Mona Lisa is not who you think she is.

The book that rewrites history.

390 illustrations.

Hidden Portraits
Multispectral studies

MonaLisa Lumière on the Leonardo da Vinci

The Mona Lisa is one of mankind's great mysteries. With over 9.7 million admirers per year, it is the most mythical painting of all time. Thanks to an extraordinary scientific imagery technique (L.A.M.), this book takes us on a journey into the heart of the paint-layer of the world's most famous picture and reveals secrets that have remained hidden for 500 years.

Mona Lisa is not actually Lisa Gherardini, wife of Francesco del Giocondo, but a portrait that masks others. Leonardo da Vinci did not paint one, but four portraits, super-imposed on one another.

More than 150 discoveries help us rediscover the painting’s genesis, with Cotte reconstituting the true portrait of Lisa Gherardini — whose face, hairstyle and costume were radically different from those we now see in the Louvre. The book shatters the myth and alters our vision of the work. It is a giant leap forward in art knowledge and art history.

Pascal Cotte, who digitized the Mona Lisa at the Louvre with his multispectral camera in October 2004, now presents the fruit of ten years’ research.

Pascal Cotte is an optical engineer specializing in photography and image signal analysis. He is the inventor of the L.A.M. scientific imagery technique and the first high-definition multispectral camera, which he has used to digitize several works by Leonardo da Vinci: the Louvre’s Mona Lisa, in October 2004; The Lady with an Ermine in Cracov, in September 2007; La Bella Principessa in 2008; and La Belle Ferronnière in 2011. All told, Cotte has digitized over 2,000 works in public and private collections, and authored several studies about famous paintings. His book Lumière on The Lady with an Ermine reconstitutes the three phases of that painting’s creation, including one version without an animal.

Since 2007 Cotte’s exhibition The Secrets of Mona Lisa, produced by Australia’s Grande Exhibitions, has been seen by over 8 million visitors on all five continents.

The book reveals that the Mona Lisa is not Lisa Gherardini, and that her identity has been mistaken for 500 years. Using a new scientific imaging technique (L.A.M.), Cotte unveils over 150 discoveries found beneath all the repaintings. He establishes the chronology of the various paint-layers and reveals the authentic portrait of Lisa Gherardini, of which he proposes a realistic reconstitution. She has more feminine face and looks to her right, with a different posture; there is no dark veil, while her clothes (gamure) and hairstyle (foggia alla francese) reflect Florentine fashion between 1502-07. Her dress has pretty tied ribbons (nastri) and openings (finestrelle) that reveal her chemise underneath. Her hair is held in place by a net (velo) and embroidery around her forehead. This was the portrait of a dignitary’s wife, typical of the Florentine upper-classes. The extraordinary discovery reconciles the various existing theories about the history of this Symbol of Western Art.

Cotte goes even further, helping us discover two other projects hidden beneath deeper repaintings. He reveals an impressive head-dress made from draperies, hair-pins and pearls (probably for a Madonna or Saint); and the forms and outline of another, larger portrait. The book enables readers to superimpose four moveable transfer sheets, featuring the surrounds of the discoveries, on the images so as to chart the four stages of the work’s evolution. The reader can thus conduct his own investigation.

Why did Leonardo transform the portrait of Lisa Gherardini into the Mona Lisa? The answer, suggests Cotte, lies with the story of Giuliano de’ Medici — the very man Leonardo himself, speaking at the end of his life, referred to as the portrait’s commissioner.

ISBN: 978-29-548-2584-7

£29.95 / $49.95
The L.A.M. technique is based on images obtained by the multispectral camera, recording the light reflected on 13 wavelengths (filters). It generates over 1,650 images, capturing the interaction between light and matter at all depths of the paint-layer. The technique makes it possible to reconstitute the genesis of a work, its chronology and the different phases that compose it.
Pascal Cotte’s scientific discoveries rewrite the history of a mythical work that has become the emblem of Western Art.

They lead to the hypothesis that the *Mona Lisa* was painted in four main stages:

1/ Leonardo painted a 1st portrait, slightly larger than today – perhaps the draft for the 2nd portrait. Nothing enables us to say who is represented. The posture seems identical to the portrait as it appears today. The hands placed on the arm-rest and the sleeves are similar but slightly larger.

