

Leonardo da Vinci Notes

From Wikipedia –

Much of his early working life was spent in Milan. Later, he worked in Bologna, Rome, and Venice. His last years were in France at the home awarded him by Francis I.

Florentine court records (1476): Leonardo and 3 other young men were charged with **sodomy** and acquitted. From 1476-78 there is no record of his work or his whereabouts.

The three giants of the High Renaissance, **Leonardo**, **Michelangelo** and **Raphael** were not of the same generation. Leonardo was twenty-three when Michelangelo was born and thirty-one when Raphael was born. Raphael only lived until the age of 37 and died in 1520, the year after Leonardo, but Michelangelo went on creating for another 45 years.

Within Leonardo's lifetime, his extraordinary powers of invention, his "outstanding physical beauty", "infinite grace", "great strength and generosity", "regal spirit and tremendous breadth of mind" as described by Vasari, attracted the curiosity of others.

Leonardo had friends who are now renowned either in their fields or for their historical significance. They included the **mathematician** Luca **Pacioli**, with whom he collaborated on a book in the 1490s, as well as Franchinus Gaffurius and Isabella d'Este. Leonardo appears to have had no close relationships with women except for his friendship with sisters Beatrice and Isabella Este. His portrait of Isabella was lost.

THE LAST SUPPER: most reproduced religious painting of all time. It was acclaimed as a masterpiece of design and characterization, but it deteriorated rapidly, so that within a hundred years it was described by one viewer as "completely ruined." Instead of using the reliable technique of fresco, he had used tempera over a ground that was mainly gesso, resulting in a surface which was subject to mold and to flaking.

Leonardo's studies in science and engineering recorded in **13,000 pages of notes and drawings**, fuse art and natural philosophy (forerunner of modern science). Leonardo's notes appear to have been intended for publication because many of the sheets have a form and order that would facilitate this. In many cases a single topic, for example, the heart or the human fetus, is covered in detail in both words and pictures on a single sheet. Why they were not published within Leonardo's lifetime is unknown.

As a successful artist, he was given **permission to dissect human corpses** at the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova in Florence and later at hospitals in Milan and Rome. He made 200+ pages of drawings and notes towards a treatise on anatomy.

Leonardo's **writings are mostly in mirror-image cursive**. The reason may have been more a practical expediency than for reasons of secrecy as is often suggested. Left handed, it is probable that it was easier for him to write from right to left.

Other sites: As were most of the Italian citizenry, Leonardo da Vinci was a **Catholic (?)**. Based on his own writing and the firsthand accounts of those who knew him, Leonardo da Vinci was also a deeply moral individual who strived to live ethically and believed strongly in the importance of self-mastery.

Leonardo objected to the commercial exploitation of relics, religious art, and pious items, saying, "I see Christ once more being sold and crucified and his saints martyred." In his notebooks and letters, he protested the sale of indulgences, liturgical and ceremonial pomp, obligatory confessions, and the cult of the saints. He assailed the clergy—at all levels—for their lack of morality, values, and education. As a scientist, he questioned the contemporary reality of miracles performed by priests and monks.

In his paintings, Leonardo expressed what might be termed his "reformist" ideas. He removed haloes; dispensed with the inclusion of gold, azure, and other expensive colors; avoided elaborate costumes for Mary and the (arch)angels; and presented visual meditations on the meaning of Jesus as the Christ and of Mary as mother. He found proof for the existence and omnipotence of God in nature—light, color, botany, the human body—and in creativity.

IN THE NEWS:



Leonardo da Vinci's 'Salvator Mundi' unveiled at Christie's New York on October 10, 2017 in New York City.

(Credit: Ilya S. Savenok/Getty Images for Christie's Auction House)

November, 2017

NEW YORK (AP) -- A painting of Christ by the Renaissance master Leonardo da Vinci sold for a record \$450 million (380 million euros) at auction on Wednesday, obliterating previous records for artworks sold at auction or privately. The highest price ever paid for a work of art **at auction** had been \$179.4 million, for **Picasso's** "Women of Algiers (Version O)" in May 2015, ...at Christie's in New York. The highest known sale price for any artwork had been \$300 million, for Willem de Kooning's "Interchange," sold **privately** in Sept.2015.

The painting, called "Salvator Mundi," Italian for "Savior of the World," is one of fewer than 20 paintings by Leonardo known to exist...

The 26-inch-tall Leonardo painting dates from around 1500. ...Its path from Leonardo's workshop to ...Christie's was not smooth. Once owned by King Charles I of England, it disappeared until 1900, when it resurfaced and was acquired by a British collector. At that time it was attributed to a Leonardo disciple, rather than to ...himself.

