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Famous Paintings

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Portrait of a lady

Over 500 years ago, a famous Italian artist was hired to paint a famous Italian beauty.



Lady with an Ermine by Leonardo da Vinci

Can you spot?

- A see-through veil, edged with gold thread, covering her forehead.
- Her plain black beads which – like her simple dress – show she was not from a particularly rich family.
- Gold letters spelling out the title (in French) and the artist's name, in the top left corner.



The picture shows 16-year-old Cecilia Gallerani, a favourite at the court of a powerful Italian duke. She is holding an animal known as an ermine. With its pure white fur, the ermine was meant to show how pure and good she was.



Dog
by Leonardo da Vinci

Artist Leonardo da Vinci didn't have a real ermine to look at, so he made one up based on other drawings.

The ermine's paws were probably based on a dog's paws, like these.



To make his paintings as lifelike as possible, Leonardo filled sketchbook after sketchbook with nature drawings and notes – as well as some amazing inventions.



Sleeping cat



Flying machine



Dragon

