

EXPO

DA VINCI

THE ARTIST, THE ENGINEER, THE GOURMET



LIEGE-GUILLEMINS

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PRESS Release



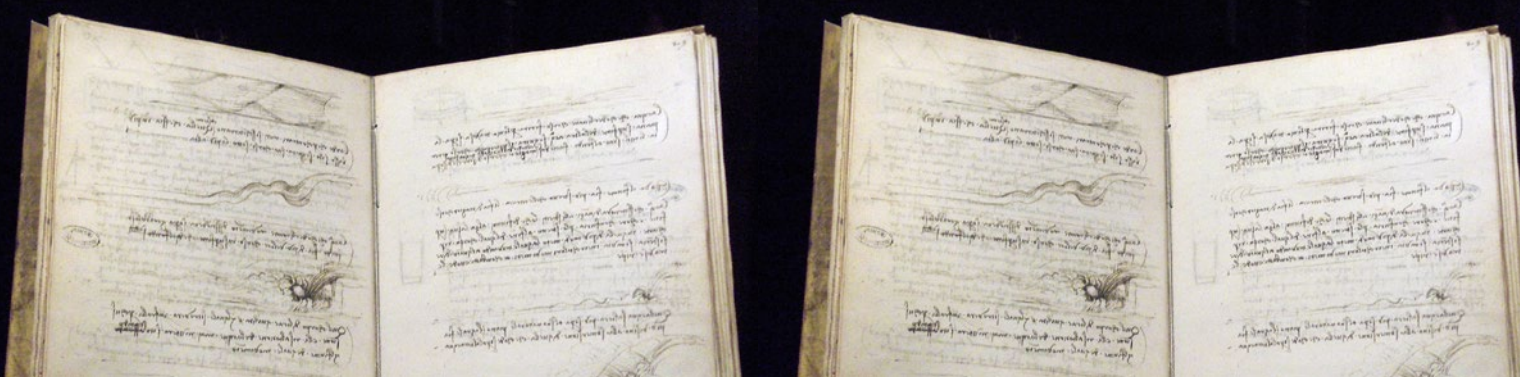


GENIUS? DID YOU SAY GENIUS?

On 24 February 2024, almost 20 years after its successful exhibition in Koekelberg, Europa Expo is opening a new exhibition at the Liège-Guillemins station exhibition centre dedicated to Leonardo da Vinci: “Da Vinci - The artist, the engineer, the gourmet”. Spanning more than 2000m², the exhibition aims to explore the reasons why he is still regarded today as one of history’s greatest geniuses. Renowned in many fields, the exhibition focuses on three aspects of his life: art, engineering and, most surprisingly, gastronomy. With this exhibition, entirely designed and produced by Europa Expo, the Liège-based company is inviting visitors to step back in time and wait until the end of winter.

More than 500 years separate the present day from Leonardo da Vinci’s time... The man who wrote, “I intend to leave a memory of myself in the minds of others”, was, in fact, born in 1452 in the small village of Vinci in Tuscany. Throughout his life, he tried to understand the world around him, through observation and experimentation. He tried his hand at every discipline with unflinching zeal. He was an inventor, architect, theoretician, painter, anatomist and mathematician, amongst others... He was one of history’s greatest geniuses!

Leonardo da Vinci died on 2nd May 1519, aged 67 years, in the Château du Clos Lucé in Amboise. Three years earlier, Leonardo had been invited to come to France by French King François I. The King considered him to be his spiritual father and showered him with money and honours. On 23rd April 1519, Leonardo felt his end drawing near. He wrote his last will and testament, appointing his faithful pupil as sole executor of his will and principal heir to his work. Was Leonardo aware that he was leaving behind an artistic and scientific legacy unprecedented in the history of humanity? What remains of him 500 years after his death? How did he manage to leave such an impression on the world? How did he manage to revolutionise the history of art with just twenty paintings? To find out more about this man’s quest to discover the secret laws of nature, this exhibition invites you to step back in time...



A FASCINATING GENIUS

The exhibition begins with the legend of Leonardo da Vinci and by the success of the works he left for humankind, firstly, the Mona Lisa and then the Salvator Mundi, the costliest painting in the world. Visitors are immersed in the moment in 2017 when the auctioneer's hammer at Christie's in New York slams down to sell the painting for 450 million dollars...

