leonardo befriended\* Paintings and detailed explanations\* Inventions and detailed explanations with pictures\* Secrets, theories and surprises. You are also going to learn:----Who was Salai? ----How did Leonardo painted The Last Supper on the huge walls of a church?----Why did Leonardo leave the Florence and moved to Milan?----What was his greatest accomplishment?----What was his greatest failure?----Why did he take no wife?----What was the secret behind his famous ambition about flying?----Who is the real Mona Lisa? (Not what you think!!)----What are the secrets messages hidden in The Last Supper?Read now, and \* learn great things about the history of art from renaissance\* learn how can you describe and analyze paintings\* learn how great Leonardo's master was\* learn Leonardo's view about his sexuality. Knowledge, is power.

**all about leonardo da vinci:** All about Leonardo Da Vinci Emily Hahn, 1959 A biography of Leonardo da Vinci, the fifteenth-century genius, showing his creative work as an inventor, artist and scientist.

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all about leonardo da vinci: The Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci Leonardo Da Vinci, 2025-06-20 The Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci serves as a profound gateway into the mind of one of history's most extraordinary figures. Authored by the Renaissance genius himself, Leonardo Da Vinci, these collections of sketches, observations, and musings unveil a multifaceted intellect that transcended the borders of art, science, and philosophy. The notebooks encapsulate Da Vinci's relentless pursuit of knowledge, showcasing his creativity as an artist and an inventor, whose curious spirit laid the groundwork for countless advancements and masterpieces. Within these pages, readers will find more than mere sketches; they are greeted with an intimate portrait of a man who sought to understand the intricacies of the world around him. The renowned artist and scientist meticulously documented everything that intrigued him—from detailed drawings of human anatomy that reflect his deep understanding of the body, to innovative engineering designs that foreshadow modern machines. Each page bursts with art and science blending harmoniously,

showcasing Da Vinci's versatility—an embodiment of the Renaissance period where the arts and sciences coalesced in the guest for human understanding. Da Vinci's notebooks highlight the rich tapestry of ideas that he explored with fervor. His sketches, often accompanied by rich observations, illustrate his philosophies on human nature, the dynamics of light and shadow in visual art, and the mechanics of flight—concepts that reveal not only his artistic genius but also his visionary insight as a scientist. Readers engage with his thinking, experiencing the myriad ways he sought to grasp the universe through a unique interdisciplinary lens, creating a source of inspiration for artists and thinkers even today. The letters and notes contained within these writings also reflect Da Vinci's contemplative side—his musings on the purpose of art, the role of nature, and the essence of creativity. This introspection reveals the heart of an artist dedicated to self-education and an undying guest for knowledge. The genius of Da Vinci is not simply in his incredible output of masterpieces but also in his desire to use art as a means of understanding the greater truths of existence. The historical significance of The Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci extends far beyond art circles. It serves as an important historical document that captures the essence of a transformative era—one that changed how humans perceive their world. The impact of Da Vinci's findings resonates through time, influencing science, art, engineering, and culture in ways that are still evident today. His legacy is not merely that of a celebrated artist but rather that of a polymath who inspired future generations to embrace curiosity and creativity in equal measure. As readers leaf through the pages, they are invited into a world richly adorned with sketches and notes that reveal the depth of Da Vinci's thought processes, providing insights into how he approached challenges and problems creatively. It's a reminder that the path of discovery requires exploring the intersections of various disciplines, where true innovation often occurs. Whether a lover of art, a student of history, or a curious mind drawn to the realms of science and invention, engaging with this book is to commune with brilliance itself, experiencing the echoes of a life devoted to understanding a complex world. When you delve into The Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci, you are not just reading; you are participating in a dialogue with one of history's greatest minds, sparking your own inspiration and thirst for knowledge.

all about leonardo da vinci: The Story of Leonardo Da Vinci 500 Years After His Death Antone R E Pierucci, 2018-03-21 A quick internet search will yield results of Leonardo da Vinci's legendary paintings; the Mona Lisa and the Last Supper; and you might even catch a glimpse of his well-known sketches of machines; human bodies; and animals. However; there's so much more to da Vinci than his paintings and drawings. This 16th-century Italian man embodied the Renaissance spirit -- he was intensely interested in everyone and everything. His curiosity spanned every discipline; from geometry to anatomy to the link between art and science. 500 years ago was a time of insight; of investigation; and in this sense; da Vinci fit in perfectly. However; in another sense; he didn't belong at all -- he was a loner living in his own world. An illegitimate child with 17 half-siblings; Leonardo also shrouded himself in secrecy. He wrote in a mirror script; meaning that you could only understand what he had written by holding it up to a mirror. He believed that we all have potential to do amazing things; but he also had lots of unfinished projects and struggled with lifelong self-doubt. Delve in to these pages to find out why Leonardo di Ser Piero d'Antonio di Ser Piero di Ser Guido da Vinci -- yes; this was his full name -- was as mysterious as his painting of Mona Lisa's famous smile.

