

ANTENNA | AUDIO

High Museum of Art

Louvre Atlanta Year 3:

The Louvre and the Masterpiece



Family Audio Tour

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201. Antoine-Louis Barye, *Lion with Serpent*, 1832-1833

Snooty Tour Guide (*exaggerated looking-down-his-nose voice*): Welcome, art lovers, to the High Museum. Today we'll look at objects from the Louvre Museum in Paris and ask the question: *What* is a masterpiece?

Ace Easton (*12-15 year-old boy*): Psssst!! Hey you...over here!! Don't listen to that guy, he'll bore your ears off!

Tina (*12-15 year-old girl*) (*skeptical*): Who are you?

ACE: Ace Easton, private eye. I've been snooping around this museum for weeks. I'm on a case for a very important client.

Tina (*impressed*): Is it a *murder* case?!

ACE: Nah. My client has gotta find a masterpiece. Said it was around here somewhere.

Tina: Detectives don't know anything about art!

ACE: I've got a nose for these things, and I'll tell ya, not every hunk of art is a masterpiece.

Tina (*skeptical*): And you can tell which is which?

ACE: Sometimes it's a just matter of opinion. Like this huge lion right here.

Tina: Is it a masterpiece?

ACE: Since you're so smart, I'll let you and your friend decide. Yeah, *you*, listening in on the headset! We're gonna need your detective smarts, too. Maybe you and, uh, what's your name?

Tina: Tina Max. I'm gonna be a rock star!

ACE: Rock star. *Right.* You and Tina case this lion. Look at as many details as you can. See anything special about it? Then press your green play button and I'll let you both in on some masterpiece secrets!

2022 – Bayre/Intro – Second Level

ACE: When Bayre – that’s the artist – first made this about 150 years ago, they put it in a park in Paris. The lion looked so real and scary that it sent young women screaming away in fright.

Tina: You’re kidding me?

ACE: Nope. No kidding.

[*SFX: loud lion’s roar*]

Tina: Yeowwww....!

ACE: See? It still works.

Tina: Very funny.

ACE: The way I figure it there are a lot of clues that can point to a masterpiece. See any here?

Tina: One thing we noticed is it looks so real.

ACE: That's 'cause it's made really well, and that's one of the marks of a masterpiece! Bayre spent hours at the zoo drawing pictures of lions. He even examined dead lions up close to get their exact anatomy.

Tina: Ewwwww!

ACE: And it's got other masterpiece qualities, like the fact that art critics and art lovers both agree it's great.

Tina: Oh, I can see that easily.

ACE: You can, huh? Did you ever consider becoming a detective?

Tina: No, I'm gonna be a rock star!

[SFX/Music: Guitar riff....]

ACE: Oh, right. Well, I've got something else to show you guys. This one's really, really tiny, Tina! And bring your partner on the headset...yeah, *you!* We gotta go to the second floor, though. Here's where the exercise part of being a detective comes in. Look for the nearby stairs. I'll meet you up there!

202. Iran, Susa, Worshipper carrying a goat, ca. 1500-1200 BC

Ace: They got a lot of cool things in this case, but look for the little gold man.*

Tina: Ooooh! Solid gold!

ACE: Well, not really. Its gold mixed with other metals. There's silver and copper in there, too.

Tina: Could've fooled us! Looks like all gold...so does that make this one a fake?

ACE: Nope. It's not a fake. I call it a masterpiece!

Tina: It's not very realistic.

ACE: Maybe not, but it's over 3,000 years old.

Tina: Nothing's that old!

ACE: This is. It's a little worshipper from ancient Iran. He's carrying a goat like a kind of offering to his god. And he's got tattoos all over his body.

Tina: Oh, cool. When I'm a rock star I'm gonna have tattoos, too.

ACE: Well, his tattoos stand for his religion, not his music! He's supposed to be a king, and he was left at a temple, sort of like the king's messenger. Can you see the shape of his tattoos?

Tina: They're so small. I'm gonna need some help from my partner here.

ACE: Look closely....**

Tina: Stars! He's got *stars* all over him.

ACE: Good work. And would you call this a masterpiece?

