

Study: Mona Lisa neither man nor da Vinci

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A University of Illinois scientist says Mona Lisa probably wasn't a man, and it's even more unlikely it was a self-portrait of Leonardo da Vinci.

UI researchers last year used facial-recognition software to analyze the Mona Lisa's enigmatic smile. They concluded the model was happy, with touches of disgust, fear and anger, at least as Leonardo da Vinci painted her, the Champaign (Ill.) News-Gazette reported Tuesday.

Now Professor Thomas Huang has analyzed the painting to determine its subject's likely gender and compared it with a self-portrait of da Vinci.

Huang says facial-recognition software he and his students developed

indicate a 60-40 probability the painting is of a female. And Huang says even if it is a man, it doesn't match well with Leonardo's sketch of himself.

"Of course, nothing proves anything," said Huang, a professor of electrical and computer engineering. "At least it indicates these conjectures may not be right."

The portrait, which da Vinci is believed to have completed in 1507, is formally entitled "Mona Lisa del Gioconda."

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