Forthcoming events

**Leonardo da Vinci Society Annual Lecture**
Leonardo and the Ineffable
Martin Kemp, Oxford University
6pm, 17 May 2019, The Courtauld Institute

**Leonardo da Vinci and perpetual motion**
Exhibition at the Peltz Gallery, Birkbeck College, University of London, 43 Gordon Square, WC1H 0PD
7 February – 12 March 2019
The exhibition is a contribution to marking the 500th anniversary of Leonardo da Vinci’s death. Leonardo’s designs for perpetual motion have been largely overlooked. Though perpetual motion is physically impossible and was recognised as such by Leonardo himself, the machines he devised are intriguing applications of his understanding of mechanical power and motion, and express an important side of his multifaceted experiments in art, science and engineering. The exhibition at the Peltz Gallery is part of a larger research project conducted in collaboration with the Vasari Research Centre for Art and Technology and the Department of History of Art at Birkbeck, the Royal Institution, Ravensbourne University, the Leonardo da Vinci Society, and the Museo Galileo in Florence.

Recent Events

**Leonardo da Vinci Society Annual Lecture**
Leonardo da Vinci and Bio-inspiration
Pascal Brioist, The Centre for Higher Renaissance Studies, University of Tours
4 May 2018
To learn about armour, look to the overlapping plates of the lobster; to construct a ship’s hull, mimic the form of a fish. Throughout the medieval and early modern eras, thinkers in all disciplines asserted the value of learning from Nature. It was thought that close study of natural forms and creatures would provide the key to a wide variety of knowledge, and a deeper understanding of the forces that shaped the world. Leonardo certainly subscribed to this view, and, as Pascal Brioist illuminated in his stimulating lecture, it shaped his activities throughout his long career.

There was one area in particular where Leonardo sought to learn from what he found in the natural world, and that was flight. His notebooks are filled with sketches of flying creatures: birds, bats, ants, flying fish, butterflies. He drew and commented on birds of all kinds, from ducks to owls, magpies to kites. He passed time in keen observation of dragonflies, and was fascinated by the way their four wings moved in two distinct pairs, allowing the insect to hover and dart through the air. Brioist suggested that Leonardo’s understanding of the dragonfly’s complex mechanics must have come from dissecting dead insects as well as observing them in flight. From this early stage, then, we find that Leonardo was not satisfied with simply observing. He felt it necessary to reach a deeper understanding, one that might allow him to innovate on what he found in nature.

The underlying cause of Leonardo’s obsession with Nature’s many solutions to the problem of flight was, of course, his desire to discover a way to make man airborne. He approached this mighty challenge from a variety of perspectives, changing his thinking and tactics over time. An initial focus on anatomy (his interest in pelicans stemmed from the fact that they
were able to support heavy bodies in flight, as a man would have to) turned in the 1490s to a concern with mechanics. But his experiments with the idea of a flying machine making use of springs, screws and pulleys came to nothing, as he acknowledged that the weight of such a contraption would doom it to failure. Ultimately he came to believe that the best model for a human-flight machine was provided in the natural world by a bat, with its lightweight wing frame covered in a thin and flexible membrane.

Maya Corry
University of Oxford

Conference reports

Latin and the vernacular in fifteenth-century Italy
Leonardo da Vinci Society Conference
1 December 2017, Warburg Institute

How distinct were the worlds of Latin and the vernacular, for someone like Leonardo? What linguistic range of books was available to fifteenth-century Italian thinkers? What governed the choice of language, when many volgare jostled for eminence on the Peninsula? How flexible was Varchi’s use of imaginatione compared to the Latin imaginatio? Questions of this kind formed the focus of the Society’s conference this year, which was generously hosted by the Warburg Institute.

Amos Edelheit (Maynooth University, Ireland) opened the conference with a comparison between the vernacular works of Marsilio Ficino and Nicoletto Vernia. One of Ficino’s few compositions in the vernacular was his Consilio contro la pestilenza, written in his capacity as physician; this compares in interesting ways with Vernia’s account of medicine as a practical science – ‘practical’ not because founded on practice, but because it is applied in practice.