Tina: If a cute little guy like this can be 3,000 years old and still look like new, that's gotta be *something*.

ACE: Yep. That's one of the reasons they call this guy a masterpiece!

203. Limoges (Alpais), *Alpais Ciborium*, ca. 1200

[*MUSIC/SFX: Gregorian Chant*]

Snooty Guide: Now here we have an extraordinary example of French Limoges enamelwork of the Middle Ages...

ACE: Oh, boy! Who let Mr. Stuffed Shirt in here? Don't pay any attention to him!

[*MUSIC/SFX: Gregorian Chant screeches to a halt*]

ACE: Let *me* clue you in to this shiny jar that's almost 1,000 years old.

Tina: What is it?

ACE: They used to use it in church. It held the Holy Communion, you know, the host, the sacred wafer.

Tina: The what?

ACE: Never mind. That's not the point. Check out how perfect looking it is.

Tina: Nice jewels!

ACE: You're looking at turquoise, lapis, glass beads, and enamel.

Tina: And angels!

ACE: It's got masterpiece written all over it. In fact, the word masterpiece was invented in medieval times when this was made. They used to have these groups of workers in what they called guilds. And all those workers made beautiful things like this. But there's something more special about this golden vessel. There's actually writing inside the lid.

Tina: Who would write on such a special thing?

ACE: I'll give you guys 3 guesses. **

[*SFX: Game Show "Tick-Tock"*]

Tina: Hmmmmm. The owner?

[*SFX: Wrong answer buzzer.*]

ACE: Nope! **

[*SFX: Game Show "Tick-Tock"*]

Tina: I don't know...what about the church?

[SFX: *Wrong answer buzzer.*]

ACE: Not the church. You have one guess left. **

[SFX: *Game Show "Tick-Tock"*]

Tina: Well, what if it's like a painting, maybe the artist *signed* it.

[SFX: *Triumphant right answer music*]

ACE: That's correct! And this artist even called himself a "master!" You know, I think you should reconsider your rock 'n roll career and be an art historian.

Tina: Ewwwww! Actually I got that idea from my friend on the headset here.

[MUSIC/SFX: *rock 'n roll outro music*]

204. Théodore Géricault, *The Raft of the Medusa*, 1816-1819

[SFX: Loud sloshing water around a huge raft, people moaning, stormy winds]

ACE (*talking loudly over noise*): The story behind this painting is pretty scary.

Tina (*talking loudly over noise*): Why? Was there a murder?

ACE (*talking loudly*): Not exactly...

[SFX: Winds calm to a whimper; water and moans subside.]

ACE (*talking normally*): Oh, good, the wind died down. Let me tell you this quickly. This scene really happened. It was a shipwreck off the coast of Africa. And all the passengers made a big raft of wood from the wrecked ship. A hundred and fifty people, mostly sailors, tried to stay afloat on that raft. In the end, only *fifteen* survived. There were even some stories about *cannibalism*.

Tina: So there *was* murder!

ACE: I guess you'd have to say that. I'm glad I didn't have to solve *that* case!

Tina: Look at those people...they look miserable!

ACE: Luckily, there's a ship in the distance. See it all the way on the right?

* I think it's coming to save them. The painter was a French guy named Gericault, and this was just a practice picture. The final painting was 23 feet long!

[SFX: Winds kick up, water sloshes, moans start...]

Tina (*yelling over noise*): I guess a masterpiece is a masterpiece whatever the size.

ACE (*yelling*): True.

[SFX fade out]

ACE (normal voice): They call this a masterpiece because no one ever did pictures of current events before. It used to always be mythology or history. This painting was like tuning in to CNN back then! The artist Gericault was an artistic genius since he broke all the rules about art. That's what true artists do!

Tina: Oooooooh...I'm getting seasick!!!!

205. Islamic (Turkey), *Platter with Peacock*, 1540-1555, and other two for comparison

Tina: What are these? Dishes? What are dishes doing in a museum?

ACE: One of them is considered a masterpiece.

Tina: Which one? Wait, don't tell us!

ACE: My lips are sealed. Private eye code of honor.

Tina: We'll figure it out...but this doesn't look easy. They look all alike.

