

For Francesco del Giocondo Leonardo undertook to execute the portrait of his wife, Mona Lisa. He worked on this painting for four years, and then left it still unfinished; and today it is in the possession of King Francis of France, at Fontainebleau. If one wanted to see how faithfully art can imitate nature, one could readily perceive it from this head; for here Leonardo subtly reproduced every living detail. ... The eyes had their natural lustre and moistness ... The mouth appeared to be living flesh rather than paint. ... One could swear that the pulses were beating. ... In this painting of Leonardo's there was a smile so pleasing that it seemed divine rather than human ...

Source: Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, 1550