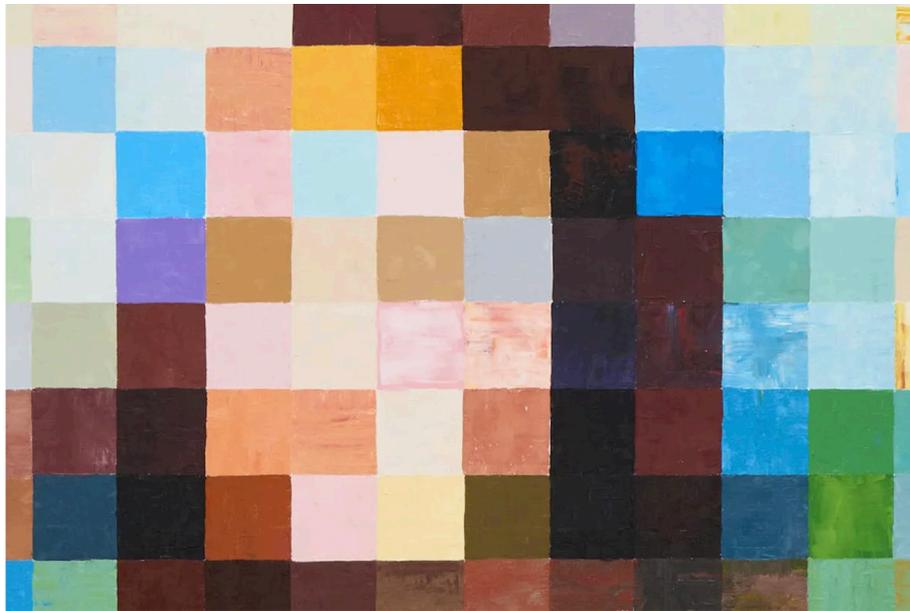


WIDEWALLS

New Paintings By the Acclaimed Filmmaker Gus Van Sant Coming to Vito Schnabel Gallery

by Balasz Takac
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Gus Van Sant - *Mona Lisa* #8, detail, 2021. Oil on canvas 84 x 62 inches (213.4 x 147.5 cm) © Gus Van Sant; Photo by Flying Studio; Courtesy the artist and Vito Schnabel Gallery

The world's best-known artwork in history, the mysterious *Mona Lisa*, has inspired numerous artists for centuries. Her discreet smile, the state of calmness, and the pose have been interpreted differently, yet the painting widely celebrated for featuring the ideal of beauty still captures the fancy of many including the famous filmmaker Gus Van Sant.

Known for epic films such as *My Own Private Idaho*, *Good Will Hunting*, and *Milk*, throughout the years he was also active as a painter, photographer, and musician. Regardless of the media, Van Sant always stays focused on portraying marginalized individuals living on the fringes of society.

In the last couple of years, Van Sant's painterly practice became the most dominant way of expression for the artist. An upcoming exhibition of his new paintings based on the

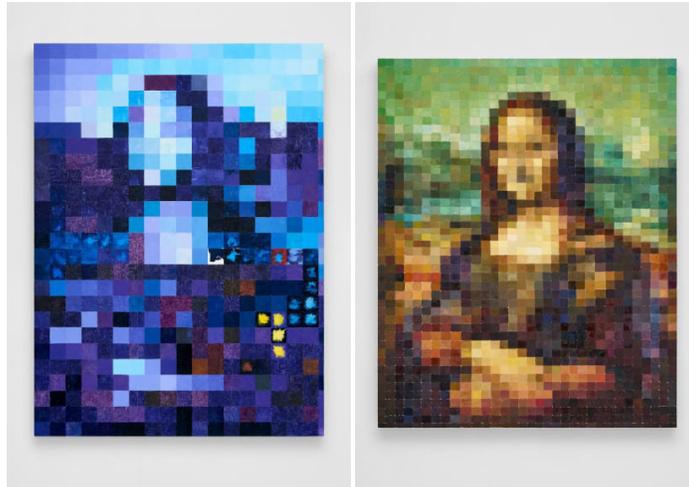
Mona Lisa will be showcased at Vito Schnabel Gallery in St. Moritz, marking Van Sant's first presentation in Switzerland.

Van Sant's Take on *Mona Lisa*

The upcoming show will bring a series of large-scale canvases, executed in gold leaf, crayon, and oil, based on the reinterpretation of Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* (*La Gioconda* or *La Joconde*), ca. 1503- 1519.

Van Sant's intervention was generated throughout the course years, and the new works are a final result of the artist's fascination with digital printing.

He was majorly inspired by LEGO's famous plastic blocks featuring the world's renowned paintings, including Mona



Left: Gus Van Sant - Blue Mona Lisa #9, 2021. Oil on canvas, 84 x 62 inches (213.4 x 147.5 cm) © Gus Van Sant; Photo by Flying Studio; Courtesy the artist and Vito Schnabel Gallery / Right: Gus Van Sant - Mona Lisa #4, 2021. Oil on canvas, 73 x 59 inches (185.4 x 149.9 cm) © Gus Van Sant; Photo by Flying Studio; Courtesy the artist and Vito Schnabel Gallery



Left: Gus Van Sant - Mona Lisa Gold #2, 2021. Gold leaf on canvas, 84 x 62 inches (213.4 x 157.5 cm) © Gus Van Sant; Photo by Flying Studio; Courtesy the artist and Vito Schnabel Gallery / Right: Gus Van Sant - Mona Lisa #8, 2021. Oil on canvas,

Lisa. By isolating and dividing the hues, Van Sant managed to extract paintings that range from pale pastels to vibrant colors, as well as metallic shades of gold, silver, and bronze. In doing so, he managed to play around with the notion of appearance and disappearance, the figurative and the abstract.

Gus Van Sant at Vito Schnabel Gallery

With the same sensitivity that frames his films, Van Sant invites the viewer to reconsider their sense of perception by

engaging with the emotional distance and dislocation that inform the real history of the *Mona Lisa*. With these works, Gus Van Sant deconstructed the *Mona Lisa* narrative through formal experimentation by using a technique reminiscent of pointillism. Another value of the optical effects is that they make anybody observing the paintings at close range immersed in the abstract composition.

The exhibition *Gus Van Sant: Mona Lisa* will be on view at Vito Schnabel Gallery in St. Moritz from December 27th, 2021 until February 19th, 2022.