David A. Lines (Warwick) complemented this account with an intriguing glimpse into the ways the vernacular was mixed with Latin use within the university of Bologna. This comingling was certainly present in the university’s governance, and increasingly in compendious texts that divulged Latin learning to broader audiences, such as Girolamo Manfredi’s De homine (1474). In a third talk, Simon Gilson (Warwick) reviewed attitudes towards the relationship of Latin and the volgare among the important theorists now associated with Italian literature, such as Leonardo Bruni, Leon Battista Alberti, and Cristoforo Landino. All three of these papers offered a powerful counter to the usual assumption that there was a clear dividing line between practical and theoretical, vernacular and Latin: in fact, theorists, practitioners, university men and literary commentators all transferred and mingled practices, expectations, and frameworks from one to the other.
The warning not to over-emphasise difference – between Latin and the vernacular, but also between the many flourishing forms of Italian – was crystallised by Letizia Panizza (Royal Holloway), who spoke on ‘Taming the Tower of Babel, Case Studies of choices made regarding Latin or the volgare or both’. A point she raised in discussion, and which animated her talk, was that writers made profound points with their selection of Tuscan, Venetian or Neapolitan. Since there was no one vernacular, the specific choice could be highly charged.

The continuity of Latin and vernacular was also illustrated by Ben Thomson (Birkbeck) in his paper. Thomson explored the allegorical interpretation of three archetypal vices: luxuria or sensual pleasure; avaritia or avarice; and superbia or ambitio. These are addressed in two of Cristoforo Landino’s works: his Latin dialogue the Disputationes Camaldulenses and his vernacular commentary on Dante’s Divina Commedia. Landino used these three vices to construct a systematised moral philosophy. In both cases, Thomson showed that despite the broadly Platonic cast of his ethical thought, Landino’s treatment of these vices was indebted to Aristotle, Cicero and Sallust.

Finally, David Zagoury (Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rome) offered an account of a key term in the developing framework of art theory: imagination. Zagoury’s focus was Benedetto Varchi and Giorgio Vasari, who made it one of the central (if ambiguous) terms in the vernacular analysis of artistic invention. In fact, imagination was a hot new term, recently borrowed from Latin – a fact Zagoury demonstrated by looking at the uncertain use of it at the beginning of the sixteenth century, including by Leonardo da Vinci himself.

Richard Oosterhoff
University of Cambridge

Renaissance Society of America conference
New Orleans, 22-24 March 2018

Abstracts of papers given at the conference which related to Leonardo appear below.

Geoff Lehman, Bard College Berlin
Leonardo, Van Eyck, and the Epistemology of Landscape

The young Leonardo’s Arno valley drawing, dated ‘5 daghossto 1473’, proclaims a relationship to the temporal and the topographical, and yet its clearest point of reference is pictorial: the Eyckian perspectival landscape type that predominated in Florentine workshop practice. Leonardo, however, transforms Van Eyck’s synoptic vision of landscape, with all its epistemological implications (vision as desire for knowledge), into a means of exploring dynamic processes and the geometry of natural laws. In later drawings, such as the Deluge series, this perspectival model of landscape provides the mathematical and theoretical underpinning for Leonardo’s dynamic vision of natural structure, where his fluid drawing articulates the movements of clouds, air, and water as a continuum of interlocking forces and elements. But for Leonardo, perspective’s rectilinear commensurability is no longer adequate to a depiction of landscape moving towards genuine scientific inquiry, which demands a new geometry, that of the spiral and the helix.

Elizabeth B. Graham, The Frick Collection
Leonardo’s Netherlandish Inspiration: Ginevra de’ Benci and Hans Memling’s Portrait of Bernardo Bembo

Leonardo da Vinci’s portrait of Ginevra de’ Benci has consistently been identified as possessing stylistic features more common in Netherlandish than Italian portraiture of the late fifteenth century. Despite these observations, its relationship with a portrait of Bernardo Bembo by Hans Memling, and this relationship’s impact on Leonardo’s later female portraits, remains relatively unexplored. I argue that Bembo commissioned Leonardo’s portrait of Ginevra, and that he made specific requests to Leonardo regarding the style and composition of the painting. The parallels between Memling’s portrait of Bembo and Leonardo’s portrait of Ginevra indicate that Bembo must have discussed the commission at length with Leonardo, and also lent Leonardo his portrait by Memling as a guideline. This interaction acted as a catalyst for Leonardo to embrace Netherlandish style and motifs, for which he had already indicated a predilection in his earlier work.