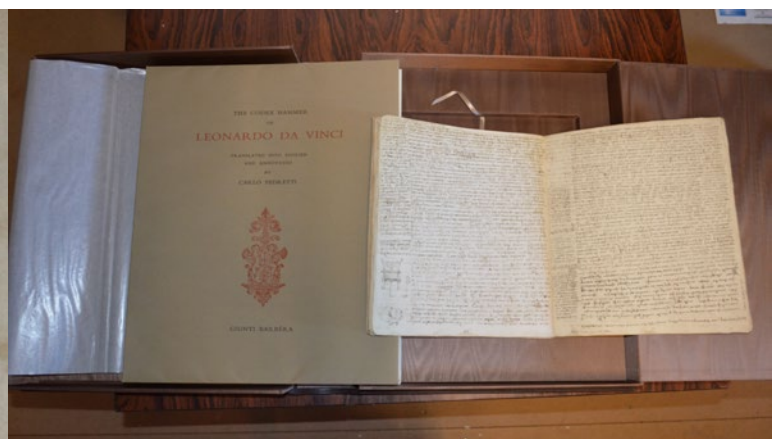
Everybody knows of the famous Mona Lisa in the Louvre... From New York to Tokyo, from Moscow to Bali, from Oslo to Sidney, she is an absolute icon of art history, the most visited and commented work in the world, always elusive with a gaze whose eyes follow us wherever we go, seemingly eternal and full of mysteries!



Salvator Mundi

ALL LEONARDO DA VINCI'S CODICES ON DISPLAY TOGETHER

The exhibition displays the entire collection of all Leonardo da Vinci's codices... Published in very limited numbers during the 20th century, visitors can admire the finest drawings selected from the 7,000 pages of the master's works that are still preserved today. They contain a wealth of reflections and sketches in fields as varied as geology, optics, anatomy, mathematics, mechanics, physics and also astronomy. The tour includes the following codices: Arundel, Atlanticus and Leicester, whose owner is none other than Bill Gates.

