

Renaissance Art Hunt #1

LEONARDO DA VINCI

JENNIFER KARCH

Revised January 2022

VERONA, ITALY

Photos of works taken from trip to Florence in 2018 and Milan in 2019

High Renaissance

Very brief- 4 decades between 1490- 1530

Golden years of the Renaissance

Artists were Renaissance men combining skills of painter, sculpture and architect into one

Cult of the artist as an individual genius rather than a craftsman

Yet they still needed patrons

Rome became more important towards this time, the art was not to reflect the growing wealth of rich families but the grandeur of the papacy and the Vatican.

Perspective a commonplace tool- in this period:
perspective of light and air- aerial perspective
portray the complex emotions and intellects of the subjects
busy canvases are replaced with simple large forms, more
direct

Three names would dominate- **Leonardo da Vinci**,
Michelangelo Buonarroti and **Raphael Sanzio**
(in order of age)

Their counterparts in Northern Italy and Venice would be
Titian, **Giorgione**, and **Correggio**.

Artists of the Renaissance

Leonardo da Vinci

Michelangelo

Raffaello

Titian

Correggio

Tintoretto

Giulio Romano

Now we will look at the first artist on
our list:

Leonardo da Vinci

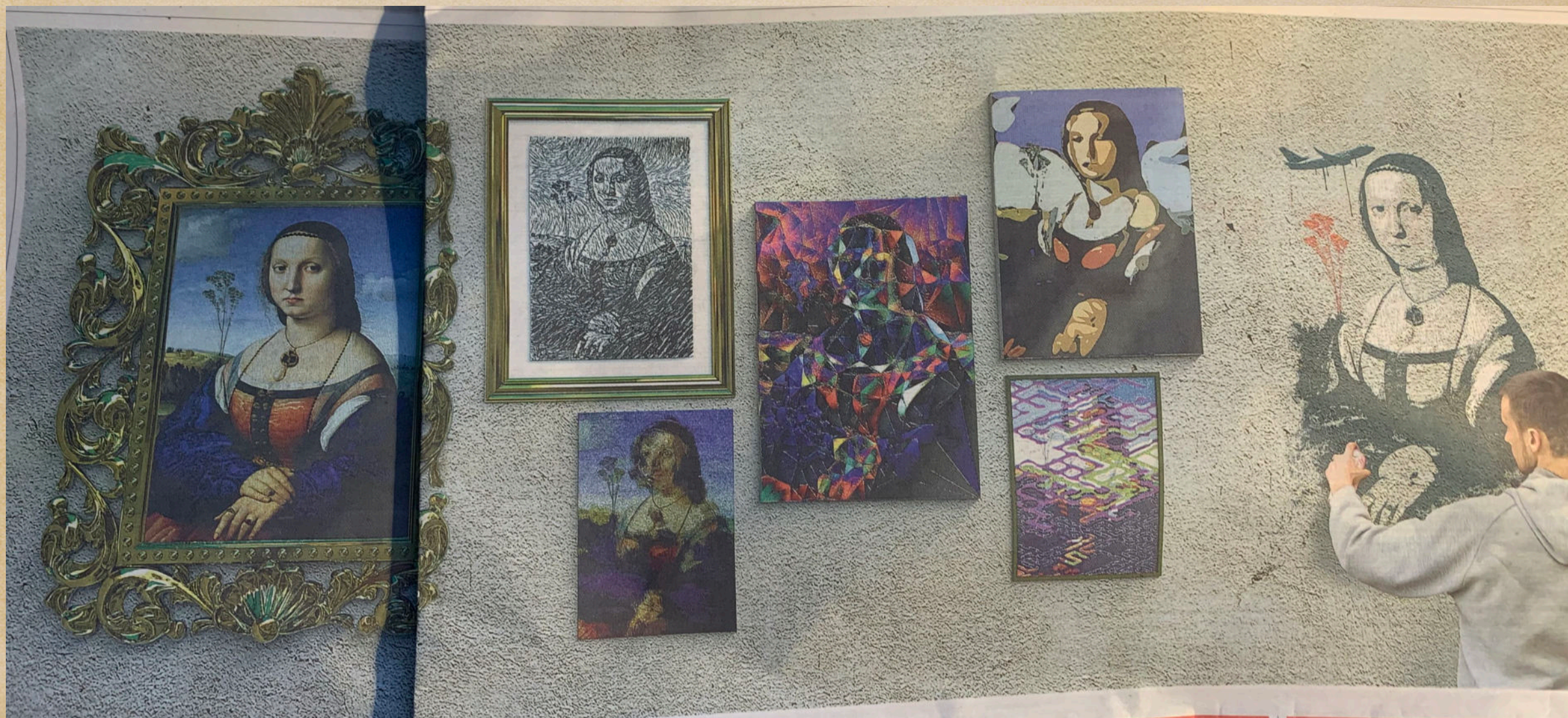
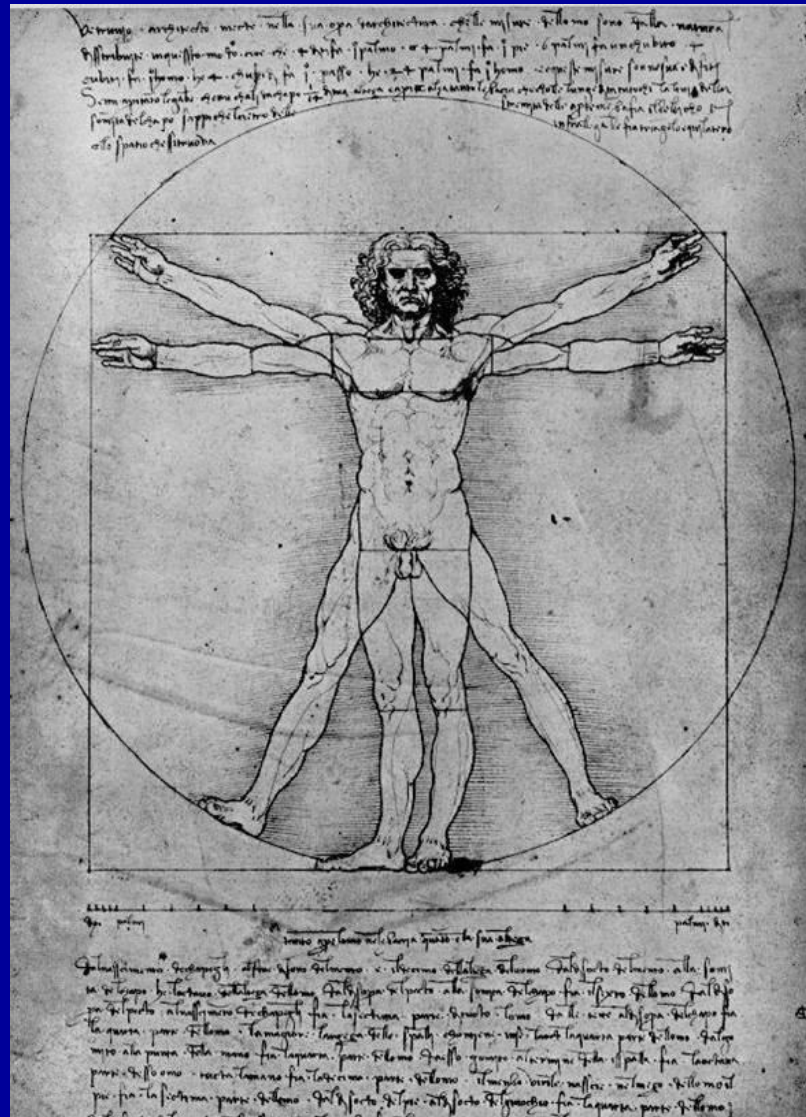


Foto from Corriere della Sera, Arte, 20 gennaio 2021

LEONARDO DA VINCI



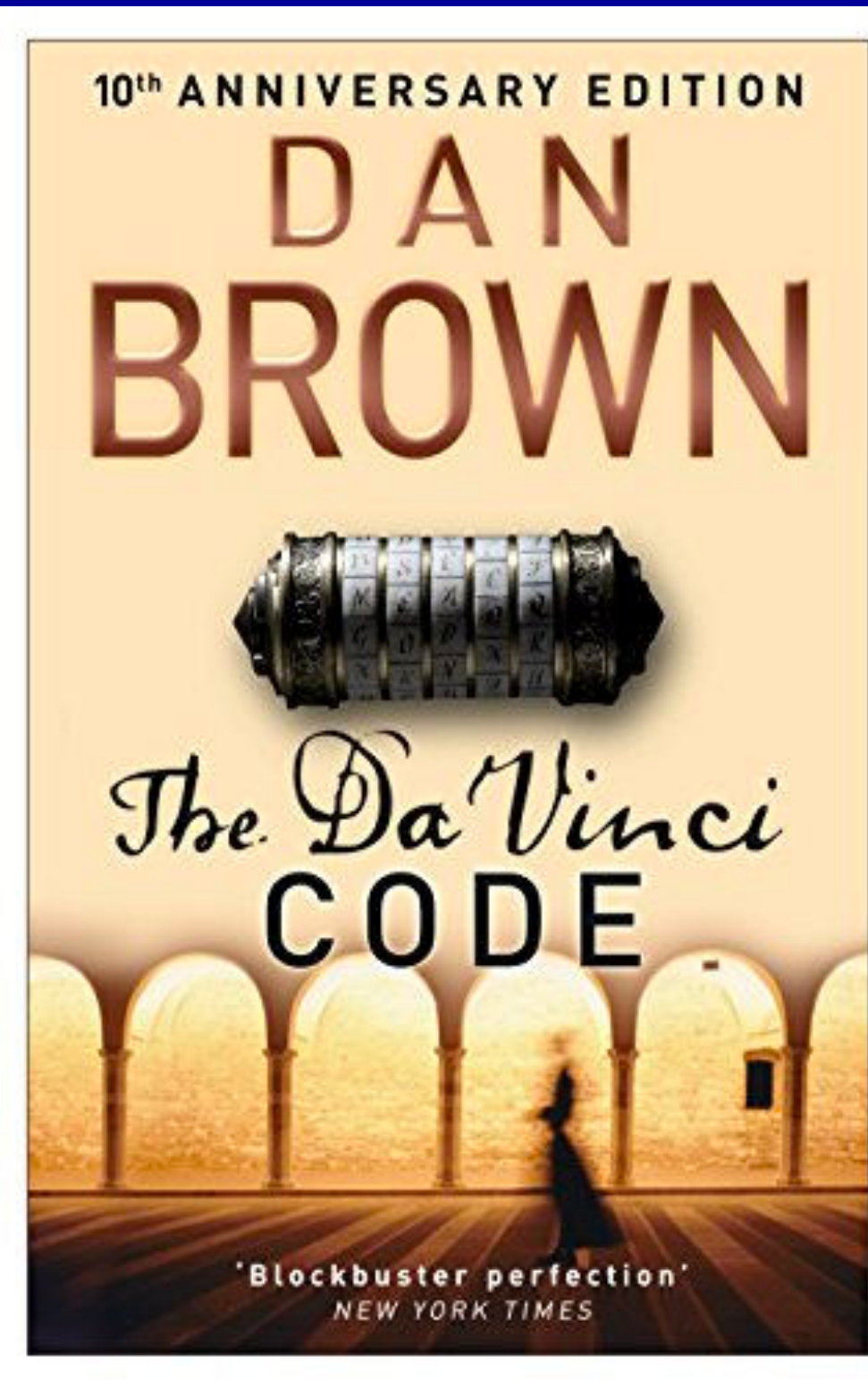
Da Vinci Code: to the fact that Saunière's body is found in the Denon Wing of the Louvre naked and posed like [Leonardo da Vinci's](#) famous drawing, the [Vitruvian Man](#), with a cryptic message written beside his body and a [Pentagram](#) drawn on his stomach in his own blood

- **(Vinci 1452- Ambroise 1519)**
- Scientific investigator and thinker
- Inventor of war machines and technical inventions
- Philosopher
- Eldest of the three stars of the High Renaissance (23 years older than Michelangelo, a bit younger than Botticelli)
- Natural son of Florentine notary and a servant girl named Caterina
- All told, he has a few shy of 30 existing, individual pieces of artwork (not including his drawings).
- *Vitruvian Man*, c. 1490, pen and ink on wash over metal point on paper, Galleria dell'Accademia, Venice

THE DA VINCI CODE



Loved the book and the movie!



500 YEARS OF LEO'S DEATH 2019



Andrea del Verrocchio (Florence 1435- Venice 1488) and Leonardo da Vinci (Vinci 1452 – Amboise 1519), *The Baptism of Christ*, 140-1475 c.



