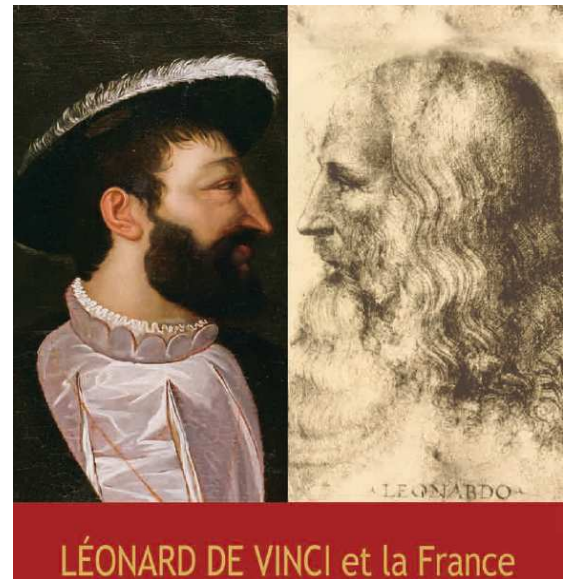


## « LEONARDO DA VINCI AND FRANCE »

*A treasure. It is indeed a precious treasure that the Château du Clos Lucé in Amboise is exhibiting in honour of its most illustrious resident, Leonardo da Vinci, who imagined projects for the king and lived there for the last three years of his life. The exhibition presents the result of the studies, work and research that da Vinci carried out during his Milanese period from 1507 to 1513 and his French period, 1516 to 1519. The special connection that da Vinci had with France, supported by three kings, Charles VIII, Louis XII and Francis I - and Louise de Savoie - was one of the reasons that the Renaissance period came to the Loire Valley.*



Realized by the Château du Clos Lucé in collaboration with Laure Fagnart (FNRS), the exhibition is supervised by Professor Carlo Pedretti, world specialist on Leonardo da Vinci.

There will be around one hundred facsimiles exhibited in the museum hall at Le Clos Lucé, as well as twenty collectors' works. Other major works, some of which are of exceptional size, produced during the height of the Romantic movement, will help provide an insight into the Tuscan Master during his French period.

The event will enable the viewer to trace the many projects created or imagined by the Master through its richly-illustrated display.



Leonardo da Vinci,  
*Study for an equestrian monument*  
Windsor Castle RL 12354

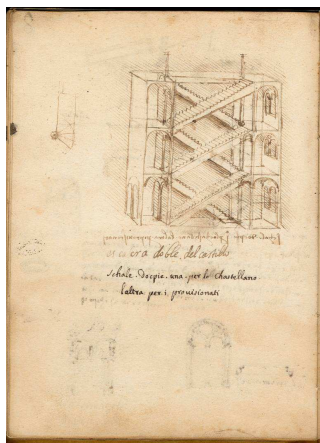
Other major works, some of which are truly exceptional, created during the heyday of the Romantic Movement, also reveal the work of da Vinci during his French period. A period which began in Italy as early as 1507, when da Vinci was involved in a project to build a sumptuous villa commissioned by Charles II of Amboise, who at the time was governor of the Milanese. Da Vinci's broad-minded attitude, talent and ability to adapt the models of other architects while assimilating them into a different context are remarkable. With functionality remaining his essential parameter, da Vinci succeeded in bringing together architecture and nature, private spaces and social living, a rigid framework and a flexible approach, in a whole that came together like a natural organism. This project for a villa/work of art is the expression of a human encounter based on a two-sided exchange: of client and artist on the one hand and of the Italian tradition and the French tradition on the other.



Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres,  
*The death of Leonardo da Vinci*  
Paris, Musée du Petit Palais

However, this delightful palazzo was never built, and neither was the monumental ideal city that da Vinci designed for Romorantin, where he planned to combine a waterside royal palace, sophisticated stables, a new district to house the court and nothing less than a new town built around a complex network of canals, conceived as a new capital for the kingdom. It would appear that Francis I's motivation was to provide his court, which did not have enough room in Amboise, and his royal administration, housed in Tours, with a residence worthy of his army in Italy that would include the new Italian architectural features and would dazzle his great rival Charles V.

A great plan that never went further than the drawing board, like another plan for networks of canals that da Vinci conceived to boost trade in the French kingdom, where river navigation was still underdeveloped. The idea that the waterway networks of the Loire, Saône and Rhône could be interconnected was a very attractive one.



Leonardo da Vinci,  
*Drawing of a staircase*  
Paris, Institut de France  
Ms B, folio 68v

Francis I's schemes provided the man he called "my father" with the opportunity to work on subjects that were dear to him for one last time. So it was that Leonardo da Vinci designed for the centre of a château his famous double-helix open staircase, on which courtiers would pass others but never meet them. Da Vinci's "apotheosis", to use Professor Carlo Pedretti's expression, therefore took place in France, far from Rome and Florence.

