



## PRESS RELEASE

### **WORLD PREMIERE OF LEONARDO DA VINCI'S 'EARLIER MONA LISA' EXHIBITION OPENS TODAY IN SINGAPORE**

#### **Latest Evidence Reaffirms Attribution to Leonardo da Vinci**

*Singapore, 15 December 2014* – Today the 'Earlier Mona Lisa' painting, with further evidence supporting its attribution to Leonardo da Vinci, was presented to the general public for the first time at The Arts House at the Old Parliament, Singapore.

The much anticipated unveiling of the painting marks the debut of the exhibition "Leonardo da Vinci's 'Earlier Mona Lisa'" - a fully interactive, multi-media experience. Visitors are provided with an audio-visual tablet, which will guide them through the world of the Italian Renaissance and the exciting discovery and authentication of the painting. At the end of the tour, visitors come face to face with the painting itself in Singapore's historic old Chambers of Parliament. Specially designed lighting illuminates the magic of Leonardo's particular mastery of light and shadow.

The painting first captured the world's attention when it was presented to the media in 2012 by The Mona Lisa Foundation (a Swiss non-profit), which had compiled the findings of more than 35 years of historical research and scientific testing. Additional results published by the Foundation in 2013 led to the general acceptance that the painting, a portrait of a younger Lisa del Giocondo, is the precursor to the world-acclaimed 'Mona Lisa' masterpiece in the Louvre Museum.

Conclusive research from investigations conducted since then are presented to the public for the first time at the world premiere of this fascinating exhibition.

#### **New Findings**

- Scientist and Emeritus Professor John Asmus from the University of California proves with 99% certainty that the same hand wielded the brush that painted essential parts of both the 'Earlier Mona Lisa' and the version in the Louvre. These results, independently confirmed by Professor Vadim Parfenov of St. Petersburg University, are presented and fully explained to the public within the exhibition.

In the words of John Asmus: "*The case here for it being a Leonardo is much stronger than generally acknowledged paintings...*" he continues "*I would say that it is 99% certain that the two Mona Lisas were done by the same artist.*"

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- The purchase by King Francis I of a Mona Lisa was recorded in a royal receipt dated 1518. The Louvre traces the acquisition of their *'Mona Lisa'* to this event and date. However, a 1525 inventory from the estate of Leonardo's servant and pupil, Salai, lists another Mona Lisa by Da Vinci. This further reinforces the already extensive historical evidence that Leonardo painted two Mona Lisas.

*"The discovery of this additional inconsistency further reinforces the fact that Leonardo must have painted two Mona Lisas."* remarks Joël Feldman, General Secretary and spokesman of The Mona Lisa Foundation.

- The *'Earlier Mona Lisa'*, previously referred to as the *'Isleworth Mona Lisa'*, was rediscovered and acquired by art expert Hugh Blaker in 1913. Little was known of its provenance, except that Blaker acquired the painting from a Somerset nobleman. After painstaking and extensive research, several centuries of the painting's history have been pieced together over the past two years: its acquisition by English nobleman James Thomas Benedictus Marwood from Italy in the late 1770s; its appearance at the 1856 Yeovil Fine Arts Exhibition; its auction by Avishayes in 1858 and its acquisition by the Montacute family of Somerset.

*"It is quite astounding to think that this painting is over 500 years old, and yet we have only recently managed to uncover so much new information about its provenance"*, says Dr. Markus A. Frey, President of The Mona Lisa Foundation. He continues, *"Though the painting's attribution to Da Vinci is now undisputable, the Foundation's work must continue to enhance the appreciation of this great masterpiece through public exhibitions worldwide."*

## **"Leonardo da Vinci's *'Earlier Mona Lisa'*": A Thoroughly Interactive Multimedia Experience**

### **Highlights of the exhibition include:**

- **Historical Evidence**  
Various historical facts - from references to two Mona Lisa paintings by Leonardo da Vinci and persistent inconsistencies in documentation about the paintings, to the maestro's regular practice of executing multiple versions of his works - all lead to the conclusion that there have always been two Mona Lisa paintings.
- **The Discovery of the Century: The *'Earlier Mona Lisa'***  
The circumstances surrounding the painting's discovery in England in 1913, and the subsequent impact it made in captivating those who came into contact with it during the 20th Century.