2/ Leonardo effaced this draft and painted a 2nd portrait. The discovery of a head-dress made of pearls, draperies and hair-pins suggests the subject may have been sacred or mythological – perhaps a Goddess, Saint or Madonna.

3/ Above this Leonardo then painted a 3rd portrait, with a hairstyle and dress typical of Florentine fashion from the years 1502-06. It is suggested that this is the veritable portrait of *Lisa Gherardini* seen by Florentines and described by Vasari.

4/ Finally, Leonardo transformed this work into the *Mona Lisa* we know today, altering the posture, turning the head and eyes towards the viewer, moving the shoulders more to the right and adding a veil around the head and upper body to mask the former hairstyle and dress.
Summary

The book reveals that the Mona Lisa is not Lisa Gherardini, wife of Francesco del Giocondo, and that her identity has been mistaken for 500 years. Using a new scientific imaging technique (L.A.M.), Cotte unveils over 150 discoveries found beneath all the repaintings. He establishes the chronology of the various paint-layers and reveals the authentic portrait of Lisa Gherardini, of which he proposes a realistic reconstitution. She has more feminine face and looks to her right, with a different posture; there is no dark veil, while her clothes (gamure) and hairstyle (foggia alla francese) reflect Florentine fashion between 1502-07. Her dress has pretty tied ribbons (nastri) and openings (finestrelle) that reveal her chemise underneath. Her hair is held in place by a net (velo) and embroidery around her forehead. This was the portrait of a dignitary's wife, typical of the Florentine upper-classes. The extraordinary discovery reconciles the various existing theories about the history of this Symbol of Western Art. Cotte goes even further, helping us discover two other projects hidden beneath deeper repaintings. He reveals an impressive head-dress made from draperies, hair-pins and pearls (probably for a Madonna or Saint); and the forms and outline of another, larger portrait. The book enables readers to superimpose four moveable transfer sheets, featuring the surrounds of the discoveries, on the images so as to chart the four stages of the work’s evolution. The reader can thus conduct his own investigation. Why did Leonardo transform the portrait of Lisa Gherardini into the Mona Lisa? The answer, suggests Cotte, lies with the story of Giuliano de’ Medici – the very man Leonardo himself, speaking at the end of his life, referred to as the portrait’s commissioner.

Presentation

The Mona Lisa is one of mankind’s great mysteries. With over 97 million admirers per year, it is the most mythical painting of all time. Thanks to an extraordinary scientific imagery technique (L.A.M.), this book takes us on a journey into the heart of the paint-layer of the world’s most famous picture and reveals secrets that have remained hidden for 500 years. Mona Lisa is not actually Lisa Gherardini, wife of Francesco del Giocondo, but a portrait that masks others. Leonardo da Vinci did not paint one, but four portraits, super-imposed on one another. More than 150 discoveries help us rediscover the painting’s genesis, with Cotte reconstituting the true portrait of Lisa Gherardini – whose face, hairstyle and costume were radically different from those we now see in the Louvre. The book shatters the myth and alters our vision of the work. It is a giant leap forward in art knowledge and art history. Pascal Cotte, who digitized the Mona Lisa at the Louvre with his multispectral camera in October 2004, now presents the fruit of ten years’ research.

Biography

Pascal Cotte is an optical engineer specializing in photography and image signal analysis. He is the inventor of the L.A.M. scientific imagery technique and the first high-definition multispectral camera, which he has used to digitize several works by Leonardo da Vinci: the Louvre’s Mona Lisa, in October 2004; The Lady with an Ermine in Cracow, in September 2007; La Bella Principessa in 2008; and La Belle Ferronnière in 2011. All told, Cotte has digitized over 2,000 works in public and private collections, and authored several studies scientific about famous paintings. His book Lumière on The Lady with an Ermine reconstitutes the three phases of that painting’s creation, including one version without an animal. Since 2007 Cotte’s exhibition The Secrets of Mona Lisa, produced by Australià’s Grande Exhibitions, has been seen by over 8 million visitors on all five continents.

Informations

Section : Fine Art
Text : Pascal Cotte
Date of first sale : 12/2015
Size closed : 23,5 x 30,5 cm
Number of page : 220
Illustrations : 390
retail price : £29,95 / $49,95
Distribution : ACC book distribution LTD
Diffusion :