Gerard Passannante, University of Maryland, College Park
Leonardo da Vinci’s Catastrophic Style

Exploring Leonardo’s appropriation and transformation of ancient patterns of thought, this paper seeks to understand why he reached repeatedly for the image of disaster when he contemplated the limits of human knowledge – and how the figure of disaster relates to the experience (and representation) of involuntary thought. I’m especially interested in catastrophic thinking as a form of analogy-making that cuts across the artist-philosopher’s notebooks –
from his satirical ‘prophecies’ to his visions of the deluge.

News

Celebrations of the quincentenary of Leonardo’s death.

Leonardo died on 2 May 1519, making 2019 the 500-year anniversary of his death. As a result, from now on numerous institutions are organising special events and exhibitions focused on his work. A list of some of these is included below. Details of further events will be posted on the Society’s website and Facebook page.

Montepulciano Fortress, Montepulciano
21 April – 7 October 2018
One of the most innovative aspects of Leonardo’s contribution is his analysis of the “organs” of machines, that he considered not as an indivisible whole, but as an assemblage of distinct parts. He applied the same method to the study of the human body, whose organs he regarded as highly sophisticated mechanical devices. For Leonardo, even the Earth is a vast organism whose motions are governed by the universal mechanical laws of Nature. The exhibition features working models of the machines conceived by Leonardo and a gallery of mechanical, anatomical and geological studies from his notebooks. Organised in conjunction with the Museo Galileo, Florence.

Leonardo: Discoveries from Verrocchio’s Studio
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven
28 June – 7 October 2018
This landmark exhibition focuses on Leonardo’s early years as an apprentice in the studio of the sculptor, painter, and goldsmith Andrea del Verrocchio, seeking to identify the young artist’s hand in paintings known to be collaborations with his teacher and fellow pupils.

Leonardo da Vinci
Teylers Museum, Haarlem
5 October 2018 – 6 January 2019
In his time (1452-1519), Leonardo was already famous for his unprecedented ability to portray human characters and emotions convincingly. He was one of the first artists to be fascinated by the relationship between the inner and the outer. This is evident not only from his famous paintings such as the Mona Lisa, but even more it shows in the dozens of drawings he made of the human face. Loans are drawn from the British Royal Collection, the National Museum in Budapest, the Albertina in Vienna, the Louvre in Paris and many others. Several dozens of drawings by Leonardo himself and a number of works by his followers will be on show.

Leonardo da Vinci’s Codex Leicester. Water as a Microscope of Nature
Uffizi Gallery, Florence
29 October 2018 – 20 January 2019
Temporarily lent to the city of Florence by its owner, Bill Gates, the Codex Leicester will be on display from 29 October 2018 to 20 January 2019 in the ‘Magliabechiana Hall’ of the Uffizi. Handwritten by Leonardo between 1504 and 1508, the 72 sheets of the codex are full of prodigious notes and extraordinary sketches on water and the environment. Other original drawings by Leonardo, lent by many Italian and foreign institutions, will also be on view. The exhibition is curated by Paolo Galluzzi and is in collaboration with the Museo Galileo.
tion will go on display in twelve simultaneous exhibitions across the UK. Twelve drawings selected to reflect the full range of Leonardo’s interests – painting, sculpture, architecture, music, anatomy, engineering, cartography, geology and botany – will be shown around the country. Following these exhibitions, in May 2019 the drawings will then travel to The Queen’s Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse in November 2019, the largest group of Leonardo’s works ever shown in Scotland.

1 February – 6 May 2019
Ulster Museum, Belfast; Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery; Bristol Museum and Art Gallery; National Museum Cardiff; Derby Museum and Art Gallery; Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow; Leeds Art Gallery; Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool; Manchester Art Gallery; Millennium Gallery, Sheffield; Southampton City Art Gallery; Sunderland Museums and Winter Gardens

24 May – 13 October 2019
The Queen’s Gallery, Buckingham Palace, London

22 November 2019 – 15 March 2020
The Queen’s Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh

Museo Leonardiano, Vinci
April – June 2019
The museum has a programme of various events for 2019 including the introduction of a new app that guides visitors around the town and museum, and an exhibition exploring the relationship with local landscape in Leonardo’s work.