The king of France appointed him "First Painter, Engineer and Architect to the King", but also master of festivities. A legendary director and designer of prodigious special effects, the king's protégé did indeed have a talent for dazzling an audience, according to many eye-witness accounts, and this is demonstrated in the exhibition, which includes an interpretation of the lion automaton that made a big impression on an historic evening in 1517 in Argentan.

There are also a number of 3D films illustrating this fascinating journey through da Vinci's world, which also includes an imposing life-size copy of *The Last Supper* and a remarkable *Mona Lisa* dating from 1630. The exhibition ends by considering the heritage of the greatest genius of all time and the fate of his countless paintings and manuscripts, and also considers the birth of the da Vinci legend during the French Romantic period. A time when an entire country rediscovered this genius, who, on the day of his death, caused Francis I to say, "For each one of us, the death of this man is a great loss, because it is not possible that life will ever produce the like again." On 2 May 1519, at the age of 67, the greatest visionary in Christendom finally joined the one he called, "the operator of so many marvellous things." After all, was it not he who wrote, "Not to value life, all life, is not to deserve it."?

Le Clos Lucé is therefore inviting the public to Leonardo da Vinci's last residence for this first event in the run-up to the great celebration of the five hundredth anniversary of his death on 2 May 2019.

To complement the exhibition a 176-page catalogue (24 euros) has been published by the Italian publisher Cartei & Bianchi, which specialises in the life and work of da Vinci, with the support of the Friends of Leonardo da Vinci Association. Supervised by Professor Carlo Pedretti, Director of the Armand Hammer Center for Leonardo Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles and the University of Urbino, the catalogue includes a collection of essays by the eminent contributors Andrea Bernardoni, Pascal Brioist, Paola Cordera, Laure Fagnart, Sabine Frommel, Luca Garai, Jean Guillaume, Pietro Marani, Romano Nanni, François Saint Bris and Alessandro Vezzosi.



Leonardo da Vinci,  
*A masquerader on horseback*  
Windsor Castle, RL 12574

The exhibition covers da Vinci's two great periods  
The Milanese period (1507-1513): Leonardo da Vinci, Charles VIII, Louis XII and Charles of Amboise

The French period (1516-1519): Leonardo da Vinci and Francis I at the Château du Clos Lucé

It is arranged into the following topics:

**Leonardo da Vinci and France, introduction by Professor Carlo Pedretti**

*Director of the Armand Hammer Center for Leonardo Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles and the University of Urbino*

**France's admiration for *The Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci, Laure Fagnart**

*Fonds National de Recherche Scientifique, University of Liège*

**Da Vinci and the villa of Charles of Amboise, Sabine Frommel**

*Director of studies at the Direction d'études "Histoire de l'architecture de la Renaissance" at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Sorbonne*

**The King's invitation, Jan Sammer**

**The palace and ideal town at Romorantin, Pascal Briost**

*Senior Lecturer at the Centre d'Etudes Supérieures de la Renaissance in Tours*

**"Il modo di disegnare questa scale è cosa trita"**

**note on the history of the "double-spiral" staircase, Romano Nanni**

*Director of the Biblioteca Leonardiana and Museo Leonardiano, Vinci*

**A horse for the king, Andrea Bernardoni**

*Researcher at the University of Bergamo and Istituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza*

**Leonardo da Vinci's canalisation and irrigation projects in France, Pascal Briost**

*Senior Lecturer at the Centre d'Etudes Supérieures de la Renaissance in Tours*

**Da Vinci, organiser of royal celebrations, Laure Fagnart and Luca Garai**

*Expert in ancient robotics and expert at the court of Bologna*

**The daily life of Leonardo da Vinci at the Château du Clos Lucé, François Saint Bris**

*President of the Friends of Leonardo da Vinci Association and of the Château du Clos Lucé*

**Da Vinci's manuscripts in Paris, Pietro C. Marani**

*President of the Ente Raccolta Vinciana Association, Castello Sforzesco, Milan and Professor of Art History, Politecnico di Milano*

**The face of da Vinci, Guillaume de Marcillat, Alessandro Vezzosi**

*Director the Museo Ideale Leonardo da Vinci*

**The legend of Leonardo da Vinci in France in the 19th and 20th centuries, Paola Cordera**

*Professor of museology, Politecnico di Milano*

Catherine Simon Marion

Executive Officer

Marie-Caroline Chaudruc

Communication Department

Tel. 00 33 (0)2 47 57 55 78

[www.vinci-closluce.com](http://www.vinci-closluce.com)

[closluce.com@vinci-closluce.com](mailto:closluce.com@vinci-closluce.com)



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