**Santa Maria Gualtieri**

**Spazio Arti Contemporanee del Broletto**

**Castello Visconteo**

**Piazza del Municipio**

PAVIA

**LOOKING FOR MONNA LISA**

**Misteri e ironie attorno alla più celebre icona pop**

*curated by Valerio Dehò*

**24 November 2019 – 29 March 2020**

Press preview Friday 22 November at 11:00, Sala del Camino - Broletto

*press release, 08.11.2019*

“Looking for Monna Lisa. Misteri e ironie attorno alla più celebre icona Pop”*,* curated by Valerio Dehò, is an immersive, multifaceted exhibition on show from 24 November to 29 March at themost important art venues in **Pavia**. It celebrates the **fifth centenary** of the death of **Leonardo da Vinci,** deepens the Florentine genius’s bond with the city of Pavia, and investigates the mysteries and legends surrounding the celebrated *Mona Lisa*.

The exhibition is promoted and organised by the Municipality of Pavia, with the support of the Fondazione Banca del Monte di Lombardia, Confindustria Pavia, and the patronage of the Pavia Chamber of Commerce. It involves the **church of Santa Maria Gualtieri**, **Spazio Arti Contemporanee del Broletto**, **Castello Visconteo** and the **Piazza del Municipio**. The distinctly contemporary artworks on display include **paintings**, **sculpture**, **installations** and **multimedia** works, some created for the occasion but all linked by their inherent relationship with the past, with history and with the great master Leonardo.

The deconsecrated church of **Santa Maria Gualtieri** is the ideal stage for the multimedia experience *Mona Lisa Who?*, created by Karmachina multimedia design studio. It centres on discovering the identity of the woman in Leonardo da Vinci’s most famous portrait, adopting the hypothesis that the work portrays Isabella D’Aragona, who was banished to Pavia and met Leonardo during his stay there. The projections, sounds and narration, combined with Studio Dune’s installation design, are perfectly in tune with the location’s vertical structure, symmetry and softness of line, and accompany the visitor on a totalising journey.

The exhibition continues at **Spazio Arti Contemporanee del Broletto** and **Castello Visconteo** with a selection of over forty works by thirty-nine artists who have reinterpreted the *Mona Lisa* masterpiece in a contemporary key, some aimed at creating continuity, others at producing a rupture, presenting works that range from conceptual art to Fluxus, visual poetry to neo-painting, and from Pop Art to more recent expressions that highlight the continuous search for innovation and courageous experimentation, which Leonardo himself masterfully exemplified.

As Valerio Dehò comments, *‘The phenomenon of reproducibility has made this painting by Leonardo the greatest pop icon in history, which has never ceased to interest artists as well as gadget and souvenir merchants. Research on the* Mona Lisa *spreads into unpredictable territories.’*

The artists involved are **Marcello Aitiani, Paolo Albani, Anna Banana, Vittore Baroni, Stefano Benedetti, Julien Blaine, Stefano Bressani, Carlo Cantini, Myriam Cappelletti, Ugo Carrega, Cinzio Cavallarin, Gianni Cella, Riccardo Cocchi, Fabio De Poli, Giovanni Fontana , Franco Fossi, Claudio Francia, Raimondo Galeano, Marco Gerbi, Jiri Kolar, Sean Mackaoui, Roberto Malquori, Lucia Marcucci, Jean Margat, Miradario (Massimo Biagi), Gian Marco Montesano, Luciano Ori, Orlan, Vania Paolieri, Luigi Petracchi, Vettor Pisani, Lorenzo Puglisi, Giovanni Raffaelli, Sarenco, Karel** **Trinkewitz, Ben Vautier, Giuseppe Veneziano, Virgilio Rospigliosi** and **Elisa Zadi.**

Also on display is a **video** and the special 1958 issue of the magazine *Bizzarre* from the Museo ideale Leonardo da Vinci, together with *Bijoconde* by artist and scientist Jean Margat, the inventor of *Giocondologia*, a phenomenon that brings together the results of many artists’ experiments and variations applied to Da Vinci’s portrait. In Italy, the most significant collection built around the reinterpretation of Leonardo’s masterpiece is the Carlo Palli Collection, the source of many of the works on exhibit.

This variegated, iconographic panorama presents artworks such as **Fabio de Poli**’s *Monna Lisa Pop*: a gloomy, mournful figure, which explicitly refers to the pure enigma of Leonardo's painting, or the Central European visual poetry of **Jiri Kolar**, whose collage includes an invoice bearing Leonardo’s icon, calling attention to its commercial exploitation. Using the same technique, **Lucia Marcucci**, founder of Gruppo 70, juxtaposes cuttings of heads with images of Muslim women and symbols of fertility, as if wanting to assign a role to the painting. Performer and artist **Orlan** identifies with Mona Lisa in the works on show by superimposing herself on the image, creating a double identity of artwork and woman, yet making it clear she has no desire to resemble Leonardo’s masterpiece.