Leonardo da Vinci
The Louvre, Paris
Opens October 2019
The exhibition will include the museum’s own Leonardo paintings, and loans including the Salvator Mundi. The stated aim is to gather the greatest number of Leonardo works ever to be shown together.

The life of Mona Lisa: some personal reflections on an archival search

Ever since my time at university I have had a passion for archival research. After graduation I taught Economics in secondary schools, but I continued to study in the Florentine public archives in my free time. For me, it is a way to enter directly into people’s lives, a way to tell ‘the story of real people doing real things in real places at real times’, as my friend Martin Kemp puts it.

In 1998, I began research on the Chianti region, where my family comes from, with the unconscious desire to learn about my roots. While studying land registry books I unexpectedly came across the properties of Antonmaria Gherardini, Mona Lisa’s father. This surprising find prompted me to throw myself into a new adventure: to mine the archives for information about Lisa’s life and look for possible links with notable figures and artists of her time. Up until this point, we knew that she was born in 1479, but not precisely when or where. A visit to the Archive of Santa Maria del Fiore, next to the Duomo, which conserves the Baptismal Registers of all children born in Florence from 1450 onwards revealed the date of Lisa’s birth: 15 June, 1479. This was the earliest record of her existence, and also confirmation that I should continue with my research.

The next step was to identify her family’s properties. By consulting the cadastral books – big registers recording land and property transactions in which the fortunes of a family can be traced – I was able to establish that Lisa was born in a house on the corner of Via Maggio and ‘Chiasso Guazzacoglie’, a narrow alley where water stagnated (today Via Sguazza). In 1494, her family moved to Via dei Pepi, on the corner with Via Ghibellina. They now lived almost directly opposite the house of Leonardo’s father, the notary Ser Piero, and they must have crossed paths with him often. In 1495, Lisa married Francesco del Giocondo and moved to her husband’s house in Via della Stufa (between the church of San Lorenzo and the convent of Sant’Orsola). Francesco was a shrewd businessman. He began his career as a silk merchant, but his activities expanded to include trade in a wide variety of goods: wool and wax from Spain, sugar from Madeira, leather from Ireland, and so on. He was accused of usury; among others he lent money to Michelangelo’s father in 1504–5.

The State Archive of Florence conserves all the notarial books of Ser Piero: 20 books, each between 600 and 1200 pages, of which only a few have an index of clients. I determined to review them all, searching for the word ‘giocondo’ – a reference to the family of rich silk merchants that Lisa had married into. The lengthy amount of time spent hunting for this tiny clue paid off; eventually I found evidence that the Del Giocondos were clients of Ser Piero. In
1497, in Francesco del Giocondo’s workshop in Via Por Santa Maria, near the Ponte Vecchio, the notary wrote an act regarding business being conducted between Francesco and the monks of the Santissima Annunziata (with whom Ser Piero had a longstanding business relationship). This find meant that all my efforts were worthwhile: it proved that an acquaintance, and a certain level of confidence, existed between Lisa’s husband and Leonardo’s father. In 1500 Leonardo himself returned to Florence, where he was hosted by the monks of Santissima Annunziata. It was probably then, in the spring of that year, that Francesco first met Leonardo.

It is most likely that Leonardo painted Lisa in 1503, when she was 24. In the portrait she appears young but not especially youthful, perhaps as a result of her many pregnancies. I sought record of her children in the Baptismal Registers (going through them day by day, from 1496 to 1520), finding six: Piero, Piera, Camilla, Marietta, Andrea and Giocondo. Five were born by 1503, and we can imagine that five pregnancies within eight years would have taken their toll!