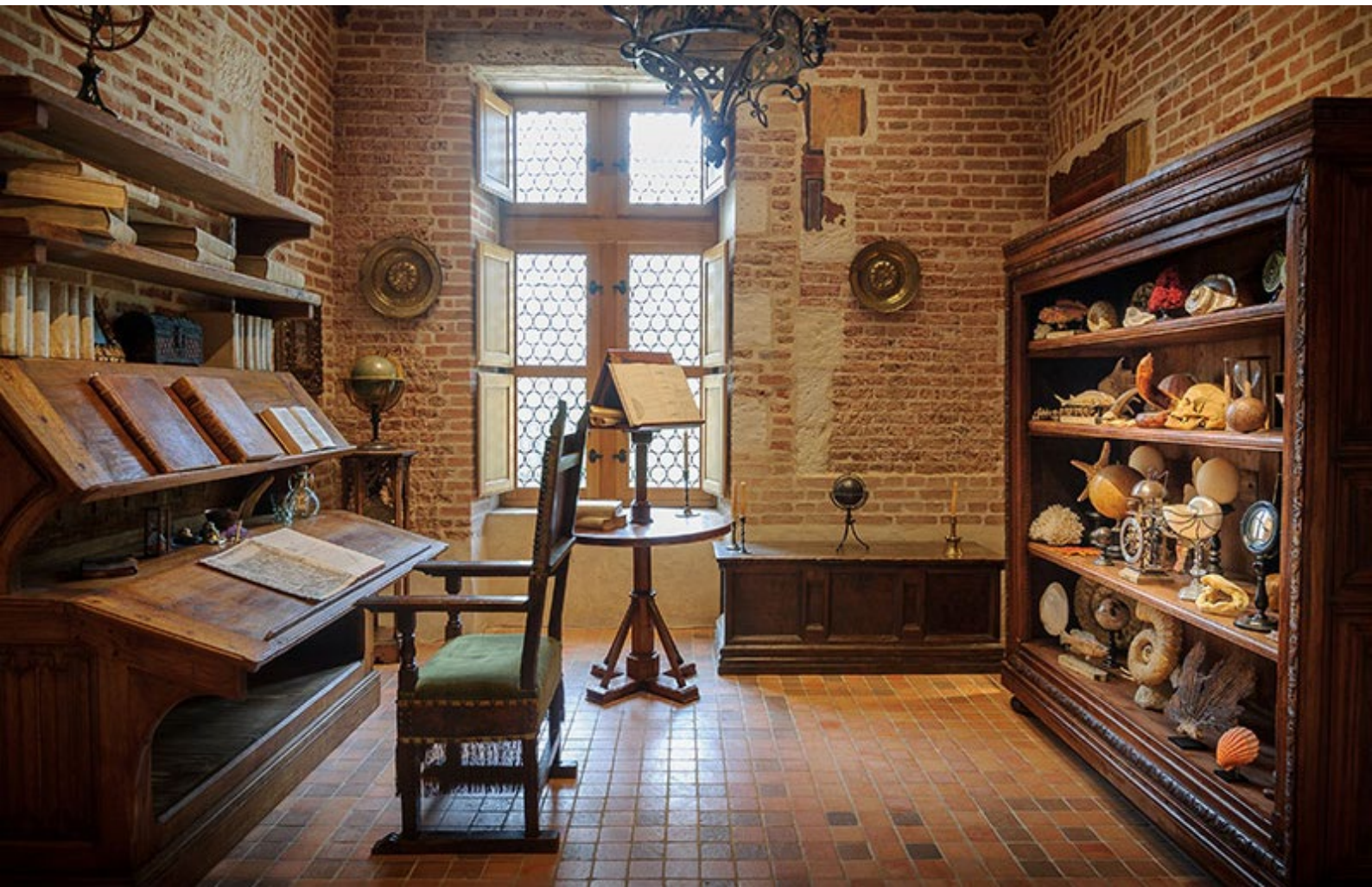


THE MAN BEHIND THE GENIUS

Visitors then discover the life of Leonardo da Vinci through his encounters with his exceptional patrons for whom he worked or the cities in which he worked. Nothing predestined the son of Ser Piero, a wealthy notary in the Republic of Florence, to become a universal genius. He was born of an affair between Ser Piero and Caterina, the daughter of a poor peasant from the town of Vinci where the notary lived. This illegitimate child, according to the terminology used at the time, was given his baptismal name, Leonardo, to which the name of the village where he was born was added: da Vinci. The tour allows visitors to discover the young Leonardo's talent for graphic arts and his arrival in Florence to join the studio of Andrea del Verrocchio.

Thanks to many of Leonardo's belongings and drawings, the tour successively takes visitors to Milan, where the artist worked for the Sforza family, to Venice where he was a cartographer for the Borgias and to Mantua. Leonardo then moved on to the Vatican where two other exceptional artists dominated the scene: Michelangelo and Raphaël. He was not entrusted with any major projects and Leonardo eventually accepted the invitation from the King of France, François I.

For 3 years, Leonardo lived at the Château du Clos Lucé. He was appointed to be the King's chief painter, chief engineer and chief architect. It was here that he spent the highlight of his career with his two most loyal disciples: Francesco Melzi and Salai.



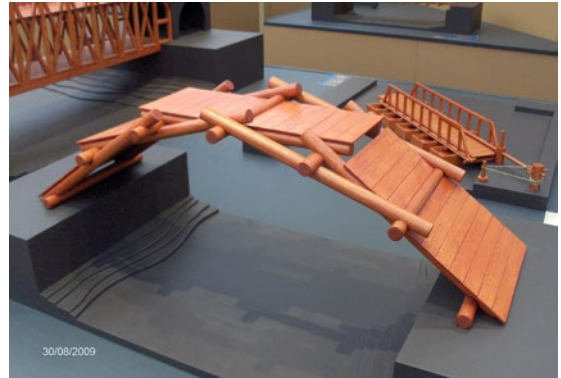
LEONARDO'S MACHINES

After discovering the man himself, the exhibition continues with another essential facet of Leonardo's career:

HIS LIFE AS AN ENGINEER AND INVENTOR!

Visitors will be able to walk through a life-size reconstruction of a tank. The exhibition's walls will come alive with never-before-seen 3D films on Leonardo's major inventions: the helicopter, swing bridges, canal locks, weapons or defence systems. His designs are probably best known in the field of aviation, long before the concept of a flying machine became a reality. Leonardo da Vinci produced 500 sketches dedicated to flying machines and birds in flight.

