*Mona Lisa* and the *Starry Night*

Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* and Vincent van Gogh’s *The Starry Night* are two of the most famous paintings in art history. They were created in very different times and styles, but both continue to fascinate people all over the world. Comparing them shows how art changed from the Renaissance to the modern era.

*Mona Lisa* was painted during the Italian Renaissance, a time when artists focused on realism, harmony, and balance. People believed in humanism and wanted art to show beauty and intelligence. Leonardo da Vinci used soft lines and gentle shading to make the figure look natural and calm. The colours are muted and earthy, creating a peaceful feeling. The background shows mountains and rivers fading into blue tones, which gives the painting depth. Everything is smooth because of the sfumato technique, where colours blend without hard edges. This makes the face and hands look very lifelike.

*The Starry Night*, painted almost 400 years later, belongs to the Post-Impressionist movement. Artists at this time wanted to express emotions rather than copy reality. Van Gogh used bold, swirling lines in the sky to show movement and energy. The colours are bright and contrasting, with deep blues and glowing yellows. The brushstrokes are thick and visible, giving the painting a rough texture. Space is created by overlapping shapes, but the scene feels more like a dream than real life. Instead of calm and balance, the painting shows drama and strong feelings.

Both paintings use light and shadow, but in different ways. Leonardo uses soft changes in value to make the figure look three-dimensional and realistic. Van Gogh uses strong contrasts to make the stars shine and guide the viewer’s eye. *Mona Lisa* feels stable and harmonious, while *The Starry Night* feels full of movement and emotion.

These differences reflect their historical context. *Mona Lisa* shows the Renaissance ideal of reason and beauty. It invites quiet contemplation and represents the humanist belief in individuality. *The Starry Night* shows the modern search for meaning and personal expression. Van Gogh painted it while struggling with mental health, and the swirling sky seems to express his feelings. This emotional approach influenced many later art movements.

Although they are very different, both paintings changed the history of art. *Mona Lisa* is admired for its technical perfection and mysterious smile. *The Starry Night* is loved for its energy and emotional power. Together, they show how art moved from realistic representation to personal interpretation, and why these masterpieces still speak to us today.

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