<https://www.uffizi.it/en/artworks/verrocchio-leonardo-baptism-of-christ>

- Apprentice to **Verrocchio (Florence 1435 -Venice 1488)-**

- it is said when Verrocchio saw that young Leonardo's painting was better than his, he stopped painting





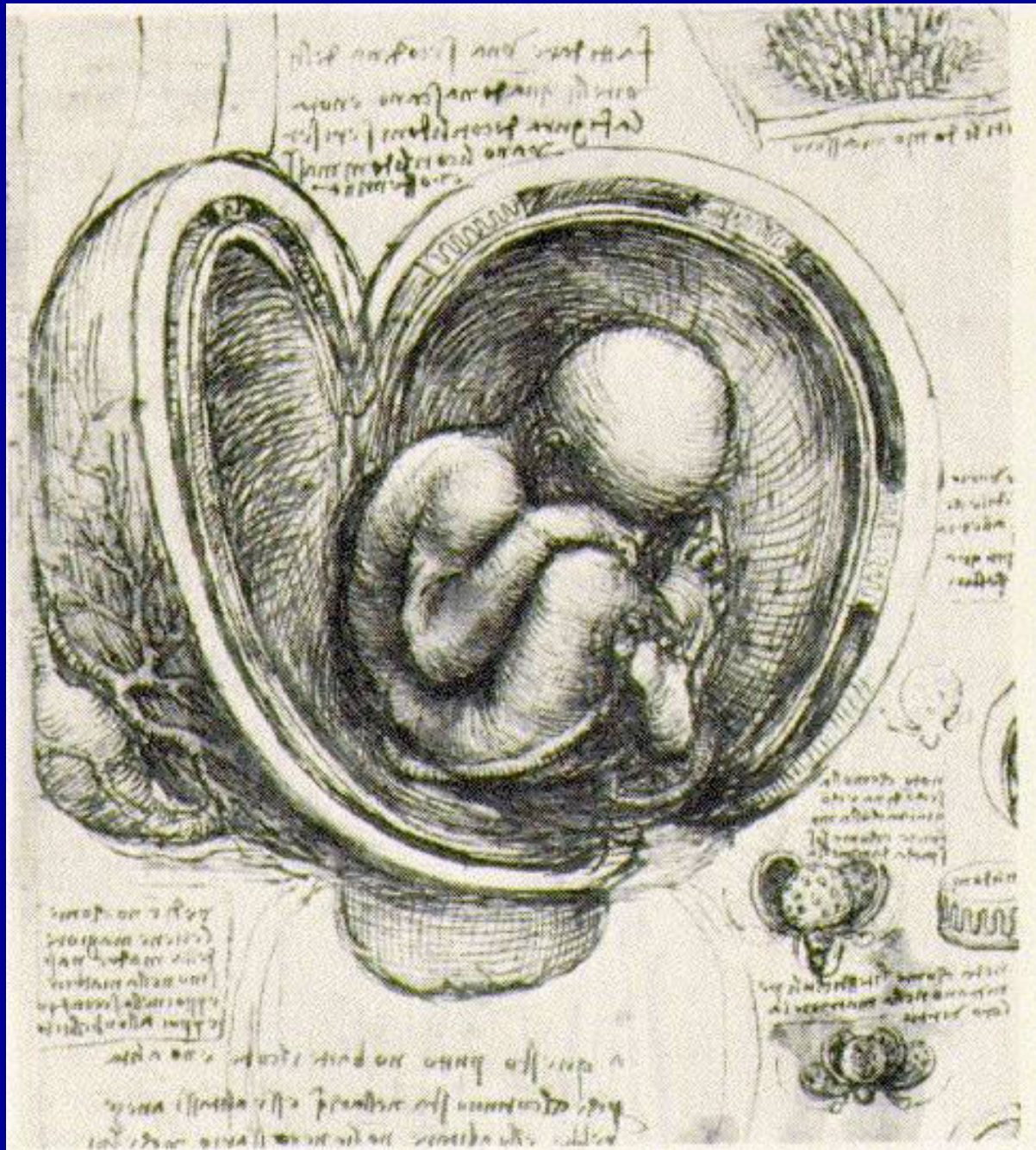
THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST
Andrea del Verrocchio and
Leonardo da Vinci, 1470-1475 c.
Uffizi Gallery, Room 35
Tempera and oil on table

<https://www.uffizi.it/en/artworks/verrocchio-leonardo-baptism-of-christ>

Sala 35.

<https://www.artribune.com/arti-visive/arte-moderna/2018/07/musei-leonardo-da-vinci-uffizi-allestimenti/>





Leonardo performed autopsies on corpses to improve his knowledge of physiology, and ridiculed lesser artists' depictions of human flesh, saying they looked like 'sacks of nuts.'

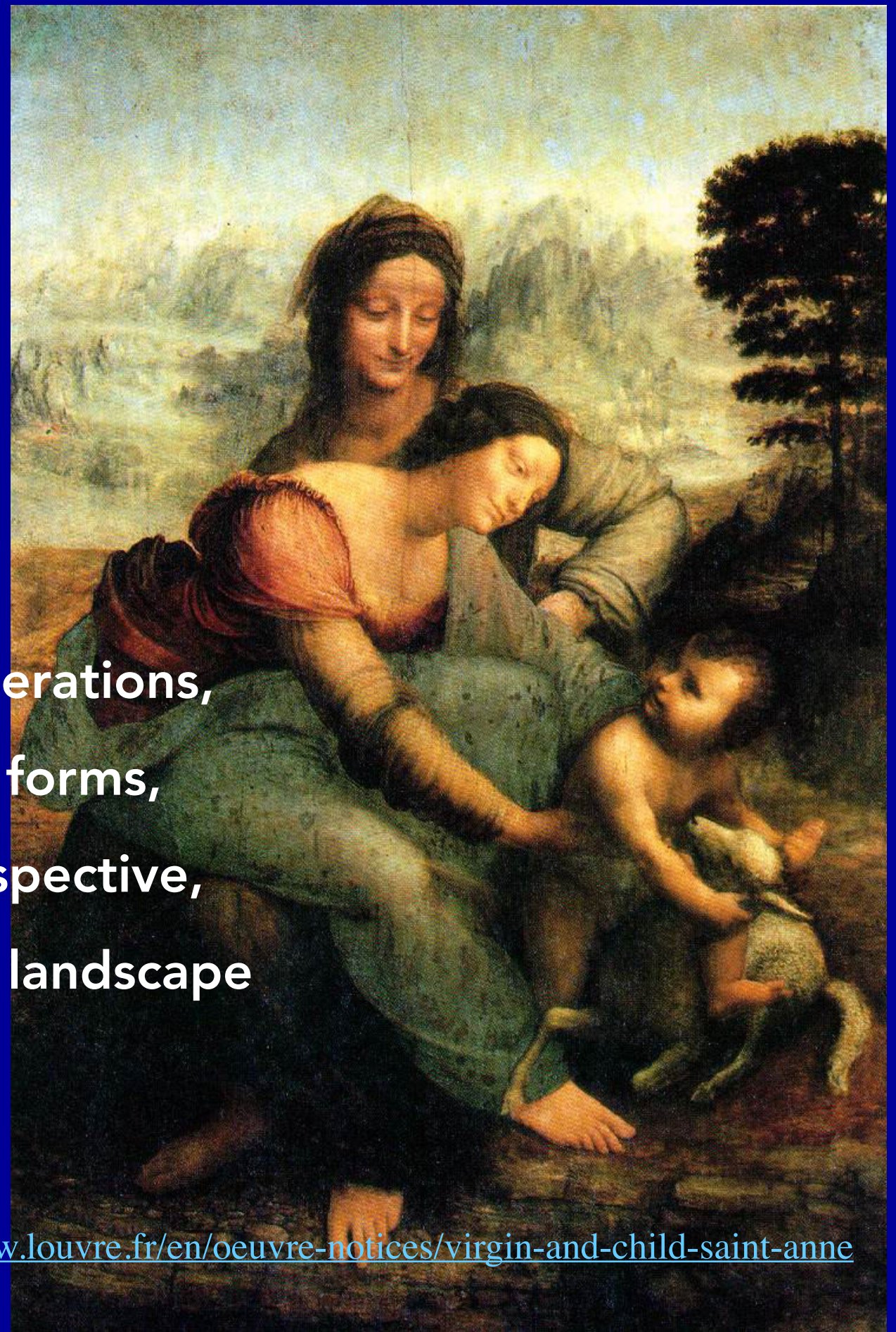
- Possessing a sprawling intellect that touched astoundingly diverse areas of knowledge, but suffering from a tendency to assume too many projects in various fields, and failing to complete most
- Wrote backwards in his journals so others could not read them.
- **PLEASE WRITE NOW YOUR NAME BACKWARDS**
- Leonardo established modern techniques of scientific illustration with highly accurate renderings such as *Embryo in the Womb* (1511), Royal Collection, UK

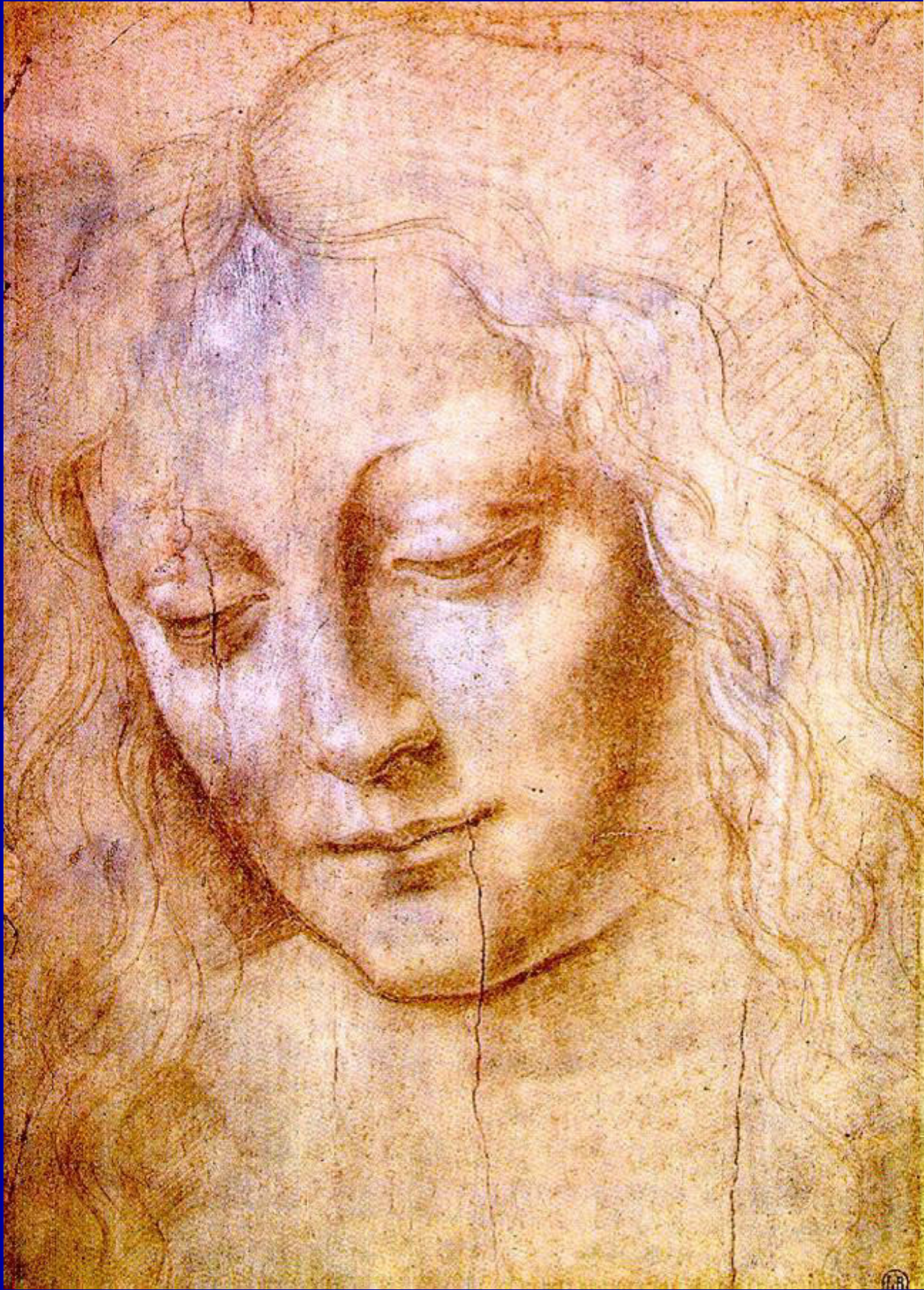


The Virgin and St. Anne 1499-1501- charcoal
- oil on wood- 1510 1.7 m x 1.2m, Louvre, Paris

Three generations,
triangular forms,
aerial perspective,
imaginary landscape

<https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/virgin-and-child-saint-anne>

