



## Leonardo: The Artist and the Man

*Serge Bramly, Siân Reynolds (Translator)*

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"A considerable work of assimilative scholarship and common sense...races along merrily."—*The Boston Globe*.

## Leonardo: The Artist and the Man Details

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Author : Serge Bramly , Siân Reynolds (Translator)

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## **From Reader Review Leonardo: The Artist and the Man for online ebook**

### **Linda says**

I've always admired Leonardo Da Vinci and this book gives a closer look into the man himself. It's very comprehensive book and the author has a passion for the man. It's easy to read and detailed. There are a lot of pictures of Leonardo's art. The author interprets how Leonardo's life must have looked like and even what he must have felt or thought at certain events in his life. This can be annoying for some readers. I find it very helpful in creating my own interpretation of Da Vinci and his art. It really gives you a broad idea of the man and Leonardo really comes to life the further you get into the book.

I recommend this book to anyone who would like to know more about Leonardo Da Vinci, his life and his art.

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### **Sam Brannelly says**

A book that's hard to put down. So much to learn about a man that largely remains still a mystery.

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### **James Shearer says**

Great book on Leonardo da Vinci's life showing that he really wanted to be an engineer rather than a painter.

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### **Samuel says**

Excellent biography of the man his context and accomplishments without delving into lionization.

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### **Dustin says**

Bramly embeds Leonardo in the history that he lived. I was surprised by how little we know of this history for such a universally revered genius. This well researched biography states what we do know, in context with Italian History, while providing likely scenarios to fill in the gaps and providing questions that delve into Leonardo's possible thoughts without labelling them fact. This is not quite scholarly book is not for the casual reader that only wants a story narrated to Da Vinci's life. This provides the facts and makes connections to why relatively few of his works have survived. Florence, Italy and Europe were vastly different in Leonardo's time and it is relatively sad that Leonardo's genius was mainly filtered through the patrons that he catered to. This book gives the evidence accurately and somehow manages to further elevate the de-facto Renaissance man's genius that has been sensationalized so much. I do not feel a need to read any other Da Vinci book as there is little left to say.

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### **Bartelomeo says**

Hij wordt een "uomo universale" genoemd. Leonardo da Vinci probeerde het universum te vatten als kunstenaar, wetenschapper en uitvinder.

In deze meesterlijk geschreven biografie gaat de Franse schrijver Serge Bramly terug naar de bronnen. Hij traceert het leven van de grote Italiaan in diens eigen geschriften, gaat te rade bij tijdgenoten en rivalen als Botticelli, Miche Angelo en Machiavelli en zoekt het spoor terug in de verschillende woonoorden van de Renaissance-kunstenaar. De dod is voor hem het grootste kwaad : "Elk kwaad laat een droefheid achter in het geheugen, behalve de dood, dat tegelijk met het geheugen het leven vernietigt;"

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### **Béatrice says**

Je ne suis peut-être pas aussi enthousiaste que les critiques mais c'était quand même très intéressant, donnant une vue assez complète du personnage, mais plus de l'artiste que de l'homme lui-même dont on ne sait pas grand chose...

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### **Michael Finocchiaro says**

I think this (along with Fox's Alexander the Great) was one of the first biographies I ever read. I have always been amazed by the genius and legend of Leonardo and learned enormous amounts about him from this beautiful biography by Serge Bramly. After reading it, you will want to visit the Loire Valley and enjoy his double-helix staircase at Chambord and the love shack Le Clos Lucé that François I built for him. In Italy, you need to reserve in advance, but it is more than worth it to see The Last Supper in Milan. As for his extant paintings, I have seen all of them except - ironically enough - the ones in the National Gallery in Washington, DC. This book provides priceless insight into his life and his work and how he defined the Renaissance Man in every sense of the term.

