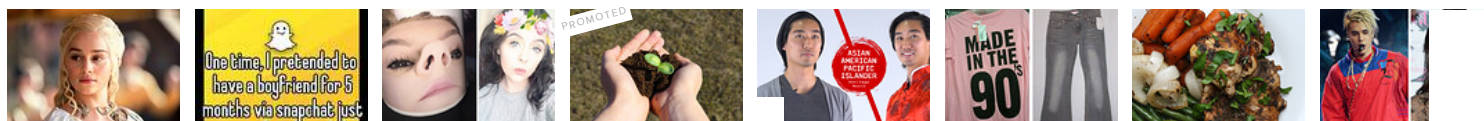


# BuzzFeed

News Videos Quizzes Food DIY More Get Our News App



TECH

## The Mona Lisa of Unicorn Art Will Be On Display In San Francisco

A High Renaissance coincidence

posted on Nov. 4, 2015, at 7:09 p.m.



**Nitasha Tiku**  
BuzzFeed News Reporter



Via giphy.com

Raphael's 16th century painting *Portrait of a Lady with a Unicorn* is considered a masterpiece of the High Renaissance. For the first time ever, the work of art will be on display in San Francisco as a [one-painting show](#) at the Legion of Honor starting in January. Elsewhere in the Bay Area, adults have become enchanted with the word *unicorn* — the jargon du jour for tech companies valued at one billion dollars or more. But the painting's arrival and the region's newfound belief in magical beasts is merely a coincidence, Dr. Esther Bell, the exhibit's organizing curator, told BuzzFeed News.



10 Amazing Breakfasts You Can Make In Under 5 Minutes

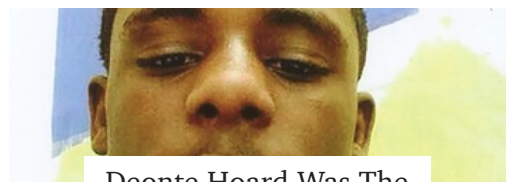
PROMOTED BY  
 Jimmy Dean Fully Cooked Sausage

### BuzzFeedNEWS

#### In The News Today

- Refugee families are being torn apart by British bureaucracy. Processing delays and bureaucratic barriers are separating families by thousands of miles.
- Seventeen people died in a fire at a makeshift nursing home near Ukraine's capital Kiev on Sunday.
- At least four people died and 49 others were injured in shootings during a violent Memorial Day weekend in Chicago.

Download the BuzzFeed News app

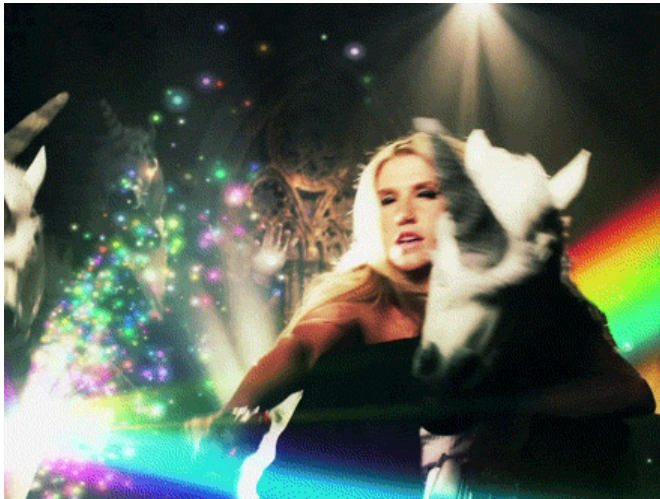


Deonte Hoard Was The 53rd Of 489 Homicide Victims In Chicago Last



Via giphy.com

“It’s really interesting timing for certain, so maybe the painting will resonate with some of our local businesses for that reason,” said Bell, who only recently learned of the word’s contemporary usage in Silicon Valley. Bell is also the curator in charge of European paintings at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (FAMSF), which encompasses the Legion of Honor. The museums’ [board of trustees](#) includes investor [Zachary Bogue](#) (Marissa Mayer’s husband), as well as [Juliet de Baubigny](#), a partner at the venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins, so there is a [connection](#) to the tech sector. However, the exhibit has been in the works for two years. (The term was coined [almost exactly two years ago](#), but has really only come into widespread usage this year.)



Via giphy.com

Bell marveled at the evolution of the unicorn imagery. “A unicorn as early as the third or fourth century was talked about in terms of purity and chastity, so it has a very long history of having those connotations,” she said. And a very short history of symbolizing irrationality and excess? “Exactly,” she replied.

Year

by Albert Samaha

Connect With **BuzzFeed** Tech

Like Us On Facebook

Follow Us On Twitter

Follow Us On Apple News

Subscribe to our RSS feed



News moves fast. Keep up with the BuzzFeed News daily email.

Your Email Address

Sign up

### More News



[“Amber Is A Hero” Say Amber Heard Lawyers Amid Abuse Allegations Against Johnny Depp](#)



[Justices Make Moves In Death Penalty Challenges — But Avoid Hearing Any New Cases](#)



[Many Dead, Including Children, In Airstrikes On Syrian Hospitals](#)



Via giphy.com

The exhibit will highlight the stylistic similarities between this portrait by Raphael and the *Mona Lisa*, in terms of the format, the positioning of the sitter's hands, and the distant landscape in the background. Have a look:



### Warriors Advance To NBA Finals To Face Cleveland Cavaliers For Second Year In A Row



### Baylor University Athletic Director Resigns Amid Sexual Assault Cover-Up Scandal



### This Guy Face-Swapped On Snapchat With Two Celebrities And Now The Police Are Involved



### Eric Holder Now Says Edward Snowden Performed A "Public Service"



### A School Bus Crashed Into A House In North Carolina





Raphael (1483–1520), Portrait of a Lady with a Unicorn, ca. 1505–1506. courtesy of Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

“What’s really fascinating is the way she’s kind of holding the unicorn in her lap, her hands clasped around its feet, so it might be a warning to a suitor, or her new husband,” Bell explained. “She clearly has power and control over the beast, so it might signify her powers of seduction.” In modern day terms that would perhaps make the sitter the unicorn’s venture capitalist.

Nitasha Tiku is a senior writer for BuzzFeed News and is based in San Francisco. Contact Nitasha Tiku at [nitasha.tiku@buzzfeed.com](mailto:nitasha.tiku@buzzfeed.com).

More ▾



Weekend in Chicago

[More News >](#)

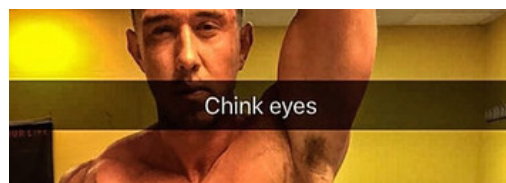
### Now Buzzing



[23 Things All '00s Did While Shopping At Supre](#)



[Here's What's Trending On Amazon This Week](#)



[It's Due Time To Talk About Non-Asian People Using The Term "Chink Eyes"](#)



[The College "Would You Rather" You Wish You Had Taken](#)