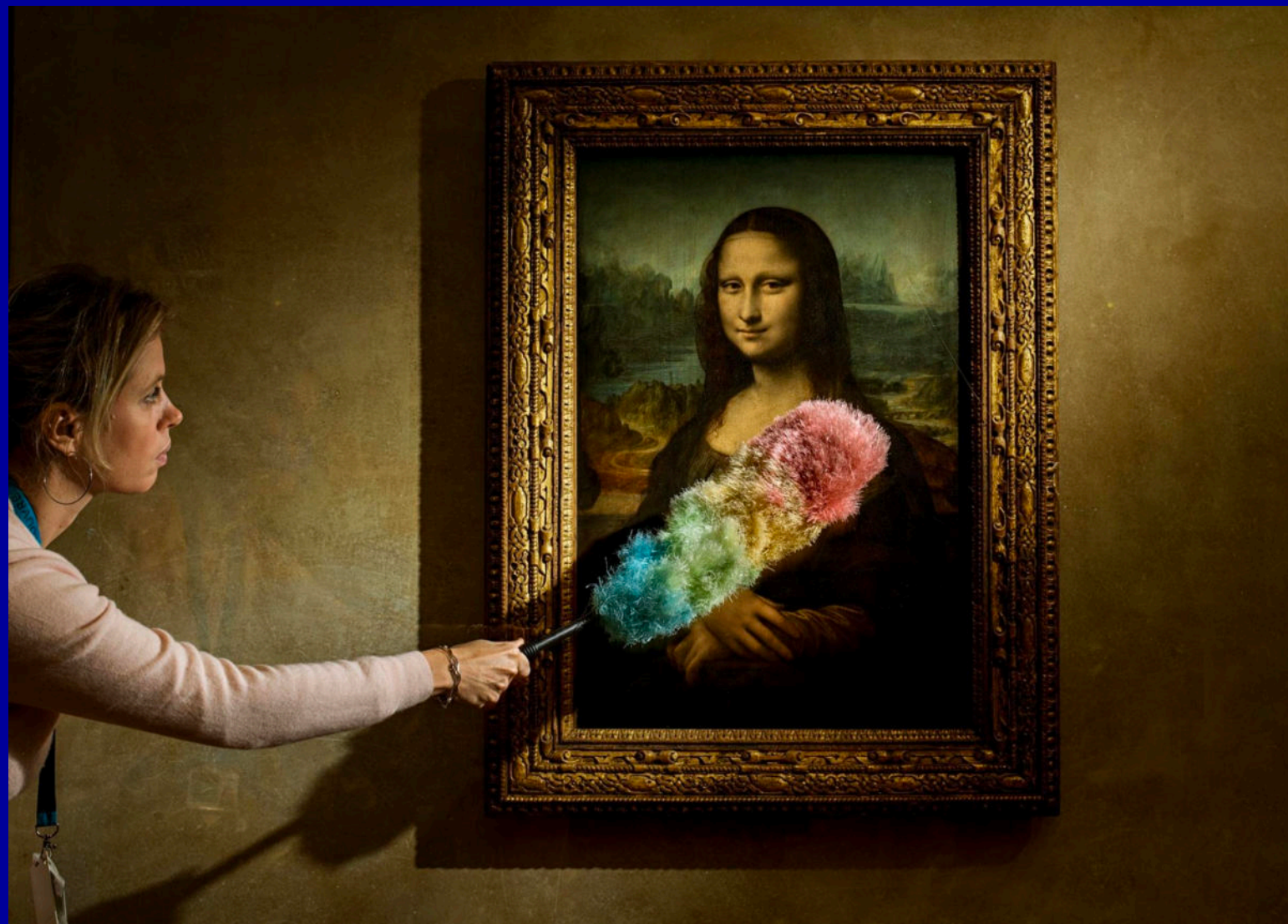




MONA LISA

1503-1506, continuing until 1517, oil on poplar panel
The Louvre Museum, Paris

- The most famous portrait of all times!!!
Many artists during the centuries have appropriated her image.





- **Composition:** Leonardo relied on a pyramidal design, which gives the painting a great sense of harmony between the sitter and the landscape. For the first time, he adopted the half-to three-quarters length, instead of the bust-size pose, with her sitting sideways. This *contrapposto* (the twisting of one part of the body away from another part) was a modern development (here Mona Lisa sits sideways but she faces front) and helped establish three-dimensional space.
- Speculation on who the woman was- some thought it was a female Michelangelo - Lisa Gherardini
- He spent four years on it and carried the painting around until he died.



The smile: Who can turn it down? Seriously, it embodies how Leonardo captured the complex inner life — and all of Lisa's mysteries — without offering solid proof, or overt symbols, of her inner self.

Smiling or mocking? Some explanations

Around 1550, Vasari described *Mona Lisa*'s smile as "more divine than human." Since then, people have come up with different theories about her mysterious mug:

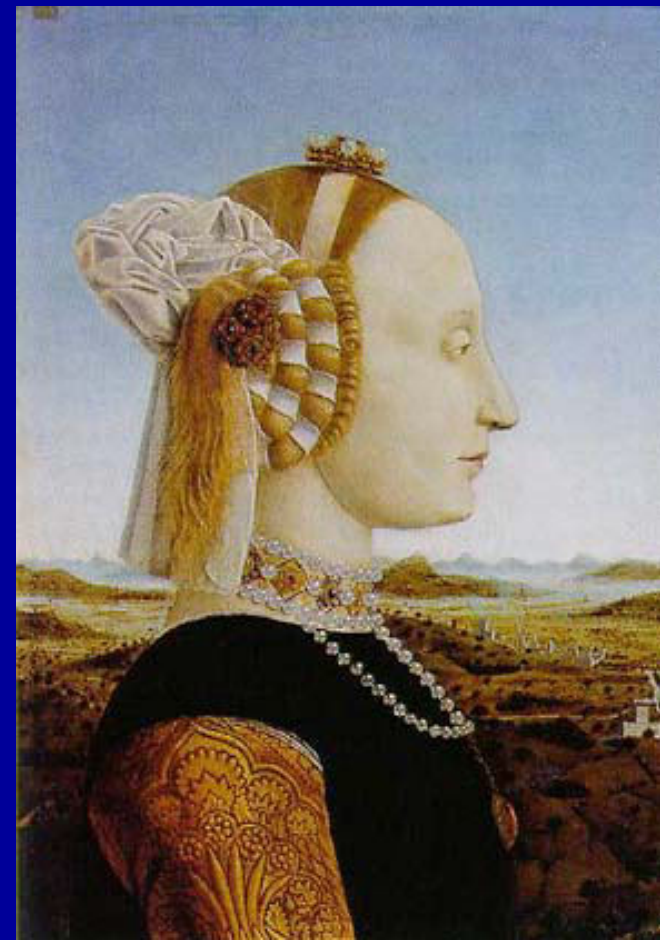
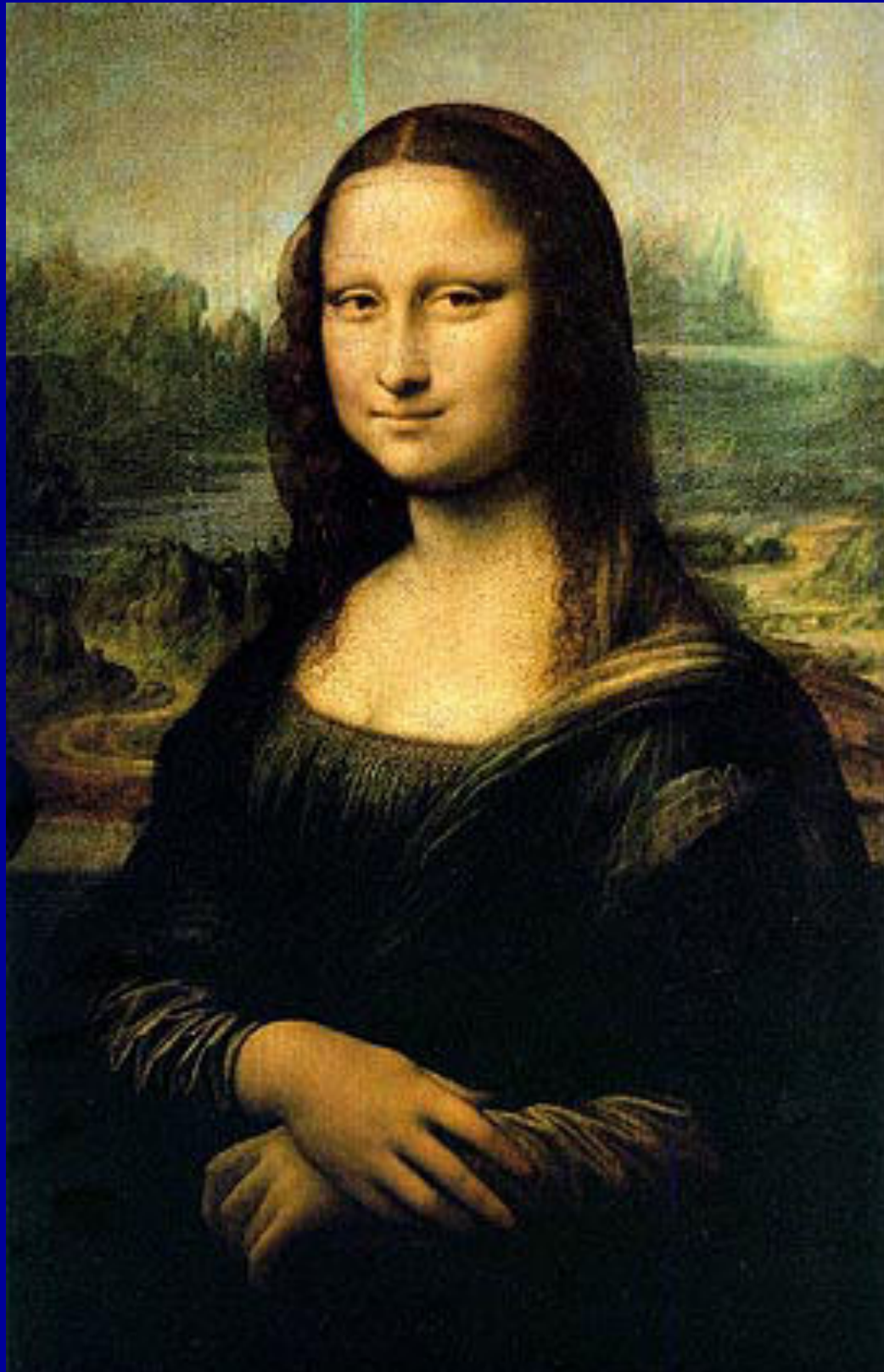
She was pregnant (and kind of smug about it, too; her swollen fingers, resting on her stomach, give her condition away).

She had some sort of facial paralysis, wore away her teeth by grinding them, or suffered from asthma.

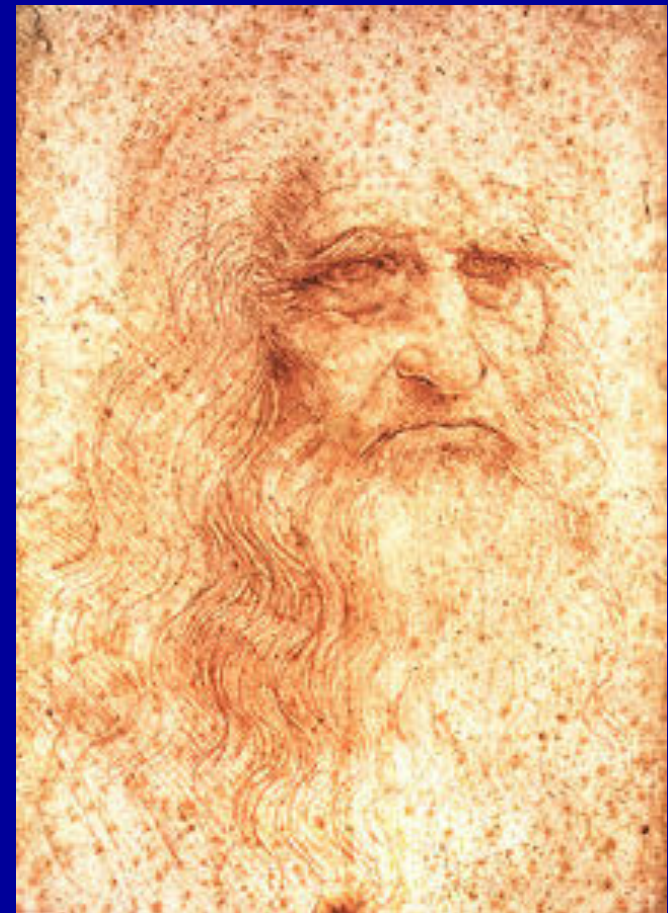
She was an unhappy wife, subject to an impotent, alcoholic, and abusive husband. (According to Vasari, Leonardo hired jesters to entertain her while she sat for him, so she remained merry instead of melancholy.)

- She's really playing a joke on you — the *real* subject is Leonardo himself (in drag!), and he's trying not to laugh
- If you stare long and hard at Leonardo's portrait of the *Mona Lisa*, you'll notice how she smiles at you — and how quickly her smile flickers and disappears. Why is she so fickle? Don't worry. It's not you; it's her. Or, rather, it's *you*, but not in the way you think

compare with



Piero della Francesca, *Duchess of Urbino, Battista Sforza*, Galleria degli uffizi



Leonardo da Vinci, *Self-Portrait*

- Leonardo da Vinci arrived with the painting in his baggage in France in the year 1516. Leonardo sold the painting in France to King Francis I., who bought it for his castle in Amboise. Following that, Mona Lisa went to Fontainebleau, Paris, Versailles and then to the collection of Ludwig XIV. After the revolution in France the painting got a new home in the Louvre. Napoleon took it away from there and hung it up in his bedroom. When Napoleon was banished Mona Lisa returned into the great Louvre in Paris.
- On 21 August 1911 Mona Lisa was stolen from an Italian thief, who brought the painting to Italy, where it emerged two years later in Florence. After some exhibitions Mona Lisa returned again to Paris.
- An acid attempt damaged the lower half of the painting in 1956. The restoration took several years.
- In the 60's and 70's Mona Lisa was exposed in New York, Tokyo and Moscow. Today the painting is behind bullet-proof glass in Paris in the Louvre and international terms are prohibiting any journey.

