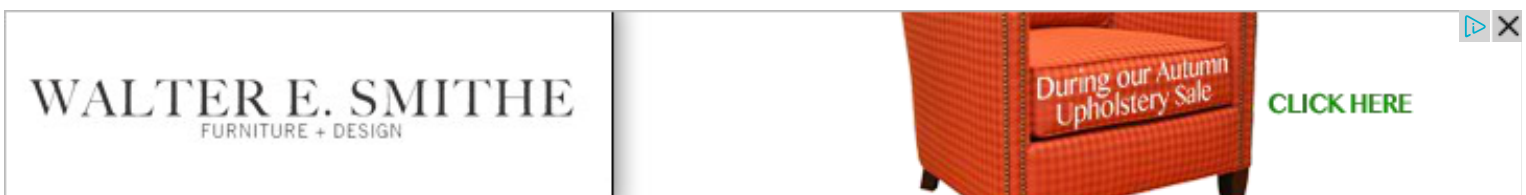




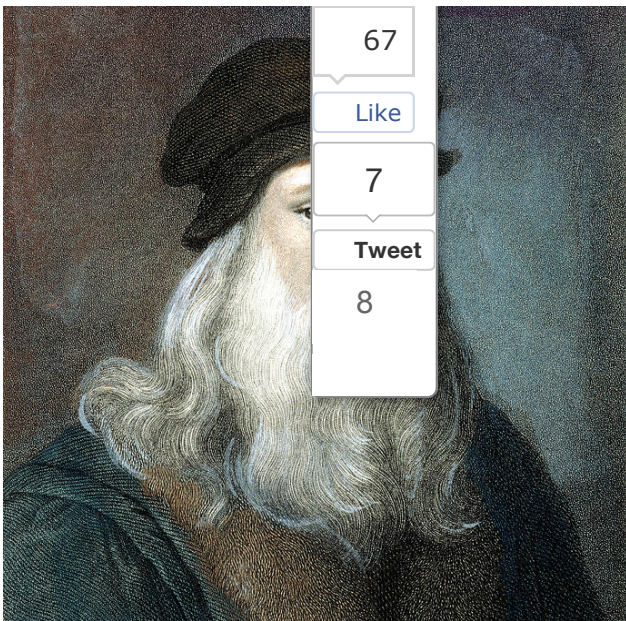
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- [Frida Kahlo](#)
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## Leonardo da Vinci, his paintings, drawings, and inventions



**Leonardo da Vinci** was a true genius who graced this world with his presence from April 15, 1452 to May 2, 1519. Like Athens in the age of Pericles, Renaissance Italy is a summit in human history. Today, no name better seems to symbolize that age than Leonardo da Vinci. Leonardo da Vinci had an insatiable curiosity for everything that he encountered and was a master sculptor and painter. His talents went far beyond painting or sculpting and, in fact, he is an accomplished mathematician, architect, botanist, engineer, inventor, geologist, cartographer, writer, anatomist and a talented musician.

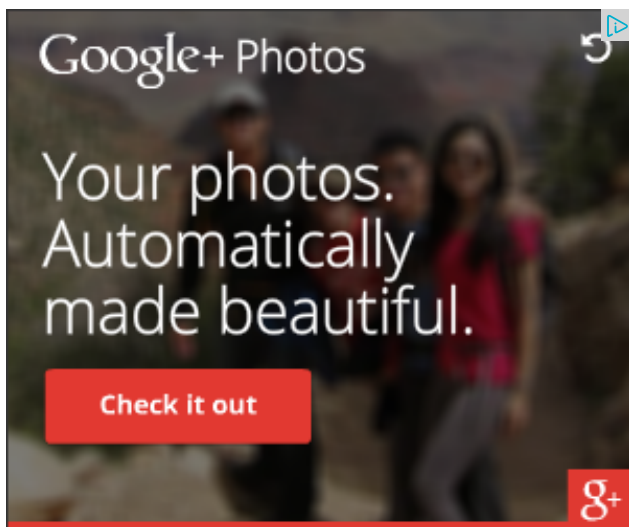
It was said that da Vinci was the recipient of gifts from God which he shared with the world, along with his creativity, curiosity, physical beauty and grace. He was immediately intrigued with any problem that he was presented with and studied it  new one carefully, working out those problems and solving them with what seemed like casual ease. He  the scenes he made detailed notes and created diagrams that filled thousands of pages of manuscripts and books. Some would see this as an ancient case of obsessive compulsive disorder,



but five hundred years have passed since Leonardo da Vinci walked the earth and we still regard him as an incredible human being and a genius.

