



DOMAINE DE CHANTILLY

September 2018

PRESS RELEASE

THE NUDE MONA LISA

1 JUNE - 6 OCTOBER 2019

Jeu de Paume room - Domaine de Chantilly

CURATORS

- Mathieu Deldicque, curator at the musée Condé
- Vincent Delieuvin, chief curator of paintings at the Louvre
- Guillaume Kazerouni, in charge of ancient art at the Rennes Fine Arts museum



Workshop of Leonardo, *The Nude Mona Lisa*.
74 X 55 cm, Chantilly, musée Condé, DE 32
© RMN-Grand Palais (domaine de Chantilly) / Gérard Blot

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For the 500th anniversary of Leonardo's death, the Domaine de Chantilly will celebrate the artist's genius through one of his lesser-known and enigmatic yet seminal work: the *Nude Mona Lisa*.

The musée Condé in Chantilly houses the most famous representation of the *Monna Vanna*, better known as the *Nude Mona Lisa*. This large sketch (almost as big as the Louvre Mona Lisa) has never ceased to puzzle its viewers.

Thanks to incredible international loans, the summer 2019 exhibition will aim to elucidate part of the mystery behind this true icon.

The birth of a genre: around *Simonetta Vespucci*



Piero di Cosimo, *Portrait of Simonetta Vespucci*
around 1480 ?
Wood, 57 x 42 cm
Chantilly, musée Condé, PE 13
© RMN-Grand Palais (domaine de Chantilly) /
Adrien Didierjean



Bartolomeo Veneto, *Portrait of a woman*
around 1506-1510?
Bois, 43,5 x 34,3 cm
© Städel Museum - U. Edelmann - ARTOTHEK

The *Nude Mona Lisa* “invented” by Leonardo is the result of budding research in Florentine Neoplatonist circles during the 1480s with whom the master was acquainted. The portraits of Simonetta Vespucci, a fatal beauty who died prematurely and was the object of Giuliano de Medici’s platonic love, attest to this. Botticelli and Piero di Cosimo painted her in the nude, thus giving birth to a true pictorial subject matter, polysemous and at the intersection of genres. For these artists, and notably the Venetians (as seen for example in the famous *Portrait of a woman* by Bartolomeo Veneto held at the Städel Museum in Frankfurt), the feminine naked portrait became the archetype of universal beauty.

Leonardo and the *Nude Mona Lisa*

The heart of the exhibition will be dedicated to the prestigious Chantilly sketch or cartoon representing the *Nude Mona Lisa*, which was purchased by the duc d’Aumale in 1862. Designed after the *Mona Lisa*, this masterpiece was the physical symbol both of a play between pictorial genres and of a polysemy characteristic of Leonardo’s fertile mind.

The Italian master spent a lot of time perfecting his work. Laboratory analyses have succeeded in showing that the Chantilly drawing was used as a tracing (to transfer the composition) for paintings probably created in his workshop. For the first time ever, they are shown together here.

Numerous students and followers of Leonardo used his composition, drew inspiration from it or shifted its meaning. This will be the unique occasion to bring several replicas together, as well as to compare them to the Chantilly sketch or cartoon and to each other.

Who created the *Nude Mona Lisa* of Chantilly? Scientific analyses to solve part of the mystery

The exhibition will also showcase the laboratory exams that were conducted along with the study of the Chantilly masterpiece. In the manner of a police investigation,

The *Nude Mona Lisa* in Renaissance France

The *Nude Mona Lisa* gained early recognition in France, most likely through an original or a copy. François Clouet, the son of Francis I's portraitist, drew inspiration from it for his *Lady in Her Bath* (Washington, National Gallery of Art), a composition promised to a bright future, which was situated at the intersection of the childbirth portrait, the allegory of fertility or love and the genre painting.

The motif underwent significant evolutions, particularly among painters from the Second School of Fontainebleau. Ladies in their prime, in their bath, at their mirror, portraits of mistresses of Henry IV (among which the famous Louvre painting, *Gabrielle d'Estrées and one of her sisters*) are, in a way, all daughters of the *Nude Mona Lisa*, a frame which allowed to develop time and time again a precious and polysemous aesthetic that the Renaissance highly valued.

By looking closely at Leonardo's emblematic and forgotten artwork, the exhibition at the Domaine de Chantilly will pay homage to one of the master's most enigmatic inventions, while displaying a true art history lesson dedicated to the development of a pictorial genre, between France and Italy during the Renaissance.

This exhibition benefits from the generous support of the *Fondation d'Entreprise Caisse d'Epargne Hauts de France* and *Hugau Gestion*.



The Domaine de Chantilly celebrates women of the Renaissance

Clouet. Le miroir des dames

Exhibition in the Prints and Drawings Gallery

1 June – 6 October 2019

Curator : Mathieu Deldicque, curator at the musée Condé

The musée Condé has an internationally unique collection of prints and drawings, including 366 portraits drawn by two of the major French Renaissance portraitists, Jean and François Clouet, and their workshops. Among these are delicate sheets dedicated to female figures featuring famous women of the Renaissance (such as Renée de France, Eleonore von Habsburg or Diane de Poitiers) and unidentified but equally beautiful models. As a complement to the *Nude Mona Lisa* exhibition, a selection of forty drawings will trace the history of 16th century female portraiture in France.

This exhibition is supported by the Friends of the Domaine de Chantilly.



Friends of the Domaine de
CHANTILLY

Special summer showcase of the Library of the musée Condé

1 June – 6 October 2019

This summer showcase will highlight some of the great women writers from the end of the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, notably Marguerite de Navarre and Catherine de Medicis, who held brilliant courts during the 16th century. As a dedicatee of many books, the library of the musée Condé holds some works that were directly in their possession.

PREPARE YOUR VISIT

Chantilly is less than an hour away from Paris and twenty minutes away from the Roissy-Charles-De- Gaulle airport.

Opening times

From 24 March to 29 October 2018 included

10 am to 6 pm, gardens close at 8 pm
open 7 days a week

From 30 October to 29 March included

Open every day except Tuesdays
10.30 am to 5 pm, gardens close at 6 pm
The Domaine is open on public holidays
Annual closure
7 January to 25 January 2019 included

Tickets and rates

Domain ticket

Full rate 17 € - reduced rate: 10 €

Grounds

Full rate: 8 € - reduced rate: 5 €

Annual subscription for the Domain

Full rate: 50 euros - reduced rate: 30 €

Annual subscription for the Grounds

Full rate: 25 euros - reduced rate: 15 €

By car

- From Paris: A1 motorway, exit 7 "Chantilly"
- From Lille: A1 motorway, exit 8 "Survilliers", A16 motorway, "Champagne-sur-Oise" exit

By train

- Gare du Nord SNCF Main lines (25 minutes) stop : Chantilly-Gouvieux.

From the Chantilly train station to the domain

- On foot: 20-25 minutes
- The DUC bus (Desserte Urbaine Cantilienne), a bus provided free of charge by the municipality of Chantilly and the bus n°15 "Senlis" direction. Departure from the bus station, get off at "Chantilly, église Notre-Dame"

In the vicinity of the Domaine de Chantilly

Hôtel : Auberge du Jeu de Paume : www.aubergedujeudepaumechantilly.fr
Chantilly Tourism Office : www.chantilly-tourisme.com - +33 (0) 3 44 67 37 37