While this research was progressing I always had in mind Lisa’s death certificate, which had never been found in the city’s Libri dei morti (Books of the Dead), and the absence of which posed substantial questions. This played on my thoughts (even causing some sleepless nights!) and I stubbornly worked my way through the Libri dei morti on black and white microfilm reels that, after a while, make your head spin. When this proved fruitless I had the idea of checking the parish archive of the church of San Lorenzo, to which Lisa belonged. After many failures, I eventually came upon a late sixteenth-century manuscript which listed all the funerals celebrated in the church since the beginning of the century, in alphabetical order. There, at the letter L, I finally found the death and the burial of Lisa listed on 15 July, 1542.

After Lisa’s death her son Piero sold the great house in Via della Stufa and moved into a smaller property, near Piazza San Marco. From December 1555 to May 1557, he was a neighbour of Giorgio Vasari, who rented a building in the same place for his family and studio. Vasari knew Francesco del Giocondo’s cousins well, and had some knowledge of the artworks in their houses (for example, he knew that Francesco ordered a painting from Domenico Puligo, a friend of Andrea del Sarto, when the young Vasari was his apprentice). I believe that when he claimed that Leonardo painted Mona Lisa, Francesco del Giocondo’s wife, he did so with full knowledge of the facts.

My search was over: I had pieced together Lisa’s life from her birth to her death. I was happy, and had achieved my goal, but I felt a strong sense of exhaustion and a little sadness. On a final visit to the archive I considered a young woman who was studying a manuscript on the table in front of me; I regarded her with tenderness, knowing the sacrifices and joys that would await her, because research in the archive and the study of the manuscripts require so much tenacity.

[The results of Giuseppe Pallanti’s research are published in M. Kemp and G. Pallanti, Mona Lisa. The People and the Painting (Oxford, 2017).]

Giuseppe Pallanti

Book report: Claire Farago, Janis Bell and Carlo Vecce, The Fabrication of Leonardo da Vinci’s Trattato della Pittura

With a scholarly edition of the editio princeps (1651) and an annotated English translation. 2 vols. Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2018. ISBN 9789004353749 (hardback) and 9789004353725 (paperback)
[The book is available to buy from Brill’s website in hardback or as an e-book.]

This prodigious, monumentai achievement is the first scholarly edition of the earliest printed version of Leonardo’s Trattato della Pittura, published in Paris in 1651. It has involved eight leading scholars of Leonardo manuscripts who have worked on it together for over a decade. Its two volumes run to a little over 1,250 pages, and it is copiously provided with some 200 illustrations. In her Preface, Claire Farago provides an explanation of the term ‘fabrication’ used in the book’s title: as she says, the word ‘has become almost synonymous with “false fabrication”, but in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was closely associated with artistic invention’. Samuel Johnson defined ‘fabrication’ as ‘the act of building’, which describes well ‘the work of those who edited Leonardo’s Treatise on Painting over the 130 years of its gestation’. Readers are enjoined to keep in mind ‘this richly textured history’, for ‘how the translators of Leonardo’s ideas approached their task is what this book is all about’.

In Volume 2 a new, definitive edition, reached through extensive, detailed textual analyses, of the 1651 Trattato is published. Accompanying this is full explanation of the editors’ critical apparatus, and a new English translation (by Claire Farago and Janis Bell). The English translation and the 1651 Italian text of each chapter in turn are printed together, to ease the
reader’s comparison of the two. From such comparison it can readily be appreciated that this new translation will soon come to be seen as the definitive one to which students of Leonardo’s work and thought will naturally turn in their desire to engage with the painter’s artistic and art-theoretical ideas.

While the carefully edited text and the new translation of the 1651 *Trattato* will be of inestimable value to Leonardo aficionados, it is perhaps Volume 1 that offers a greater number of important insights into the reception of Leonardo’s ideas on the art of painting during the century and a half or so between Leonardo’s notebook records of these ideas and the publication of the *Trattato* in 1651. Volume 1 provides scholarly commentary on a range of issues that constitute historical contexts in which Leonardo’s treatise may be best understood. Six leading Leonardo scholars consider aspects of the pre-history of the 1651 printed edition of the *Trattato*. Carlo Vecce discusses the sources and procedures used by Leonardo’s devoted assistant and literary executor, Francesco Melzi, in composing his *Libro della Pittura*, and the evidence that this book offers about the earliest plans for its publication. This text, which survives in a single, unique manuscript (Vatican Library, Codex Urbinas 1270), was unfinished at Melzi’s death in 1570. His careful codicological and philological examination of Codex Urbinas 1270, and his discussion of such aspects of book production as handwriting and page numbering, lead Vecce to the conclusion that ‘the *Libro* was prepared with extreme care, and a remarkable degree of philological and linguistic reliability’. It was clearly intended for publication, and that it remained in manuscript is a mystery, especially given the popularity of publications on the visual arts in the mid-sixteenth century.