Da Vinci Code: The second and third lines written in blood-("O, Draconian devil!" and "Oh, lame saint!") are anagrams respectively for "Leonardo da Vinci" and "The *Mona Lisa*" (in English). These clues were meant to lead to a second set of clues. On the glass over the [Mona Lisa](#), Saunière wrote the message "So dark the con of Man" with a curator's pen that can only be read in [ultra-violet](#) light.

THE REAPPEARANCE OF MONA LISA

APPROPRIATION ART AND DIALOGIC NETWORKS

When an original piece is taken from its environment and altered once, a new dialogue is created between the two pieces. If an original piece is taken from its environment multiple times, the dialogic network becomes larger and complex. What fuels this network is not necessarily the image itself, but the intention behind each variation of the image in the network.



MONA LISA (1503-1506)

LEONARDO DA VINCI

THE MONA LISA GETS AROUND SIX MILLION VISITORS A YEAR. HOWEVER, FAME IS A TWO-EDGE SWORD. BECAUSE MONA LISA IS ONE OF THE MOST ICONIC PIECES OF ART IN THE WORLD, IT IS ALSO ONE OF THE MOST APPROPRIATED.



L.H.O.O.Q. (1919) BY MARCEL DUCHAMP WAS A PIECE OF WORK COMING OUT OF THE DADA MOVEMENT. L.H.O.O.Q. FEATURES DA VINCI'S MONA LISA WITH MASculine FEATURES (Moustache AND BEARD) AND A CRUDE CAPTION. IF YOU SOUND OUT THE INDIVIDUAL LETTERS IN FRENCH "L-H-O-O-Q" IT RESEMBLES THE PHRASE *ELLE A CHAUD A CUL* WHICH TRANSLATES TO SHE HAS A HOT ASS.

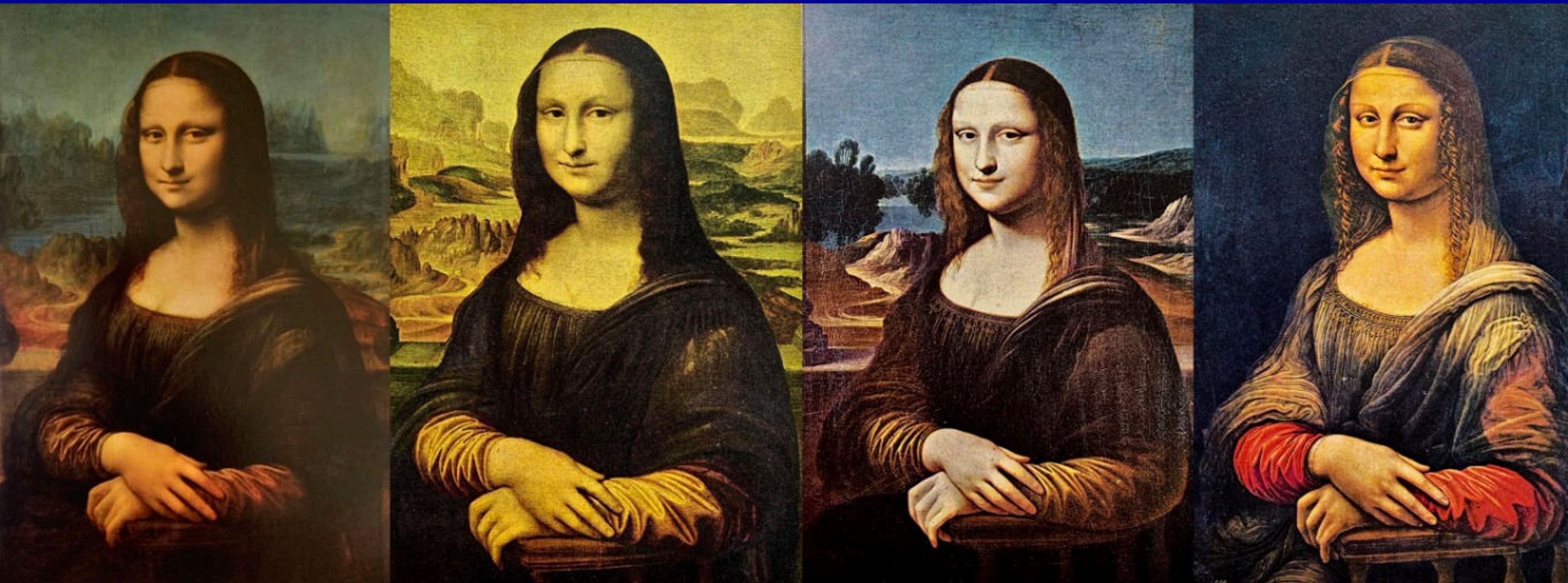
IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT DUCHAMP INJURED THE MONA LISA WHEN HE CREATED L.H.O.O.Q. HOWEVER, LOOKING AT THE IMPACT L.H.O.O.Q. HAD ON THE DADA MOVEMENT AND OTHER MOVEMENTS THAT FOLLOWED, THERE COULD BE A COUNTER-ARGUMENT THAT DUCHAMP WAS UTILIZING THAT SPECIFIC IMAGE OF MONA LISA TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOMETHING LARGER THAN ITS EXISTENCE AS A STORE-Bought POSTCARD.



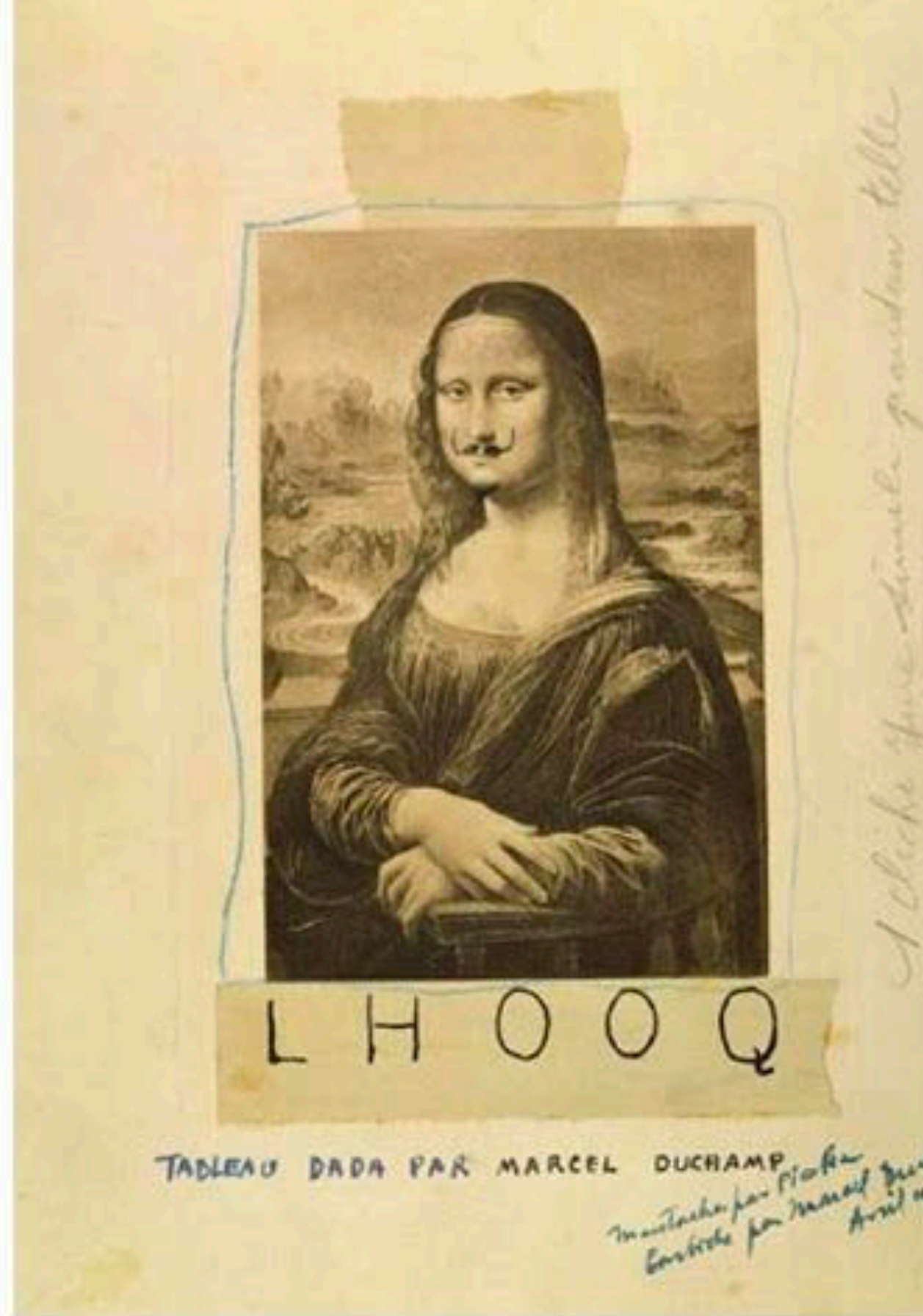
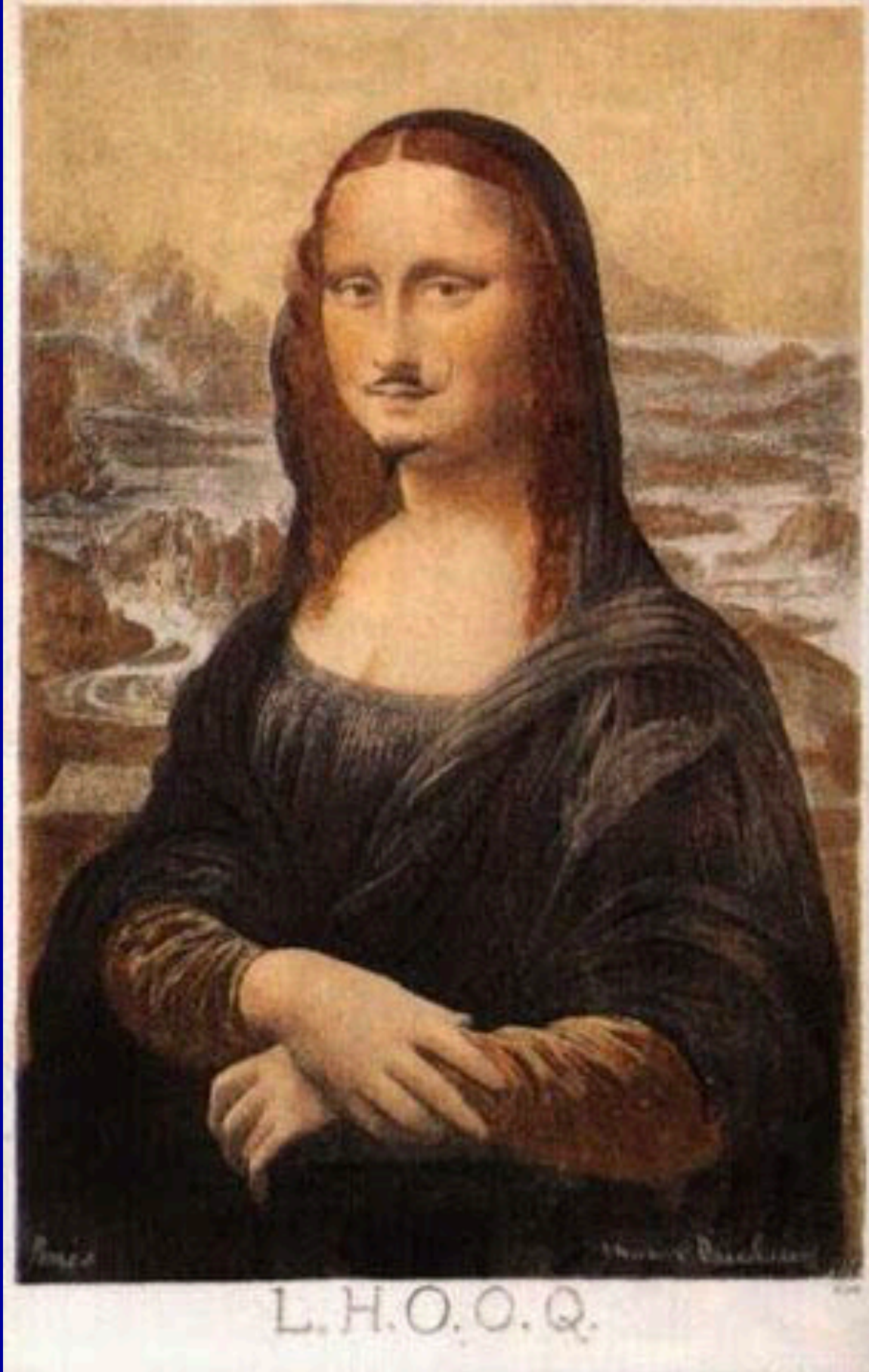
ANDY WARHOL WAS OBSESSED WITH THE CELEBRITY CULT AND SINCE MONA LISA IS ONE OF THE MOST ICONIC IMAGES OF ALL TIME, WARHOL OBVIOUSLY DEDICATED A WHOLE SERIES TO THE PIECE. WARHOL APPROPRIATED THE MONA LISA A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENTLY THAN DUCHAMP. HE TOOK IMAGES OF MONA LISA AND WOULD REPRODUCE THEM IN VARIOUS SIZES AND COLORS. IN HIS PIECE **THIRTY ARE BETTER THAN ONE** (1963), WARHOL CREATES A PATTERN-LIKE PRINT UTILIZING THE IMAGE OF MONA LISA MULTIPLE TIMES. THIS PIECE EMBRACES MASS CONSUMERISM AND REPRODUCTION. MORE IS BETTER.



