

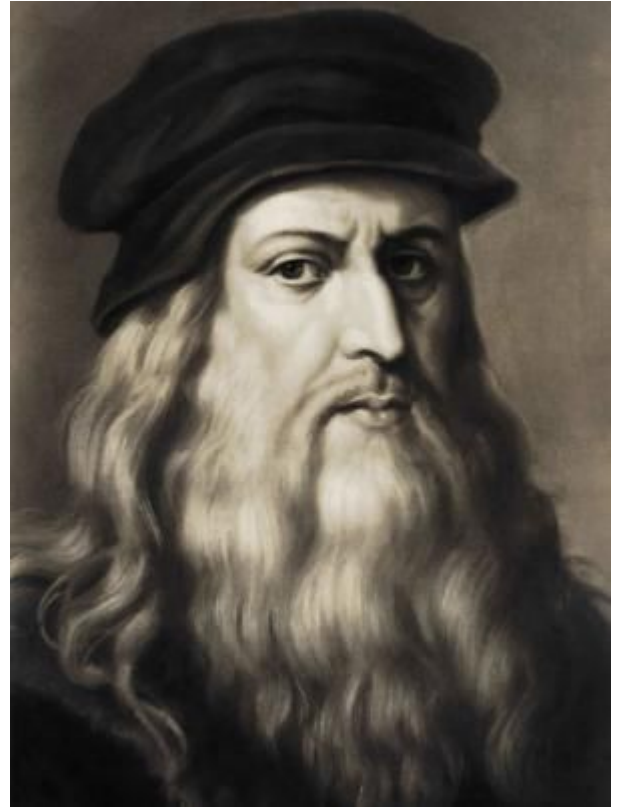
Comparative Study by Roberto Ferrusquia

Expressionless Portrayal in Art

Art is commonly regarded as a form of expressing emotion and feelings. Through facial expressions in portraits to vibrant colors in the abstract, emotion is triggered within the viewer. Whether intentional or unintentional art commonly seems to have a causation with emotion. However there are those few works of art that seem to lack emotion, where the artist wasn't able to extract any expressiveness and render the work neutral. Emotions aren't triggered but rather the viewer only becomes puzzled by enigmatic works of art.

Fine Artist: Leonardo da Vinci

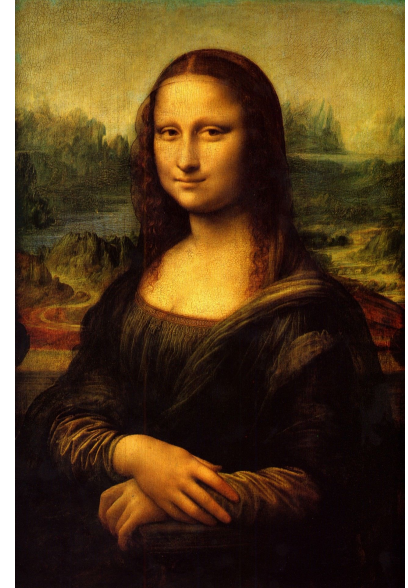
Inventor, painter, sculptor, architect, scientist, musician, mathematician, engineer, literati, anatomist, geologist, astronomer, botanist, writer, historian, and cartographer: Leonardo was truly a “Renaissance Man.” Born 15 April, 1452 in a farmhouse nestled amid the undulating hills of Tuscany outside the village of Anchiano in present-day Italy. Born out of wedlock to respected Florentine notary Ser Piero and a young peasant woman named Caterina, he was raised by his father and his stepmothers. Little was it known that he’d become one of the most famous artists in history.



Leonardo Da Vinci. Digital image. N.p., n.d. Web. <http://www.customasapblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/da-vinci-alam_159842t.jpg>.