Melzi’s *Libro* was widely circulated in manuscript in an abridged form, rather than in the more extensive form that it had reached before the author’s death. Claire Farago considers the origins of the abridged version of the *Libro della Pittura* in the context of the Catholic Reformation of the later sixteenth century. ‘Perhaps’, she concludes, ‘it matters less that we cannot associate a specific name with the editor who abridged Melzi’s compilation, than it does that we can locate the initial reception of the *Libro di pittura* and the origins of the *Trattato* in [the] orbit of Catholic Reformation ideas in the wake of the Council of Trent’. In another chapter she discusses the relationship between Leonardo’s advice to the painter and his workshop procedures, and how Melzi embeds these in his *Libro* by focusing on his main source in Leonardo’s writings, Manuscript A (Paris, Institut de France) dating from 1490-92. Here her argument opens with ‘a close reading of a few passages of central importance to his legacy, namely his treatment of chiaroscuro, colore, and sfumato’. It continues by considering ‘how the text is organised as a progressive set of instructions to train artists’, and concludes by discussing the passages on human movement in relationship to other texts on related topics such as anatomy and proportion’.

Anna Sconza explores the early interest, shown between 1570 and 1580, by scholars such as Raffaello Borghini, Niccolò Gaddi and their intellectual peers in Medicean Florence, in Melzi’s compilation of Leonardo’s theory of art. Early Florentine copies of the abridged *Libro* cast light on the cultural context in which Leonardo’s theoretical ideas were well received. They help to define the contribution of Leonardo’s thought to debates on the arts in later sixteenth century Italy. Leonardo’s lost treatise on painting and human movement is discussed by Matthew Landrus, who offers new evidence for the circulation of Leonardo’s ideas in later sixteenth-century Italy: in a comparison of the Codex Huygens of ca. 1570 with Melzi’s Codex Urbinas 1270, he finds in the former significant derivations from Melzi’s text. He concludes that the proposed treatise on human movement was to be one part of a treatise on ‘human agency and the human condition’, to be printed between books on mechanics and on human anatomy. Juliana Barone discusses the manuscript copy of the *Libro* made by Cassiano dal Pozzo in Rome around 1630, and the transformation from this to the 1651 printed edition generated by Poussin’s illustrations for this copy. Cassiano’s project sought textual accuracy, while the illustrations provided a new visual message to complement the new aesthetic ideals of early seventeenth-century Rome. Finally, Janis Bell considers the work of the editorial team headed by Raphaël Trichet du Fresne in the formulation of the final, 1651 Italian text of the *Trattato* and its illustration. She considers first du Fresne’s work as a textual editor, and follows up with an examination of Charles Errard’s role in providing visual images based on those commissioned by Cassiano from Poussin and Pierfrancesco Aliberti.

Much more could be written in commentary on this book, for it is dense in erudite philological and art-historical scholarship. Although by no means easy reading, it is a measure of Claire Farago’s impressive achievement in collecting together this set of original and highly stimulating contributions. It is also, moreover, a lasting tribute to the depth and perspicacity of contemporary scholarship on Leonardo da Vinci’s
thought in general and in particular on his art-theoretical ideas.

Francis Ames-Lewis, Birkbeck, University of London

Obituaries

Thomas Frangenberg, 1957-2018

Thomas Frangenberg was a ground-breaking scholar of Renaissance and Baroque art literature with a particular interest in the *fortuna* of Leonardo; unusually for an art historian, he was also an expert on contemporary art and in particular a prominent collector of conceptual art.

