



# Leonardo da Vinci: Complete Paintings and Drawings

By Johannes Nathan, Frank Zöllner

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Lying open, this unutterably wonderful book is almost the size of the *Mona Lisa* and about as hefty as a slab of *The Last Supper*'s monastery wall. All 34 paintings are here (including what we know of the lost ones), many with huge and immensely illuminating details, plus 663 drawings. The reproductions are stunning, on paper sturdy enough to serve as wings on some of the flying machines depicted on pages 644 to 671. The precision of the images amazes: the delicate petals fingered by the larger-than-life-size baby Jesus in *Madonna of the Carnation*; the wailing, dismembered victims of Leonardo's scary scythed chariots; Mary's transparent drapery in the *Annunciation*; the bands of sunlight streaking each swirling curl of Ginevra de Benci; *Mona Lisa*'s gossamer veil and intricately embroidered gown; even, unless my eyes deceive me, one of the fingerprints Leonardo famously left while daubing paint by hand.

The text by Frank Zollner (and Johannes Nathan, who discusses the drawings) teases out meanings and sketches historical context without overloading his scholarly brush. Without it, one might have overlooked the dim crucifix on which St. Jerome fixes his blazing gaze, and quite misunderstood the sexist Hippocratic delusions that inform *The Sexual Act in Vertical Section*: "A tube-like duct leads from the woman's breasts to her womb, while the male organ is directly linked not only to the testicles but also...to the brain." (Zollner's discussion of the erotic subtext of some of the artwork suggests that Leonardo's male passion was not necessarily so rational.) The brief accounts of Leonardo's esthetic combat with Michelangelo and Raphael suggest that you don't need a scythed chariot to cut off an opponent at the knees. The famous quotes by everyone from Nietzsche to Warhol are well selected, especially Freud diagnosing Leonardo's genius as residing in his childlike sense of play. That's a key to the spirit of this book: it's more fun than a week in the Louvre. —*Tim Appelo*

#### Review

"...the wealth of Leonardo's surviving drawings provide an extraordinary direct and intimate view of the artist's hand...." -- *World of Interiors, London*

"A scholarly work and a sensual delight...offering a moth's-eye-view and the ability to "enter" the works of art..." -- *Associated Press, New York*

"Sumptuously made and beautifully produced, is the most thorough Leonardo comprehensive survey ever published." -- *Soloarte, London*

"[N]o better catalogue raisonné of the paintings - scrupulous in every respect - it has no equal currently in print." -- *Brian Sewell, The Evening Standard, London*

"[S]tart making serious room on your bookshelf. The XXL tome features supersized blowups of Leonardo's works.... A truly sumptuous undertaking." -- *artnet.com, New York*

#### About the Author

Johannes Nathan studied art history at New York University and the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, where he earned his Ph.D. in 1995 with a dissertation on the working methods of Leonardo da Vinci. He is the author of numerous art publications, director of Nathan Fine Art (Berlin and Zürich) and a teacher of art history at the Technische Universität, Berlin.

Frank Zöllner wrote his doctoral thesis on motifs originating from Antiquity in the history of art and architecture of the Medieval and Renaissance periods (1987). He is also the author of a postdoctoral treatise on motion and expression in the art of Leonardo da Vinci, published in 2010. He has published numerous works on Renaissance art and art theory, and on 20th-century art. Since 1996 he has been Professor of Medieval and Modern Art at the University of Leipzig. For TASCHEN he has authored the XL monographs on Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo.

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