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- **Science & Mathematics:**

Conclusive evidence that the materials used were available to Leonardo da Vinci and common to his palette. The geometric principles employed are the same in the construction of both versions of Mona Lisa. The decades of work presented by Emeritus Professor Asmus of the University of California scientifically demonstrates that the same hand painted the essential parts of the two Mona Lisa paintings. This newly evolving science being developed by an international team is a groundbreaking field for the attribution of paintings, which promises to have a major impact on the art world.

- **Comparative Analyses:**

Analyses of both paintings show how elements unique to the 'Earlier Mona Lisa' were replicated in later works, and how the painting contains hidden clues that demonstrate Leonardo da Vinci's authorship.

- **Expert Views:**

Highlight how, in published opinions collected to date, there is not one expert who has viewed the painting that denies its attribution to Da Vinci.

Professor Jean-Pierre Isbouts, author of *The Mona Lisa Myth* and director of the eponymous film, narrated by Morgan Freeman, recalling the first time he saw the painting: *"I was not prepared for the encounter; it was a very emotional experience – and, at that point, there was no longer any question – we were looking at a portrait that was painted by Leonardo da Vinci."*

*"The 'Earlier Mona Lisa' is another version from the same author with the same quality and even more beautiful."* exclaims Professor Atila Soares da Costa Filho.

The exhibition includes a variety of interactive kiosks, including a unique aging module.

## Singapore Premiere Launches Exhibition's World Tour

This innovative and highly anticipated exhibition has been entirely designed and built in Singapore – the venue for the World Premiere. The exhibition is planned to continue to the University Museum and Art Gallery, Hong Kong in March 2015, following on to China, other Asian cities and the rest of the world.

*"The Foundation is extremely excited to bring the "Leonardo da Vinci's 'Earlier Mona Lisa'" exhibition to the world, and, more so, to hold its global premiere in Singapore, which is one of the world's most cosmopolitan cities, fast becoming the newest art capital of Asia. Singapore's well-developed infrastructure for the arts, Singaporeans' growing interest in visual culture, as well as its burgeoning tourist numbers, make the island-state a strategic gateway for the exhibition to start its worldwide tour,"* said Joël Feldman.

*"The 'Earlier Mona Lisa' has proved to be a highly anticipated event in the Singapore arts calendar. For American Express, being a presenting partner allows us to bring these blockbuster exhibits to Singapore to be enjoyed by all, while being able to offer exclusive access via priority booking, exciting Card Member savings and unique events for our Card Members."* said Mr Cheng Heng Chew, Singapore Country Manager of American Express, the presenting partner of the exhibition.

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## Smile Asia

The Mona Lisa Foundation has chosen Operation Smile Singapore Ltd., which provides free reconstructive facial surgery for children suffering from facial deformities throughout Asia, as the event beneficiary for the World Premiere of “Leonardo da Vinci’s *‘Earlier Mona Lisa’*” exhibition with a corporate donation made after the successful completion of the event.

## Information

**Exhibition open daily until February 11 2015**

**Exhibition hours: 11am – 10pm**

**Venue: The Arts House at The Old Parliament**

**Address: 1 Old Parliament Lane, Singapore 179429**

Tickets are available through [www.sistic.com.sg](http://www.sistic.com.sg) and at all SISTIC counters as well as at The Arts House.

## Ticket prices:

Standard	: S\$20
Child (6 – 12 years old)	: S\$14
Family Ticket (2 Adults, 2 Children)	: S\$50
Senior Citizen	: S\$15
NSF	: S\$15
Student	: S\$15

Excludes booking fees.

American Express® Card Members enjoy exclusive savings on ticket prices.\*

“Leonardo da Vinci’s *‘Earlier Mona Lisa’*” is proud to participate in Singapore Art Week. A special *‘Breakfast with Mona Lisa’* is available to the public on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 9am – 11am. Tickets through SISTIC.

All photos courtesy of The Mona Lisa Foundation.

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