



# Leonardo and the Mona Lisa Story: The History of a Painting Told in Pictures

*Donald Sassoon, Professor Donald Sassoon*

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We've all seen that famous smile a thousand times. It graces the face of La Gioconda, or the Mona Lisa, created by Leonardo da Vinci around 1505. Five centuries later, her mysterious smile has reached celebrity status. Da Vinci himself is in the public eye like no other artist before him. Yet few of us know the compelling story of this priceless world treasure—how she was created; her impact on other artists; the story of her theft; and how, through a mix of luck, history and her own innate beauty, she came to be regarded as the world's greatest painting.

In this engaging story—told largely in pictures, and presented in a unique format—acclaimed historian and Mona Lisa scholar Donald Sassoon offers us an intimate look at the painting's history and the genius who gave the Mona Lisa lasting life, revealed in more than four hundred paintings, photographs, and illustrations. From photographs of Florence to paintings by Leonardo's Florentine contemporaries; from canvases by nineteenth-century masters that detail the Victorian enthusiasm for Leonardo to parodies of the Mona Lisa by Duchamp and Warhol; from commercial appropriations to cartoons; *Leonardo and the Mona Lisa Story* unlocks the history behind the painting and illustrates just how much she continues to influence our culture.

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