Assault ladder



Small self-supporting bridge



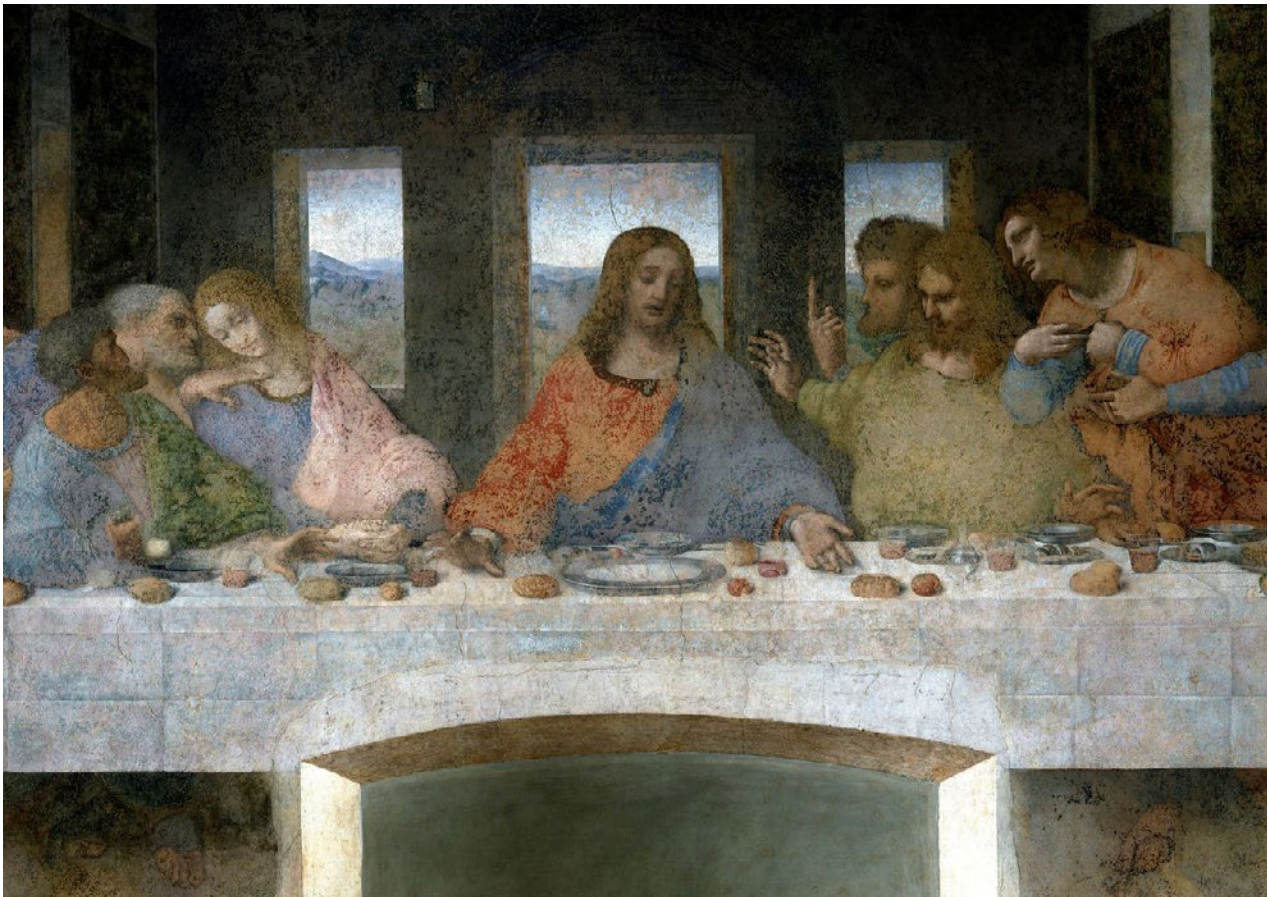
Principle of the paddlewheel boat



LEONARDO THE GOURMET!

