

Design, Invention, Creation: the Multiple Lives of Leonardo da Vinci

A study day in three one hour parts: Exploring the life, work, interests and legacy of a Renaissance icon

Speculations regarding the true life and meanings of Leonardo's works have been rife for centuries; culminating in recent times with books such as the Da Vinci Code, which only serve to confirm this continued interest while shedding no light on the man himself or his works. Indeed what do we really know about this enigmatic Renaissance icon?

This study day aims to provide the participant with an insight into the life of the great Renaissance masters and ultimately an understanding of his works through the historical and social context within which this artist worked. This will be achieved by looking at his early career and influences including his training and working methods, and the stylistic similarities or differences in his works. Emphasis will also be put on his reasons for the choices he made in mediums, such as chalk, charcoal, silverpoint and painting methods.

Part one: Here we will begin by focusing on Leonardo's early life and tutelage in the workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio. We will also look at the methods taught in the Verrocchio workshop and how Leonardo might have employed these in his own and subsequent work. This will lead us neatly on to examining his earliest commissions and how these might have shaped his future work.

Part two: In this section of the study day will look at Leonardo's patrons and his fascination with the Madonna and Child grouping and portraits. This subject would be constant throughout Leonardo's life, something he returns to time and time again up to the end of his long life. And finally part two will also look at Leonard's association with particular noble families, the interaction between these families and the female portraiture that was produced as a result of the associations with these families.

Part three: And finally part three will look at Leonardo's life of invention and fascination by all living things including the mechanics generally and the mechanics of flight. Part three will also look at his major projects and how these coincided with Leonardo's peripatetic existence, which finally brought his life to an end in France.

Short Bibliographic Reading List:

Brown, David Alan, *Leonardo Da Vinci: Origins of a Genius* (Yale University Press, 1998)

Franklin, D, *Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo, and the Renaissance in Florence* (National Gallery of Canada, 2005)

Kemp, Martin, and Kenneth Clark, *Leonardo Da Vinci* (Penguin, 1993)

Kemp, Martin, *Leonardo Da Vinci: The Marvellous Works of Nature and Man* (Oxford University Press, 2006)

Kemp, Martin, *Leonardo da Vinci: Experience, Experiment and Design*, (V&A Publications, 2006)