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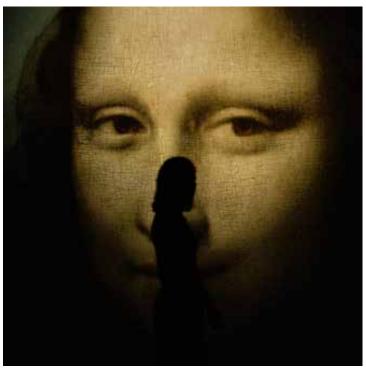

The Mona Lisa
an immersive exhibition

10 March – 21 August 2022

Palais de la Bourse
9, La Canebière
13001 Marseille

a co-production by the Grand Palais Immersif
(a subsidiary of the Rmn - Grand Palais) and the Musée du Louvre

The Palais de la Bourse welcomes in its Grand Hall *The Mona Lisa, an immersive exhibition*, a fully digital multi-sensory experience of 600m².
Why is the *Mona Lisa* the most famous painting in the world? The answers to this apparently simple question are varied, complex and surprising, giving visitors an insight into part of the myth and above all into the work itself, beyond any false mysteries and clichés.

The exhibition is an invitation to rediscover Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece through stories and sensory experiences that take place on different levels:

- the circuit is punctuated with encounters with the "landscape-skin" that envelops the entire exhibition space. It immerses visitors in a place inspired by the works of Leonardo da Vinci (1452 - 1519), such as the *Mona Lisa*, *Virgin of the Rocks* and *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* and offers interactive experiences for the public. The landscapes from these works come together and interact to create a panoramic world that brings the space to life. Here digital media, which is often thought of as a "cold" format, takes on an appealing sensitive and emotive dimension, with unusual graphic textures.

- different visual tales recount the stories, mysteries, contemporary context and process behind this painting that has become an icon. Visitors meander through visual narratives that are simultaneously instructive, sensory and contemplative. Six very large-format digital projections convey the polysemy of Leonardo da Vinci's work:

1. The *Mona Lisa*, a universal icon
The portrait of Mona Lisa is now one of the few truly universal images. It became part of 20th century popular culture, with caricaturists tackling current events through her smile. Image, icon, symbol: today, she has the most famous face in art history.

2. The theft of the *Mona Lisa*
Or how the world's most famous painting was stolen and found in Florence before being returned to the Musée du Louvre after a farewell tour in Italy.

3. The *Mona Lisa*, copied but never equalled
Up to the 19th century, many painters paid tribute to Leonardo da Vinci's composition. The *Mona Lisa* was copied and imitated from the moment it was created. The painting was still unfinished when a young Raphaël discovered the *Mona Lisa* as a powerful source of inspiration for his own works, as it would go on to be for countless portraits of men and women throughout Europe for centuries.

4. The *Mona Lisa* and the art of the portrait
Like other painters before him, Leonardo da Vinci placed his subject in front of a landscape. Although, up to that point, Italian tradition favoured the profile position, in Northern European portraiture a three-quarter angle was preferred, the eyes looking towards the visitor. The composition offers a view of the hands, which brings the painting to life. Most significantly, the master chose to paint Mona Lisa with an expression that few artists before him had dared to depict: a smile. Da Vinci therefore drew inspiration from other pictorial traditions, particularly Flemish painting. But because he was able to render the life of his subject like none other before him could, he created a masterpiece that still fascinates us five centuries later.

5. Behind the painting

The extraordinarily realistic impression given by the *Mona Lisa* comes from da Vinci's pictorial technique: by blending contours, all of the elements in the painting appear as one. The artist felt that shadow and light should meld into one another and vanish "like smoke". He therefore invented a painting technique that he called "sfumato". This was the culmination of the artist's research and his scientific observation of the world.

6. A painter and his subject

Leonardo da Vinci made several portraits throughout his life. In his drawings, sketchbooks or painting, he sought to understand how to depict life in all its complexity. Painted at full scale, the *Mona Lisa* appears to be the most faithful representation of the artist's quest. Da Vinci never delivered it to the man who commissioned it, Francesco del Giocondo, as a portrait of his wife; instead, he guarded it closely until his death, perfecting it constantly. This was the price of rendering life on a piece of poplar wood, causing his contemporaries to "tremble" before this miracle.

Each of the projects offers different visions and animations tailored to the content of each one:

- interactive devices continue these visual representations and are intended to encourage the visitor's involvement. They can "touch" these digitised works, handle them, observe their texture and every minute detail as they have rarely been able to do before.

- the different experiences on offer make for a dynamic way to transmit knowledge. Visitors can therefore truly encounter legendary masterpieces that are made accessible to all.

The format of The *Mona Lisa*: an immersive exhibition invites a wide audience to experience an exhibition, and each individual's relationship with this emblematic work, in a brand new way. This is no minor ambition, as it involves combining aesthetic, narrative and technological innovations while remaining mindful of accessibility and audience engagement. This creation offers a unique vision of Leonardo da Vinci's work, both precise and well-researched, as well as a powerful and original artistic perspective.

Visitors can expand and share their knowledge of the topics covered in the exhibition through the experiences and interaction offered by the fun, appealing and intuitive modules, where technological innovation lends itself to education and exploration.

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