

The Contemporary Monument and Leonardo's Horse: *A Dream Reborn.*

by Matteo Chincarini

photos by Marina Danesi





Today, in the era of contemporary art, the concept of monument is constantly evolving, going beyond its traditional celebratory function to become a powerful tool for dialogue between past and present. It is no longer just a matter of commemorating illustrious figures or events historical events, but to create works capable of evoking collective memories, stimulating reflections and inserting themselves harmoniously into the cultural and urban context.

An emblematic example of this transformation is Leonardo's Horse, an imposing sculpture located in Milan that embodies the link between Renaissance genius and sensibility contemporary. More than a simple reproduction, this work takes the form of a tribute visionary to the Master, returning an unfinished project to the public and transforming it into an icon of timeless innovation and beauty.







The idea of an imposing equestrian statue was born at the end of the 15th century at the behest of Ludovico Sforza, known as the Moor, Duke of Milan. Entrusted to the genius of Leonardo da Vinci, the project called for the construction of the largest equestrian statue in the world, dedicated to Francesco Sforza, founder of the dynasty. Leonardo spent many years at the Sforza

court, becoming not only an artist but also an engineer, stage designer, and scholar. His stay in Milan was characterized by intense study and experimentation that profoundly influenced his later work. However, technical difficulties and the wars that devastated Milan prevented the completion of the work, leaving it unfinished for centuries.

Leonardo studied equine anatomy at length to conceive a perfect statue, observing carefully the horses in the Sforza stables. He created numerous sketches and preparatory drawings, many of which have come down to us and are now part of the collections of the British Royal Household, guarded with great care because of their immense artistic and historical value. His studies on the horse movement were pioneering and laid the foundation for future representations equestrian in art.

Leonardo's initial design called for a prancing horse, but the weight of the cast in bronze made this pose unfeasible. After falling back on a more stable version, Leonardo created a clay model, which was destroyed during the French invasion of 1499.

Leonardo's dream of the Horse seemed destined to remain just a drawing in his notebooks.

But in the 20th century, thanks to the interest of American Charles Dent, the project was rediscovered and relaunched. Dent initiated a fundraising effort to create the statue, but it was only thanks to the the intervention of Frederik Meijer and sculptor Nina Akamu that Leonardo's Horse took finally take shape. Standing nearly eight

meters tall and weighing 10 tons, the statue was made in the United States and later donated to the city of Milan, finding its final placement at the Snai San Siro Hippodrome in 1999. This impressive work of art not only honors the genius of Leonardo da Vinci, but also represents also one of the largest equestrian monuments in the world. If we think of other famous statues equestrian statues, such as the Monument to Marcus Aurelius in Rome or the statue of Peter the Great in St. Petersburg, Leonardo's Horse stands out for its unique history and its ability to blend Renaissance ingenuity and contemporary achievement.

Today, Leonardo's Horse is not only a symbol of the past, but a testimony to how art can bridge the gap between eras, transforming an ancient dream into a tangible reality and majestic. Its presence in Milan is not only a tribute to the history of the Sforza family, but an invitation to reflect on the power of art in handing down memory and identity through time.

The legacy left by Leonardo, with his painstaking studies and timeless vision, continues to to live on, reminding us how human genius can transcend the barriers of time and space to create works destined for eternity.

**CHINCARINI
EVENTI**
L'ARTE DI FARE EVENTI

Matteo Chincarini

Chincarinieventi.it | Info@chincarinieventi.it