Da Vinci was born out of wedlock to a legal notary in Florentine - Messer Piero Frusino di Antoni da Vinci and his mother was a peasant woman who was only known by her first name "Caterina". For the first five years of his life he lived with his mother in the Hamlet of Anchiano, then he went to live with his grandparents, father and uncle Franceso in Vinci. From such humble beginnings emerged an incredible man who had an influence on many aspects of our modern day lives.

Leonardo da Vinci's education was informal but he made the most of it by delving into learning the basics of mathematics, geometry and Latin. At the age of fourteen, he received an apprenticeship with the artist Andrea di Cione (also known as Verrocchio). During the course of this apprenticeship, Leonardo would have learned a wide array of both technical and theoretical training which would have included such



skills as plaster casting, working with leather, metal work, chemistry, drafting, metallurgy, carpentry and mechanics. He also would have learned basic art skills including sculpting, painting, drawing and modelling.

Verrocchio's workshop was commissioned to do an art piece known as "The Baptism of the Christ" which was, in large part, painted by Leonardo da Vinci. The 16th century biographer of many renaissance painters said that the work that Leonardo had done in painting the young angel that held Jesus' robe in the work "The Baptism of Christ" was far superior to that of his master. Apparently, Verrocchio put down his paint brush after seeing the work done by da Vinci and never painted again.

During his professional life between 1476 and 1513, Leonardo da Vinci created some incredible works of art that have stood the test of time, including these famous pieces: [The Last Supper](#), [The Mona Lisa](#), [Vitruvian Man](#), [Virgin and Child with St. Anne](#), [The Adoration of the Magi](#), [Virgin of the Rocks](#),

Leonardo kept notebooks which contained his notes on a wide variety of topics and show incredible detail on every aspect of his life. He sketched out details of ideas and studies that he undertook. His anatomical drawings are extremely detailed from the structure of the human body to the inner workings of it including a drawing of a fetus inside of the uterus. He had formal training in anatomy during his apprenticeship to Verrocchio and drew studies of tendons and muscles. He also received official permission to dissect corpses at hospitals near his

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residence which allowed him an up close and in depth look at the human body.

This special permission was granted in recognition of the fact that di Vinci was a well-known and successful artist of the period. Between 1510 and 1511 da Vinci worked closely together with Dr. Marcantonio della Torre to create more than 240 completely detailed drawings and over 13,000 words to describe those drawings as a formal and systematic description meant to give more detail than an ordinary essay or dissertation.

As an accomplished artist, Leonardo da Vinci took on various assistants and pupils to help him with his work. Gian Giacomo Capriotti da Oreno or "Salai" started to work with Leonardo Da Vinci in 1490. He did create a great deal of paintings under the name Andrea Salai. Count Francesco Melzi started to work with da Vinci in 1506 and was considered by many observers to be his favorite student. Upon Leonardo's death, Melzi inherited a large amount of his works including art, manuscripts, and scientific works.

Through his paintings, Leonardo da Vinci expressed an in depth knowledge of geology, botany, light and anatomy. He was very in tune with the way that the human body and face displays emotion and could express that very well in his paintings as well as depict certain ideas with gestures frozen on the subjects he depicted. The best examples of his subtle gradation of tone can be seen in his masterpieces *the Last Supper*, *the Virgin of the Rocks*, and *the Mona Lisa*.

Vasari was a 16th century Renaissance Painter Biographer and said that while Leonardo da Vinci was painting *the Last Supper* it was observed that he would work, painting feverishly from sun-up to sun down without taking any breaks to eat. After that, he would not work on the painting for three to four days. It was said that the reason for this was that Da Vinci was said to have struggled with the depiction of the faces of Jesus Christ and of Judas in this particular piece of work.

*The Mona Lisa* is one of the most famous paintings in the world. This picture depicts a woman who appears to be trying not to smile and has a very mysterious quality to it. She is wearing a very plain dress which draws more attention to her eyes and her hands when one studies the picture. The background of the picture appears to depict a world in turmoil while the woman is calmly seated in the forefront. The painting was been stolen many times and recovered, and is in remarkable condition considering the age of it.

The legacy left by da Vinci still survives to this day and one can marvel at the depth of his investigations and creativity. He had a certain ingenuity for technology that transcended the boundaries of time. Da Vinci drew conceptual sketches of a tank, a helicopter, an adding machine, the double hull and a concept of solar power, all of which were hundreds of years ahead of his time. Some of the inventions that he sketched were constructed by modern day engineers to see if they were functional. Some worked correctly and as expected, while others did not.

Very few of da Vinci's designs were actually constructed during his lifetime but he did invent some smaller items including a machine for water testing and an automated bobbin winder. He also created a machine that could be used to test the tensile strength of wire. These inventions became commonly used in many manufacturing processes and not much fanfare flowed from these devices.