Born on 15 April 1957 in Cologne, Thomas was a pupil at the Nicolaus-Cusanus Gymnasium in Bergisch-Gladbach. There he displayed a precocious interest in the arts, developing a particular taste for the Baroque: he enjoyed going to opera, ballet and museums, an interest he cultivated throughout his life. From the mid 1970s, he visited Italian migrant worker families in the Cologne suburb of Holweide (where his family was based), to learn about Italy and the Italian language, in which he became fluent. This interest stemmed from his kindness towards the underprivileged, a quality reflected also in the help and friendship he extended to Romanian migrants in London, whose language he mastered.

He studied Art History, Archaeology and Early Christian Archaeology in Bonn and Cologne and in 1981 he moved to London, which became his permanent home. Not least because he was very good at Latin and Greek, he developed an intermittent association with the Warburg Institute, having been awarded a Studentship and a Frances Yates Fellowship.

Thomas’s research was primarily focused on the responses of viewers to early modern Italian art. His first book on the ‘beholder’, *Der Betrachter: Studien zur florentinischen Kunstilliteratur des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Gebr. Mann Berlin), appeared in 1990, the year he was appointed Lecturer (later Reader) in Art History at the University of Leicester. He was an engaging and much admired lecturer, several of his students becoming life-long friends. A further product of Thomas’s research into how works of art were experienced by their intended publics was *The Beholder. The Experience of Art in Early Modern Europe* (Ashgate 2006) with Robert Williams. Among his many other publications was an edition, with Lucia Faedo, of the *Aedes Barberinae* (Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa 2006).

Thomas’s generosity as a scholar resulted in his organizing many conferences (and editing the resulting volumes), such as *Poetry on Art. Renaissance to Romanticism* (Shaun Tyas 2003) and *Secular Sculpture 1300-1550* with Phillip Lindley (Paul Watkins 2000). Yet his curiosity and intelligence fed interests further afield: he translated into English Eckhard Kessler’s *Alexander of Aphrodisias* (Brill 2011) and was planning a book on the Romanian nineteenth-century painter Theodor Aman.


Thomas was gregarious and generous. His acquisitions of contemporary art included works by future Turner prize winners and nominees, now represented in national museums (among them Martin Creed, Elizabeth Price, Angela de la Cruz, Fiona Banner and Simon Patterson). His talent led to his acting as buyer for the Contemporary Art Society (now responsible, with Tate, for most of his collection). Many artists were among the friends visiting Thomas in the days prior to his death at UCL Hospital on 12 March 2018. He is survived by his younger brother Andreas, his sister-in-law Rita and their daughter Stefanie.

Donatella Sparti and Charles Hope

Carlo Pedretti, 1928-2017

Carlo Pedretti was Professor Emeritus of Italian Art History at the University of California in Los Angeles, where he also held the Chair of Leonardo Studies. In 2013 he moved permanently to the Villa di Castel Vitori in Lamporecchio, headquarters of The Ros-
sana and Carlo Foundation, which he directed up until his death. He published sixty books and more than five hundred essays, articles and exhibition catalogues in various languages. He was a member of the Permanent Commission for the National Edition of Manuscripts and Drawings by Leonardo da Vinci. The honours he received in Italy and abroad include the Gold Medal for Culture conferred by the President of the Italian Republic in 1972, and in the same year the Congressional Citation, which is the highest recognition from the Government of the United States of America. He was also Honorary Citizen of the cities of: Arezzo (2002); Vinci (2008); Romorantin, France (2010); Florence (2010); Lamporecchio (2011); and Pennabili (2015). Four universities conferred the title of Doctor honoris causa on him: Ferrara (1992); Urbino (1998); Milan (Cattolica, 1999); Caen, France (2003).

Professor Pedretti’s contribution to the knowledge of Leonardo’s manuscripts and drawings has capital importance. The direct study of the originals enabled him to carry out the life-long task of reassembling Leonardo’s papers according to their original and chronological order. His pioneering work was the 1957 catalogue of the fragments of Leonardo drawings at Windsor from the Codex Atlanticus. Subsequent publications include the monumental edition of Leonardo drawings at Windsor (1968-1969), followed by the edition of the drawings by Leonardo and his circle in Florence (1985), Turin (1990) and in the American collections (1993). His critical and facsimile editions of Leonardo’s texts include the Codex Hammer (1987), the Book on Painting (1995), and the Codex Arundel (1998).

