

Mona lisa by leonardo da vinci: analysis and interpretation

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The portrait shows the subject sitting upright and sideways in a chair, with her face and chest turned slightly towards the viewer. Her left arm sits comfortably on the armrest of the chair and is clasped by the hand of her right arm which crosses her front. The slightly protective position of her arms, as well as the armrest, creates a sense of distance between sitter and spectator. The background landscape behind the sitter was created using aerial perspective, with its smoky blues and no clearly defined vanishing point. It gives the composition significant depth, although its details reveal a clear imbalance between the higher rocky horizon to the right, compared to the lower flatlands stretching away on the left. This imbalance adds to the slightly surreal atmosphere of the picture. This was not a deliberate act of the artist, as scans indicate that originally, she was given both. It is possible that the colors pigment used for these facial features has since faded or been inadvertently removed during cleaning.

The Mona Lisa exemplifies Leonardo's contribution to the art of oil painting, namely his mastery of the use of fine shading. This painterly technique involves the smooth, almost imperceptible, transition from one color to another, by means of ultra-subtle tonal gradations. Another slightly surreal feature of the Mona Lisa is her lack of eyebrows and eyelashes. Evident throughout the painting, Leonardo's use of use of fine shading is particularly visible in the soft contouring of Lisa's face, around the eyes and mouth. The serenity comes from the muted color scheme, the soothing use of fine shading tonality, and the harmony created by the sitter's pyramid-shaped pose and understated drapery. The mystery stems from a number of factors: first, her enigmatic half-smile; second, her gaze, which is directed to the

right of the viewer; her hands which have a slightly unreal, lifeless quality - almost as if they belonged to a different body. The painting was among the first portraits to depict the sitter before an imaginary landscape and Leonardo was one of the first painters to use aerial perspective.

The enigmatic woman is portrayed seated in what appears to be an open loggia with dark pillar bases on either side. Behind her, a vast landscape recedes to icy mountains. Winding paths and a distant bridge give only the slightest indications of human presence. The sensuous curves of the woman's hair and clothing, created through sfumato, are echoed in the undulating imaginary valleys and rivers behind her. The blurred outlines, graceful figure, dramatic contrasts of light and dark, and overall feeling of calm are characteristic of da Vinci's style. Due to the expressive synthesis that da Vinci achieved between sitter and landscape, it is arguable whether Mona Lisa should be considered as a traditional portrait, for it represents an ideal rather than a real woman. The sense of overall harmony achieved in the painting especially apparent in the sitter's faint smile reflects the idea of a link connecting humanity and nature.