



UN ALTRO LEONARDO (A DIFFERENT LEONARDO)

satellite event in “**Milano e 50 anni di movimento LGBT***”

Ex Fornace, Alzaia Naviglio Pavese 16, Milano, Italy.

June 19, 2019: lecture at 6:30 PM

We focus on the precise opposite of the conventional Leonardo Da Vinci, i.e. the “genius” confidently celebrated (and neutralized) with special effects on the 500th anniversary of his death.

We’d like to present –with images and words – another person, another portrait: the personality of a young man. We see Leonardo as a free spirit.

It’s a common and convenient cliché to portray him as the old saviour out of reach. The reality is very different. His real “genius”, as anyone can verify from what he wrote, is in his personality, his viewpoints and his unstoppable curiosity. He was a man who was ahead of his time, with a vision of life based on a real examination of facts. Anatomy, birds’ flight, water motion became expressions of poetical substance through technique. Physiognomy allowed him to represent personality using *sfumato* to reproduce the transitory aspects of life.

Moreover, absolutely crucial in his biography and attitude was the acceptance and use of life’s disadvantages as an opportunity. Without classical studies and self-taught, his was a restless and perfectionist talent. As an illegitimate but recognised son, Leonardo Da Vinci knew how to achieve a larger existential freedom.

Curious, uncatchable, a challenging perfectionist: he’s the quintessential “unconventional”, a central and necessary protagonist in human evolution.

Milan, the place where work has always meant respectability, the young Da Vinci found his place as a young man who was creative in applied arts (as a fashion or a set designer is today). The local Lord Ludovico il Moro engaged

him to organise prestigious parties and recreative events at his castle, adding prestige and charm to the city.

This was the young man walking the streets of Milan, measuring everything, taking note of personalities and sketching them, interpreting and idealising women— Isn't Leonardo someone very open and near to all of us?

Two images by the internationally renowned artist Vittoria Chierici will be the theme of a fascinating lecture. Vittoria has made a pictorial portrait (no 3D, no exaggeration) of Leonardo Da Vinci as the 30-year-old who lived in Milan searching for work and freedom, after having been anonymously charged of sodomy in Florence.

By means of a meticulous philological procedure she took as her basis the only officially recognised portrait of Da Vinci, which was made in his 50s and was possibly drawn by his assistant and protege Francesco Melzi. The work is part of the English Royal collection at Windsor. Da Vinci may look older than he really was, due to his passion for the long beard (always with well-finished curls!). In any case, he was surely younger than posthumous portraits of him, or than his "Portrait of an old man" which may be seen in Turin, Italy. To produce the portrait of a young Leonardo, Vittoria isolated the compatible physiognomical features from artworks in which he might have volunteered as model.

It's a frontal image of a young Leonardo staring at us, which is an ideal motif for a T-shirt that cuts through time and distance.

Presentetation

Giovanni Dall'Orto, historian, will introduce the cultural and social dynamics of the time in which Leonardo lived, including the role of Florence and neoplatonism. He will discuss Leonardo's voyage to Milan as a crucial part of his life as well as details from Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo's biography of Leonardo.

Vittoria Chierici will explain the process and method of her work. Like other projects in her career, this is an interpretation and analytical reinvention of classic masterpieces, crossing life, history and art.

Far from an academic or conventional approach, she decided to bring the young Leonardo back to Milan. The first public presentation of the project is at the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Stonewall as seen from Milan, the leading city for openness in Italy. The connection with Leonardo's 500th anniversary is a tribute and a recognition of his influence.

Paolo Rumi, cultural commentator, will underscore the connections. Leonardo in Milan is a key part of a contemporary discussion of identity and gender issues. This central and vital city (between northern and southern Europe or the continental east and west) has a spirit that Da Vinci used, seized and amplified. His work for the palace and its historical limitations (separation of women) somehow led to an inter gender / androgynous aesthetic.

We can see Leonardo in a totally different way today. He may even be a defence and an alert against virtual reality. Just as he took advantage of the dissemination of books during his lifetime, in the web age he could set us up against manipulation or illusions, inviting us to come back to reality, to settle for a correct search for identity.

Let's talk about love and personality: who/what are we when we define ourselves?

The difference is in our watching and understanding skills.

Paolo Rumi, May 2019

