

From Nana's Back Porch: Famous Artist Leonardo da Vinci

Hello, this is Nana from my back porch. Thank you for joining me today. You are all artists!

Hello there, artist friends! This is Nana. It's a little bit cold outside here today, and I am not on my porch. I'm speaking to you from my kitchen! And there are all sorts of wonderful inventions here in my kitchen. There is a humidifier, there's a blender, there is a coffee pot, there are just all sorts of inventions.

And I'm going to tell you about someone who had a fantastic mind and a driving curiosity about inventing and learning. His name was Leonardo da Vinci. He was an artist, a scientist, and as I say, an inventor, during the Italian Renaissance. He is best known for his paintings, his famous Mona Lisa, and The Last Supper.

Artist Leonardo da Vinci's Notebooks

He kept marvelous notebooks of his inventions. The early version of a helicopter, an airplane, sketches of the human body, astronomy, map-making. He was known as an early genius of that era

Da Vinci was born on April 14th or 15th, we're not sure, in Florence, Italy. He was educated by the famous Italian artist Verrocchio in his studio. That rhymes, but I didn't mean for it to rhyme.

He had no formal academic training, he didn't even go to school at all! But many historians and scholars point to Leonardo as a universal genius and an individual of unquenchable curiosity and a feverishly inventive imagination. Can you imagine? All he did was think of things he can make and study and do.

Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa and The Last Supper

One historian noted that the scope of Leonardo's mind seemed to be superhuman while the man himself was and still is mysterious to us. Yes, he is considered one of the greatest painters of all time, his painting the Mona Lisa the most famous portrait. The Last Supper is the most reproduced religious painting of all time.

Leonardo da Vinci's Salvator Mundi Painting

In 2017, one of his paintings sold at auction for 450.3 million dollars, setting a record for the most expensive painting sold at a public auction. The painting is Salvator Mundi. Now I want you to look this up. Salvator Mundi is the name of the painting, and it is translated as "savior of the world." It is a painting of Jesus dressed in Renaissance style, making the sign of the cross.

Preparatory pastel chalk and ink drawings are held in the British Royal collection. So he did sketch and pastels, and he did do great studies on the human body and cheekbones and eyes and ears. So by the time he was ready to paint the Mona Lisa, even though it took him 12 years to paint her, he didn't stay with it all the time, he kept studying about her.

Da Vinci, never stopped learning or experimenting. He made drawings of an armored fighting vehicle or what we call a tank. He studied solar power, made an early adding machine, and is credited with the invention of the parachute. Discoveries in anatomy, geology, optics. He kept busy with his notebooks of discoveries.

We recognize and admire Leonardo as a scientist and an inventor. But for over 400 years, his fame has rested on his great skill as a painter. By the 1490s, he was described as a divine painter.

Just his innovation. The new ways to lay on the paint. His detailed knowledge of anatomy, light in the room and botany in the background and geology. His interest in the way human beings have emotions, and his use of color and tone. All these came together in his masterpieces.

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"There are no mistakes in chalk pastel art!" - Nana

Leonardo's fame within his own lifetime was such that it was said the king of France carried him away like a trophy to his castle and was claimed to have supported him in his old age and held Leonardo in his arms as he died.

Crowds still stand in long lines to see his best known artworks, t-shirts still bear his most famous drawings, and historians continue to hail him as a genius as do I.

Thank you for joining me today. I hope I have sort of made you become curious, like Leonardo. And perhaps you'll do a little bit of study on him and look at some of his fabulous artworks and the things he invented and how he just has been magnificent for centuries.

And always, always remember, like, Leonardo is, You ARE also An Artist.

Love, Nana.

You ARE an ARTiST Mona Lisa Homeschool Art Lesson

You can paint the Mona Lisa too with Nana's Famous Artist Leonardo da Vinci lesson. Find it in her Famous Artists series in the You ARE an ARTiST Complete Clubhouse.

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