JASPER JOHNS WAS AN AMERICAN ARTIST KNOWN FOR HIS WORK WITH ASSEMBLAGE ART. ONE OF JOHN'S MORE POPULAR PIECES, **SEASONS** (1985-1988), APPROPRIATES THE IMAGE OF MONA LISA TO PAY HOMAGE TO ARTISTS LIKE DUCHAMP AND WARHOL WHO HAD USED THE ICONIC IMAGE IN THE PAST. JASPER JOHN'S APPROPRIATION OF THE IMAGE OF MONA LISA DIRECTLY ACKNOWLEDGES WORKS LIKE THIRTY IS BETTER THAN ONE AND L.H.O.O.Q., PULLING THIS HUGE DIALOGIC NETWORK TOGETHER.



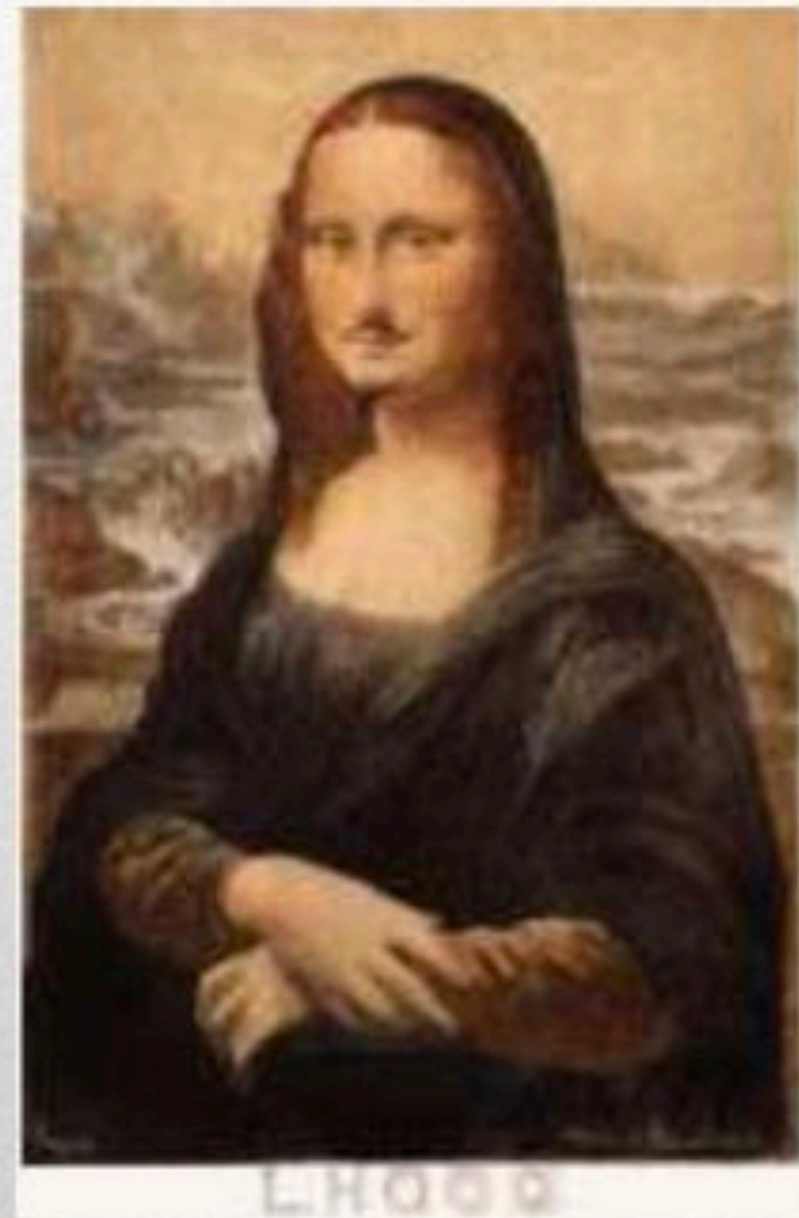
<https://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2020/03/11/the-eternal-enigma-of-leonardo-da-vincis-mona-lisa.html>



Marcel Duchamp, *L.H.O.O.Q.*, Dada

POST MODERN FRAME: L.H.O.O.Q.

- 1919, France
- Post card reproduction of the Mona Lisa with pencil
- Readymade
- The name of the piece, *L.H.O.O.Q.* (in French *èl ache o o qu*), is a pun, since the letters when pronounced in French form the sentence "Elle a chaud au cul", which can be roughly translated as "She has a hot ass".





Andy Warhol, *Coloured Mona Lisa*



There are so many artists who tribute Mona Lisa.....Can you name them?

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2633391/Mona-Lisa-tributes-Can-you-name-the-artists.html>

MONA LISA IN THE LOUVRE



<https://www.discoverwalks.com/blog/the-best-way-to-see-mona-lisa-at-the-louvre/>

Germaine Greer, the feminist art historian said about Leonardo da Vinci at the Hay Festival in Wales on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Leonardo in 2019:

“Leonardo da Vinci, the incomparable Renaissance painter? Actually, he was rather sloppy, disappointing and derivative. His greatest work, the most popular painting in the world? The bloody Mona Lisa ...this half-dead woman, this strange green-faced female.

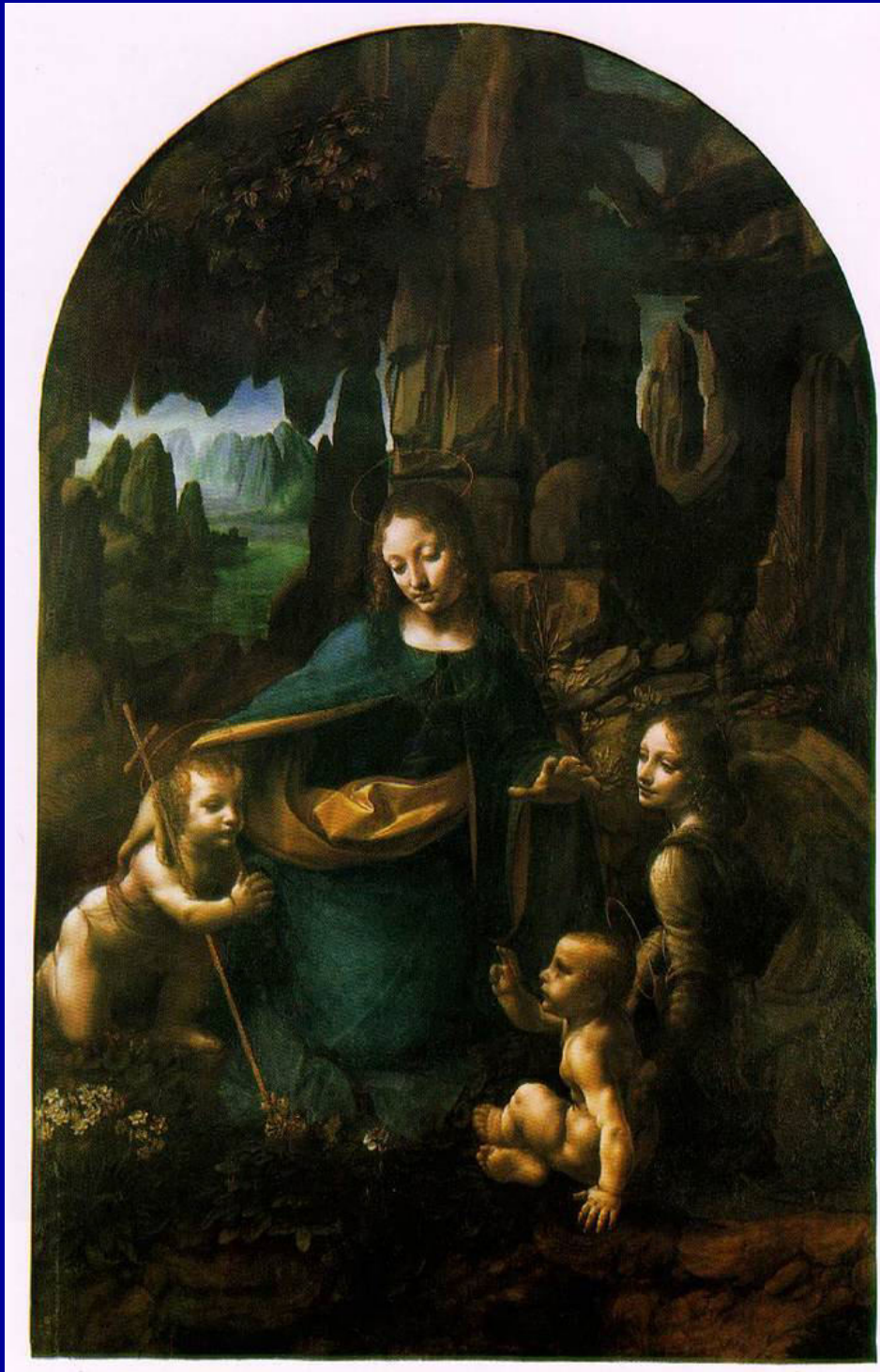
Greer said she was repeatedly “disappointed in Leonardo as an artist”. On the Mona Lisa, she said the painting was typical of Venetian art in the period.

“The most important thing to me about this bl**dy picture is that this woman looks as if she is already dead”, said Greer. “As for the famous smile, this is what I call the Leonardo smirk. You find it everywhere”.

VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS (1483-86)

oil on wood, now transferred to canvas (1.1 x 1.9 m)

Louvre Museum, Paris



- Madonna of the Rocks recalls a Medieval story in which the infant Christ and St. John meet on the journey home from Egypt.
- Leonardo, who felt that the essence of great art was the creation of the illusion of depth, uses foreshortening in the figures, and aerial perspective, as the rocky outcroppings gradually vanish into the mist.
- The sense of drama is created by the strong contrast of values, or chiaroscuro.
- The figure composition is based on a triangle, with the face of Mary at the apex. The deliberate softening of outlines is called **sfumato**

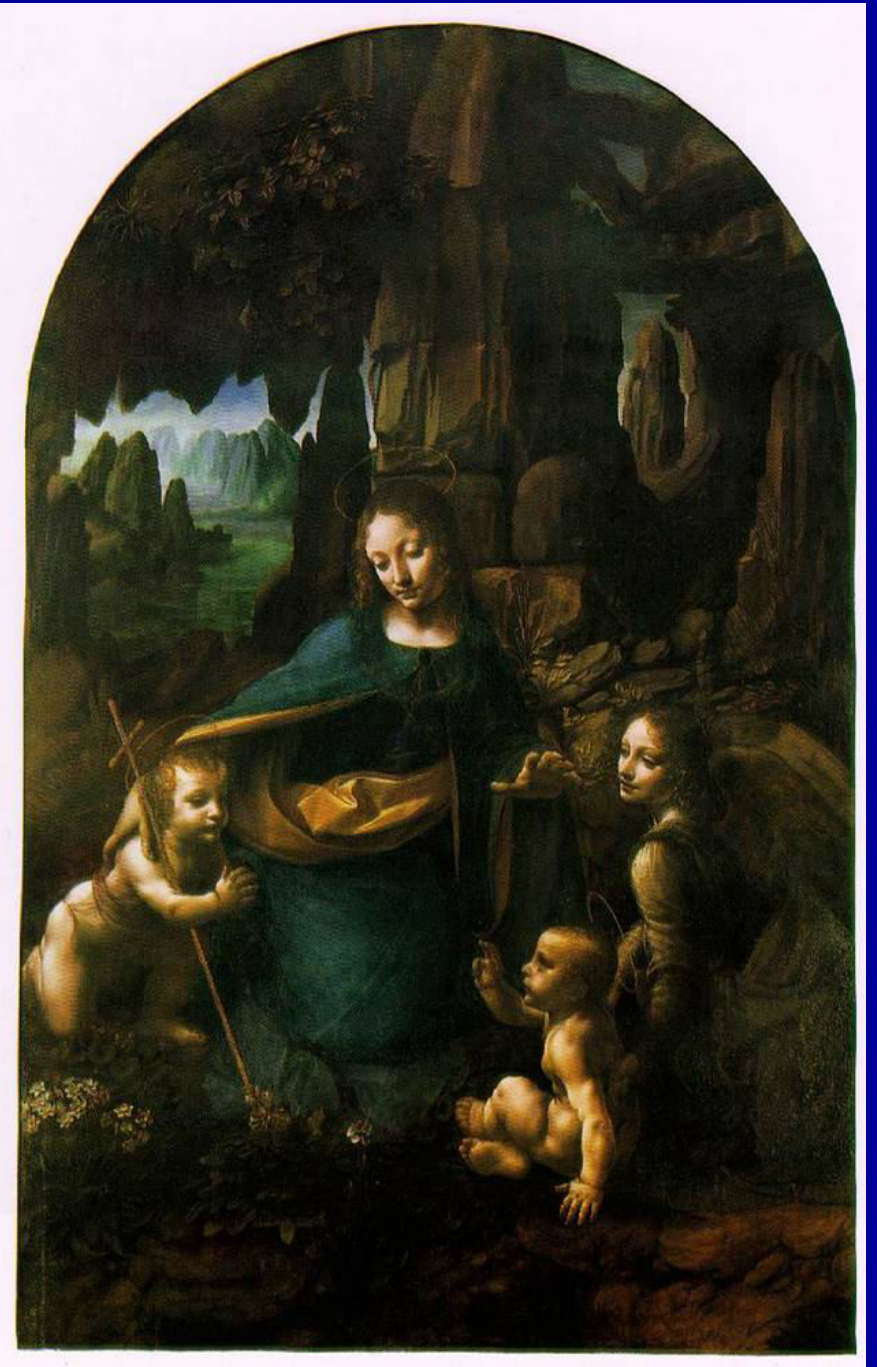
So dark the con of Man" - is an anagram for Madonna of the Rocks,. Behind this painting, Saunière hid a key. On the key, written with the curator's pen, is an address.