all about leonardo da vinci: SUMMARY - Leonardo Da Vinci By Walter Isaacson Shortcut Edition, 2021-06-22 \* Our summary is short, simple and pragmatic. It allows you to have the essential ideas of a big book in less than 30 minutes. By reading this summary, you will discover the life of the extraordinary character that is Leonardo da Vinci. You will also discover: that his illegitimate birth forbade him to follow in his father's footsteps and become a notary; that, from his youth, his curiosity for nature made him seem different; that he then cultivated this difference all his life; that apart from his talents as a painter, he has carried out a great deal of scientific research; that his comings and goings between Florence, Milan and Rome allowed him to be impregnated with different artistic currents; that his inability to honor his commissions forced him to constantly look

for patrons. Steve Jobs considers that Leonardo da Vinci saw beauty in art as in mechanics, and that this association made him a genius. If his paintings made him universally known, he also devoted a large part of his life to scientific research. His taste for perfection prevented him from finishing several of his works, which he was never satisfied with. His way of life, his taste for beauty and elegance made him a being apart. Are you ready to immerse yourself in the tormented universe of one of the greatest geniuses of humanity? \*Buy now the summary of this book for the modest price of a cup of coffee!

all about leonardo da vinci: Leonardo da Vinci Eugène Müntz, 2012-05-08 Leonardo's early life was spent in Florence, his maturity in Milan, and the last three years of his life in France. Leonardo's teacher was Verrocchio. First he was a goldsmith, then a painter and sculptor: as a painter, representative of the very scientific school of draughtsmanship; more famous as a sculptor, being the creator of the Colleoni statue at Venice, Leonardo was a man of striking physical attractiveness, great charm of manner and conversation, and mental accomplishment. He was well grounded in the sciences and mathematics of the day, as well as a gifted musician. His skill in draughtsmanship was extraordinary; shown by his numerous drawings as well as by his comparatively few paintings. His skill of hand is at the service of most minute observation and analytical research into the character and structure of form. Leonardo is the first in date of the great men who had the desire to create in a picture a kind of mystic unity brought about by the fusion of matter and spirit. Now that the Primitives had concluded their experiments, ceaselessly pursued during two centuries, by the conquest of the methods of painting, he was able to pronounce the words which served as a password to all later artists worthy of the name: painting is a spiritual thing, cosa mentale. He completed Florentine draughtsmanship in applying to modelling by light and shade, a sharp subtlety which his predecessors had used only to give greater precision to their contours. This marvellous draughtsmanship, this modelling and chiaroscuro he used not solely to paint the exterior appearance of the body but, as no one before him had done, to cast over it a reflection of the mystery of the inner life. In the Mona Lisa and his other masterpieces he even used landscape not merely as a more or less picturesque decoration, but as a sort of echo of that interior life and an element of a perfect harmony. Relying on the still quite novel laws of perspective this doctor of scholastic wisdom, who was at the same time an initiator of modern thought, substituted for the discursive manner of the Primitives the principle of concentration which is the basis of classical art. The picture is no longer presented to us as an almost fortuitous aggregate of details and episodes. It is an organism in which all the elements, lines and colours, shadows and lights, compose a subtle tracery converging on a spiritual, a sensuous centre. It was not with the external significance of objects, but with their inward and spiritual significance, that Leonardo was occupied.

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1500-1519 Claire J. Farago, 1999 Also available as the third book in a five volume set (ISBN#0815329334)

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all about leonardo da vinci: Leonardo Da Vinci Leonardo (da Vinci), Kenneth David Keele, Jane Roberts, 1983 This remarkable manuscript is almost 500 years old and was hand-written in Italian by Leonardo da Vinci in his characteristic mirror writing and supported by copious sketches. It covers a wide range of his observations and theories on astronomy, the properties of water, rocks, fossils, air, and celestial light. The Codex Leicester provides a rare insight into the inquiring mind of the definitive Renaissance artist, scientist, and thinker as well as an exceptional illustration of the link between art and science and the creativity of the scientific process. Each delicate page is faithfully reproduced and accompanied by an insightful interpretation of the original Italian texts by the foremost Leonardo scholar, Professor Carlo Pedretti. There is also an introductory essay by Michael Desmond.

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