The Mona Lisa

One of da Vinci's greatest works is the prestigious Mona Lisa. The painting, thought to be a portrait of Lisa Gherardini, the wife of Francesco del Giocondo, is in oil on a white Lombardy poplar panel, and is believed to have been painted between 1503 and 1506. The painting is most well-known for the mysterious, emotionless grin. The expression is often described as enigmatic and has puzzled countless artists and critics over time. Brushstrokes on the piece are soft and smooth with a great amount of blending. The foreground is seems to outweigh the background in terms of dark hues yet there is a balance between light and dark. Extensive detail can be seen in the robe and background. Wrinkles and bumps are captured in great detail whereas the skin seems almost flawless. Facial features are highlighted through shadows.



Da Vinci, Leonardo. *Mona Lisa*. Digital image. N.p., n.d. Web.

St. John the Baptist

Created through oil on walnut wood between 1513 and 1516. The piece depicts St. John the Baptist alone surrounded by darkness. Through use of chiaroscuro, the figure appears to emerge from the shadowy background. Unlike the Mona Lisa, it is easy to depict a smile on St. John. Furthermore, detail is great in regards to the hair and pelts worn by St. John. However once more, the skin is almost flawless with little to no imperfections seen. Smoothness and softness is formed by gentle brushstrokes and great amounts of blending. The posture is also gentle as the hand almost caresses the wooden cross being held rather than grasping it.



Inspiration

Da Vinci painted during the Renaissance time period. This was a time of enlightenment when literacy was spreading rapidly, science was evolving, and art was reaching a peak. It was a time of rediscovery whether in architecture, art, or religion. In terms of art, spirituality was an essential aspect during the time. Christianity was widespread and appeared often in works of art. Saints were portrayed, angels, and the human body. Leonardo developed an interest in the human body and often times portrayed it in a flawless manner such as to demonstrate divinity and sacredness.

Local Artist: Chuck Weber

Chuck Weber is a Wisconsin native. He studied marketing and art at St. Norbert College, then received an MBA from UW-Madison and Marquette University. His first career was in the advertising industry, where he was Creative Director and Principal of a Milwaukee-based ad agency and design firm. Now Chuck pursues his passion of fine arts Chuck prefers utilizing oils and an impressionist like style.



"Chuck Weber - About the Artist." *Chuck Weber - About the Artist*. N.p., n.d. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

Fresco Anguissola

The work can be described as a “Nouveau Fresco” oil. The piece utilizes a heavy gel medium with a somewhat distressed substrate. Due to the medium used a cracked painting is formed. Brushstrokes seem somewhat smooth yet there are parts that seem almost to have been formed by the dabbing of the brush rather than an actual brushstroke. A dark background surrounds the subject yet it does not engulf it. Nonetheless a distinction is formed between light and dark. The skin tone is very pale and blending on the skin is rough and imperfect. Reds, blues, whites, greens and other colors can be seen in the skin tone. It seems to appear almost somewhat fauvist like with the blending technique used. Detail is not extensive in the hair nor the collar or background as there seems to be an almost impressionist approach in creating these portions.



"Chuck Weber - About the Artist."
Chuck Weber - About the Artist. N.p.,
n.d. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

Inspirations

Chuck Webber is greatly inspired by impressionists in his works. He enjoys utilizing vibrant colors in his pieces in subtle ways. Although not all his pieces are impressionists he still inserts aspects of it into them. In addition fauvism is also a movement that adds to his work. In terms of cultural inspiration, for the particular piece Fresco Anguissola, Chuck was inspired by French and Renaissance sculptures. He appreciated their antiquity and discoloration as well as their distrust expressions being portrayed.

Compare and Contrast Styles

Chuck Weber

- Impressionistic
- Imperfect blending
- Lighter Shadows
- Little detail to background and hair or clothing

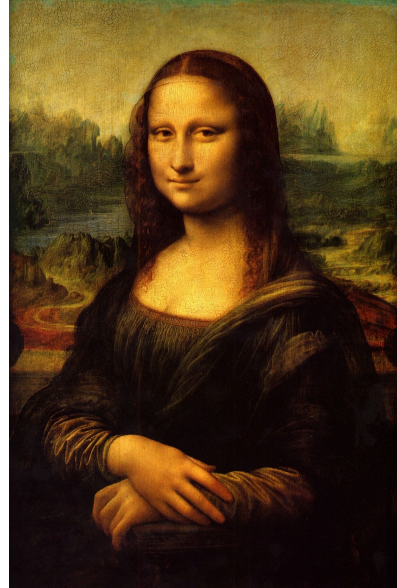
Both

- Contrast created between light and dark
- Smooth faces created, not rigid features
- Somewhat side prolific views. No paintings of the face straight on