The last part of the exhibition, organised around a reconstitution of the ideal kitchen according to Leonardo da Vinci, illustrates an often-ignored facet of the man's life: gastronomy and study of vines. Leonardo is considered to be the first agronomist and oenologist in history. In addition to the codices, experts have also uncovered dozens of drawings of culinary-related machines and the staging of banquets. In the kitchen, Leonardo scribbled away on the corner of the table. He is credited with the recipes for red shrimps a la buratta, apricots and mint, pigeon breast with blackberries, as well as a risotto, which was rare in the 16th century, but also left lists of ingredients which suggest that he was not a complete vegetarian. Visitors can also discover Leonardo's other recipes, including "acquarosa": an aphrodisiac drink made from rosewater, sugar, lemon and alcohol, filtered through a cloth.

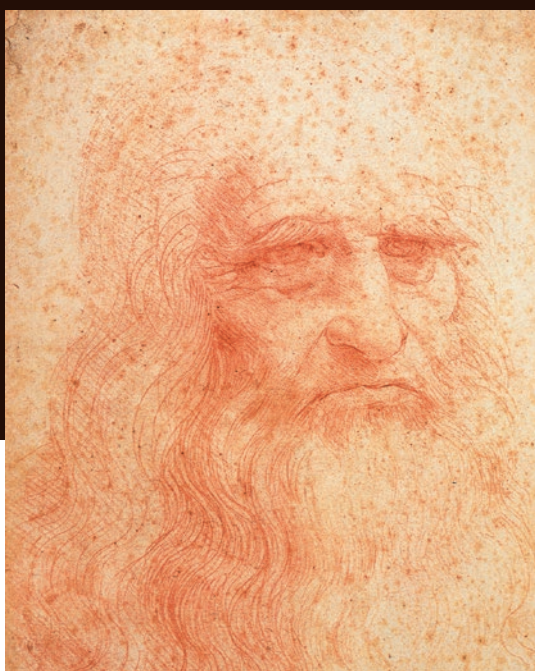
The tour ends with a 3D-mapped reconstitution of a banqueting table, on which Leonardo's favourite dishes are displayed... Indeed, the genius was a master of table arts and of good manners. He drew up rules for the Renaissance banquets he held during his stay with the Sforza family, among which are the classics: "Do not put your feet on the table", "Do not put your head down on the plate", "Do not cut the table with your knife" and "Do not let your birds fly freely around the table".



The Last Supper, detail

A PRESTIGIOUS EXHIBITION DEDICATED TO A LEGENDARY FIGURE

The exhibition concludes with the Renaissance, during which humanity regained a central place in a civilisation that was undergoing an exceptional artistic, scientific and political renewal. Leonardo embodies the genius of the Renaissance, leaving a body of work of inestimable quality. His legend did not take long



Self-portrait

to emerge... Less than 50 years after his death, Leonardo da Vinci was already spoken of in the following terms: "Heaven, in all its goodness, sometimes rains down its most precious gifts on a mortal, and marks with such magnitude all the actions of this fortunate person, to the extent that they seem not so much to pay witness to the power of human genius but to the special favour of God. Leonardo da Vinci, whose beauty and grace will never be praised enough, was one of these chosen ones. His prodigious skill enabled him to triumph easily over the greatest difficulties. There was something truly royal and magnanimous about his strength, his skill and his courage; and his fame, brilliant during his lifetime, grew even greater after his death".



The Madonna of the bobbins

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

OPENING DATE

24 February 2024

TICKETS ONLINE AND INFO

www.europaexpo.be

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EUROPA EXPO is a key player in the field of culture and tourism but also events, thanks to producing, setting up and holding immersive exhibitions of international scope in the museum venue at the Liège-Guillemins high speed railway station. Its activities undoubtedly boost and reinforce the attractive image of the Liège conurbation.

Its primary concern is the promotion of Belgian and international cultural heritage. This objective is implemented through its exhibitions, which focus on the promotion of Belgian artists and authors as well as major internationally renowned figures. Europa Expo also highlights historical, environmental and civic themes through an educational and informative approach aimed at the general public (of all ages) and school groups.

In this way, **EUROPA EXPO** aims to be a “transmitter of emotions”.

With the exhibitions “Tout Hergé” (1991), “Tout Simenon” (1992), “I was 20 years old in 1945” (1995), “Made in Belgium” (2005), “From Salvador to Dalí” (2016) and more recently “Tutankhamun: discovering the forgotten pharaoh” (2020), “Napoleon – Beyond the Myth” (2021), and “I Love Japan” (2022), Europa Expo has attracted, over a period of 30 years, more than 3,500,000 Belgian and foreign visitors.



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