

PRESS RELEASE

LEONARDO A VINCI. ALLE ORIGINI DEL GENIO (BACK TO THE ORIGINS OF THE GENIUS. LEONARDO'S BIRTHPLACE)

15 April – 15 October 2019

Vinci, Museo Leonardiano

The exhibition *Leonardo a Vinci. Alle origini del Genio*, organized in conjunction with the Uffizi Gallery, is being held in the Museo Leonardiano in Vinci, and focuses on Leonardo's biographic links with his birthplace and the stimulus that it provided in his work as an artist, technologist and scientist. The show features documents on loan from the State Archive in Florence, which reconstruct unequivocally the very first events in Leonardo's life in Vinci, and his first known drawing, a *Landscape* (inv. 8P) dated by the artist 5 August 1473. On loan to the Museo Leonardiano for the first six weeks of the exhibition, this youthful work constitutes a kind of palimpsest for all of Leonardo's future output, and acts as a centrepiece for the exhibition.

The element of water, which we find in the landscape drawing and which Leonardo investigated with interest throughout his life, is conjured up here by models of paddle boats and water-powered machines, and articulated through the presentation of studies for a navigable canal linking Florence to the sea.

The scientist's wish to regulate and exploit water also prompted an examination of his less well-known projects for the Vinci area, reconstructed through fascinating video mapping.

These studies, supported by other notes from surviving documents, show how Leonardo's ties with and time in Vinci were not limited to his childhood and youth, but continued into his adult life, perhaps precisely during the period in which Leonardo was in the area to work on the more demanding project to deviate the course of the river Arno.

Was the view inspired by places associated with his birthplace, the depiction of a constantly evolving nature or an ideal landscape dense with meanings that are difficult to interpret? Engaging multimedia installations help to set out the different interpretations of the celebrated landscape drawing.

In it can be found fascinating resemblances to settings in the Montalbano hills, which Leonardo certainly knew well from his childhood, while at the same time there are also figurative elements that recur in other drawings and paintings from the period.

The density of the air on a summer's day, the rocks, the profiles of mountains, and the water, so evident in the central part of the drawing, recall many other studies by Leonardo of the natural elements, especially fossils, a symbol of the change and revolution that nature undergoes.

Early biographic events in Leonardo's life, from his birth in Vinci to his training in Renaissance Florence, and the artist's indissoluble tie with his land of origin, are recounted in an innovative and immersive exhibition room. Starting with fascinating details that emerge from archive documents, and with the aid of an installation that seamlessly combines sounds and images, the exhibits trace the events that attest to Leonardo's presence in Vinci. The history of the Da Vinci family, hypotheses about the identity of his mother Caterina, Leonardo's relationship with his uncle Francesco and his first abacus studies are all outlined in this fascinating account.

The *Landscape* drawing and the documents on loan from the State Archive, the real highlights of the exhibition, are on display in the imposing Sala del Podestà, which for centuries was the seat of government in Vinci. Here visitors will also be able to admire the verso (back) of Leonardo's celebrated drawing, which has never before been on public display, and explore every detail of the work thanks to a very high-resolution 3D rendering of the image that can be consulted with a touch screen produced in conjunction with the Università Alma Mater of Bologna.

Finally, with the fascinating insights offered by the landscape drawing still fresh in their minds, visitors can climb up to the panoramic terrace in the tower of the Castello dei Conti Guidi and take in an extraordinary all-round view of the Montalbano hills, the lower Valdarno and the Valdinievole. Seeing the actual landscape, still so similar to what it would have been like five centuries ago, and the elements that may have inspired Leonardo's work, is a perfect way to round off this experience of the origins of the great genius.

Vinci for Leonardo

To mark the five hundredth anniversary of Leonardo's death, the town of Vinci pays tribute to its most illustrious son with an extensive programme of initiatives and events entitled "Vinci for Leonardo". It comprises over 100 events ranging from meetings with leading Leonardo scholars, who will be in Vinci at monthly intervals, to exhibitions, shows, concerts and a variety of other activities organized by local bodies.

Leonardo 2019 in the Empolese Valdelsa area

In the Empolese Valdelsa area, the anniversary of the death of the genius who was born and lived in the area, and returned on various occasions, represents a unique opportunity to organize a series of top-flight cultural initiatives which in different ways revolve around the figure of Leonardo and the theme of landscape. These focus on such things as Leonardo's artistic legacy as found in the output of Pontormo (born in Empoli and one of the best-known Tuscan mannerist painters), the fascinating devotional landscapes that emerged in Catholic Europe in the years straddling the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and aspects associated with the theme of flight, through naturalistic studies from Pisanello to Leonardo. Exhibition events will be held in many municipalities in the Empolese Valdelsa area throughout the second half of 2019.

Tourist itineraries: *Leonardo da Vinci. Nelle terre del Genio*

Thanks to support from the Fondazione Ente Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze, between April and July it will be possible to follow in Leonardo's footsteps and visit the exhibitions in the Empolese Valdelsa area as part of the "Leonardo, sulle tracce del Genio" tourist itineraries. To make it easier to enjoy these guided trails, designed to give visitors a chance to explore places associated with Leonardo, and other programmed events and experiences, a free shuttle, the Leonardo Bus, will run from Florence and Vinci on Saturdays and Sundays.

Information

Exhibition *Leonardo a Vinci. Alle origini del Genio*

15 April – 15 October 2019

Hours: Everyday 9 a.m.- 11 p.m. (ticket office close at 10.15 p.m.)

Opening: 15 April, 11 a.m., Piazza Guido Masi, Vinci

Museo Leonardiano: Tel 0571 933251, info@museoleonardiano.it, www.museoleonardiano.it

Programme of events in Vinci

Ufficio Turistico di Vinci: Tel 0571 933285, ufficioturistico@comune.vinci.fi.it

[Calendario "Vinci per Leonardo"](#) (pdf version)

Events in the Empolese Valdelsa area

Toscana nel cuore, info@toscananelcuore.it, www.toscananelcuore.it

Leonardo da Vinci. Nelle terre del Genio itineraries

Sigma Csc: tel. 055 2340742, prenotazioni@cscsigma.it



LEONARDO
1519-2019

COMITATO NAZIONALE PER LE CELEBRAZIONI
DEI 500 ANNI DALLA MORTE DI LEONARDO DA VINCI