The painting was sold in 1958 (\$60) and then acquired in 2005, badly damaged and partly painted-over, by a consortium of art dealers who paid less than \$10,000. The art dealers restored the painting and documented its authenticity as a work by Leonardo.

The painting was sold ...by Russian billionaire Dmitry Rybolovlev, who bought it in 2013 for \$127.5 million in a sale that became the subject of a continuing lawsuit.

Christie's says most scholars agree the painting is by Leonardo. Some... questioned the attribution and say the extensive restoration muddies the work's authorship.

In New York, where no museum owns a Leonardo, art lovers lined up outside Christie's Rockefeller Center headquarters on Tuesday to view "Salvator Mundi."

History Stories

Stunning 'Long-Lost' Da Vinci Painting Sells for Record \$450 Million

By **Becky Little** // November 15, 2017 <http://www.history.com/news/stunning-long-lost-da-vinci-painting-expected-to-fetch-100-million>

A painting that went for \$60 in 1958 sold for a record \$450 million at a Christie's auction in November 2017, the highest price ever paid for a painting. That's because the piece—known as *Salvator Mundi*, or “Savior of the World”—was identified as a work by Leonardo da Vinci in 2011. Painted around the same time as the *Mona Lisa*, it is one of fewer than 20 known paintings by the Renaissance master.

Art historians in the 20th century knew that da Vinci had created his own version of *Salvator Mundi*, and had identified more than 20 copies that other artists had made of his version. But for a long time, no one knew where the original was.

It wasn't until 2011 that experts revealed that one of the supposed “copies”...had been misidentified, and was actually da Vinci's original work.

Art historians and conservators use a range of criteria to evaluate possible da Vincis..., including technology... This gives modern researchers a huge advantage over their predecessors, says Rita Albertson, chief conservator at the Worcester Art Museum in Massachusetts, who has also been researching another possible da Vinci, called *Miracle of San Donato*, for at least a decade.

The painting is a small scene panel from a larger altarpiece that was created by the workshop of artist Andrea del Verrocchio in the late 15th century, according to its commission document. At the time, Leonardo da Vinci worked in that workshop, where he and other artists collaborated on assignments. Using advanced technology to examine the painting's underdrawing, Albertson says her team has found multiple drawing styles at work, and that they believe one of them could be da Vinci's.

The “different hands in the underdrawing,” she says, technologically “could not have been detected up till now.” But researchers have also collected other clues that a computer can't necessarily spot, like da Vinci's scientifically-based observational skills. These signs include da Vinci's unique way of observing how light falls, and his ability to make two-dimensional objects appear three-dimensional.

“He was ravenously hungry to understand how things worked and how things grew,” Albertson says. For example, in *Miracle of San Donato*, she says the trees seem to be “growing up from out of the ground. They're very organic looking as opposed to sort of cookie-cutter trees which you see in other works from this workshop.”

Albertson explains that identifying da Vinci's earlier work is different from identifying his later work because there are fewer examples for comparison. In addition, Albertson thinks researchers shouldn't assume that da Vinci's earliest pieces will be as mature as the ones we know him for.

“We're looking for signs of brilliance,” she says. “We're not looking for perfection.”

Sometimes it can take half a millennia for true brilliance to be identified, as in the case of the rediscovered masterpiece of *Salvator Mundi*.

Leonardo Da Vinci's Painting of Jesus Christ Goes Missing

By Jack Phillips April 2, 2019

...“Salvator Mundi,” was bought for \$450 million. It was later reported that Prince Bader bin Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Farhan al-Saud was the purchaser.

It was slated to go on display at the Louvre Abu Dhabi, but The New York Times recently reported that it has disappeared. The painting has disappeared twice..

...When it was scheduled to be unveiled at the Louvre branch in September 2018, the event was canceled. There was no explanation as to why. The department has not been forthcoming in answering questions about the missing artwork, and the Louvre Abu Dhabi have stated they don't know where it is...

Leonardo's more famous work, “The Mona Lisa,” is likely the most expensive painting in the world, according to Guinness World Records, which stated that an insurance policy worth \$100 million was taken out on the painting in 1962. Today, that insurance premium would cost over \$800 million when adjusted for inflation.

After “Salvator Mundi,” the most expensive paintings sold at an auction are “Interchange” by Willem de Kooning, sold for \$300 million; “The Card Players” by Paul Cézanne, sold for \$250 million; and “Nafea Faa Ipoipo” by Paul Gauguin, sold for \$210 million.