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### **Steve says**

Honestly, I knew next to nothing about Leonardo going into this, and now I'm fascinated by his talent, the breadth of his interests, and his inability to finish most of what he started. He was possibly the greatest painter in an age of brilliant artists, but his reputation is based on such a small number of surviving works, many of which suffer from serious issues of decay or poor restoration attempts. His insatiable curiosity led him to investigate anatomy to levels which hadn't been done before, as well as to study water and its methods of movement, the potential of manned flight, and many other subjects. Bramly's research, considering it was done in the late 80s, is extraordinarily detailed, and he tells a fascinating story, allowing for the great amount of information which simply doesn't exist. I bought another Leonardo bio the same day as this one, and will read it soon. It's also fascinating to see how his life intersected with so many famous figures of the 15th and early 16th Century.

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### **Alexandra says**

Serge Bramly's biography of Leonardo da Vinci is a number of very different books rolled into one. It is an abstruse, highly literary treatise on a Renaissance artist and scientist, but also a tender, intimate portrait of a man Bramly clearly admired. It is a portrait of late 15th century Florence and Milan, and a biography, indeed, of the very conception, in da Vinci's time, of the artist as a tradesperson, rather than the artist-construct that exists in the present western cultural zeitgeist.

Bramly begins, from the outset, to deliberately put a healthy distance between himself and other biographers, clearly being of the opinion that he has managed to avoid many of the errors common to this type of work. He blasts others for descending into hagiography. Others, it would seem, did a great deal of extrapolating, deducing, supposing and guessing in the process of obtaining certain histories, orders of events, details from the life of the man in question. Many gaps do exist in da Vinci's personal history, things that are hard to ascertain from patchy municipal records and subjective epistolary accounts. Harder still is the process of teasing out the character and spirit of a man who wrote prolifically on his many subjects of scientific inquiry, but hardly anything about his inner state.

Bramly very convincingly picks apart fact from extrapolation, and is forthright in disclosing how he arrived at the many conclusions drawn throughout the book. He draws you in with his deep convictions, and his profound respect for da Vinci as a whole human being, with brilliant, glaring flaws, a man who, by dint of taking on spectacular challenges, often failed spectacularly. Through Bramly's often snobbish, but meticulous accounting of his subject, runs a vein of bittersweet, highly nuanced, loving obsession over a strange and fascinating subject. One can't help but be drawn into this labyrinth of conjecture. To watch Bramly try to divine the meaning in many things others might gloss over, to find such haunting depth in the life and work of someone who lived in a distant world so different from our own and yet so strikingly similar, often feels like walking in on something too private to witness.

It bears mentioning that the superb quality of the writing is even more striking considering the book I read is a translation from French, and credit is due to the translator, Sian Reynolds, for a marvellous work. Reynolds was working with a book that featured multiple languages *in situ*, names, places, concepts, in Italian and French, Latin, German... I can't even begin to imagine how one tackles such a task.

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### **Geoff Cain says**

An interesting speculative biography. I read this as an antidote to Damn Brown...

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### **Brett Stortroen says**

A decent biography of one of the great minds of the renaissance. This work was an interesting study on Leonardo's passion for engineering and scientific innovation. Of course, the author also gives a nice summary of Leonard's artistic works in great detail.

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## **Josh Schneier says**

Leonardo: The Artist and the Man by Serge Bramly is a biography about Leonardo da Vinci. The main character was obviously, Leonardo da Vinci. In this book Bramly describes da Vinci's entire life from birth to death, in vivid detail. The beginning of the book starts out with describing how da Vinci grew up, and how he was introduced to art. "Leonardo was born in 1452-on Saturday, April 15, at 10:30 pm, to be precise" (Bramly 37). That quote states the day da Vinci was born, giving the exact time. After discussing da Vinci's childhood, the book then goes on to describe how da Vinci took his art to the next level, and progressed into the best artist of all time. There is also a large section in the book where Bramly talks about da Vinci's lesser known work in other subjects, like anatomy, science, inventions, music, and other things. The end of the book describes da Vinci's work in his older years and his death. Since it is a biography, there is no real plot, it just goes in chronological order.