Leonardo Da Vinci

- Blending is smooth
- Dark Shadows
- Smooth Brushstrokes
- Great Detail to background and Aspects of foreground

Comparison on Individual Paintings

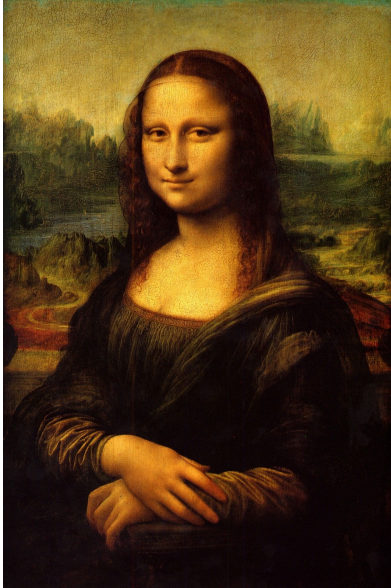


Both paintings are somewhat similar in mediums due to the use of oils. However they also contrast as Weber created a fresco resulting in a cracked painting in comparison to da Vinci's use of a canvas. The Mona Lisa portrays an almost emotionless smile where in a similar manner Fresco Anguissola does as well. Furthermore the paintings are similar in the prolific side view rather than a head on painting. Both paintings portray somewhat of a soft pose with no dramatic actions. Additionally it is clear to see a great contrast between light and dark.



Contrast on Individual Paintings

The painting contrast in terms of blending. Da Vinci utilized a smooth blending technique in which the coloration of the skin is almost uniform when excluding shadows. Meanwhile Weber creates highlights from light reflections on the skin and has a not so uniform blending technique. Other colors can be seen in the skin tone. Furthermore there is a much balanced contrast between light and dark in the background and foreground. Meanwhile in Fresco Anguissola the contrast is from the center of the painting to the outside edges.



Comparison on Individual Paintings



These two works are similar in their use of darkness. The highlights or brighter colors of the work are concentrated at the center of the piece with the darkness surrounding the subject matter. Furthermore the soft facial features are similar with no hard edges. Highlights on the cheeks and forehead are created in both images utilizing a blending of white and the base skin tone. Shadow is similar in terms of emerging from a darker hue into a lighter one.



Contrast on Individual Paintings



The paintings are different from one another in the emotions expressed. While the expression on the right consists of an enigmatic type of smile the one on the left is clearly a smile yet the eyes, although similar on where the pupils are placed, provide distinct emotion. The eyes on the right provide an almost painful view, whereas the other a creates a ominous smile. Blending is smooth on the left painting whereas on the right blending is used yet other no to a uniform color. The clothes on the right painting are almost ignored in that they become lost in the background whereas on the left they stand out even on a dark background.



Venn Diagram

Da Vinci

- Background does not consume foreground
- Smooth transitional blend of dark to light

Both

- Progression of light to dark
- Smooth blending for shadows
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Weber

- Background blends into foreground
- Extreme differentiation between light and dark

Conclusion

In conclusion, Leonardo da Vinci seems to remain loyal to a single form of producing paintings. Painting techniques remain constant through his works with smooth blending and great detail to the background. However when it comes to the human body itself he extracts certain detail to produce almost flawless figures. Meanwhile Chuck Weber does not utilize smooth blending but rather demonstrates the blemishes in the skin. He even creates a fresco which produces cracks on the art piece. Yet both artists are similar in portraying emotion as they use almost bland looks and lip expressions that become difficult to interpret. They are uncommon and somewhat unnatural looks. In addition both artists utilize similar techniques of Chiaroscuro with a focus on the Renaissance as the cultural inspiration.

Bibliography

<http://weberportraits.com/>