First painting



Da Vinci's original commission for his famous Madonna of the Rocks came from an organization known as the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception, which needed a painting for the centerpiece

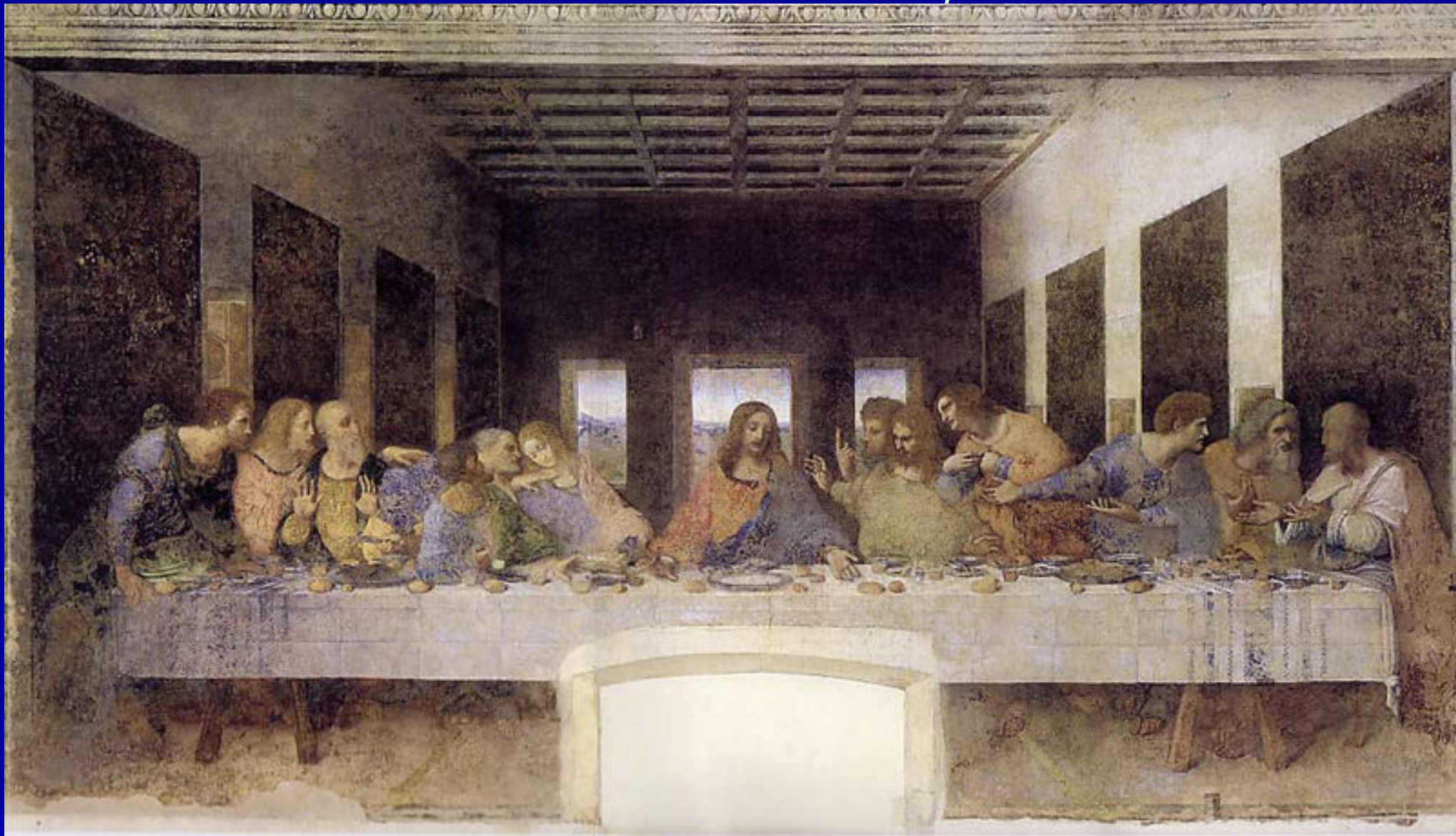
In this case, the hand of the angel Uriel is described as "making a cutting gesture as if slicing the invisible head gripped by Mary's claw-like hand"



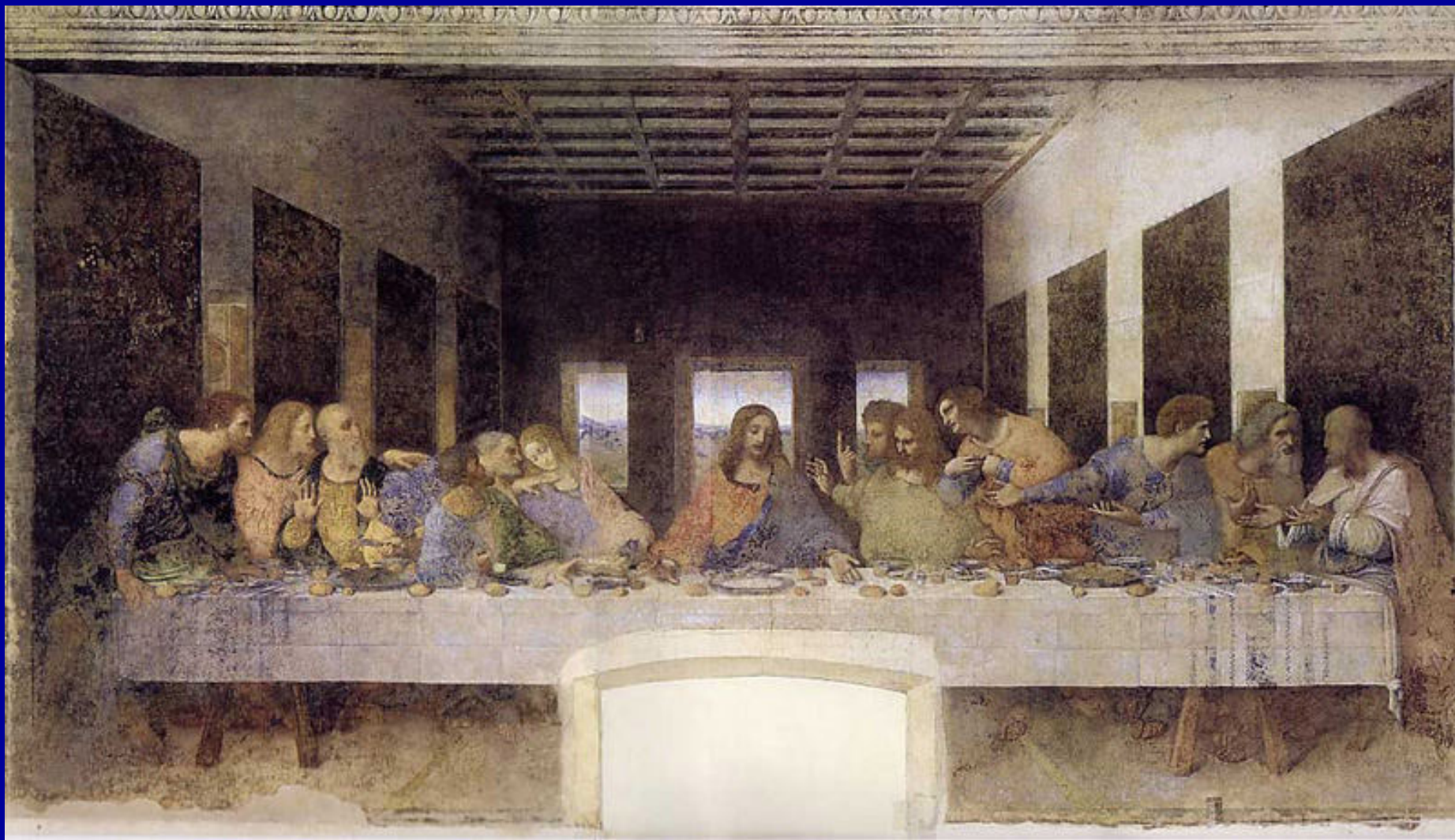
What Dan Brown states: The nuns gave Leonardo specific dimensions and a desired theme—the Virgin Mary, baby John The Baptist, Uriel, and Baby Jesus sheltering in a cave. Although Da Vinci did as they requested, when he delivered the work, the group reacted with horror. The painting contained several disturbing "un-Christian" anomalies, which seemed to convey a hidden message and alternative meaning. Da Vinci eventually mollified them by painting them a **second version of Madonna of the Rocks, which now hangs in London's National Gallery under the name Virgin of the Rocks. Da Vinci's original hangs at the Louvre in Paris**

THE LAST SUPPER, 1495-98

Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan



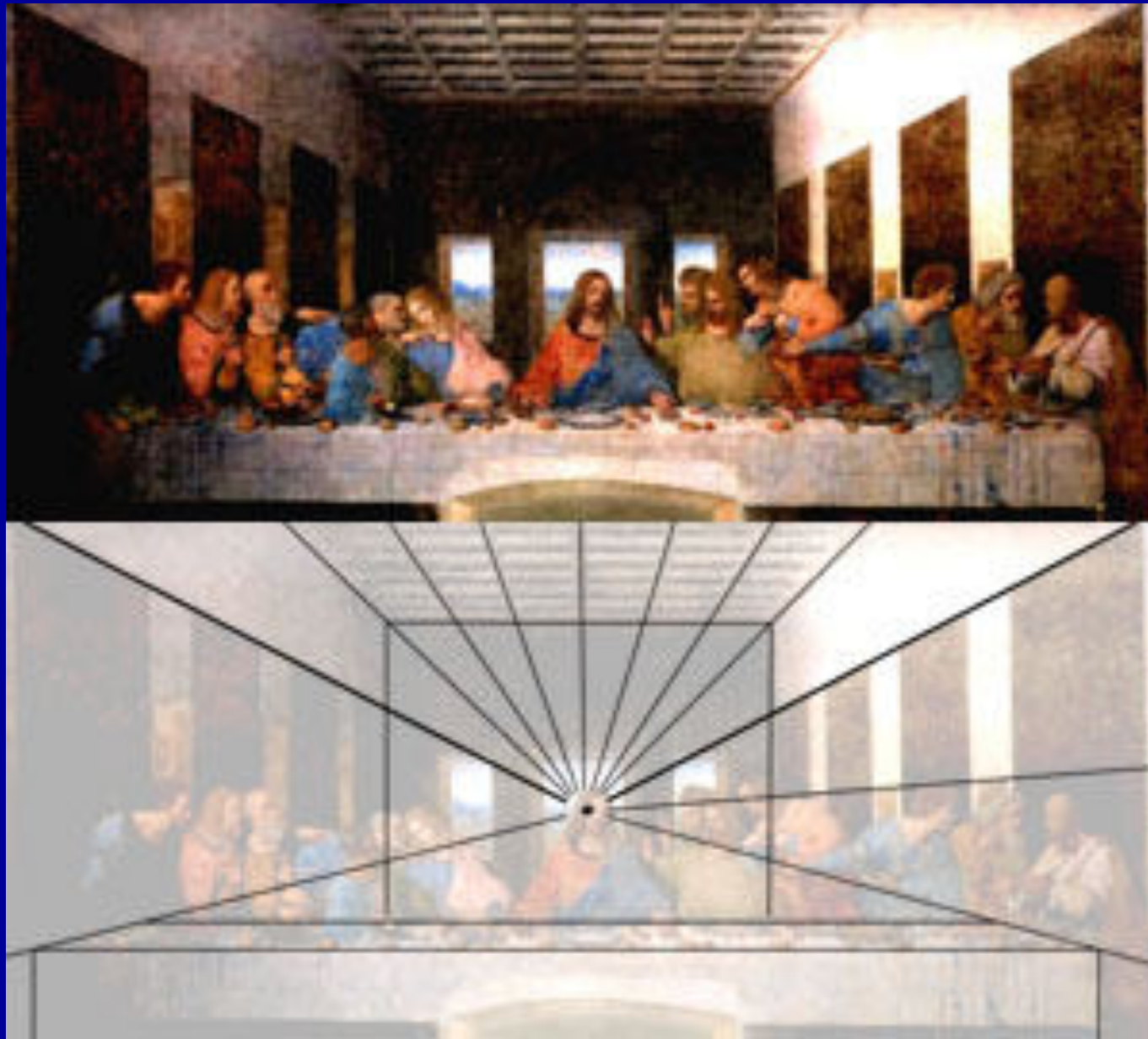
- In 1495, Leonardo Da Vinci began painting the *Last Supper* on the wall of the refectory (dining hall) of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan, Italy, and completed it in 1498.
- Constructed symmetrically according to the laws of central perspective. The focal point of the perspective is at Jesus's head, right in the centre of the painting. This is further highlighted by the open window above Jesus' head.
- Jesus is physically and psychologically isolated from the other figures and with his hands is pointing to the bread and wine.



