

The Many Faces of Art

Mona Lisa

It is surprising that a painting from the early 1500s could still be interesting, intriguing and current today, but the *Mona Lisa* and her smile seems to have a mysterious hold on us now, as much as it did then. Painted by Leonardo da Vinci during the Italian Renaissance, the *Mona Lisa* has been described as the most visited work of art in the world. In fact, the painting is so popular that it has inspired many other paintings, music, films, parodies and street art.

Other paintings

Many famous artists from the 20th century created pieces of art based on and inspired by the *Mona Lisa*. In 1963, Andy

Warhol produced a series of canvases based on the *Mona Lisa*, the most famous being *Colored Mona Lisa*. Art critics say that Warhol was inspired by the popularity of the image as well as the mass production and consumer culture in which he lived.

Music

The song "Mona Lisa" was composed by Ray Evans and Jay Livingston and recorded by Nat King Cole in 1950, and was inspired directly by the Da Vinci painting. It was a Billboard Number 1 in 1950, topping the charts for eight weeks. In 1991, Natalie Cole, the singer's daughter, released an album of covers of her father's songs,

including "Mona Lisa". This album, called *Unforgettable ... with Love*, won Album of the Year at the 1992 Grammy Awards.

Street art

The provocative artist and activist Banksy created his own version of the famous painting, replacing Mona Lisa's face with that of a yellow smiley face. He called his piece *Mona Lisa Smile* and in 2004 secretly hung it in the Louvre where the original *Mona Lisa* is also on display.

So, although this painting was done so many years ago, it still has influence on modern day art forms.

1 Read the article. Write T (true) or F (false).

- 1 The *Mona Lisa* is one of the most famous pieces of art. T
- 2 Other artists have been inspired by the *Mona Lisa*. _____
- 3 The text is about literature inspired by the *Mona Lisa*. _____
- 4 Mainly art from the Italian Renaissance has been inspired by the *Mona Lisa*. _____
- 5 Only other painters have been inspired by the *Mona Lisa*. _____
- 6 The *Mona Lisa* continues to have an influence on art. _____

2 Read the article again and answer.

What happened in ...

- 1 the early 1500's?
Leonardo da Vinci painted the Mona Lisa.
- 2 1963?

- 3 1991?

- 4 1992?

- 5 2004?

3 Tick the correct option.

- 1 The article gives the exact year that Da Vinci painted the *Mona Lisa*.
☐ Yes
☐ No
- 2 The *Mona Lisa* is an example of what period of art?
☐ Renaissance
☐ Romanticism
- 3 In 1963, Andy Warhol produced ...
☐ one piece inspired by the *Mona Lisa*.
☐ more than one piece inspired by the *Mona Lisa*.
- 4 Nat King Cole _____ the song "Mona Lisa".
☐ wrote
☐ sang
- 5 Banksy _____ permission from the Louvre to display his painting there.
☐ had
☐ didn't have