Carlo Pedretti began his career over fifty years ago as a journalist (he was a regular contributor to the Corriere della Sera and L’Osservatore Romano, the prestigious Vatican newspaper), and he continued to be involved in television and cinema, as author, actor and consultant to producers and directors. He loved to remember his collaboration with his friend Piero Angela on the production of a series of episodes dedicated to Leonardo for the Superquarck broadcast. He was an honorary member of the Accademia degli Euteleti in San Miniato al Tedesco and the Accademia Raffaello in Urbino. Recently he was nominated as an honorary member of the Accademia Nazionale di Scienze Lettere ed Arti in Modena.


Carlo Pedretti: Some Personal Thoughts

‘Aiyai, yai yai,’ Carlo is reacting in a cheery and encouraging way to someone who thinks they have discovered something new about Leonardo. The chances are that he knows already but is too kind to dash his interlocutor’s hopes.

Carlo Pedretti knew more about Leonardo’s career and his written and drawn legacy – and the Leonardsque – than anyone had ever done, does now or will do in the future. He knew every corner and byway in Leonardo’s legacy. He precisely recalled details of texts and sketches, including their folio numbers, that most of us had not noticed in the first place. Every facet of Leonardo’s varied activities fell under his scholarly purview and yielded to his penetrating understanding. There can be few if any of the great figures in cultural history whose complex legacy has been so mastered by one person.
His scholarship, particularly his editions of Leonardo manuscripts, will live long after most of our contributions have outlived their usefulness. For anyone researching any aspect of Leonardo, his publications of the primary sources are the fundamental point of reference. There are of course the obvious set-piece publications, many of them undertaken for Giunti. But there are many other things, less widely recognised. A superb example of his penetrating grasp of how Leonardo works is his reconstruction of the lost Libro A, using material that it shared with other manuscripts to reconstruct even the line lengths of missing passages. The two companion volumes of the Commentary to Richter’s The Literary Works... presents a treasury of knowledge that infallibly delivers when we ask questions of Richter’s great anthology.

Not least he built on the foundations of Clark’s superb catalogue of the Windsor drawings, to which he contributed his unrivalled knowledge in the second edition, to construct a formidable, richly interlocking chronology of Leonardo’s drawings and writings. His sense of how Leonardo’s mode of writing evolved in form and content was unrivalled, though he sometimes underrated the extent to which Leonardo’s handwriting could vary at one and the same time.

It is perhaps surprising that he never wrote the great synoptic biographical overview of all aspects of Leonardo’s career that he was uniquely equipped to produce. I suspect he may have had a sense that such was the great rambling edifice of Leonardo’s art and thought that it was better explored as a series of interlinked rooms rather than forcing it into a synoptic whole. He may well have taken cautionary note of Leonardo’s scathing dismissal of ‘abbreviators’. Some of us have been more imprudent in this respect.

Carlo’s insights into Leonardo’s painted oeuvre were considerable, though I think it is fair to say that some of us were surprised by his attributions and regretted his involvement with some of the chancy things in the hands of hopeful collectors and the commercial world. He was in this respect more aligned with Italian scholars of an older generation than the younger technicians of academic art history.

Anyone visiting the commodious villa he and Rossana occupied at Lamporecchio near Vinci will count it as a truly memorable experience. Carlo’s wry humour and gentle eccentricity was perfectly complemented by Rossana’s outgoing exuberance, which was applied to the promotion of her Carlo as someone of the stature that he warranted. The culinary welcome she offered was legendary.

His death has deprived the world of Leonardo of a giant worthy of the great master. We are all measurably poorer as a result.

Martin Kemp
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The Leonardo da Vinci Society

The Secretary and Newsletter Editor welcome suggestions of material, such as forthcoming conferences, symposia and other events, exhibitions, publications, reviews, that would be of interest to members of the Society for inclusion in this Newsletter or on the website: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/hosted/leonardo. Please send items for publication to: Maya Corry, Oriel College, Oxford, OX1 4EW; maya.corry@oriel.ox.ac.uk

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