- The other figures are grouped in three's, and reacting directly to Jesus. It took Leonardo 4 years to paint this painting as he would leave for a couple of days and sketch people's faces for the disciple's expressive faces.
- His *Last Supper* exemplifies that belief that figures should express emotional and psychological realism. The Apostles are arranged in four groups of three with Christ in the center. Leonardo's depiction of Christ as the focal point in perspective and in the form of a triangle, symbolic of the Trinity, provides for calmness and stability, whereas the gesticulation and facial expressions of the Apostles conveys their sense of astonishment
- Judas above all was clearly characterized by Leonardo, for he was not, as was customary, placed in the centre of the picture in front of the table, but placed amongst the row of disciples.



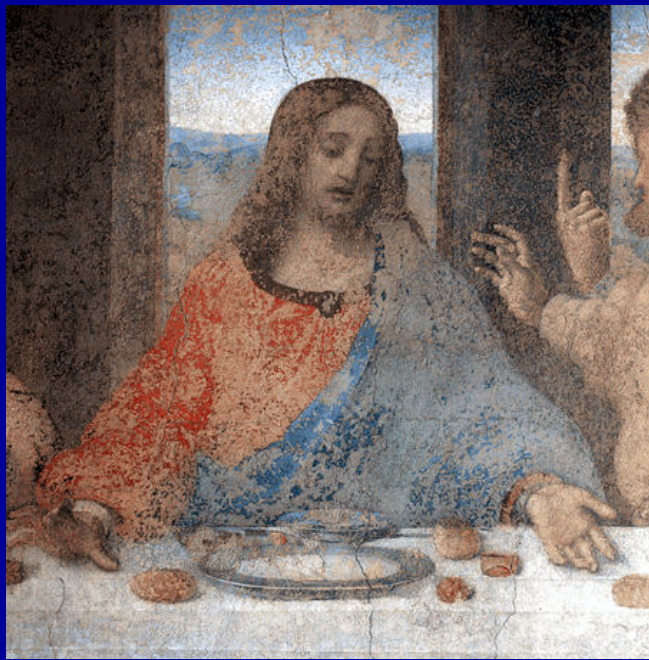
- With regard to his use of perspective, Leonardo was successful in employing it to create an extension of the refectory and thus provides an illusionist effect.
- (My photo from trip in 2018)



- There have been discoveries of how Leonardo made use of this artistic measure. A hole into which a nail had been driven has been found, located in the temple of Jesus. The location is the key spatial focus of Leonardo's painting of the *Last Supper*. He drove a nail into the wall and radiated string in various directions to help him see the perspective of the room he was painting.

Excellent zoomable site of the last supper

<http://milan.arounder.com/category/fullscreen/IT000005356.html>



Peter was leaning menacingly toward Mary Magdalene and slicing his blade-like hand across her neck. The same threatening gesture as in the *Madonna on the Rocks*!

- The faces in the painting, with the exception of Jesus (center figure), are reportedly those of actual people Leonardo sought out in Milan.
- Reportedly, Leonardo spend much time wandering through jails with Milanese criminals to locate the an appropriate Judas (fourth figure from left of painting).
- Judas is identified by means of several motifs such as his reaching for the bread, the purse containing the reward for his treachery and the knocking over of a saltshaker, a sign of misfortune. Leonardo even formally expressed his isolation from the group by depicting him as the only one whose upper body is leaning against the table, shrinking back from Jesus.
- In addition to using living models from some of the disciples, Leonardo surrounded them with objects then in everyday use. The tablecloth, knives, forks, glassware, and china were all similar to those of the monks residing at the monastery

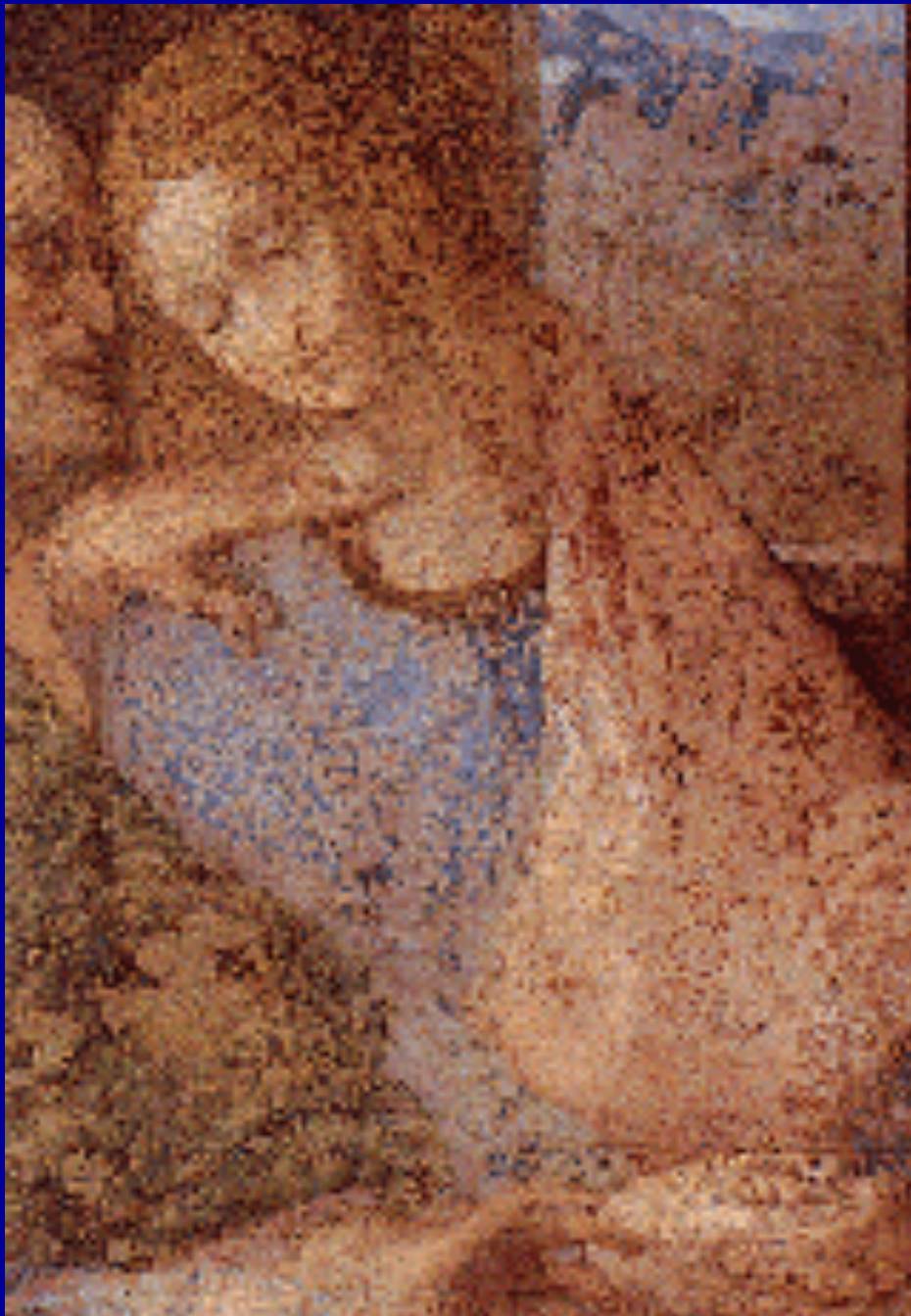
- “Is that hand wielding a dagger?”
Yes. Stranger still, if you count the arms, you’ll see that this hand belongs to ... no one at all. It’s disembodied. Anonymous.”





Compare to
traditional version of
last supper

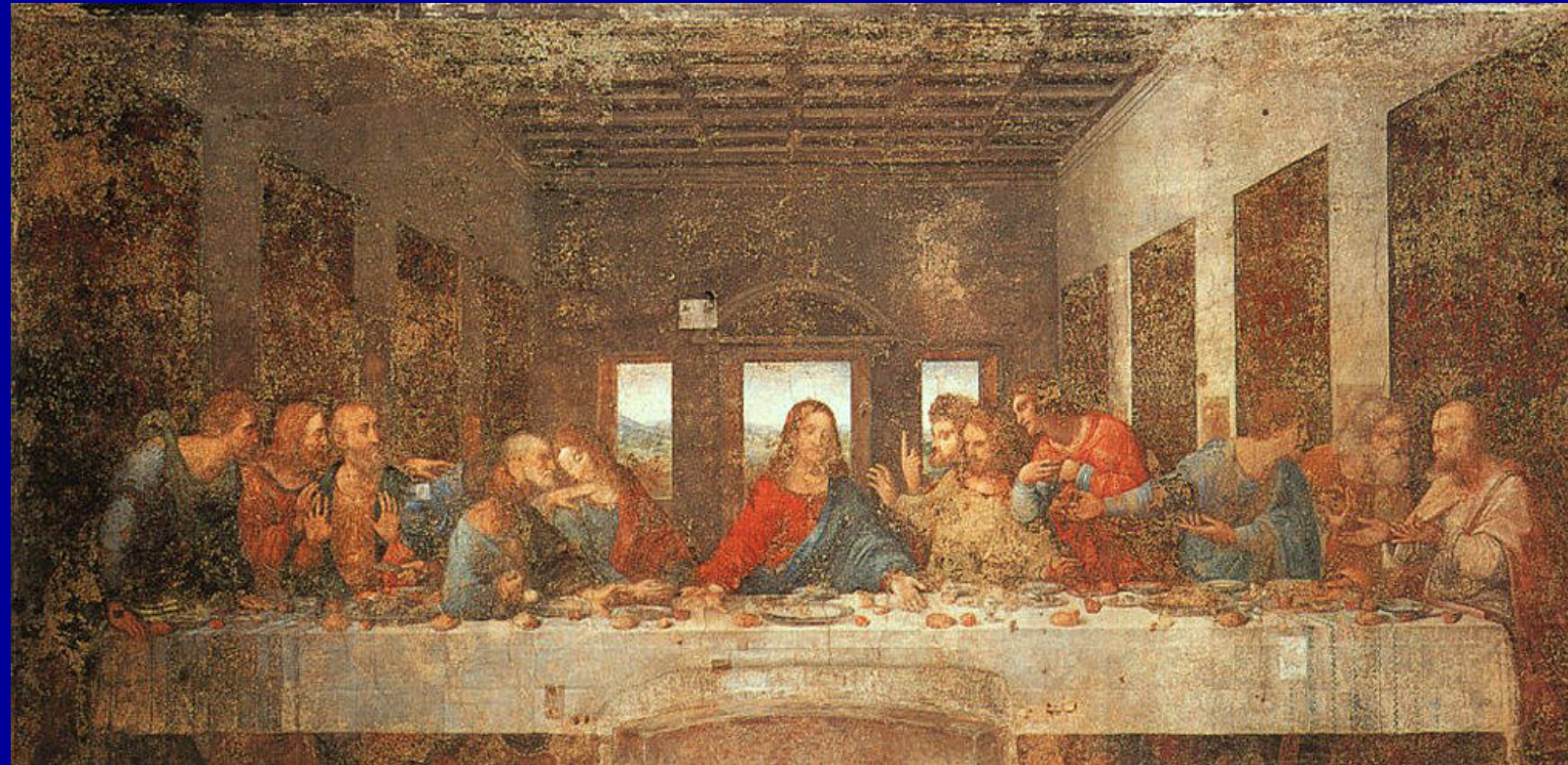




The refectory was badly damaged during World War II by Allied bombs. Leonardo's painting barely survived behind a protective bulwark of scaffolding and sandbags.