ACE: But they're (*sign-song "not"*) no-ot! What's different about them? **

Tina: Okay, they're not *exactly* the same. Like, one of them has a bird in it.

ACE: And so they call it the peacock plate.

Tina: Peacock...that's what I meant.

ACE: And it's from Turkey – they're all from Turkey. And they're a few hundred years old.

Tina: Well, that peacock looks like it's stepping around the leaves. He's so cute! And look at all those flowers swirling around. *

ACE: There are flowers on the other plates, too. Take a look. **

Tina: Yeah, but those flowers look like they were cut out and stuck on. The peacock plate flowers whoosh around like they're in the wind...like they'll spin right off the edges of the plate!

ACE: Ah! So they don't all look the same?

Tina: We like the peacock plate. It's more fun and a whole lot prettier.

ACE: And that, my friend, makes it a masterpiece!

Tina: We got it right!

206. Interactive Egyptian heads game

Snooty Guy: Before anyone goes into this room be sure you are 18 or older. Only adults are allowed since there will be a test of your art knowledge and kids couldn't possibly understand.

Ace & Tina: Oh, no! Not him again!

ACE: Listen, you guys. He's totally wrong about this. I've been in that room and I know for a fact that you can figure out the game that's inside. And it's a GAME, not a test - leave it to Mr. Stuffed Shirt to take the fun out of everything.

When you go in you'll see two sculptures of heads. They both look like they're from ancient Egypt. But they're *not*! One of them is a fake.

Tina: Wow, fakes in a museum. Cool! You think we'll be able to figure it out?

ACE: I'll give you some hints. First: pay attention to the color blue.

Tina:...blue...

ACE: Second: be on the lookout for something made of glass.

Tina: ...glass....

ACE: Third: don't be fooled by imitations!

Tina: Got it! We can nail this, I know it! Let's go!

ACE: Good luck! When you're done in there meet me up on the Skyway level. That's right...more stairs! See you later.

207. Greek, Female figure, called the "Lady of Auxerre," second half of 7th century BC

ACE: Hey guys! Glad you caught up with me. Did you ever hear the story about the traveling statue?

Tina: Is this a joke?

ACE: I kid you not. *This* statue has been on a lot of adventures. Just like the crystal skull in Indiana Jones. Try and imagine its journey. She's from a Greek island, and she's 2400 years old! But she mysteriously ended up in France many years ago.

Tina: How?

ACE: I already did *my* investigation. What do you two think? *

Tina: Hmmm. Must have been a rough trip. Her face is broken. But, wow, what cool hair!

ACE: The statue didn't get much respect until the Louvre Museum discovered it.

Tina: What a great dress...and nice belt! Was she bumping around in someone's suitcase?

ACE: Something like that.

Tina: Or stuck in the corner of a garage unnoticed?

ACE: Something like that, too.

Tina: Or used as a paperweight?

ACE: Close! It first belonged to an artist in the French countryside, then was sold to a theatre and used as a prop onstage, then wound up in a small museum stuck behind a door and used as a hat stand.

Tina: And now she's famous?

ACE: Yup! She's a perfect example of art made at a special time in Greece.

Tina: (*sigh.*) I guess it takes a long time to become a star...

208. French, *Daniel in the Lion's Den*, 6th c. and beginning of 12th c.

Tina: Look at that little guy in the middle.* Are those lions all around him?

ACE: Yup. That's Daniel, from the story in the bible. And he's supposed to be *in* a lion's den.

Tina: Do they want to eat him?

[*SFX: ferocious lions growling*]

ACE: The story goes that the king threw Daniel in with the lions because he worshipped God and not the king.

Tina: The lions don't look so ferocious. They look like they like him.

ACE: That's the other part of the story. The lions didn't hurt him at all.

Tina: Wow. So he's kinda like a lion tamer.

[*SFX: whimpering lions.*]

ACE: Um...right. Notice anything else? Walk around it, check out the carvings. * You might see what look like leaves. Artists worked on this in

two different centuries. Marble is pretty valuable stuff...they tried using it over and over.