I think the author did a very good job of going into almost every little detail of da Vinci's life. I learned a ton of information about Leonardo da Vinci from reading this book. I feel like I knew him personally after finishing this book. I think that depending on the reader, this book could either be an outstanding read, or a terrible one. If the reader is a history guru, a fan of da Vinci, or doing a project on da Vinci, like me, then I would highly recommend this book because it goes in deep detail about every aspect of da Vinci's life. If the reader is just looking for an interesting book to read, but isn't a history guru, then I wouldn't recommend this book. To someone who loves history and da Vinci, this book would probably be extremely interesting to them, but to your normal person, like me, this book would be extremely boring. "Leonardo probably found the faces of the apostles in The Last Supper in the surrounding streets of Milan-the reader may be reminded of Fellini and his painstaking casting. Cristofano da Casti, mentioned above, may have inspired the head of Saint John or another disciple; a certain Count Giovanni, in the entourage of Cardinal di Mortaro, seems to have served as a model for Christ" (Bramly 294). That quote is explaining how da Vinci might have gotten the ideas for the faces in the people in his painting The Last Supper. The history lovers, that quote might be very interesting to them, but to your everyday person, it might be hard to understand and boring.

I kind of had two ratings for this book. I averaged them out and gave it a three. One of my ratings was a five, and this was because it served my purpose very well of providing me with information on da Vinci for my project. My other rating was a one, I got this rating from my opinion on this book from my standpoint on interesting books, so ignoring using it for information for my project. This book was just to boring and extensive for my taste of interesting reading. Overall this book can have very different ratings depending on the reader, but it definitely served my purpose for the reason I read it, although I didn't necessarily enjoy it.

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## **Kim says**

Leonardo da Vinci, was born under the name Leonardo de ser Piero da Vinci on April 15th, 1452 in the town of Vinci, Italy. He is famous for his paintings of the Mona Lisa and the Last Supper. But he was not only a painter. He was a sculptor, architect, musician, scientist, mathematician, engineer, inventor, anatomist, geologist, cartographer, botanist and writer. He studied anatomy, biology, astronomy, geology, the movement of water, acoustics, mechanics, general physics. For a man who called himself as "unlettered" he owned more books than many scholars of his time. He was a Renaissance Man, always curious about things, how they worked and how he could improve them. He was fourteen when he was apprenticed out to a man by the name of Verrocchio, who was a painter. Leonardo had shown talent as an artist at a young age. He did not complete all the training as an apprentice, he struck out on his own at a young age. Leonardo was

known for not finishing his work, having too much on his table or not satisfied with results. May 2, 1519 Leonardo departed from this world. He was not satisfied with his work on earth and always related that he had wasted too much time. I think of him as a man of wonder. There is still much to learn from him.

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### **Florence Millo says**

#### Leonardo the Artist and the Man

This book was an excellent biography of an exceedingly complex man. It is very readable. While including information on daily life and politics of Italy during Leonardo's life, it avoids going into minute detail. The author clearly indicates when he is speculating on some aspect of Leonardo's life and work. His life was certainly one of constant investigation and imagination. He was an illegitimate child, he worked as an apprentice in Verrochio's studio, he felt unappreciated in Florence & relocated to Milan. The book includes many little vignettes which give the reader a flavor of what life was like at the time and even more what Leonardo was like. For example, he signed a contract with a certain monastery to produce a very staid, stiff Madonna and Child but it was obvious from the beginning that he had no intention of producing such a painting; what he did produce was the masterpiece, The Madonna of the Rocks. His interests were as varied as can be imagined--from anatomy to astronomy to machines of war to horses of bronze--everything interested his inventive mind.

I am neither an artist nor an art historian. I found this book a wonderful introduction to the genius that was Leonardo da Vinci. My only wish is that there had been more color plates included in the book.

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