For **Vettor Pisani**, the *Mona Lisa* becomes a sort of paradigm for the ‘masterpiece’, which he saves from mortality in his installation *Concerto invisibile di Gino De Dominicis*, or he transforms it into an advertising icon in *Il ventre della Gioconda*, where she is presented as a mother with a baby. In the first of these two powerful works, two pianos, one inverted on top of another, become a tribute to Gino De Dominicis and a parameter for timeless art, whereas in the second, Freud’s name conjures the enigma of a psychoanalytic account of millions of people’s attraction to the *Mona Lisa*.

The large body of work on show also contains references to great artists from the past, including Duchamp and his moustached *Gioconda* from 1919. **Karel Trinckevicz**’s painting refers to the famous artist of the readymade, elevating him to ‘father of art’ status by means of a bicycle wheel and by tracing a sort of genealogy.

The nucleus of **works created for the occasion** include **Pop Art interpretations,** such as **Gianni Cella**’s polychrome terracotta Batwoman, or Stefano Bressani’s brightly coloured fabric sculptures, which have earned the name of ‘dressed sculpture’. **Gian Marco Montesano**’s work is dedicated to the historic 1911 theft of the *Mona Lisa*,while conceptual artist **Virgilio Rospigliosi** in his acrylic on wood creates a short circuit between the internal and external space of the painting.

The exhibition continues at Castello Visconteo under the title *La visione di Leonardo a Pavia*, a project developed by Way Experience, a Milanese start-up specialising in creating innovative products using augmented and virtual reality technologies. The itinerary takes us to Renaissance Pavia, where it follows Leonardo da Vinci’s time there from 1490 to 1513, which was a source of reflection for his studies in human anatomy, mathematics and architecture, but above all for the conception of the *Mona Lisa*, his most important work. Realised with the sponsorship of Sea Vision, this highly engaging and exciting journey through history is divided into three stages, during which visitors wearing Oculus headsets and accompanied by the narration of journalist and writer **Massimo Polidoro** are projected into the streets, landscapes and locations that Leonardo saw and knew.

The Leonardo itinerary ends with the giant five-metre-high, four-metre diameter sculpture located in the **Piazza del Municipio**. Made by artists Eleonora Francioni and Antonio Mastromarino from hydro resin and Cipollino Apuano marble, the sculpture depicts Leonardo da Vinci’s portrait as an aged man, a tribute to the Florentine genius and his eternal greatness.

The exhibition is accompanied by a **catalogue** with texts in Italian and English, edited by Valerio Dehò and published by Silvana editoriale.

For the duration of the exhibition, a guide service is available to illustrate the exhibition route or to provide a city tour of the places associated with Leonardo, including the Duomo, Regisole, the Piazza Grande, S. Maria di Canepanova, the University and the Castello. Bookings can be made at **leonardopavia@comune.pv.it**

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| Sole sponsor of *La visione di Leonardo a Pavia*: Sea Vision  | Technical Sponsors: MTP e Floricoltura Bariani |
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**Exhibition Details**

**Title**: Looking for Monna Lisa. Misteri e ironie attorno alla più celebre icona Pop

**Curated by** Valerio Dehò

**Venues**: Castello Visconteo (Piazza Castello)

Spazio Arti Contemporanee del Broletto (Piazza della Vittoria)

Santa Maria Gualtieri (Piazza della Vittoria)

Piazza del Municipio

**Duration:** 24 November 2019 – 29 March 2020

**Press preview: Friday 22 November, 11am, Sala del Camino - Broletto**

**Opening times for all locations**: every day from 10:00 to 18:00 – closed on Tuesdays

Closed on 25 and 26 December 2019 and 1 January 2020

**Entrance Fee**

Full: € 15.00

Reduced: (under 26, over 65, and groups of min. 15, max. 30 people) € 10.00

Reduced: school groups and under 18 year olds € 5.00

Free: children under six, holders of a Lombardy Milan Museums pass, ICOM members, tourist guides and journalists with a professional card, the disabled (including carers)

**Sole ticket office at Spazio SaperePavia del Broletto in Piazza della Vittoria**.

**Open until 16:45 on every day of the exhibition**

Booking for guided tours of the exhibition and the city leonardopavia@comune.pv.it

Booking is essential for groups of 15 people or over (€10 per person for groups and free admission for 1 accompanying person) and schools (€5 for students and free admission for 2 accompanying persons) leonardopavia@comune.pv.it

**Catalogue:** Silvana editoriale, edited by Valerio Dehò with texts in Italian and English. On sale at the bookshop in Castello Visconteo

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