Snooty Guy (*voice approaches, gets closer*): This superb example of Romanesque art features a fearful Daniel pursued by terrible lions....(*voice fades and moves away*)

ACE: Fearful? I don't know. What do you think of Daniel's expression? *

Tina: Well, if you ask me he looks kinda happy. Like he just tamed the lions without even trying.

ACE: Very good! You're great at figuring out people's feelings.

Tina: Well...actually...I got that from my partner on the headset.

ACE: I think we have a genius on our hands!

209. Franz Xaver Messerschmidt, *Character Head*, 1770-1783

ACE: Now, take a look at this head. Doesn't he remind you of someone?

Tina: Yeah, he does. But I can't think of who. What's the matter with him?

ACE: Doesn't look very happy, does he? The head was made by an Austrian guy in the 1700's. His name was Franz Messerschmidt. It's supposed to be a self-portrait.

Tina: He sculpted it of *himself*?

ACE: They say he made faces in the mirror and copied them for the sculpture. Can you make that face?

Tina: I'll try...but it doesn't look easy...just grumpy, I guess....*

ACE: Not bad, not bad...I think you got it. But hey! Our pal on the headset nailed it. Great face!

Snooty Guy (*voice approaches, gets closer*): The artist, Franz Messerschmidt, suffered from mental illness, which caused him to make distressing facial expressions...

Tina: He's back!

ACE: Now I know who this head reminds me of!

ACE & Tina: Mr. Stuffed Shirt!

Snooty Guy: Excuse me, young people, are you addressing *me*?

ACE: Uh...no...

Tina: ...not you...

ACE: ...Sir...

Snooty Guy: Just as well....(*then to his "group"*)...Our next artwork is here to the left...please follow me....(*voice fades*)

ACE: Pssst. Stay right here with us. There's another thing about this head you should know. This artist was *way* ahead of his time. No one had ever shown the inner feelings of an artist before. And one more thing....

Tina: Do we really *want* to know more?

ACE: It'll surprise you. You two guess what it's made of....**

Tina: ...hmmm...some kind of metal....copper?

ACE: Nope. *

Tina: ...steel?

ACE: Good guess. But nope. He's made of *lead*.

Tina: Lead?! No wonder he looks so heavy!

210. Jan Vermeer, *The Astronomer*, 1668

ACE: The name of this picture is *The Astronomer*.

Tina: That's someone who studies the stars, right?

ACE: You got it. But what is it about this picture that *says* Astronomer? *

Tina: Well...He's looking at a globe like he's studying it.

ACE: What kind of globe?

Tina: An earth globe, what else?

ACE: Could be something else. Take another look. *

Tina: Now that you mention it, I don't see any blue ocean or continents like I know them.

ACE: That's 'cause it's a constellation globe. A globe of stars.

Tina: Oh, of course! And look at what's hanging on the cabinet behind him!

ACE: What is it?

Tina: I don't know! But I bet it's some kind of mathematical chart to go with his astronomy.

ACE: But he doesn't —

Tina: And look! That book in front of him. More star information for sure!

ACE: Ah! Good point. Did you get that from —

Tina: Yeah...my friend on the headset...

ACE: Mastermind! You know, Vermeer is the name of the artist who painted this. He's VERY famous now. But for 200 years he was completely unnoticed.

Tina: And now we know this is a masterpiece!

ACE: Hey! I think that's just what my client was looking for!

Tina: See? You're a pretty good mastermind yourself.

ACE: Thanks! Well, this is our last stop...so press the green play button now.

2102. Conclusion - Second Level

ACE: And that's the end of our investigation!

Tina: You've certainly got some masterpieces to show your client. You gonna tell him about the Astronomer guy?

ACE: Yep, I've got this case solved.

Tina: So do I!

ACE: Aren't you gonna thank your pal here on the headset for all the help?

Tina: Oh, yeah, thanks!

ACE: And now you can take all your new masterpiece ideas and pick out your own masterpiece!

Tina: What do you mean?

ACE: Right behind the Astronomer painting there's a big screen just *waiting* for you. You can choose a personal masterpiece right there.

Tina: Cool.

ACE: I gotta run...my client is waiting!

Tina: Thanks, Ace, for saving us from Mr. Stuffed Shirt!