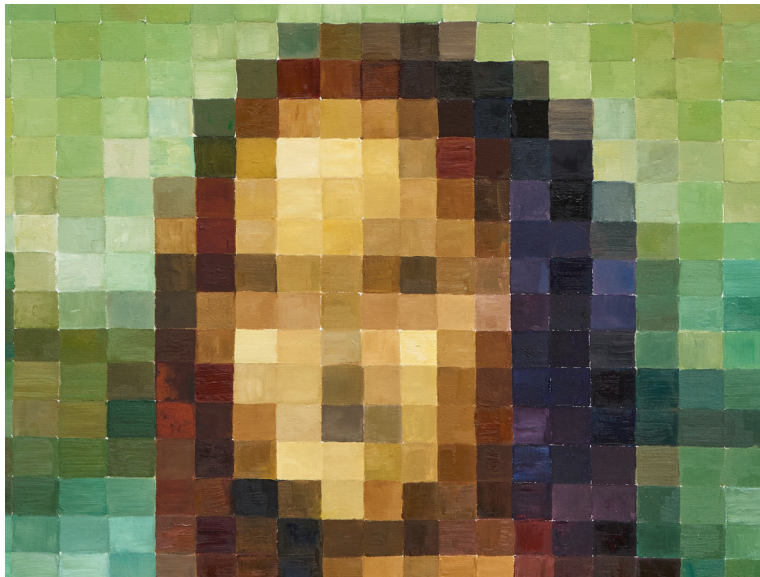




The Mona Lisa “reinterpreted” by director Gus Van Sant

December 10, 2021



Gus Van Sant, *Mona Lisa # 4*, 2021, oil on canvas, 185.4 x 149.9 cm. © Gus Van Sant; photo by Flying Studio. Courtesy the artist and Vito Schnabel Gallery]Courtesy the artist and Vito Schnabel Gallery

The well-known American director Gus Van Sant is preparing to inaugurate his first solo show in Switzerland. At the center of the exhibition at the Vito Schnabel Gallery in St. Moritz is a new cycle of paintings whose main subject is the famous “Mona Lisa” by Leonardo da Vinci.

From Federico Fellini to David Lynch, there are numerous internationally renowned filmmakers who have cultivated a certain passion for the visual arts. The need to express one’s creativity outside the entertainment world seems to be, in fact, a prerogative that unites many movie stars. Gus Van Sant knows something about it - the memorable author of films such as *Good Will Hunting* and *Elephant* - who for years has been carrying out a personal artistic research inspired both by photography and painting. The first Swiss solo exhibition that Van Sant will inaugurate on December 27 in the spaces of the Vito Schnabel Gallery in St. Moritz is concentrated on the latter.

THE EXHIBITION OF GUS VAN SANT IN SWITZERLAND

The heart of the exhibition, simply titled *Mona Lisa* and set up in the Swiss gallery until February 19, 2022, is a new series of large paintings that look precisely at one of the most iconic women in the history of art. All the

enigmatic nature of Leonardo’s famous *Mona Lisa* is summarized by Van Sant through a captivating process of formal decomposition of the subject. Thanks to a pictorial technique that winks at Pointillism, the artist’s canvases in fact suggest reconstructing the figure of the *Mona Lisa* using only one’s own memory and imagination. An expanse of small blocks of color constructed with precision compose a chromatic grid made up of both large oil brush strokes and touches of pastel and precious materials such as gold leaf. Portraits, those proposed by Gus Van Sant, invite you to rediscover the emblematic smile of the *Mona Lisa* by observing everything from the right distance.

CINEMA AND ART ACCORDING TO GUS VAN SANT

The “pixelated” display of the portrait subject is not the only connection that can exist between the world of cinema and the artistic research of Gus Van Sant. As happens in his films, the artist / director does nothing but focus on a mysterious character to offer a dense layer of parallel narratives that lead to the identification of the entire situation. An experiment that, from the big screen, is now translated into the language of painting.

Translated from Italian