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'Beauty adorns virtue'

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Citation

Dijk, S. J. van. (2015, June 18). '*Beauty adorns virtue*'. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/33552>

Version: Corrected Publisher's Version

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Title: 'Beauty adorns virtue' . Dress in portraits of women by Leonardo da Vinci

Issue Date: 2015-06-18

Propositions accompanying the PhD thesis

**‘Beauty adorns virtue’.
Dress in Portraits of Women by Leonardo da Vinci**

by Sara van Dijk

1. Leonardo da Vinci portrayed his female sitters in plain attire to emphasize their physical beauty and by consequence their inner virtue.
2. There is no evidence to support the generally accepted belief that fifteenth-century portraits of Florentine women wearing conspicuous dress and jewellery were painted on the occasion of their wedding.
3. The fame of *Mona Lisa* should not be used as an argument in the discussion on whether or not to clean the painting.
4. The *Bella Principessa*’s recent attribution to Leonardo da Vinci, which has attracted considerable attention, cannot be upheld from a dress historian’s perspective.
(contra Martin Kemp and Pascal Cotte, *Leonardo da Vinci. “La Bella Principessa”*. *The Profile Portrait of a Milanese Woman*, London 2010.)
5. Further research on French and Spanish fashion around 1500 could shed new light on dress at the courts of Northern Italy in this period.
6. Dress historians using artworks as visual sources should be familiar with art theory and workshop practice.

7. The strong emphasis on painting in scholarship on the Renaissance reveals an anachronistic perspective among modern art historians. Like in the Middle Ages, in the Renaissance society put a considerably higher premium on the products of the so-called minor arts, such as gold and silverware, jewellery and textiles.
8. There is no such thing as timeless apparel.
(compare Henri van de Waal, 'Forgery as a Stylistic Problem', in: Henri van de Waal, Thomas Würtenberger and W. Froentjes (eds.), *Aspects of Art Forgery*, The Hague 1962, p. 1-14.)
9. The depiction of linen damask tablecloths and napkins in seventeenth-century Dutch still lifes is no mere display of painterly virtuosity. These objects allude to a vital aspect of the Republic's economy, as is recognized for other luxury items and food often encountered in these paintings.
10. Leiden University should cherish its chair for the decorative arts, which is not only unique in the world for covering the full spectrum of the field but indispensable for the continuation of research and our understanding of the objects around us.
11. The museum security guard's paramount role in preserving and presenting our cultural heritage – no less important than that of a curator, conservator or academic – is all too rarely recognized.
12. To a student of Renaissance dress, the solemn attire ('stemmige kleding') prescribed for women PhD candidates seems ill-suited to an occasion as festive as obtaining one's doctorate.