Technique

- Leonardo's method of working on the *Last Supper* was unprecedented. The *Last Supper* is not a fresco.
- Leonardo's intense concentration and hesitant manner of painting did not suit the commonly used medium for mural painting, in which the pigment had to be applied quickly before the plaster dried
- Instead of fresco, Leonardo devised his own technique for mural painting, a sort of tempera on stone
- The wall was first coated with a strong base of some material which would not only absorb the tempera emulsion but also protect it against moisture. His base was compounded out of gesso, pitch, and mastic, and has not proved durable. The pigment soon began to break loose from the base and a process of progressive decay set in. As early as 1517, it was noted to have begun to decay

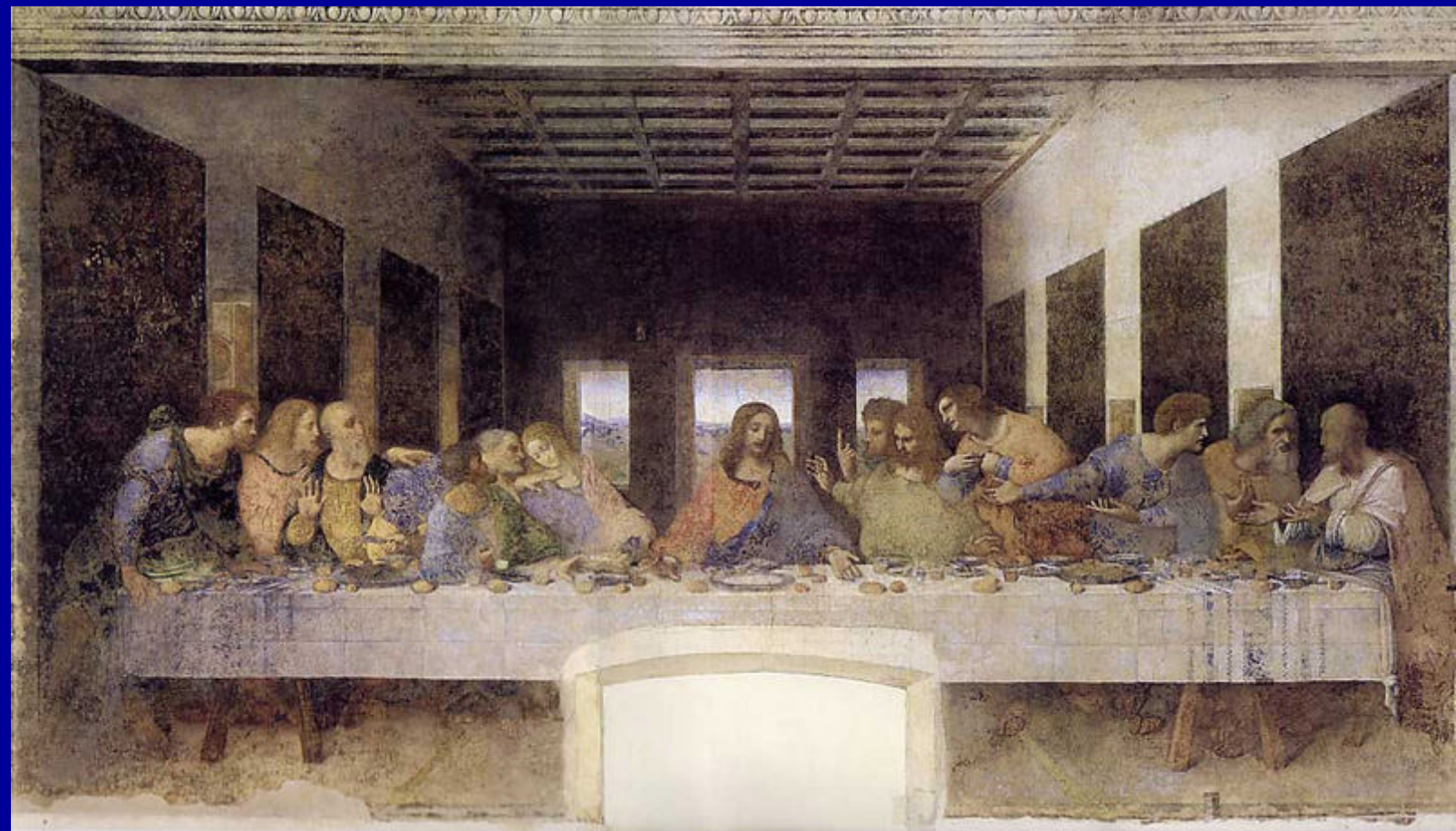


Before restoration

Best site about
restoration:

[http://
www.press.uchicago.edu
/Misc/Chicago/
504271.html](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/504271.html)

After restoration



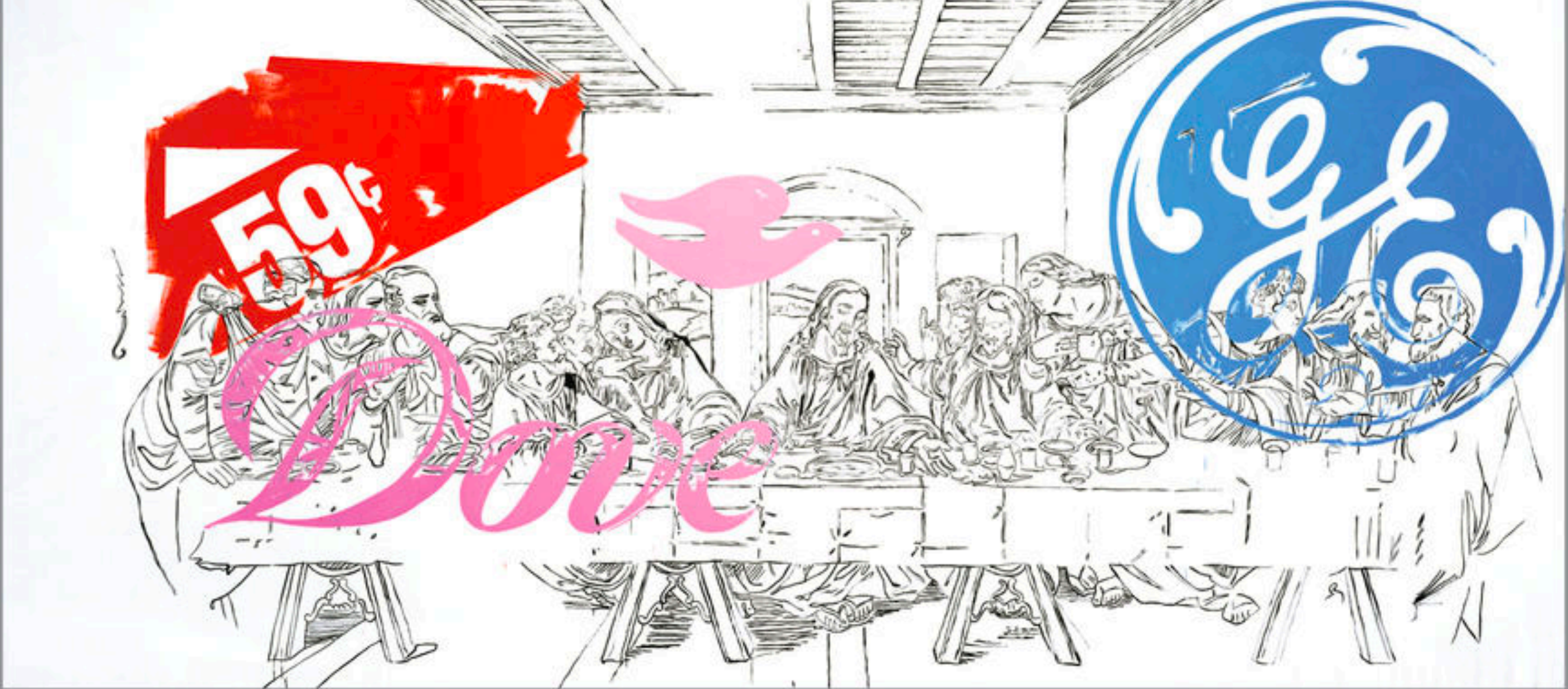
Germaine Greer on *The Last Supper*,

“...a sloppy piece of work. People have gone mad for this. They are starstruck by this man and I can see what’s fascinating about him, but I can’t forgive him for being sloppy with this sort of work.

“I won’t forgive him for the Last Supper. It’s on monastery walls all over Italy and it’s one of the worst.

I can respect Leonardo as an experimenter, although sometimes he seems to me to be an experimenter a bit short of imagination. You wonder if he has human feeling.”





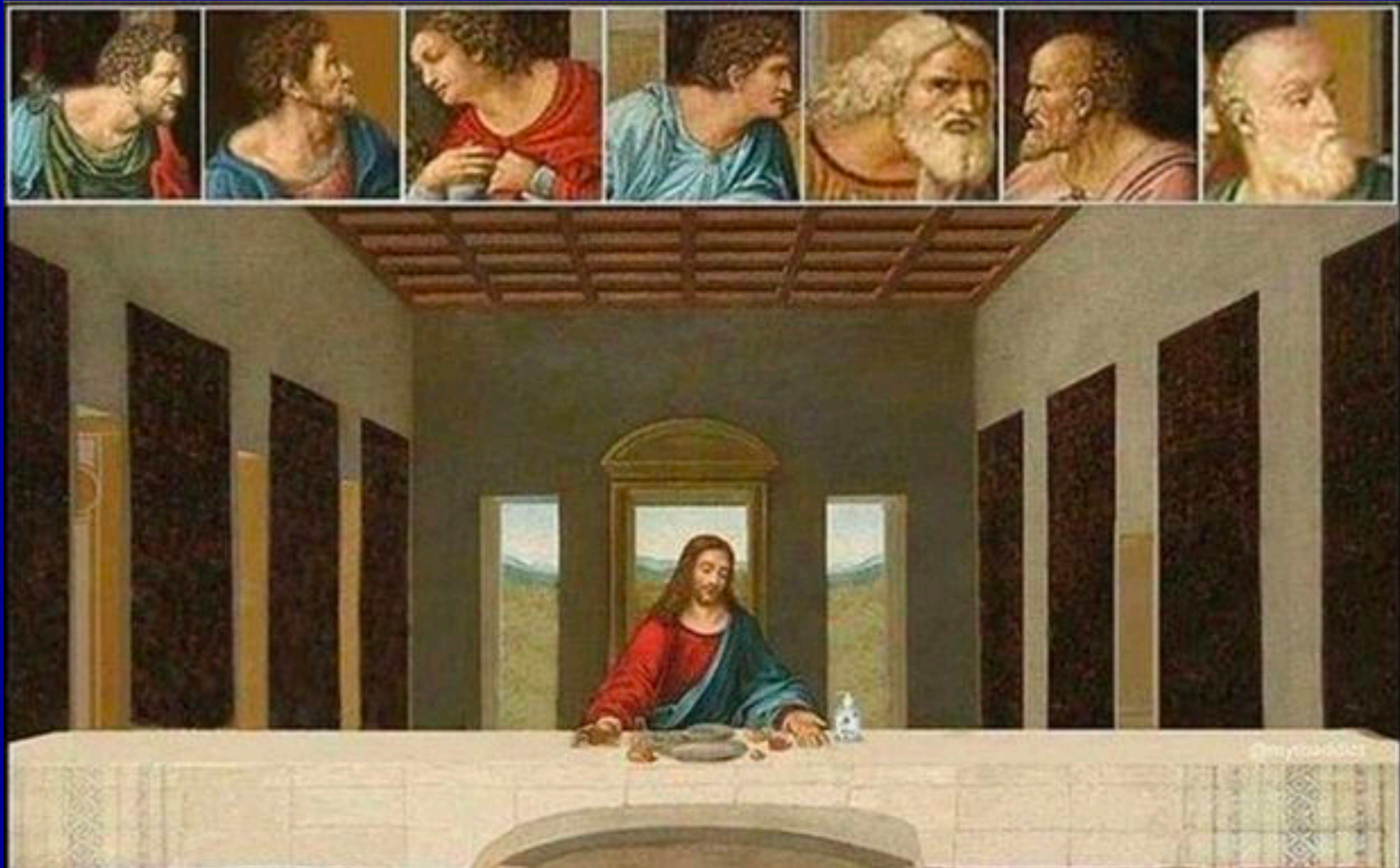
Andy Warhol's, *The Last Supper*, more than 100 paintings in Warhol's *Last Supper* series, produced between 1984 and 1986.

Warhol's final exhibition during his lifetime, *Warhol—Il Cenacolo*, featured twenty-two of these works and was staged in 1987 in the refectory of Milan's Palazzo delle Stelline, just across the street from the Sant Maria delle Grazie where the Last Supper is held.

The materials Warhol produced in relation to *The Last Supper* are remarkable for their quantity and their diversity, including works on paper, large-scale paintings, and even sculpture.



The Last Supper, Closed for Coronavirus, April 2020



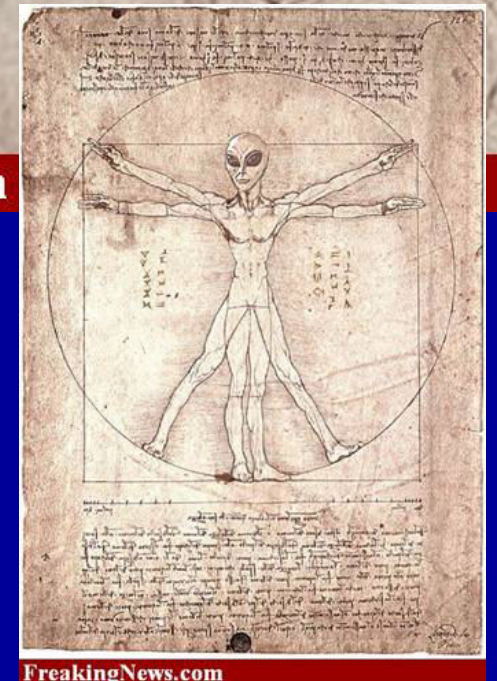
Social Distancing 2020



Celebrating Easter 2020 in Lockdown

Leonardo Da Vinci

Advanced Photoshop Contest - 36 image entries





Compare to
traditional version of
last supper



A dark, moody portrait of Leonardo da Vinci with a long white beard and a dark hat, serving as the background for the text.

**POOR
IS THE
PUPIL**

**WHO DOES NOT
SURPASS
HIS MASTER**



Leonardo Da Vinci Quotes via Gecko&Fly

Hope you enjoyed Leonardo, next one is Michelangelo!