Leonardo da Vinci approached most scientific topics from the viewpoint of an observer. He would describe it and sketch a topic or a subject in great detail in his notebooks and planned a treatise on the topic of human anatomy. He did a complete series of detailed drawings which included a study of the human skeleton, muscles and tendons. He also studied, in depth, how the human skeleton functioned and moved and how it reacted when muscles moved and caused the skeleton to also move.

He also studied and drew in depth diagrams of the human heart and other internal organs, the vascular system, and the human reproduction system. If these drawings had actually been compiled into his intended work of a treatise, they would have been made a significant contribution to the medical community. There has been much

speculation that da Vinci intended this work to be compiled and published because it appears to be set up in a format that seems to suggest it could be put together and released in sections. Unfortunately, Leonardo da Vinci's student who inherited this material found it too overwhelming to try to compile the materials and eventually gave up on the project.

Da Vinci's contributions in the field of engineering were invaluable at the time, including devices that were to be used to protect cities during times when they came under attack. Some of the devices that da Vinci invented included finned mortar shells and a steam cannon.

Leonardo da Vinci was fascinated with the idea of flying and a lot of his notes and studies centered on the anatomy of birds culminating in his work entitled "Codex on the Flight of Birds" in 1505. He also drew detailed diagrams of a hang glider, and a device that looks very similar to the concept of the modern day helicopter.

Although Leonardo da Vinci never married, he had friendships with Cecilia Gallerani and Beatrice and Isabella Este. He managed to keep his private life secret and there has been a great deal of speculation that he may have a homosexual, but there is obviously no way to prove or disprove this. There exist some court records from 1476 wherein Leonardo da Vinci was charged along with three other men and a well-known male prostitute at the time for an incident which involved sodomy. The charges were eventually dropped due lack of evidence, and there may have been some high level influence since one of the accused was related to Lorenzo de' Medici, a well-known Italian Statesman at the time.

Leonardo had very close and somewhat intimate relationships with his students Melzi and Salai, but this is to be expected since they all worked closely together for long hours for many years. The students were there to glean every bit of talent and information that was possible while the Master (da Vinci) found their service and loyalty invaluable to his projects and his work.

It is simply speculation and conjecture when people assume that Leonardo da Vinci was a homosexual and that it had any bearing on his artistic nature. Da Vinci had a certain amount of dedication to every topic that he explored and his sketches and notes depict a man who was driven to understand everything that was presented to him. When da Vinci was commissioned to create his works John the Baptist and Bacchus, it was said that the drawings for the works were very erotic, but this was simply the level of detail that was included with all of his work. Before a painting was created, many sketches and drawings and "studies" were done so that da Vinci knew he had all of the details correct before he put the final product on canvas or on a wall or ceiling.

Apparently the King of France carried Leonardo da Vinci away like a trophy when he was a very elderly man and supported him in his years of declining health. The King of France is said to have held da Vinci in his arms as he passed away. We may never again experience the gift of such a true genius living amongst us, sharing their extreme talent and works. Da Vinci kept notes on most aspects of his life from his scientific discoveries to the most mundane events in his life, including short grocery lists and debts owed to him.

Today Leonardo da Vinci is seen as one of the most famous figures in the history of art; no painting in the world has been reproduced as often as *the Mona Lisa*, and attracts so many visitors, or has been "borrowed" by so many other artist. Yet Leonardo is among the least well represented by his works; not a single sculpture survived, and the fewer than twenty paintings that remain include several that are unfinished and some in which his is not the only hand. Contemporary criticism is still engaged in cutting down to size the catalogue of paintings claimed as his, a list encrusted with all kinds of additions in the nineteenth century. At the same time, he is seen as one of the most ingenious and prolific of minds. Set against the small number of paintings is the extraordinary (sometimes overwhelming) number of notebooks, revealing the dazzling activity of the man of science, the engineer, the writer. His research on water, air, and the flight of birds inspired inventions and designs that only modern technology has been able to realize, including the aero plane, the parachute, the bicycle, the tank, and the machine-gun. Finally, he must be numbered one of the most enigmatic figures in the human pantheon. Everything we know about Leonardo da Vinci and his life has been submerged under what

people have wanted to believed about his art and his science.

Leonardo da Vinci avoided the intrigues of worldly ambitions and vanity. He was a reserved and withdrawn man, not concerned with glory, and yet absolutely sure of the value of his abilities. A consummate intellectual endowed with an extraordinary imagination, he remains the most outstanding figure of the Renaissance.

In rivers, the water that you touch is the last of what has passed and the first of that which comes;  
so with present time.” - Leonardo da Vinci

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